

Palladium Books® Presents:

The Land of the Damned™ Two Eternal Torment™

By Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin



Violence and the Supernatural

The fantasy world of **The Palladium Role-Playing Game®** is violent, deadly and filled with magic and monsters. Other-dimensional beings, demons, and sorcerers torment, stalk and enslave humans. Monsters, gods, magic, insanity, cannibalism, war and heroic adventure are all elements of this book.

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Special Dedication

A large part of this book is about death and the ways in which it vexes the living. During the writing of this book, I had an uncomfortable brush with death myself. Shortly before Christmas 2001, my father suffered what the doctors called a “pre-heart attack” that would have buried him had he not sought medical attention when he did. But that was just the beginning. As it turned out, he needed quadruple bypass surgery right away, an operation that I was not sure my father would survive, much less fully recover from.

You see, my dad nearly died of a heart attack in 1977, and then again from lung cancer in 1980. When diagnosed with cancer, the doctors told my father that he was most likely not going to survive the operation (they had to implant a pacemaker in him just so he could make it through his lung operation). Even if he did survive, the docs insisted he would live the rest of his life in a chair, and he would never see any of his three children (of which I am the oldest) graduate from college. I was 10 at the time.

My dad was looking death in the face, and he knew it. He had two choices. He could roll over and die — the easy thing to do. Or he could go the hard way. He could buck the odds, go through hell and come out smiling. And that’s exactly what he did.

That my father survived his ordeal was nothing short of amazing to me. All fathers look like giants to their kids, I suppose, but after 1980, my Dad seemed more than that to me. He seemed...invincible. Immortal.

Now I am a grown man, and here my dad was, looking death in the face one more time. He was a good twenty years older now, and not in very good health to begin with. He was scarred and hurting. But he took the hard way one more time, and right now, he has amazed his doctors with an unusually strong and steady comeback. What can I say? The man’s tough as tungsten and kicks like a mule. And I love him for it.

In the face of death, my father has always affirmed life. He is as giant and amazing as he has always been, even though his hair is gray, even though I am taller than he is, and even though I am now a father with a little one of my own to whom I must seem as big and strong as my father seems to me.

No matter how dark or bleak or grim things might get, nothing and nobody can ever erase the timeless truth of things that my father has shown me: life is beautiful; life is amazing; life is always worth living. I will never forget this lesson, not even if I live to see my millionth birthday.

Thank you, Dad. I love you. You’re my hero.

– Bill Coffin, 2002

To those who have always stayed true to Palladium Books and the spirit of role-playing we try to promote. Thanks.

– Kevin Siembieda, 2002

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Palladium Books® Presents:

Land of the Damned™ Two

Eternal Torment™

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concepts and Megaverse® created by **Kevin Siembieda**.

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— *Kevin Siembieda, 2002*

An epic sourcebook for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®, 2nd Edition

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A few words

Welcome to the second installment of the **Land of the Damned™** series. If you are new to the Land of the Damned, don't worry – this book is designed to stand on its own even if you never get the other volumes of the series, **Land of the Damned One: Chaos Lands** and **Three: The Bleakness**. The first section of each book contains a brief overview of the whole Land of the Damned region, making each volume fairly self-contained. Having said that, though, we do think you'll enjoy these other books in the series and invite you to check them out, especially if you are looking to conduct a campaign in the **Land of the Damned**. They were written to interlock with each other, and when it is all said and done, this sourcebook trilogy will form an epic setting design for **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**.

The Land of the Damned is a huge, sprawling region with 50,000+ years of history. A place where the rejects from the Age of Chaos have been locked away by the Gods of Light to protect the rest of the world. Consequently, each of the three Land of the Damned books present an *overview* of the region, a few snippets of history, some rumors and a look at some of the most notable "prisoners" and monster trapped within its ancient confines. This means we were not able to present all the details and fully fleshed out adventures we would like to have presented, but, man oh man, do you have enough to build your own blistering adventures.

Part of the whole concept behind the **Land of the Damned™** books is that this is the most dangerous place on the face of the Palladium world. Since times unknown, it has been that one place where nobody in their right mind would want to go. A remote and cursed land of monsters and evil that most people shunned. Of those who dared to cross the mountains or seas to gain entry into the Land of the Damned, few have ever come back alive or whole. It is a land inhabited by forgotten creatures of a bygone era. Many created through magic and alchemy by the malevolent Old Ones, themselves. It is why there is an ancient ruin, monster or nasty surprise around every corner, and why even when champions win some incredible treasure, they will still wonder if it really was worth the hardship and losses. This is the *Land of the Damned*, and it was named that for a reason. If heavy hitters like the legendary *Defilers* had a rough go of it here, then so should everybody else. However, any characters who use their heads, work as a team and try to keep their courage should manage through it all somehow and come out of it with their lives, though great treasure or wondrous secrets may slip through their grasp.

Remember, the Land of the Damned was sealed off from the rest of the world by the ancient Gods of Light not only to keep the horrors within inside, but to keep others out. Thus, those who worship the Gods of Light may find their prayers and pleas ignored while they are in the forbidden lands, and all should ex-



pect to suffer great trials, challenges, lasting curses and brutal combat. Some may very well lose their lives or lose themselves to evil or madness. Such is the nature of this foul place never meant for man nor Wolfen, Elf nor Dwarf, Orc nor Troll. Such is the Land of the Damned.

Explore it if you dare.

— Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin, 2002

Welcome to Oblivion

This section provides the players and the G.M. with a quick overview of the Land of the Damned with specific attention paid to the **Darkest Heart** and the **Endless Torment**. All of the information in this section will be presented "in character," presented through a character or a source that does not speak with 100% objectivity or authority. As a result, *everything* in this section is open to some degree of *interpretation*. It is left to the Game Master to decide exactly how much of all of this is true and how much is rumor or outright lie. G.M.s, look at this as a good starting-off point for building your own body of legend

and lore regarding this "middle section" of the Land of the Damned. Feel free to take what you see here and expand, embellish, edit, re-write or discard as you see fit. After all, the Land of the Damned is an unknown and mysterious place, so you have as much authority as anybody, including the author of this book or Kevin Siembieda himself, to determine exactly what shape this realm should take for your campaign.

Even if you decide that every word of this following section is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you Thoth, your players do not necessarily have to know that.

Feel free to present this entire section as the information adventurers might come across prior to an expedition into the *Eternal Torment*. Heck, treat the entire book that way if you like, and determine what is real and what is fiction without their knowledge. If ever there was a place on the Palladium world where player characters' expectations might vary dramatically from the real deal, it is here.

With all that in mind, we present to you a few morsels of knowledge that might just begin to shed a little light on that great darkness that is the Land of the Damned, and in particular, the Darkest Heart and the Eternal Torment. What follows is:

Evil, Beware, a call to arms for the heroes of the world to unite against whatever evil is growing in the Land of the Damned. As this document circulates amongst the adventurers' guilds and taverns of the world's great cities, interest in the Land of the Damned grows, as do the number of heroes and hardcases who might think they've got the stones to venture into the Place That Must Not Be Named and come out smiling.

The Legion of Northmoor, a description of one of the world's most famous adventuring groups, which recently disappeared while exploring the Land of the Damned. Their loss has sent a shock wave across the adventuring community worldwide.

- *A Report to the Brotherhood*, a series of letters written by an unnamed champion of Light explaining why they should help him form a crusade into the Eternal Torment.
- *The Lost Chronicle*, a "missing chapter" from the *Tristine Chronicles* that scholars can't quite agree on whether or not is genuine. Perhaps that is because the document paints an unflattering view of the Alliance of Light – those dragons, gods and heroes who defeated the Old Ones – and suggests that maybe they were not the paragons of virtue everybody has been told they were.
- *Rumors, Tall Tales & Damned Lies, Pt. II*, a continuation of a section began in the *Chaos Lands* sourcebook that contains a body of fact and fiction about the *Darkest Heart* and the *Eternal Torment* (and is fodder for adventure).

Evil, Beware

What follows is a treatise that in the last year or so has proliferated among the various adventurers guild houses and taverns of the Palladium world, particularly in the north lands. It is a call to arms for all heroes to come to the Land of the Damned and fight the evils there. For those ignorant of the region, *Evil, Beware* provides an interesting primer the Land of the Damned. Most consider it good reading and promptly forget about it, but to those few with the guts and gumption to try their hand at the ultimate adventure, this document is a first step toward launching an expedition to the Palladium world's greatest stronghold of evil.

Exactly who wrote this document is a mystery. It first started making the rounds in the ports of the Shadow Coast of Bizantium, the Island Kingdom of Bizantium and the Wolfen Empire. Since then, it is appearing in both the Eastern Territory and the Western Empire and shows no sign of stopping its spread south as sailors, travelers and adventurers make copies themselves and post them wherever they go.

At the farthest ends of the known world, there is a dark place, an evil place, a place whose name most sane folk dare not speak aloud. It is a realm at once home to the greatest evil ever known and the greatest triumph the forces of light have ever achieved. But such contradictions must not cloud the eyes of those champions and freebooters who seek their fortunes in this, the vilest end of the earth. For this place remains a stronghold of evil, a breeding ground of chaos, and a festering cauldron of death. It is the Land of the Damned, and its name spells doom for whoever dares tempt its power.

The infamous Northern Mountains, known to some as the "Chaos Lands," form the region's eastern border. A wall of stone higher than any other in the world, these jagged peaks offer icy weather, strange magic phenomena, the fickle treatment of the mysterious Dying Races, and a seemingly infinite variety of deathtraps to those intent on scaling its peaks and forcing their way into the Land of the Damned.

There is the Great Rift, that bottomless chasm home to the hordes of both Hades and Dyval. There, the endless Armies of the Damned wage their never-ending Minion War, a conflict as internecine as it is pointless. A conflict, some might note, that has already destroyed millions of soldiers and would just as soon add a few outside adventurers to its tally.

To the north of the Great Rift lies the Bleakness, a hopeless land sapped of life itself by the voracious Citadel, a fortress of pure chaos energy that feeds off those trapped within its walls. Hidden deep within the fortress labyrinthine halls, the last of the minor Chaos Lords rule their domain with iron fists, sending forth their legions of soul-drained Chaos Zombies to scour the land, imprisoning anyone or anything that might serve to appease the Chaos Masters' endless appetites.

These soulless monsters are opposed only by the Minotaur nations of the Broken Horn, the Land of the Damned's westernmost peninsula and home to the last great reserves of the Minotaur race. The Horn's eight mighty Minotaur tribes are each strong and ready to fight the Citadel to their dying breath. They are, for the moment, the world's last, best chance at driving the Chaos Lords back into the shadows from whence they came. But the Tribes of the Horn are a fractious lot, more content to fight each other than to unite against a common foe, and so do they squander their strength and let a greater evil consume a little more of the land with each passing day.

Far to the south, below the Great Rift, troubles of a different sort are afoot. In the savage wilderness of the Darkest Heart, beasts crafted by the Old Ones for war and for burden run wild, destroying any vestiges of civilization that might once have existed there. Endless tribes of Were-Beasts rule the inner forests, laying siege to the Fallen Palace of Therendil, a hidden kingdom of evil Faeries and corrupted Elves. Once part of the Alliance of Light that won the Chaos War, the Elven nation of Therendil committed its whole strength to policing the Land of the Damned to ensure the Old Ones never rise again. But the lingering evil of those defeated villains corrupted Therendil to the bone, making its every subject as dark and evil as the very monsters they once opposed.

But perhaps the worst fate of the Land of the Damned has been reserved for the wretches of the Eternal Torment, a blighted realm even farther south than the Darkest Heart, extending all the way to the region's southern shores. It is said

one can see the Eternal Torment from the Western Empire on a good day, but for the miserable prisoners of these Tormented Lands, such a turn of phrase is a wound itself. For there can be no good days in a place where death reigns supreme, life is a half-forgotten memory, and the light of hope dwindles under an ever-increasing shadow of doubt and despair. Populated with the Soldiers of Chaos who were defeated but not slain by the Chaos War's end, the Eternal Torment earned its name when wrathful members of the Alliance of Light cursed these fallen warriors to an eternity of endless pain and undeath. Transformed into cruel parodies of their former selves, the throngs of the dead now wander their putrid realm with no purpose other than to prey upon the living and to endure eternal punishment for serving the Old Ones.

Their destiny, as it is for every other creature condemned to the Land of the Damned, is to have no destiny at all. Their lot is to live without hope, to exist without meaning. Truly they have nothing to lose, this empire of lost souls. And that, in the end, is what makes them so truly dangerous. For despite their hopeless fate, they somehow persevere in their wickedness, finding false hope where there can be no real promise of salvation, vainly attempting to find solace from their condition by being more evil than everyone and everything around them. In this regard, the creatures of the Land of the Damned, and especially of the **Eternal Torment**, are more than mere monsters or villains. They are the enemies of life itself and the destroyers of hope. To them, it is still the Age of Chaos, when evil is immortal and invincible and can impose its will on anyone, anything, anywhere. They are the Legions of the Damned, and they do not care what pain or misery that causes them, so long as they can somehow share that horror with the living and cast a little darkness into the light.

Indeed, the darkness is growing, far away in the End of the World, where so few dare tread. A darkness spreads unchecked, threatening one day to well up and spill out over the Northern Mountains, across the Sea of Dread, and pour its evil across the lands of the world until none shall remain but those for whom chaos is the way and evil is the light. In truth, it would seem that there can be nothing and no one to stop it, and that the whole world shall one day forfeit to evil's rising tide.

But there are those who are not afraid, and who know that the triumph of evil can not be. For as long as there is a Land of the Damned, there shall be those heroes and champions looking to endure any hardship and brave any danger to confront these foul forces no matter what the cost. In the end, this is the final legacy the Land of the Damned shall bring – to always give the valiant and the noble a reason for being. To give them an enemy to defeat, a final quest to follow. Just as there can be no light without darkness, so too can there be no evil without good. And as powerful as the Land of the Damned's evils may be, so too are the champions of light and justice who stand ready to oppose them. For many, the Land of the Damned is a threat to the world and to life itself, a sign of the impending doom that threatens to consume the world. But that only hides the truth of things – that evil can only win by default, when the heroes of the land choose not to carry out their sworn duty.

For too long, too many heroes have done just that, and as a result, the forces of evil have once more returned to this battered and bruised world. But now, as the Land of the Damned

grows strong, it has also given birth to a new generation of hero, a new breed of champion, a new school of warrior ready to die for what is right and to scatter the darkness before the light.

Evil, beware!

The Legion of Northmoor

Below is the account of one of the greatest bands of adventurers ever to roam the Palladium world, the Legion of Northmoor. While they were no Defilers (who is?), tales of their courage, heroism and achievements have been told and re-told far and wide. As the following section will reveal, the group met with an uncertain fate, one which has led to a legacy not even the Legion's founders could have expected.

This section was written by the renowned Bard **Quilliam Ramble**, whose book on legendary adventuring groups, *Beyond Heroism*, is a must-read text for any scholar on the subject. Unfortunately, Quilliam Ramble is a pseudonym, and the author of *Beyond Heroism* is as much a mystery as the events he or she describes in the book. Some believe that Quilliam actually is one of the people mentioned in the book and merely wants the world to keep thinking he or she has met with a dark fate in order to avoid undue attention from obsessive fans, tax collectors, local law enforcement, demons, evil overlords, literary agents, and the like. It certainly could be the case. Writers in the Palladium world (and elsewhere!) have been known to do stranger things for stranger reasons.

Hero Among Heroes

Jidian Kulder. Scarcely a single sailor, soldier or explorer hailing from the northern parts of the world over the last century has not heard this legendary name. Himself a human who lived among the Wolfen for much of his life before he became an adventurer, Jidian quickly established himself as one of the finest rangers the Northern Wilderness has ever seen. With eyes as sharp as a hawk, a nose as keen as a wolf, and strength as great as a bear, this hero among heroes personally explored, mapped and established trails over much of the "middle area" of the Northern Wilderness, that zone south of the *Dragon's Claw*, east of the Northern Hinterlands and west of the Wolfen Empire's settled areas.

Jidian's other achievements are no less noteworthy, but to list them all would require a small book of its own, for there seems to have been no end to this champion's energy or ambition to battle evil and to make the world a finer place. He is greatly admired by the Wolfen and he has worked closely with them throughout his career.

Jidian's fame among the Wolfen hardly made him a pariah among his fellow humans, however. He remains to this day a national hero of the *Kingdom of Havea*, a client state of the Wolfen Empire, for thwarting an attempt on the life of Havea's monarch, King Avramson. Tracking down the killer's masters to the infamous *Brass Crown* Coyle horde, Jidian single-handedly captured the Horde's leaders, throwing the entire Brass Crown into such a disarray that it disintegrated altogether. Though he



had not sought accolades from the Eastern Territory, he received them anyway, for the Brass Crown had long raided Eastern villages in the Disputed Zone, pushing the East and the Wolfen to the brink of war more than once.

Far to the West, in the infamous "Empire of Sin," Jidian was just as well known, though perhaps not in the best of ways and not to the best people. Slavers in particular hate the ranger for his repeated destruction of Western slaver parties who, despite the Empire's supposed recognition of the Wolfen Empire, still hunt the noble canines for use as slaves and gladiators. On more than one occasion, elite guards of Imperial Janissaries, sent to escort the slavers, also fell to Jidian's sword, making him an official enemy of the Empire! Despite this infamy, Jidian remains a folk hero among the Western commoners for helping to build up the numerous Western "prison colonies" established on the shores of the Northern Wilderness. These colonies typically have no facilities at all and are simply places where expelled debtors, criminals and political undesirables are supposed to die of natural causes. Jidian put an end to much of that when he, and several crews of freelance humans and Wolfen, helped build these ramshackle colonies into respectable towns capable of acting as trading posts for free travelers. Where once there was only death and despair, now there could be hope and fulfillment.

Though Jidian's actions were mostly confined to the northern half of the world, ask any serious explorer or leader from any of the civilized nations and they will tell you of at least two or three things Jidian has done that directly benefitted the teller's homeland. The Timiro Kingdom, the Land of the South-Winds, the Floenry Isles, the Library of Bletherad, and even many smaller realms in the Old Kingdom and the Yin-Sloth Jungles all have Jidian to thank for something. He is a true rarity, a hero to all innocent people (and even to a few who are not so inno-

cent) and a scourge to villainy everywhere. He is a light of knowledge where there is only the darkness of ignorance, and his efforts have helped the world gain a greater understanding of itself.

Of course, no man is an island, and surely Jidian could not have gone so far if he did not have a faithful band of equally capable companions — the redoubtable **Legion of Northmoor** — to back him up. Led by Jidian himself, this group of heroes included within its ranks figures such as *Ulric Highdeed*, famed Undead Hunter; *Lady Shandra Hursai III*, a Western Noble with a taste for adventure, doing the right thing, dueling, and acquiring rune weapons; *Jade Hands*, an enigmatic martial artist whose body has been magically transformed into stone; *Hobe Bygone*, a Gnomish Wizard whose mystic knowledge is exceeded only by his interest in re-discovering the lost arts of *Protean Sorcery*, *Chaos Casting*, *Archonic Power Channeling* and several other forgotten arcane arts; and *Sister Gaia*, a Priestess of Light reportedly able to convince evildoers to lay down their arms simply by talking to them. These heroes, plus the two dozen or more other "auxiliary" members of the group who took part in Jidian's adventures only part of the time (most had pressing responsibilities elsewhere) formed a core of heroes and hardcases unrivaled by all but the most elite of adventuring circles, and clearly subordinate only to the legendary *Defilers*.

For more than a decade, the Legion adventured all over the northern lands, with Jidian leading them all the way. By this time, he was getting on in years, and clearly wanted to leave behind a legacy of something more than a list of personal deeds. Though his friends tried to convince him that the foundation of the Legion of Northmoor was just such a legacy, Jidian would hear none of it. He wanted to leave the world with a gift of knowledge that it had never known before, and so he announced

what would be his and his companions' most audacious adventure yet: the comprehensive exploration of the most dangerous place in the world, the home of monsters and the last bastion of evil. The place that should not be named, the place where even gods might fear to tread. The infamous *Land of the Damned*.

The plan was to forge through the Northern Mountains and head into the souther reaches of the region known as the *Darkest Heart* and the *Eternal Torment*. Having heard that these places were each divided into three rough sub-regions, Jidian arranged for each of his comrades to scout out a single region so they might cover the most ground in the least time.

This decision was curious, to say the least. Any explorer worth his salt knows that splitting up in hostile territory is not the smartest of moves, and certainly, Jidian should have known that. Scholars who have the benefit of hindsight chalked up Jidian's decision to his age. It was rumored that though he still had much of his legendary strength, either he was dying of an incurable ailment, or he had somehow procured knowledge of when his death day would come, and so he was desperate to accomplish as much as he could in what little time he had left. Even if, go the theories, if it meant undertaking foolish and dangerous risks.

That might explain Jidian's motivations, but what of his closest companions, who all went along with the plan? None of the Legion of Northmoor's inner circle were fools or slaves, unable to make their own decisions. They must have known that Jidian's plan was a blueprint for disaster, yet they all went along with it willingly. Why? Again, the theories are many, but the most accepted one is that Jidian had, at one point, saved the lives of every member of the Legion, and they all owed him a life-debt. Jidian might have called in this debt to get them to come along on the expedition. Another theory is that Jidian's friends so completely trusted and believed in their great leader that they would follow him into the gates of Hades itself if he so asked of them. Along similar lines, another theory suggests that the Legion's inner circle were inseparable, having bonded over the course of an amazing series of adventures, and if one of them were to go to the Land of the Damned, then they all would. Whether Jidian's plan would bring success and glory or failure and death, either all of the Legion's heaviest hitters would go, or none of them would. And since Jidian was definitely going, then so would his closest friends.

Amid a considerable amount of fanfare, the Legion left for the Land of the Damned from the Shadow Colonies of Bizantium, deep in the Northern Hinterlands, exactly ten years ago. Some felt that the Legion knew they were not coming home, since they threw an unprecedented going-away party whose attendance list included members of prominent Eastern, Western, Timiro and Bizantium noble families, a few noted monks from the Library of Bletherad, and numerous famous adventuring parties — the *Iron Circle*, *Ten from Timiro*, the *Western Allegiance*, the *Daughters of Rurga*, and the *Gaelead*, said by some to be the nearest thing to the direct descendants of the *Defilers*. The party lasted for three days, and by the most conservative accounts, must have cost enough to bankrupt a small kingdom. It is also said that numerous villains tried to take advantage of this historic moment to kill as many of the attendees as possible, but somehow every blackguard who approached within a mile of the party mysteriously disappeared. Some think

that the Legion of Northmoor's friends and agents simply ran an airtight security ring around the event, while others think that maybe, just maybe, a god or two appreciated what the Legion had done over its years, and decided that just this once they would teleport away whatever bad guys meant to do these heroes any harm. (Wolvenar figures most prominently in this theory.)

Alas, that momentous celebration would be the last happy times for the Legion. Once the revelers were all seen safely home and the heroes' hangovers wore off, they began their fateful journey into destiny. Striking out from the Shadow Colonies of Bizantium, the group entered the Northern Mountains, sending daily Magic Pigeons out to a few different parties informing them of their progress.

The first recipient of the pigeons was the **Library of Bletherad**, the world's greatest repository of knowledge. The Library and the Legion of Northmoor had long been allies, with each coming to the other's aid on more than one occasion. (The Legion is said to have destroyed a few cells of the *Zealotry*, a fanatical group bent on the Library's destruction, while the Library provided privileged information to the Legion that was not open to the general public. Information that proved instrumental in the successful completion of several of the Legion's more noteworthy quests.)

The second recipients were the **Scouting Corps of Bizantium**, an official wing of the Bizantium royal government dedicated to finding new trade lanes and sea paths for the kingdom. Unofficially, it is also the world's foremost organization dedicated to the exploration and understanding of the Land of the Damned, though their cumulative knowledge hardly exceeds anybody else's. (Note: There is a lot more information on the Scouting Corps in the *Chaos Lands* sourcebook, as well as in the *Rumors, Tall Tales & Damned Lies, Pt. II* section later on in this one.)

The third recipients were the **Royal College of Navigation**, an academic institution that belongs to no one nation, because it has branches in nearly every great city of the Palladium World. The college's mission is to spread geographical knowledge of the world and all things in it, ranging from monsters to magic to mysteries unexplained. This relatively new organization was founded by *Galtron Khejas*, an ex-member of the Legion of Northmoor and long-lost brother to famed scholars *Rystrom Khejas* and *Agrippa Khejas*. In some ways, the College has become less a place of learning and more a central meeting spot for noble heroes, explorers and adventurers to swap information and organize expeditions. Membership is selective, to say the least, but they say the benefits are outstanding.

For more than a month, the messages came in loud and clear from the group as they fought their way through and over the Northern Mountains. Once they cleared the last summits and descended into the inner Land of the Damned, the messages soon thereafter stopped coming. The last ones mentioned how the group was gong to split up, with each of the six members of the party taking one of the regions of either the *Darkest Heart* or the *Eternal Torment*. The mission was to perform a week-long reconnaissance of the region and then report back to the base of the Northern Mountains, where the Legion would regroup, compare its notes, and send them to the respective monitoring parties (the Library, the Scouting Corps, and the College of

Navigation). After the last messages describing their course of action, the Legion fell silent. With anxious ears, the Legion's various correspondents waited for any kind of word from their friends and comrades, but they heard nothing. After a year, even the auxiliary members of the Legion had to accept the obvious: Jidian Kulder and the rest of the Legion's inner circle were all dead.

It did not take long for news of the tragedy to spread far and wide, as there had been by this time a fair number of people who were following the Legion's expedition closely. After all, the Legion had no small share of friends, allies, fans and supporters, dozens of whom had learned of the group's latest adventure and were eager to hear of its successful completion. On the eve that word of the heroes' demise went out, mourning ceremonies were held in a dozen cities of the world, including the Wolfen capital, Shadowfall, the Eastern city of Llorn, the Timiro capital of Credia, the Bizantium capital city, and even in the Western capital of Caer Itom (where, it seemed, the official sentiment against these heroes was not so stringent that the powers that be were able to neglect entirely the passing of truly great champions). Indeed, a darkness settled upon the civilized nations of the world on that fateful day, for their heroes had been taken from them, and there seemed no way to replace their absence. Or was there?

Some had forgotten that though Jidian Kulder and his closest cohorts were gone, there were still over two dozen members of the Legion of Northmoor, each a worthy champion and adventurer in his or her own right. These brave souls would form the new core of the group, and through them, they swore, the valor and sacrifice of Jidian Kulder and the Inner Circle would not go unremembered or disbanded. Retaining the Legion of Northmoor name, this reconstituted group aggressively sought to expand the fellowship's renown and achievements. Cynics were quick to point out that none in this group seemed particularly eager to go back into the Land of the Damned, but then again, none of these new Legionnaires were as powerful, experienced or skilled as the mentors they had just lost. As one of them noted wisely, "It [the Land of the Damned] is as still and as deep as a black pool. Before we can plumb its depths, we must first build the strength to swim, and so we shall do just that. When the time comes, and indeed it shall, that we have the strength again to assault that place most foul, we shall do so, and we will bring out the Legion's standard over the summits of the Northern Mountains, proclaiming then and forever that the heroes we lost there were but the first soldiers of an army of light that shall never rest until the Land of the Damned and all its evils are swept from the earth."

Over the next few years, the Legion's ranks swelled from just over two dozen to nearly two hundred. Those who felt worthy of criticizing the Legion said that they had been accepting into its ranks heroes unworthy of the title, and those who had scarcely enough experience to merit the adulation of their peers. Especially sharp criticism was leveled at the Legion for its liberal use of the **Binding Sigil**, a special magical tool first used by Jidian Kulder and his Inner Circle, but now was standard practice for the entire Legion.

The *Binding Sigil* was a kind of lost ward that Jidian had come across during one of his many travels. The Sigil could be painted by a true Diabolist with virtually any medium, but sim-

ple paint seemed to be the favorite. It did not matter where on the recipient's body the Sigil was applied, though most had it placed on the back of one of their hands. Likewise, the size of the Sigil could range from the size of a small coin to as large as one's body could hold. A few Legionnaires had the Sigil written so large on their bodies that it wrapped around their torso entirely!

After painting the Sigil, the Diabolist need only utter a simple power word and the pattern would blaze with mystic energy, burning itself into the recipient's flesh. (**G.M. Note:** Small patterns, the size of a coin, inflict one point of damage. Medium patterns up to the size of a plate inflict 1D6 points of damage, and patterns larger than that inflict 3D6 points of damage.) After the Sigil is activated, and forever more, if any other bearer of Sigil should speak his true name followed by a cry for help, all other Sigil bearers will feel a faint burning sensation where their mark lies on their body. This sensation is known simply as the *Call*. When the Call goes out, all other Legionnaires will feel a burning sensation across their Sigil mark. Each Legionnaire will also know instinctively which comrade is in trouble, in what direction their comrade lies, and how far away he is. Since morale and fellowship in the Legion is extremely high, when the Call goes out, there is always a hefty response, even from fellow Legionnaires who might be dozens or hundreds of leagues away. Once the stricken Legionnaire is delivered from danger, the Call will subside, and the other members of the Legion will return to their other tasks at hand.

The Binding Sigil is still applied to all Legionnaires, though the procedure and exact mystic knowledge required in the ceremony is a closely guarded secret known only by two or three members of the group. Regardless, it is still a well-known badge of office for the Legion, as well as a good means to keep one another out of excessive danger. It is never used lightly, only when a Legionnaire truly feels that his or her life is in imminent peril and that a rescue attempt might prove useful.

It had always been the hope of some Legionnaires that since nobody ever received the Call from Jidian or the Inner Circle, that perhaps they had not really died. Perhaps they were trapped somewhere, or the ambient magic energy of the Land of the Damned interfered with the Call somehow. Most within the order felt such theories were hopelessly over-optimistic, but that never stopped a certain few from believing that someday, they would in fact receive the Call from their old masters, and the newly regenerated Legion would be ready to save them.

Incredibly, the Call *did* come, ten years to the day after Jidian and the Inner Circle vanished, prompting nearly every Legionnaire to begin mounting what would be their order's finest hour, the rescue of its founders. Today, as the Legion prepares to launch what might be the largest ever expedition into the Land of the Damned, word has gotten out about "the Call" and the resulting crusade to find Jidian and his comrades. In a fit of exuberance, many rich and powerful individuals who have been helped by Jidian and his followers over the years have put up handsome rewards for whoever finds the Legion's founders and brings them safely out of the Land of the Damned. Predictably, this has caused a sudden rush of would-be rescuers to head for

the Northern Mountains with unwise dreams of storming the Land of the Damned, escorting the troubled heroes out of there, and basking in fame and glory for the rest of their lives. Alas, such will not be the case for most, if not all of the would-be rescuers, including many Legionnaires, whose chances at survival are substantially higher than most run-of-the-mill adventurers.

Though the Legion finds this "gold rush" of rescuers and hangers-on frustrating (they do not wish to see clearly unqualified heroes die needless deaths), they will not turn a blind eye to it. As a result, those Legionnaires not going on the rescue attempt will stay behind to form recruiting schools, where those who *really* want to help can present their credentials, and if they have the mettle for it, will be granted neophyte membership within the Legion of Northmoor. Granted, those accepted have to prove themselves quite a bit if they wish to become full-fledged Legionnaires, but the Legion does not accept anyone into its ranks that it did not think was up to the task. Should these new recruits put forth a worthy enough performance during their first year, they will be branded with the Binding Sigil, making them forever more a Legionnaire of Northmoor.

But this is still in the future. At present, no neophyte has been in the order longer than six months, and at the rate the neophytes are washing out, the Legion doubts if it will initiate more than a half dozen Legionnaires by the time the rescue party hits the Northern Mountains. This is troubling to the Legion, for there are other wars to be fought, and other tasks to be undertaken throughout their sphere of influence. The fear is if the majority of the group's strength is destroyed or detained for a long time in the Land of the Damned, it will give the forces of evil elsewhere that much more time for unchecked progress and growth. The Legion cannot let that happen, which is another reason why it is trying to get as many worthy recruits as it can, to send them out as a stopgap force to do the Legion's bidding while its best and brightest are away. It is a desperate plan, but this is a desperate situation. And who knows? Maybe, just maybe, it will bring forth a new wave of Legionnaires who will do Jidian Kulder proud.

G.M. Note: The Legion of Northmoor has no fixed headquarters. Rather, it is a *fellowship* of like-minded heroes and hardcases who periodically gather in strength but more commonly, live dispersed lives, getting into adventures on their own. The recruiting stations that have been set up can be found throughout the **Great Northern Wilderness** and the **Northern Hinterlands**. The largest can be found in *Shadowfall*, the capital of the Wolfen Empire. Another can be found in *Bizantium*, capital of the Island Kingdom of Bizantium. A third can be found in *Imer Cadath*, in the rebellious colonies known as the *Shadow Coast of Bizantium*. After those, there are a dozen smaller centers scattered throughout the northern world, at the intersections of trade roads, along the coast of the Dragon's Claw, in the Disputed Zone, and on the northern shore of the Inland Sea. It is in these places that the Legion of Northmoor must replenish its suddenly depleted membership, and it is here that it will probably find the heroes who will ultimately either rescue the Legion's founders or discover what fate befell them. The consensus is clear, somehow, someway, those Legionnaires who are attempting the first rescue attempt are not fated to succeed. They will try anyway, even though they know collectively that for some reason destiny is not on their side. It will be up to this

as yet unformed generation of Legionnaires to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors and to succeed where no others have before. If they can do this, if they can live up to the legacy their founders set for them, then they will usher in a new breed of heroism to a world that has rarely been in greater need of it than now.

Joining the Legion of Northmoor

When a player character locates a recruiting center for the Legion, he must meet the following criteria for neophyte membership: 1) He must be at least 3rd level. Applicants higher than that are preferred. 2) He must be of Principled, Scrupulous, or in rare cases, Unprincipled alignment. NO Anarchists or evildoers are admitted for any reason whatsoever. Even Unprincipled applicants had better bring some incredible assets to the table if they expect the Legion to take them seriously. 3) They must not have ties that keep them from traveling at a moment's notice. Applicants with families to support, official national or local duties to uphold, or other such constrictions, must either forget about becoming a Legionnaire or they must break all of those former ties. The Legion generally turns away applicants like this on principle, since as much as they want new blood, they do not want people to abandon those who have come to depend on them. The ideal candidate is one who has no ties to leave behind. That way, there is less room for regret later on. 4) Finally, the candidate must never have died previously. The reason for this stricture remains a mystery, but apparently, Jidian felt strongly enough about it to incorporate it into his order's rules and regulations.

After an applicant presents his credentials, they are reviewed by a panel of three Legionnaires, usually those recuperating from wounds or who otherwise cannot be in the field at that time. If all three grant initial approval to the candidate, he then will undergo a lengthy interview/grilling session in which this panel will question the candidate on the most minute details of his life. They will wear him down with constant questioning of his desires and motives. And then, when the candidate is tiring, they will begin hitting him with impossible questions like: "You are hiding in enemy territory and must remain unseen. Yet, a little girl of the enemy spots you. You have time to slay her and retain secrecy. If not, she will give away your position. What do you do?" Another popular one is "You require information to find a notorious villain you have sworn to destroy. An informant will give it to you but only if you perform deviant carnal pleasures for him/her. Do you, so you might get the information?" There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. They are merely a test of character.

When the interrogation is over (which can make for an interesting role-playing experience, especially if the G.M. enlists two others to help him simulate the Q&A for applicant player characters), the panel will discuss the applicant once more. If they unanimously approve him, he is given conditional membership to the Legion. For the next year, he is expected to go forth and conduct himself heroically in every way, shape and form. His is a never-ending crusade to rid the world of evil. One year later, he must return to the recruiting center, present his deeds over the past year and await judgment. The Legion employs all manner of lie detection during this phase, making it impossible for fakers to bluff their way through. If the applicant is considered

to have conducted himself with sufficient honor, bravery and spirit, he will be given the Binding Sigil, and he is now a full-fledged Legionnaire for life.

One outside the order might think this is a time for celebration, but the newly-made Legionnaire knows it is not. For during his year of probation, he will have adventured and crusaded so hard (he must have, to be given membership) that he will know there can never be a moment's rest for the Legionnaire. There will always be more evil than one can possibly destroy, and so every waking moment of every day must be spent in pursuit of that singular goal of making the Palladium World a better place. The Legionnaire must do all he can to rid the world of evil, to bring knowledge where there is ignorance, and to bring light where there is darkness. For if he does not, he believes, then he cannot trust anybody else to succeed where he has failed. This is the life of a zealot, a super-patriot. It will be a harder life than the Legionnaire ever imagined, but it will be a noble and true one, one that will be immortalized in legend and song until the end of time. In a world improved by the deeds and examples of such heroes, that kind of reward is all one can ask for.



Jidian & His Legionaries

What follows from here are the descriptions and stats for Jidian Kulder and his fellow adventurers. Please feel free to incorporate them into your campaign however you see fit. If you think it works better that these heroes are already dead, then consider their possessions as treasured *artifacts* of the Legion of Northmoor that must be recovered and redistributed to those who deserve them most. If you like the idea of these characters

staying alive, then use their stats as "ride along" NPCs for when and if the player characters free them from the Land of the Damned. Or, if you prefer running a quick-and-dirty high-level campaign, why not allow your players to select one of these heroes and run them for a few nights or even a mini-campaign? It might be fun acting out an adventure that to the rest of the game world is legend or history, but to the players, is a series of events as yet undetermined.

Jidian Kulder, Hero of the North

Race: Human.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 75, **S.D.C.:** 52.

Height: 6 feet, 6 inches (1.98 m). **Weight:** 270 lbs (121.5 kg).

Age: 58

P.P.E.: 6. **I.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 13, M.A. 23, P.S. 22, P.P. 20, P.E. 20, P.B. 18, Spd 30

Disposition: Jidian is a natural leader. His infectious enthusiasm, genuinely friendly demeanor and great sense of humor make it difficult for folks to not take an immediate liking to him. Despite his many heroic deeds and the many accolades he has received for them, he remains humble about what he has done. Jidian is a true crusader who is more interested in what has yet to be done than what has already been accomplished. In that regard, he can be a bit of a taskmaster, constantly pushing his friends and comrades to go with him on that extra mile. Being a friend of Jidian's always means one more adventure, one more villain to dispatch, one more place to explore, one more quest to undertake. It is not easy being part of Jidian's inner circle, but as any one of them will tell you, Jidian's friendship makes it all worthwhile.

Experience Level: 11th level Ranger.

Skills of Note: Animal Husbandry (74%), Land Navigation (94%), Speak Northern (98%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Speak Elven (98%), Speak Western (98%), Identify Plants & Fruits (95%), Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (98%), Track & Trap Animals (95%/98%), Track Humanoids (98%), Wilderness Survival (98%), Sign Language (80%), Cook (85%), Intelligence (84%), Boxing, Wrestling, Swimming, Running, First Aid (70%), Detect Ambush (65%), Literacy (60%), Astronomy (50%), W.P. Sword (+4 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to throw), W.P. Archery (+5 to strike, +220 feet/67 m to range, ROF: 7), W.P. Knife (+4 to strike, +4 to parry, +5 to throw), W.P. Shield (+4 to parry, +2 to strike), W.P. Paired Weapons.

Special Abilities: Jidian has superb senses of hearing, smell and sight, that help him with his tracking abilities and makes him an excellent hunter, tracker and scout. It also proves an initiative bonus.

Psionics: None.

Magic: Jidian has no spell knowledge or magic abilities, though that has not stopped him from picking up the Wizard skills of Recognize Enchantment (90%) and Recognize Magic (75%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: 7

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +5 to strike, +8 to parry and dodge, +10 to damage, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Other Bonuses: +4 to save vs Horror Factor, 70% chance to charm/impress, +10% to save vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs magic/poison.

Other Combat Info: Kick attack: 1D6. Critical strike on a natural 18-20. Paired Weapons (all). Judo-style body throw/flip does 1D6 damage, and victim loses initiative and one attack. Knockout/stun on a natural 18-20. Body block/tackle: 1D4. Pin/incapacitate: natural 18-20. Crush/squeeze: 1D4.

Weapons: Jidian has a collection of magic weapons which he has used for years and treasures. Any of these, were they to be captured, would be either a major trophy (for those among Jidian's enemies), or a revered artifact for a noble hero. They are fairly well known items, and anybody caught using them had better have a good explanation for why they have them.

Escanfel (Holy Long Sword): This is Jidian's primary weapon in melee combat. It inflicts 3D6 damage per strike, inflicts double damage against Demons and Deevils, and is magically indestructible. Though Jidian has had plenty of opportunities to get a better sword, he prefers this one because he has had it for so long and it is like a part of him.

Dirgannish (Long Bow): This item was a gift from the *Elven Lords of the Deepest Dream*, on the island of Lohan. The bow can generate its own arrows notched right on the draw string at a cost of one point of P.P.E. The device has an internal base of 50 P.P.E., which it regenerates at a rate of 4 per hour. These magically generated arrows each inflict 4D6 points of damage and harm supernatural beings, the undead and creatures affected only by magic, as well as mortal beings. Any normal arrow fired from the bow will inflict 3D6 points of damage but has no special properties. Any magical arrow fired from the bow will automatically inflict double damage (critical hit!). Likewise, if Jidian speaks the true name of his target when he lets an arrow fly, it will unerringly hit the mark, no matter how well they try to dodge or what armor they wear. The only exception is that normal arrows will not pierce the hide of supernatural creatures. Dirgannish is magically indestructible and can transform into a quarterstaff upon command, inflicting 2D8 (or 4D4) points of damage per strike.

Quindle (Dagger): This large knife has a broad, bent-forward blade that gives it excellent chopping power. (In the real world, it would look exactly like a *kukri* knife, those nasty daggers made famous by the Ghurkas of Nepal.) Quindle returns when thrown, and inflicts 4D6 per strike. It is not indestructible, but it is impervious to flame. Quindle inflicts double damage against Dragons, and quadruple damage against Fire Dragons!

Hannida (Large Shield): Jidian has had this shield as long as he has had his sword. When fighting with one in either hand, he uses them as Paired Weapons. The shield is indestructible, and when Jidian carries it, it makes him impervious to both heat and cold (magical or otherwise for both), and he takes only half damage from lightning (again, either magical or normal). Furthermore, when carrying this shield, Jidian does not need to breathe, making him able to stay underwater indefinitely, and impervious to poisonous gas.

Armor: Leather of Iron: A.R.: 15, S.D.C.: 300.

Magic Items:

Chameleon Ring: 24 melee rounds (six minutes) per use, and can be used up to twice daily. Same effects as the 1st level Earth Warlock spell of the same name.

Nightvision Ring: Can see 200 feet (61 m) for 20 minutes per use, and can be used up to four times per 24 hours.

Sense Evil Torc: This one-piece metal necklace enables Jidian to sense evil, as per the spell, up to three times daily. The duration of each usage is for eight melees.

Cloak of the Woodlander: This Cloak of Protection (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 50) is impervious to fire, the fabric does not rustle (makes no noise) and confers upon the wearer a constant ability to Prowl 80%. In addition, it keeps the wearer dry and comfortable (comparatively warm and dry in the cold or rain, cool and dry in the heat) regardless of the outdoors environment.

Other Equipment: Two sets of clothing, a pair of heavy boots, a pair of soft leather gloves, belt, bedroll, backpack, two large sacks, two small sacks, a water skin, fishing line and hooks, 4 snares, a pair of medium-sized "jaw" traps, a set of skinning/tanning knives, a six foot (1.8 m) length of light chain, 30 feet (9.1 m) of rope, 5 wooden spikes, a small mallet, a small mirror, a small hatchet, a lantern, a frying pan, and a tinder box.

Money: Jidian has never tried to amass a large fortune, but over the course of his adventures, he has won an ungodly amount of gold for himself. He has never bothered to count it, and by now must have easily given half of it away to various friends, people in need and charities. The bulk of it is in a safe house in Shadowfall, capital of the Wolfen Empire. Jidian has given the Wolfen government permission to use the huge fortune as the starting capital for a national bank, a plan the Wolfen are gladly going through with. At any given time, Jidian will have 1,000 gold in small coinage and 25,000 gold in large coinage and gemstones. He keeps the serious money around in case he needs to bribe somebody or pay off a ransom.

Notes: Jidian is a think first, act later type of guy. He does not like to rush into a dangerous situation without thinking the matter through first. This caution has saved his life on many occasions, as well as the lives of his comrades. He is no coward, though, and will face any challenge, no matter how dangerous. He just wants to have a plan before he does it.

Ulric Highdeed

Race: Ogre.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Hit Points: 80. S.D.C.: 70.

Height: 8 feet (2.4 m). **Weight:** 350 lbs (157.5 kg).

Age: 41

P.P.E.: 150. **I.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 13, M.A. 13, P.S. 30, P.P. 20, P.E. 30, P.B. 11, Spd 22

Disposition: Ulric used to be the quiet one of the group until he finally succumbed to Jidian's relentless sense of humor. When not hard-charging on adventurers, Jidian would joke around with Ulric, trying to get the Ogre to break out of his shell a bit. Finally the campaign worked, and now Ulric has developed an unusually open and jocular demeanor for an Ogre. In particular, Ulric has developed a love for really



earthy, off-color jokes that he just loves to tell at the most inappropriate moments. While some of the other members of the group find this a little annoying, there have been times when the group was under a great deal of pressure and it was Ulric's wisecracking that injected a little comedic relief when it was needed the most.

Experience Level: 10th level Undead Hunter.

Skills of Note: Dance (95%), Heraldry (85%/90%), Horsemanship: Knight (90%/80%), Land Navigation (80%), Speak Gobblely (98%), Speak Western (98%), Speak Eastern (98%), Speak Northern (98%), Speak Southern (98%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Speak Elven (98%), Literacy: Western (98%), Literacy: Elven (98%), Military Etiquette (98%), Mathematics: Basic (98%), W.P. Sword (+4 to strike, +4 to strike, +2 to throw), W.P. Shield (+4 to parry, +2 to strike), W.P. Archery (+4 to strike, +200 feet/61 m to normal range, ROF: 7), W.P. Pole Arms (+4 to damage, +4 to strike, +4 to parry, +2 to throw), Boxing, Wrestling, Swimming (75%), Running, Prowl (35%), First Aid (80%), Horsemanship: Exotic (80%/70%), Writing (80%), Art (98%).

Special Abilities: None, other than the special magic skills afforded him by his Undead Hunter training. That should be enough cause for raising eyebrows, however.

Psionics: None.

Magic: As with all Undead Hunters, Ulric knows the following spells:

Level One: Decipher Magic (4), Globe of Daylight (2), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (4).

Level Two: Turn Dead (6).

Level Three: Armor of Ithan (10), Sense Traps (7).

Level Four: Carpet of Adhesion (10).

Level Five: Circle of Flame (10), Size of the Behemoth (12), Supernatural Strength (10).

Level Six: Call Lightning (15), Fire Ball (10), Reduce Self (20), Tongues (12).

Level Eight: Exorcism (30).

Spell Limitations: Since Ulric is not a true student of magic, he can only cast a single spell per melee round (counts as two of his melee attacks). Also, his spell strength is fixed at 12.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: 9

Combat Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +5 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +2 to disarm, +15 to damage, +5 to pull punch, +5 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Other Bonuses: Can attempt to parry every attack made on him provided he is aware of it (cannot parry a surprise or backstab attack). +2 to save vs Horror Factor and possession, +8 to save vs magic and poison, and +30% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Snap kick: 1D6. Karate kick: 2D6. Roundhouse kick: 3D6. Foot sweep. Backward sweep. Jump kicks (all). Critical strike: natural 18-20. Paired Weapons (all). Leap attack (critical strike). Body throw/flip. Knock-out/stun on a natural 20. Body block/tackle: 2D4. Pin/incapacitate: natural 18-20. Crush/squeeze: 2D4.

Weapons: Ulric possesses a number of "trademark" Undead Hunter weapons. He will not part with any of these for any reason, as he considers them to be the property of the Undead Hunter community, not himself.

Vampire Slayer: This powerful, giant-sized long sword has a blood-red blade, is well balanced (+2 to strike and parry) and inflicts 3D6+4 damage against mortals. Against demons and the undead it inflicts 4D6+4 damage. It also can cast any of the following spells: Blinding Flash (1), Globe of Daylight (2), Liquids to Water (10), and Circle of Rain (20),

all at 6th level proficiency. The sword has an internal store of 60 P.P.E., and it regenerates 10 P.P.E. per hour. Furthermore, the hilt of the weapon is a holy symbol which will keep vampires at bay.

Holy Stars: These magical shuriken-style throwing stars are made from silver and inscribed with various magical runes. The stars return to Ulric when thrown. They are indestructible, eternally sharp, and because they are giant-sized (designed specifically for Ulric), they inflict 2D6 damage to mortal foes. Inscribed at the center of each star (Ulric has six of them) are the words "Purification by Fire." When the word "purify" is uttered, the Holy Star bursts into a magic *fireball* and inflicts 3D6 damage to mortal foes, 6D6 damage against the animated dead, zombies, mummies and all forms of the undead. Each star can be thus activated up to six times in a 24 hour period.

Heart Throb Crossbow: This crossbow has been specially designed for use against vampires. Instead of arrow bolts, the weapon fires wooden stakes, to which small fins have been attached. The crossbow is heavier than most, but Ulric has no problem hefting it due to his terrific strength. Its range is a mere 110 feet (33.5 m), however. A successful strike to the body inflicts 3D6 damage, a hit to the chest (called shot) inflicts 4D6 damage, and a direct hit to the heart (a called shot at -3 to strike) does 5D6 damage and causes the vampire to fall into a coma! A natural 20 will always hit the vampire's heart. Unlike other Heart Throb Crossbows, this one has been enchanted so that its projectiles will harm other supernatural foes as well. Ulric carries a dozen missiles for this weapon on him at all times.

Medallion of Tranquility: This magic item looks like an ordinary piece of silver jewelry with various magic and religious symbols carved into it (thus preventing the undead from touching it). The medallion is designed to help victims of vampire bites defend against their mind control. When placed around the neck of a vampire bite victim, the medallion places the vampire's victim into a trance that prevents the character from hearing the vampire's calls or commands. Unfortunately, the victim is a virtually mindless zombie who sits, stands or slowly walks around with a blank expression. The entranced character cannot engage in combat, run, perform skills or even eat without somebody's help. It is a sorry state, but it will save him from being controlled by a vampire and allow others to protect him or her without a struggle. **Note:** This magic works only against vampires, not other forms of suggestion or mind control. It will not put any other characters into a trance except those who have been bitten by a vampire. The individual returns to normal only when the vampire responsible for the bite is slain.

Medallion of Will Power: This special medallion helps Ulric focus his will power to resist mind control and overcome adversity. When wearing it, Ulric is +6 to save vs the mind control of all undead/vampires, +4 to save vs psionic mind control and any type of possession, +2 to save vs illusions of any kind, and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. By wearing this medallion, one is also +2 to save vs poison and disease, and +15% to save vs death/coma.

Armor: Even though wearing heavy armor requires Ulric to spend 20% more P.P.E. to cast any spell, and even though his spells are never as strong as they could be because of metal

interference, he still refuses to adventure without wearing a suit of full plate armor (A.R. 17, S.D.C. 160). Whenever Ulric casts a spell in armor, consult the following table to see what happens:

01-20%: Reduce spell damage or effects by 1D4x10%.

21-40%: Reduce spell duration by 1D4x10%.

41-60%: Reduce the spell's range by 1D4x10%.

61-80%: Reduce both the range and duration of the spell by 20%!

81-00%: Lucked out; no additional problems.

Magic Items: Ulric has no other magic items. Whenever the group finds any, he prefers to let his fellows take them, since he is more than adequately equipped with specialized Undead Hunter artifacts.

Other Equipment: Two sets of clothing, boots, a pair of heavy leather gauntlets, belt, bedroll, backpack, two large sacks, two small sacks, a water skin, and a tinder box.

Ulric occasionally has a large war horse as his steed. He did not take one with him into the Northern Mountains, however, because he knew the animal would never survive the trip.

Money: Ulric has amassed a huge fortune over the course of his adventures, but he regularly donates it to the training monastery where he first became an Undead Hunter, as well as to his mother (see below). He keeps several thousand in gold on his person just for emergencies, but that is it! He prefers to live a relatively simple life, and his impressive array of equipment are the only possessions of note that he owns.

Notes: Ulric has been cast out of his Ogre clan for consorting with humans. He did this so he might find his mother, a human farmer who was ravaged by Ulric's savage father. Possessing uncommon nobility and honor, Ulric took in his mother, bringing her far away from the Old Kingdom village in which she was living. He has since put her up in the Eastern city of Llorn, where he routinely sends her enough money to live comfortably. Since he rescued his mother from the Old Kingdom, she has grown incredibly fond of her rediscovered son, and she is adjusting well to her life in Llorn. Should anything bad happen to Ulric's mother, he would move mountains to get to the villains who hurt her. Nothing would stay him from having his revenge. Nothing.





Lady Shandra Hursai III

Race: Elf.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 54 **S.D.C.:** 25.

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.7 m). **Weight:** 150 lbs (67.5 kg).

Age: 173

P.P.E.: 4. **I.S.P.:** 95.

Attributes: I.Q.: 19, M.E.: 25, M.A.: 24 (28 with her Cloak on; see below), P.S.: 13, P.P.: 14, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 26 (30 with her Scarf on; see below), Spd: 25

Disposition: Lady Shandra is of noble birth from a royal family that once belonged to the court of Baalgor, prior to that city's infamous destruction at the end of the Elf-Dwarf War. Though her family no longer has any hereditary holdings in the ancient Elven Empire, they have done quite well for themselves, becoming wealthy landowners in the Western Empire, where Shandra was born, raised, and trained. She is a creature of fine taste and high culture, but somebody who also does not want to waste her whole life sitting pretty and waiting for a prospective husband to look her way. No, Shandra wants *adventure*, and she has been kicking around the rougher parts of the world for the better part of a century. Only in the last few years had she joined with Jidian Kulder, but she quickly became close friends with Jidian and the rest of the crew. She is a little too averse to dirt and uncleanness in general, according to some of her fellows, but they don't mind. To them, watching Shandra jump through hoops just so her expensive new boots don't get mud on them is always good for a few laughs. Somehow, Shandra never seems to think so

Shandra has expensive tastes in all things – clothes, accommodations, equipment, horses, food and drink, entertainment, etc. Thankfully for her, she comes from a filthy rich family in the first place. She has also won immense treasures during the course of her adventures, so she can pretty much afford whatever whimsy strikes her. As extravagant as she is, though, she is just as generous, frequently showering her friends with expensive gifts, buying rounds of food and drink for everybody at the tavern, giving high-value coins to street waifs and beggars, that sort of thing.

Experience Level: 11th level Noble.

Skills of Note: Dance (98%), Heraldry (90%/95%), Horsemanship: General (95%/80%), Speak Elven (98%), Speak Western (98%), Speak Eastern (98%), Speak Gobblely (98%), Literacy: Elven (98%), Literacy: Western (98%), Literacy: Eastern (98%), Military Etiquette (90%), Mathematics: Basic (98%), Play Musical Instrument: Stringed (80%; taken twice, so she plays at the professional level), Sing (85%; taken twice, so she sings at the professional level), Art (90%), Recognize Weapon Quality (80%), Gemology (50%), W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to throw), W.P. Knife (+4 to strike and parry, +5 to throw), W.P. Paired Weapons.

Special Abilities: Shandra has a photographic memory, which gives her the equivalent of the psionic power of Total Recall, only she can use it at will and at no I.S.P. cost.

Psionics: Shandra is a major psionic with the following Sensitive abilities: Astral Projection (8), Clairvoyance (4), Commune with Spirit (8), Dispel Spirits (10), Meditation (0), Mind Block (4), Sixth Sense (2), and Speed Reading (2).

Magic: None. Though she often speaks of studying the mystic arts, Shandra has not yet done so. Her companion, Hobe Bygone, would be more than happy to teach her.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: 6 (8 when wielding Cassandra, her rune sword; see below)

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +3 to damage, +5 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Other Bonuses: +5% on all skills (already factored into skill ratios), +5 to save vs psionics, +8 to save vs insanity, 80% chance to trust/intimidate (94% when her magic cloak is on; see below), 80% chance to charm/impress (92% when she has her magic scarf on; see below).

Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D4. Axe kick: 2D6. Roundhouse kick: 3D6. Critical strike: natural 18-20. Paired Weapons (all). Body throw/flip. Disarm. Knockout/stun: natural 18-20.

Weapons: Lady Shandra fights with a pair of weapons, her rune sword *Cassandra* and her magic dagger *Inglix*. It should be noted that Shandra is practically obsessed with rune weapons and loves to collect as many as she can, but no matter what other ones she owns, she will not use them nor will she bond with them unless her beloved Cassandra were lost forever.

Cassandra; This major rune weapon looks like an ordinary, somewhat flimsy rapier. However, close examination reveals that tiny runes are etched all along the length of the blade, transforming this oversized skewer into an engine of destruction. Cassandra has three powers: 1) Its user gains +2 to initiative. 2) Its user gains an additional *two attacks* per melee. 3) The sword inflicts 4D6 points of damage. As usual,

a naturally rolled critical strike inflicts double damage. However, if Lady Shandra rolls a "Natural 1" in combat, Cassandra will jar violently from her hand during the flubbed swing, causing Shandra's hand to go numb for the next 1D4 melee rounds. During that time, her hand will be useless. It will feel like it is deeply asleep, and if she is to continue fighting, it will have to be with her dagger Inglix in her left hand, or she can fight/kick with her feet.

Inglix: This dagger was clearly designed to go along with a rapier in paired weapons fighting. It is indestructible, inflicts 2D6 points of damage per strike, and casts any combination of the following spell powers at 6th level proficiency, up to six times a day: Blinding Flash (1), Invisibility: Simple (6), Multiple Image (7), and Fire Ball (10).

Armor: *Leather of Iron*: A.R. 12, S.D.C.: 300. This sleek suit of form-fitting leather armor is actually fairly skimpy in places. Shandra had it specially tailored to show off more of her body than is practical for a suit of armor (hence, the low A.R.). The suit was commissioned in Shandra's early adventuring days, and she has since come to realize that maybe wearing such revealing outfits in combat is not the safest idea. However, she spent so much money to have it made, plus the fact that she looks pretty good in it, makes her loath to give the suit up any time soon. As a backup, she also wears a *magic ring* that gives her a Natural A.R. of 14, in case a hit gets through her armor. (**G.M. Note:** If a hit gets through Shandra's armor, but does not defeat her *Natural A.R.*, then the strike does no damage. If a strike hits Shandra's armor, then the armor takes the full damage from the blow, and the Natural A.R. does not take effect.)

Lady Shandra's teammates have never passed up an opportunity to tease Shandra about her armor, and on one occasion even commissioned a blacksmith to make her a chain mail bikini. The joke ended when Shandra replied, in all seriousness, that if she could get the thing properly enchanted to provide her some protection, she would actually wear it. Hearing that, Shandra's friends dropped the jokes right then and there, fearing that such a spectacle would cause the Legion of Northmoor to lose any respect it had garnered (especially among female adventurers, who have never figured out why so many smiths – including the legendary *Lank Bazetta*, *Ryde Haldwell* and *Voris Kallejo* – think that they'd ever want to wear one of these things, or why so many swordswomen actually go ahead and put them on).

Magic Items: Shandra is a veritable walking alchemist's shop. Her usual gear includes:

Boxed Lunch: Shandra keeps a lovely lacquered box in her pack just large enough to hold a nice meal in. Upon opening the box, a meal (hot or cold; Shandra's choice) will magically appear (up to three times daily), complete with silverware, napkins, and even a pair of candles that magically light up. (Supposedly, Shandra once had a magic music box to have play while she ate, but she lost it and has been on the search for a replacement ever since.) Any single meal from this magic box will completely satisfy and refresh the diner in terms of both hunger and thirst. With this item, one can nourish himself in the wild indefinitely.

Perfume Bottle: Shandra keeps this with her at all times, a small glass vial that contains a never-ending supply of fragrance. Upon command, Shandra can make the perfume

change scents before applying it, something she particularly enjoys about the item. But more than just an aesthetic piece wearing any fragrance from this bottle, ironically, makes the user impossible to track by scent for 24 hours, an effect Shandra has used to escape pursuers more than once.

Scarf of Style: This otherwise trivial piece of clothing always flows and flutters in an unseen wind. It looks particularly good on Lady Shandra, but that is probably because the scarf also imparts another four points of P.B. to whoever uses it.

Cloak of Presence: Along with her Scarf of Style, Shandra is rarely seen without this gorgeous ermine-trimmed cloak that seems fit for a queen. While wearing it, Shandra's M.A. gets a boost of four points.

Boots of Comfort: Shandra's favorite pair of heavy boots magically repel water (though she cannot walk on water with them) and will always make her feet nice and warm and cozy, no matter what the conditions. Her only complaint about them is that they are a bit big and clunky. And they're just so *last year*, you know?

Magic Satchel: Hanging off her belt is a medium-sized satchel that apparently can contain a seemingly endless amount of material, provided they can fit into the bag's aperture. All Shandra must do is concentrate for a second when opening the bag and the items she is looking for will pop into her hand when she reaches into the bag. Maximum weight capacity of items inside cannot exceed 200 lbs (90 kg); even at maximum weight allowance, the satchel only weighs 15 lbs (6.75 kg). Nobody must ever look into the bag, however. Those who do must save vs insanity at -4. If they fail, they will suffer a random insanity, and their I.Q. will drop 2D4 points for 2D6 hours. Those whose I.Q. drops below three will behave like a two year old.

Rune Weapons: In addition to her rune sword Cassandra, Lady Shandra technically "owns" four other rune weapons – the rune arrow *Pathfinder*, the rune sword *Screamshriek*, the rune spear *Hygaz*, and a set of runic gauntlets with retractable claws called the *Claws of Gorland*. Shandra picked these weapons off a truly evil villain she defeated, and has kept them a) to prevent their falling into the hands of other bad guys and b) because she covets rune weapons of any sort and seeks to collect as many as possible. Each of these weapons is held in a silver-inlaid chest which is itself chained, padlocked and hidden away someplace Shandra swears nobody will ever find them. In truth, she has no intention of ever using any of these devices because they are all evil, and because she likes her sword Cassandra too much to part with it for some other weapon.

Other Equipment: At least two sets of traveling clothes (more if she is bringing along a pack animal), gloves, bedroll, tent, purse and some personal items.

Money: How much do you need? Seriously, Shandra has never been hurting for cash. Her personal portion of the family fortune ranges into the millions of gold pieces, not to mention the additional fortunes she has gained in her various adventures. She is very generous and gives freely to everybody, but even her charity has not put a dent in what she is worth. Shandra likes to travel with a lot of spending power, so at any given time, she can be expected to have around 10,000 in small coinage, and anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 in Old

Kingdom coins and gemstones all stored in that magic bag of hers.

Notes: Lady Shandra and the Jade Hands (below) get along famously, even though they are Elf and Dwarf. It was a bit rocky when they first met, especially since she is a pampered noblewoman and he is an aesthetic monk. But after enough adventures in which either saved the other's hide, the two grew to put their cultural and occupational differences aside. Now they are two of the most inseparable members of the Legion of Northmoor's Inner Circle. When the Call of the group's Binding Sigils all went off, it should be noted that Lady Shandra and Jade Hands were together, probably watching each other's back until help could arrive.

Jade Hands

Race: Dwarf.

Alignment: Principled.

Hit Points: 65. **S.D.C.:** 344.

Natural A.R.: 15 (takes no damage unless the attacker's roll is 16 or higher).

Height: 4 feet (1.2 m). **Weight:** 400 lbs (180 kg).

Age: 111

P.P.E.: 106. **I.S.P.:** Zero.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 15, M.A. 12, P.S. 30 (Supernatural), P.P. 18, P.E. 21, P.B. 12, Spd 12

Disposition: The quiet and introspective Jade Hands is, for a Dwarf, anyway, unusually friendly and easy to get along with. His many years in monastic training have stripped him of the typical gruff nature for which Dwarves are so well known. His enduring friendship with the Lady Shandra has also taught Jade Hands that Elves need not be a source of irritation to him. Rather, he could learn much from these slender, noble folk, just as they could learn much from the stout and courageous Dwarven people. When not adventuring, Jade Hands spends much time contemplating the nature of his people and that of the Elves, and he has written several lengthy discourses on the topic. When he feels the time is right, he will donate them to the Library of Bletherad, which will probably make a big deal of it, considering the author.

What Jade Hands does not know is that the arguments for peace among Elf and Dwarf that he has written down are so incredible sensible and persuasive that if the document were circulated among the right people, it might have a powerful impact on diminishing the enmity between Elf and Dwarf, and may even help to dispel some of the growing enmity between humans and Wolfen in the north.

Experience Level: 10th level Warrior Monk.

Skills of Note: Begging (50%), Fasting (70%), Deep Meditation (80%), Speak Dwarven (98%), Speak Elven (98%), Speak Gobblely (98%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Literacy: Dwarven (98%), Basic Math (98%), Climbing (98%/95%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (90%), Lore: Religion (98%), Land Navigation (85%), Play Musical Instrument: Flute (95%), Swim (98%; since his transformation, Jade Hands can no longer swim. He sinks like, well, a stone. He can walk along the bottom at half his Spd, though.), Wilderness Survival (95%; even though he really does not need it anymore), Sign Language (80%), Animal Husbandry (90%), Biology (85%), Brewing (80%/85%), First Aid (85%), Holistic Medicine (85%/75%), Surgeon/Medical Doctor (85%/75%).

Special Abilities:

Spirit Strike: This works just like it does for any Warrior Monk, except that Jade Hands trained at a monastery that did not include stick fighting, focusing instead on the Spirit Strike with special intensity. As a result, Jade Hands can use this ability but it only costs him 2D4 P.P.E., not the usual 2D6 P.P.E.

Stone Body: Fifty years ago, Jade Hands earned his name when he defeated the *Green Lord of Thurugir*, in the Old Kingdom Lowlands. Thurugir at the time was as if carved from green stone, a juggernaut of incredible endurance and superhuman strength. After beating Jade Hands nearly to death, Thurugir seemed on the edge of victory. With his last surge of strength, Jade Hands hit Thurugir with a perfectly placed Spirit Strike, cracking the Green Lord's stone frame and sending a shock wave into his heart, killing him. As Thurugir fell to pieces (literally!), a strange green glow remained on the Dwarven monk's hands. Slowly, the glow moved up his arms, leaving behind flesh turned into the same sort of green stone that Thurugir had once been made of. Within a minute, the Dwarf's entire body



had been changed to a form of super-stone that granted the Dwarf incredible powers and abilities. Dubbing himself *Jade Hands*, the Dwarf set out to continue his work as a hero and bringer of peace to lawless lands. Since his transformation, he has never again uttered his true name, for fear of somebody learning it and using it to control him.

Jade Hands' transformation into stone gave him incredible endurance (+300 S.D.C. and a Natural A.R. of 15) and resilience (fire, cold and electricity all do no damage; magic fire, cold and electricity only do half damage). He has Supernatural Strength, and he does not need to eat, drink, sleep or breathe. This makes him especially well suited for long journeys through harsh wilderness and for standing night watch.

Underground Tunneling: 90%

Underground Architecture: 80%

Underground Sense of Direction: 90%/80%

Metalworking: 90%

Recognize Precious Metals & Stones: 85%

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +5 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +15 to damage (in addition to the base numbers listed below) +2 to disarm, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact. Supernatural Strength.

Other Bonuses: +4 to save vs magic, +3 to save vs poison, +6 to save vs possession, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs disease, +1 to save vs illusions and mind control, and +12% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Supernatural Strength: Restrained punch: 2D6, full-strength punch: 4D6, full-strength kick: 5D6, roundhouse kick: 1D4x10, power punch (counts as two attacks): 1D4x10! **G.M. Note**: Jade Hands cannot use his Spirit Strike in conjunction with a power punch.

Foot sweep, backward sweep. Jump kicks (all). Critical strike: natural 18-20. Paired Weapons (all; though he has no real use for this ability). Body flip/throw.

Weapons: None. Jade Hands will not use weapons, even if he were not made of supernatural stone. His monastic order specifically forbids the use of them, not even a simple staff or a spear.

Armor: None. Jade Hands' stone form provides more than enough protection. Besides, his monastic order provides no training for fighting in armor.

Magic Items: None. Supposedly, Lady Shandra believes that one day Jade Hands will snap out of his Spartan lifestyle and will kick himself for not collecting a chunk of the treasure the group would win during most of their adventures. Because she felt sorry for her friend, Shandra has been keeping a sizeable treasure cache back at her family's home, so if and when Jade Hands decides he'd like a little reward for all of his good deeds, Lady Shandra will be ready to give him that which he has already earned. Aside from that kind consideration, Brother Jade really is a devotee to a sparse lifestyle, and he refuses to take anything extraneous with him, especially added magic items. He would far prefer to rely on his personal abilities and his marvelous gift of his jade flesh.

Other Equipment: Jade Hands travels light, like most Warrior Monks. His standard traveling kit includes: a spare monk's robe, backpack, large satchel, four small sacks, a symbol of Osiris (Jade Hands' patron deity), six wooden spikes, a mallet, 30 feet (9 m) of rope, 5 vials of holy water, a small mirror, and a tinder box. Because he is so strong, Jade Hands often offers to carry extra equipment for the group. Sometimes this leads to him cutting a ridiculous figure as he lugs a mountain of gear on his back many times larger than he is.

Notes: Jade Hands has extensively researched the origin of the strange magical transformation he has undergone, but still has learned nothing about it. He will consider himself deeply in debt to anybody who can help him unravel this mystery.

Hobe Bygone

Race: Gnome.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 66. **S.D.C.**: 12.

Height: 2 feet, four inches (0.7 m). **Weight**: 40 lbs (18 kg).

Age: 458

P.P.E.: 270. **I.S.P.**: Zero.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 10, M.A. 20, P.S. 6, P.P. 20, P.E. 24, P.B. 18, Spd 8 running, 4 digging.

Disposition: Hobe is a friendly and talkative old soul, who had been adventuring long before Jidian Kulder was even born, and he had the privilege of hearing Jidian's reputation grow from day one. Hobe is actually the first co-founder of the Legion of Northmoor, having approached Jidian some years ago, offering his magical services to the daring and exuberant young Ranger. Jidian accepted, and the pair began to take in like souls who shared their thirst for adventure and their appetite for good's triumph over evil.

Hobe is immensely proud of the Legion's exploits and achievements, and if you get enough beers in him, he will begin telling stories of the group's achievements until the sun comes up. Ironically, considering his age and experience, Hobe's love for spinning yarns is matched only by his inability to spin them well and his equal inability to remember when he last repeated the same story to somebody. Maybe he should have taken the Public Speaking skill.

Experience Level: 10th level Wizard.

Skills of Note: Recognize Enchantment (90%), Recognize Magic (75%), Speak Elven (98%), Speak Dwarven (98%), Speak Faerie (98%), Speak Northern (98%), Speak Western (98%), Speak Eastern (98%), Speak Southern (98%), Literacy: Elven (98%), Literacy: Dwarven (98%), Literacy: Western (98%), Literacy: Eastern (98%), Lore: Magic (80%/70%/65%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (80%), Basic Math (98%), Advanced Math (98%), Writing (80%), Art (90%), History (85%), Astronomy (85%), W.P. Knife (+4 to strike and parry, +5 to throw), W.P. Blunt (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to throw).

Special Abilities:

Scroll Conversion: Hobe is unusually skilled at scroll conversions (50%; 20 points higher than any other Wizard at his level). Over the years, his misadventures with botched conversions have given the group much to laugh about. One particular case resulted with Hobe turning his skin blue. That, matched with his

already white hair and his trademark red cap and leggings, prompted his friends to call him . . . what was that again? Mr. Gurf? Papa Turf? Something like that. Since the group was staying in the Timiro city of Credia at the time, a local sculptor crafted a tiny figurine of Hobe as a joke, but they caught on so much that he made a fortune selling these things. To this day, little blue gnome figurines are still a popular children's toy in Timiro, much to Hobe's chagrin.

Psionics: None. Hobe is endlessly fascinated by psionics, however, and will gravitate towards anybody who has psychic powers. This might explain his initial affinity for Lady Shandra.

Magic: Hobe is a master spell caster who commands knowledge over a great many spells. He is also a scholar of the arcane, and is actively pursuing the secrets of several lost schools of magic, including *Protean Sorcery* (the art of changing things into other things), *Chaos Casting* (the unpredictable form of magic thought to empower the Citadel), and *Archonic Power Channeling* (a quick and dirty means of using raw P.P.E. for making energy blasts and energy shields, flying, teleporting, and a handful of other uses. Limited but potent; invented by Gnomes during the Elf-Dwarf War so they could defend themselves). To date, Hobe has not unlocked any of these lost arts, so for the moment he must content himself with his impressive array of Wizard spells:

Level One: All spells! Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Death Trance (1), Decipher Magic (4), Globe of Daylight (2), Increase Weight (4), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (4), Thunderclap (4), and Ventriloquism (3).

Level Two: All spells! Befuddle (6), Chameleon (6), Climb (3), Concealment (6), Detect Concealment (6), Extinguish Fire (4), Fear (5), Heavy Breathing (5), Levitation (5), Mystic Alarm (5), Turn Dead (6), and Weightlessness (6).

Level Three: All spells! Armor of Ithan (10), Breathe Without Air (5), Energy Bolt (5), Fingers of the Wind (5), Float in Air (5), Ignite Fire (6), Impervious to Fire (6), Impervious to Poison (5), Invisibility: Simple (6), Negate Poison/Toxin (5), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Resist Fire (3), See Wards (8), Sense Traps (7), and Telekinesis (8).

Level Four: All spells! Astral Projection (10), Blind (8), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Charismatic Aura (10), Cure Minor Disorders (10), Energy Field (10), Fire Bolt (10), Fool's Gold (10), Ley Line Transmission (30), Magic Net (7), Multiple Image (7), Repel Animals (7), Seal (7), Shadow Meld (10), Swim as a Fish (6), and Trance (10).

Level Five: Calling (8), Circle of Flame (10), Domination, Energy Disruption (15), Fly (15), Heal Wounds (10), Mend Cloth (12), Sleep (10), and Superhuman Strength (10).

Level Six: Animate Object (15), Apparition (15), Cure Illness (15), Create bread & Milk (15), Fire Ball (10), Fire Fist (15), Magic Pigeon (20), Teleport: Lesser (15), Time Slip (20), and Tongues (12).

Level Seven: Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Fly as the Eagle (25), Invisibility: Superior (20), Invulnerability: Limited (25), Petrification (20), Second Sight (25), and Witch Bottle (28).

Level Eight: Eyes of the Wolf (25), Luck Curse (40), Minor Curse (35), Negate Magic (30), and Stone to Flesh (30).

Level Nine: Havoc (50), Mute (50), and Protection Circle: Simple (45).

Level Ten: Mystic Portal (60), Phantom Horse (60), and Summon Shadow Beast (140).

Level Eleven: Anti-Magic Cloud (140), Create Magic Scroll (100+), and Remove Curse (140).

Level Twelve: Metamorphosis: Mist (250), and Time Hole (210).

Level Thirteen: Create Golem (700 or 1,000), and Talisman (500).

Level Fourteen: Close Rift (200+).

Level Fifteen: Dimensional Portal (1,000).

Spells of Legend: None. Yet.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +2 to damage, +4 to pull punch, and +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Other Bonuses: +3 to spell strength, +8 to save vs magic, +5 to save vs poison, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor.



Other Combat Info: Snap kick: 1D6. Critical strike: natural 19-20. Body throw/flip.

Weapons:

The Quartet: Hobe carries a set of four daggers that will automatically leap from their sheathes and whirl in the air around him whenever they sense danger. (**G.M. Note:** This aspect works just like the psionic ability Sixth Sense, only it is always on and costs no I.S.P.) With a mental command, he can use any of his attacks per melee to command the blades to attack or parry, and because these devices are mentally controlled, they tend to move really fast. This gives Hobe +2 on initiative, +1 to strike and +2 to parry, and an additional one attack per melee round when the knives are in action.

The Kneecracker: This is a stout, gnarled wooden cudgel that has been enchanted to inflict 3D6 points of damage per strike. It also has an internal store of 50 P.P.E. which Hobe may tap for spell casting. The P.P.E. magically regenerates every 24 hours. Hobe once heard that if the Kneecracker (or any other magical staff, for that matter) were to break, it would emit a huge magical fireball that would engulf the staff bearer and cause grievous damage to everybody in the immediate area. Hobe simply does not think this is true. The only evidence towards this is a reference he once read in an old book somewhere, but that's it. Besides, who is going to break their staff to find out? At worst you die. At best you've lost a great magic item to disprove a weird theory.

Armor: Hobe wears a ring that gives him a Natural A.R. of 13.

Hobe is not bashful about supplementing this with spells like *Armor of Ithan* or *Limited Invulnerability*.

Magic Items: Hobe owns a vast collection of minor magic items that he generally does not bring out into the field because he considers them trophies and the basis for his "inventory" when he eventually becomes an alchemist. His prize possessions, however, are never more than a few feet from him. These include:

Demon Guardian Stones (2): These mighty devices also stay in Hobe's magic satchel. He likes to use these to guard the group's position at night, or to block off certain pathways during adventures. They are great for preventing enemies from flanking them along a separate corridor, or for keeping bad guys from sneaking up behind them. Hobe is fairly fond of deploying these things, which means they get beat up a lot. One day, they will break, and Hobe will want to replace them posthaste.

Locked Rune Book: This large tome has seven different locks on it. Not even Hobe knows what the Rune Book might contain, but he is taking the view that if somebody thought enough to lock the thing seven times, then it probably has a very good reason for staying shut.

Scrolls: Hobe has three different scroll tubes on his person at all times. Each scroll is a homemade compilation of a half dozen spells he already knows, ready for instant casting. When in battle, Hobe likes to dramatically unfurl one of these scrolls and read off a few spells to shake the enemy up.

Magic Satchel: Slung over his back is a medium-sized satchel (for humans, large backpack for Hobe). It is an enchanted bag that apparently can contain a seemingly endless amount of material, provided the items can fit into the bag's aperture. All he must do is concentrate for a second when

opening the bag and the items he is looking for will pop into his hand when he reaches into the bag. Maximum weight capacity of items inside cannot exceed 200 lbs. (90 kg); even at maximum weight allowance, the satchel only weighs 15 lbs (6.75 kg). Nobody must ever look into the bag, however. Those who do must save vs insanity at -6. If they fail, they will suffer a random insanity, and their I.Q. will drop 2D4 points for 2D6 hours. Those whose I.Q. drops below three will behave like a two year old.

Other Equipment: Your typical Wizard's kit: two sets of spare clothing, a hooded cloak, comfortable walking boots, soft leather gloves, belt, bedroll, tent, backpack, satchel, two small sacks, a water skin, 10 sheets of parchment paper in a watertight tube, a journal with 224 blank pages, a set of writing quills, 3 jars of different colored waterproof ink, 4 sticks of graphite, 4 sticks of chalk, 4 candles, a holy symbol, a small mirror, and a tinder box.

Money: Like his fellows, Hobe is stinking rich, only he has very little of it in cash. The vast majority of his treasure comes in the small mountain of alchemical ingredients he has assembled over the years. He keeps these all in a second special magical bag very similar to the ones he and Lady Shandra have, but he leaves it in a secret hiding place known only to him and Lady Shandra. More than anything, he hopes to hang on to this collection and keep expanding it until he finally becomes an alchemist. In the meantime, the exact value of the collection is unknown, but surely it must range well over two million gold pieces.

Notes: Among other things, Hobe hopes one day to give up adventuring and become an alchemist, devoting his whole strengths to researching and developing new forms of magic. He would do this primarily for the love of the craft, but also so he might further equip his friends and allies with many new and unusual weapons with which to fight evil.

Sister Gaia

Race: Wolfen.

Alignment: Principled.

Hit Points: 60. **S.D.C.:** 20.

Height: Seven feet, five inches (2.3 m). **Weight:** 300 lbs (135 kg).

Age: 32

P.P.E.: 100. **I.S.P.:** 80.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 18, M.A. 13, P.S. 19, P.P. 18, P.E. 18, P.B. 19, Spd 19

Disposition: Sister Gaia is the newest member of the Inner Circle, having only been part of the group for a few years. She was invited to join during the fellowship's latest adventure in Shadowfall, where they helped prevent an evil death cult from bringing a mysterious and unknown god into this world. Sister Gaia in particular proved helpful when she managed to convince her patron deity, *Wolvenar*, to make a personal appearance to help smite the cultists, and whatever deific monstrosity they had already partially brought into Shadowfall from some other world or dimension.

Though the group accepts Gaia fully, she is a quiet and introverted type, more content to reflect on her actions than to revel in the fellowship of the Inner Circle. For the most part,



she is content to do her part quietly, away from the limelight, saving her strength for those times when the group's fate truly depends on it.

That said, Gaia's calm demeanor should not be taken for mere timidity or lack of conviction. She is a fierce believer of

Wolvenar, patriot of the Wolfen Empire, and soldier of Light. Her companions of the Inner Circle are her family, and woe be to those who do harm to her family. One might be safer trying to separate a wolf cub from its mother.

Experience Level: 8th level Priestess of Light.

Skills of Note: Dance (90%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Speak Elven (98%), Speak Gobblely (98%), Literacy: Wolfen (98%), Literacy: Elven (98%), Basic Math (98%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (70%), Lore: Religion (90%), Land Navigation (72%), Wilderness Survival (80%), Swim (80%), Prowl (65%), Cook (70%), Sign Language (65%), Streetwise (52%), Palming (60%), Breed Dogs (70%/50%), General Repair (55%), Sculpting & Whittling (40%), W.P. Sword (+4 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to throw).

Special Abilities:

Blessings: Blessing of Water, Blessing of a Person, Blessing of a Home, Blessing of Food.

Prayers: Prayer of Strength (83%), Prayer of Communion (84%), Prayer of Intervention (Spell Casting: 84%, Magic Scroll Knowledge: 81%; Super Healing: 84%).

Miracles: Luck (40 P.P.E.), Supernatural Strength (60 P.P.E.), Purification (20 P.P.E.).

Great Miracles: Increased Power, Control Over Nature, Miraculous Healing, Control Over Magic.

Other Abilities: Healing Touch (Instantly restores 2D4 points of S.D.C. or Hit Points as often as once every other melee round), Exorcism (56%), Remove Curse (56%), Resurrection (19%), Turn Dead (60%), Penance & Sacrifice.

Psionics: Gaia is a major psionic who possesses the following Healing powers: Attack Disease (12), Bio-Regeneration: Self (6), Deaden Pain (4), Lust for Life (15), Psychic Diagnosis (4), Psychic Purification (8), Psychic Surgery (14), Suppress Fear (8).

Magic: Thanks to her unwavering devotion to Wolvenar, Sister Gaia can cast the following spells:

Level One: Globe of Daylight (2), Increase Weight (4), Thunderclap (4).

Level Two: Levitation (5), Mystic Alarm (5), Weightlessness (6).

Level Three: Fuel Flame (5), Ignite Fire (6), Impervious to Fire (6).

Level Six: Tongues (12).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +6 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Other Bonuses: Spell strength: 13, +2 to save vs psionic attack and +2 to save vs magic and poison.

Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D6. Critical strike: natural 19-20. Body throw/flip.

Weapons: To honor her faith and bravery in Shadowfall, when she helped the Legion of Northmoor save the city and defeat the evil cultists that threatened it, the Church of the Northern Pantheon bestowed a gift upon Gaia to protect her in her further adventures:

The Claw of Wolvenar: This beautiful two-handed sword (Claymore) is a major holy weapon of the church, and that Gaia received it shows that she is one of the order's highest

champions. The sword glows with a soft white magical aura and adds +5% to all of Gaia's prayers to Wolvenar. The weapon inflicts 5D6 points of damage per strike (it is giant-sized), and automatically inflicts double damage against *supernatural beings and creatures of magic* (including dragons). The Claw of Wolvenar can Remove Curse (01-50% chance; can only be done once per person) and it also can create a Radius of Protection similar to the Protection Circle: Simple spell known to Wizards. To invoke protection, Gaia must raise the weapon above her head and then sink it into the ground. For the following 45 minutes, a circle of protection will glow and shield Gaia and whoever else can fit into its six foot (1.8 m) radius.

Armor: Gaia wears both a suit of Leather of Iron (A.R. 14, S.D.C. 200) and a magical cloak that negates the first 10 points of every incoming physical blow. Energy attacks, such as fire and lightning, and magical spell attacks are not hindered by the cloak, only physical attacks (even those executed with magical weapons).

Magic Items: Gaia wears a set of magical rings that have been in her family for generations. They are passed down to the sister in the litter chosen to become a Priestess of Light. Gaia's older sister initially wore the rings, but she was killed by the craven worshipers of the mad god *Chantico*, and so Gaia took her fallen sister's position. She wears the rings both for the powers they give her, and to remind her of the life her own blood laid down to serve the Light of the world, even at the cost of her own.

Impervious to Fire Ring: 60 minutes; twice daily.

Impervious to Cold Ring: 60 minutes; twice daily.

Multiple Image Ring: 20 minutes; twice daily.

Sense Evil Ring: 8 melee rounds; three times daily.

Size of the Behemoth Ring: 10 minutes; three times daily.

Telepathy Ring: 10 minutes; twice daily.

Other Equipment: Gaia carries with her the standard kit for a traveling Priestess of Light: two sets of traveling clothes, a traveling cloak with hood, ceremonial robe, belt, bedroll, backpack, large satchel, four small sacks, water skin, six holy symbols of Wolvenar (one for each of her friends, if they desire them), large silver holy symbol of Wolvenar, four wooden spikes, mallet, 30 feet (9.1 m) of rope, 6 vials of holy water, silver chalice, small mirror, tinder box, food rations.

Money: At Jidian Kudler's insistence, Gaia keeps 1,000 gold in small denominations on her person at all times, just for emergencies. She has no need for wealth, and freely donates any and all monies she earns or finds back to the Church of the Northern Pantheon, much to their continued delight. So much money has flowed into this church courtesy of Sister Gaia's largesse that it has been conditionally named after her once she dies (which hopefully will not be for a very long time). Still, Sister Gaia considers that an incredible honor, and it makes her teary just to think about it.

Notes: Sister Gaia has a special interest in the Eternal Torment, and openly declared her mission to destroy whatever powers have emerged there. Even if she should be rescued from the Land of the Damned, she would one day return to continue her crusade against the world's largest bastion of undead. The only thing that would make her change her plans is outright war between the Wolfen Empire and the Eastern Territory. In that case, she would have to return home and make sure her very large, very extended family was protected.

A Report to the Brotherhood

The following text comes from a formal presentation made by an unknown speaker to an unknown audience at an unknown time. It was discovered quite by accident by an amateur historian who was on his first trip to the *Library of Bletherad* and found it folded up and tucked in the corner of a book about the historical significance of Gryphon breeding on the economy of the Isle of the Cyclops. Very quickly, the stodgy text about Gryphons was forgotten and the amateur historian rushed to the monks of the Library with his find. For in the upper right hand corner of the pages, under the silver rune that had transformed these documents into indestructible rune paper, was the sign of the **Brotherhood of Masters**, a secret society dedicated to eradicating the undead and other monsters from the face of the world. The Brotherhood is a covert organization, largely because it often acts contrary to local law, and has no compunctions about eliminating local or national government figures if they stand in the way of their quest for a safer world.

While the methods of the Brotherhood are suspect at best, their members have still consisted of some of the most legendary Undead Hunters of all time. Given that the report was dated just two years ago, it could very well be that the Brotherhood, like the Legion of Northmoor, is organizing a large-scale expedition into the Land of the Damned with the purpose of waging war on anything and everything that deserves lethal attention. Surely, this is a turn of events that bears watching, and as a result, the Library staff and their allies have begun an interested, if nervous watch to see if there are any bits of evidence showing a Brotherhood offensive in the works.

Regardless of the so-called "Great Crusade" it details, this document is also important because it provides crucial overview information about the southern parts of the Land of the Damned – **the Darkest Heart and the Eternal Torment**. For that reason alone, this letter has recently become one of the more commonly reviewed items in the Library's collection as increasing numbers of heroes and adventurers have, for whatever reason, decided that they have what it takes to tempt fate in the Land of the Damned.

On a more sinister note, however, any attempts that have been made to post this letter publicly or to publish it outside of the Library of Bletherad have met with disaster. Those who attempt such a thing invariably die horrible accidental and freakish deaths. In one case, a bard was impaled by a falling church steeple knocked off its base by a sudden wind gust. In another case, a rainstorm of knives fell inexplicably from the sky, spearing the body of a scholar known to be publishing a work on the Brotherhood and its call for the Great Crusade. Exactly who or what the culprit is for these deaths and others like them is up for discussion. Some feel the Brotherhood is trying to keep knowledge of its existence limited by killing those who dare spread word about it. Others feel the forces of evil are at work, killing those who would try to rally the rest of the world to the Great Crusade. And still others (though they are few and generally discounted as crackpots) think that maybe the *Library of Bletherad*

is involved in a dark plot to make sure its hold on this document and others like it remains solely theirs.

Whatever the reason for preventing the document from becoming as widely known and distributed as it could be, the end result is that its contents are known only to a relative handful of people outside the Brotherhood, nearly all of which are prominent adventurers. It is implied late in this document that the Brotherhood might try to recruit outside parties to help with the Crusade. Might they test the waters with potential allies by making sure they get a copy of this document to see how they might react? And lastly, is this document authentic and the information accurate, or is it a hoax?

The Brotherhood of Masters' Great Crusade

"Friends, comrades, brothers-in-arms, we find before us a battlefield that concerns the whole of the world. For as long as there has been a world worth fighting for, the forces of good and evil have held a precarious balance of power. Sometimes the Light stands triumphant, but there can be no light without the tiniest bit of darkness within it. Just the same, there have been times when the Darkness rules without equal, yet there must remain that glimmer of Light without which the Darkness would have nothing to oppose. For most times, the balance is, in its own way, relatively level. Dark and Light counter each other in a grand and intricate coordination that is beyond our mortal reckoning, yet we know it exists, and we know that it shapes the face of our world.

"My friends, there comes a time when that balance shifts, and when it does, it throws the entire world into a disoriented state. A time when all manner of catastrophes are let loose upon the innocent and guilty alike. We fear we stand at such a unique period in time, because we know for the first time when the next imbalance might occur. Unlike our ancestors, who were always powerless to stop their world from sliding into upheaval, we have the precious opportunity to do something about it. We have the manpower. We have the skills. We have the motivation. Now all we need is the unity of purpose to carry out the Great Crusade to make sure evil's tide rises no further against the Light. And, we need tools to make sure our Crusade can be carried through to its final, successful, completion.

"But before I address those things, let me show you exactly what challenges stand before us. For there are those within our ranks who do not believe our world is at a crucial point, and believe that we can afford to be indifferent while forces greater than ourselves are hard at work. My friends, whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, there is a clarion call being sounded throughout the world, calling us and any other hero worthy of the name to jump to action, and battle the growing evils that for too long have hidden behind a wall of stone, unchecked, unguarded, unbelievably. They are the hosts of darkness who populate the Land of the Damned, and they are the harbingers of our world's doom unless we do something to prevent them from such a course of action.

"Now, some of you might say that the Land of the Damned is far too horrible and huge a place for our humble order to assault.



That half of us would die just attempting to gain entry. You would be right. But the threat before us is too great to ignore. A mismatch of power that is breaking down the ancient checks and balances that once kept the evildoers of that land safely at each other's throats so as to not bother the outside world. You might think that the key to this situation is the dreaded *Citadel*, home to the worst of the worst, and what amounts to the capital city of this blighted region. But you would be wrong. You might point to the *Great Rift*, from where endless Demons and Deevils pour forth to make their trouble, but again, you would be wrong. You might point to the *Minotaur Nations of the Broken Horn*, or any of the mysterious presences along the Northern Mountains, but in both cases, you would be wrong. No, the evil that threatens to spill into our world and upset the Land of the Damned's dark equilibrium, lies in its southern reaches, the savage forest and scrublands of the **Darkest Heart** and the wastelands that are home to the undead, the land of **Eternal Torment**. These places require our immediate and full attention, even if it comes at the cost of our own lives."

A Heart of Darkness

"To the south of the Great Rift and the Blasted Lands that accompany it lies the *Darkest Heart*, a sprawling and twisted forest that has stood since the world was young. There are four sections to this Darkest Heart, each of which merit our attention. They are:

"The Outer Weald. During the *Age of Chaos*, the Old Ones used this place to carry on all manner of dread experiments, toying with life itself as if it were so much children's building blocks. In their vicious boredom, they perfected here their methods of forming entirely new breeds of life. And when the Chaos War came, these vile woodlands became the birthing grounds of all manner of bizarre creatures known as the *Barbarous Horde*, which the Lords of Chaos would use as both soldiers and burden beasts throughout their conflict. Today, long after that terrible war has been fought, the Barbarous Horde controls the western end of the Darkest Heart, rampaging there without end, destroying the last vestiges of whatever fortresses or strongholds once existed to keep the local inhabitants under control. The Horde is just one small piece of a larger puzzle, but they are all equally important pieces, and equally deserving of immediate action. The Horde, for example, in its feral activities, has taken control of the part of the Darkest Heart least covered by dense growth. It is a scrubland province that the Demons and Deevils of the Great Rift could possibly travel through were the Horde not there as de facto crossing guards. With their own Minion War to contend with, the infernal legions are content to stay north and fight amongst themselves, leaving the lords of the Eternal Torment well to the south to build their strength in quietude. Therein lies the seed of catastrophe.

"The Middle Weald. Here the forest grows too dense for the gargantuan Barbarous Horde to dwell comfortably in (though some do anyway), and the various *Were-Beasts*, thought to have been invented by the Old Ones themselves, have expanded their numbers and built a grisly and savage empire for themselves that is as barbaric as it is intractable. These wretched creatures, trapped between a proper humanoid form and that of any number of beastly creatures, rule this Middle Weald with total authority. None know these dense woodlands so well as they, and no other power around them are in such number. For many

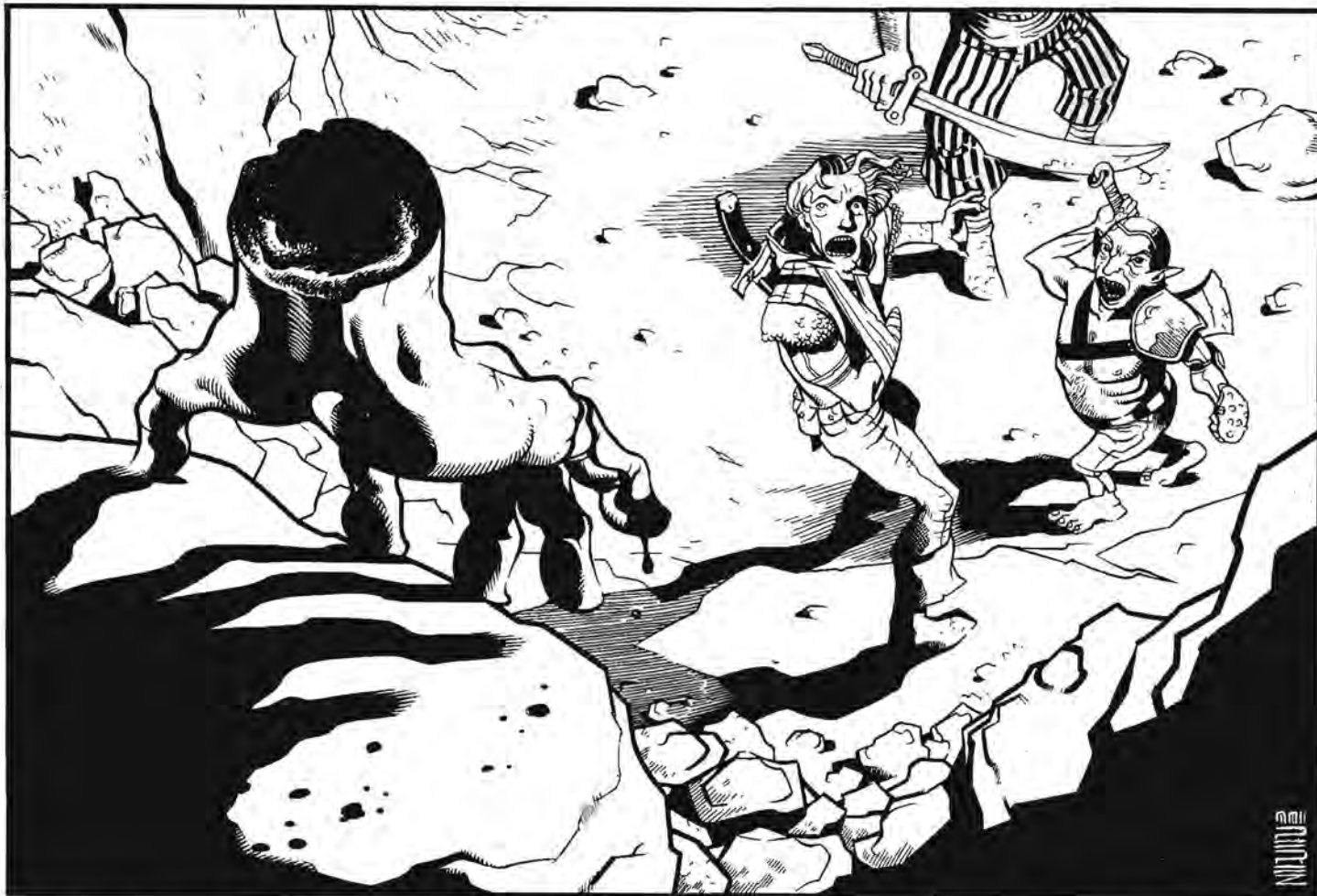
years, they have lacked the collective will to expand their dread empire, but now, under the charismatic leadership of a sinister few, they have unified, settled the petty squabbles that once kept them apart, and have set their sights on conquering a new land for them, a land that would offer them the ultimate habitat and proving grounds. This place is . . .

"The Inner Weald. Occupying the westernmost end of the Darkest Heart, this section of forest becomes even denser than the Middle Weald, making it difficult for any large numbers of beings to move about with ease. Small groups and individuals skilled at woodland navigation can thread their way among the trees and undergrowth just fine, but the large packs of *Were-Beasts* that rule the Middle Weald have a more difficult time of it here. They must split up their numbers and hunt in smaller, more easily contended with groups. This is fortunate for the various clans of Orcs and Ogres who can be found here, as well as numerous petty kingdoms of dark-hearted Faerie Folk living pitiful lives of misery, treachery, and brutality, punctuated only by the occasional and bloody *Were-Beast* attack. Whether they know it or not, these Orcs, Ogres and Faeries are providing an unorganized buffer between the *Were-Beast* menace and their true goal, the seat of power in the Darkest Heart . . .

"The Fallen Palace of Therendil. Once the seat of power to the Kingdom of Therendil, the Elven nation that nobly poured its whole resources into helping contain inhabitants of the Land of the Damned as prisoners after the Chaos War ended. As the Alliance of Light broke apart soon after its victory over the Old Ones, it left behind only a token force, the *Garrison*, to make sure the forces of evil left to rot in the Land of the Damned would not grow so strong as to threaten the world once more. With time, the Garrison would crumble and fall to the forces of evil, and so it was that Therendil found itself more and more isolated, surrounded by enemies, forgotten by its friends. At long last, it took refuge in the deepest part of the forest, a place where ancient magic made it so the woodland was many times larger on the inside than on the outside, making this core of the Darkest Heart, in reality, as large as the rest of the entire forest. Here, the Therendil Elves built their greatest fortress, a mighty and beautiful palace, where they would wait out their enemies and emerge later to smite them, all the stronger. But time and attrition took their toll on these Elves, and the evil of the land eventually seeped into their hearts, corrupting them and turning them as foul as the evil Faeries, Orcs and Ogres who dwelled in the Inner Weald. Now, the Fallen Palace of Therendil is a dark and decadent place, where the last of the noble families wait out their time, taking part in every depravity and decadence they can imagine, while constantly maintaining watch on the *Were-Beast* hordes they know will one day overrun their tattered Kingdom.

"This is another major piece of the oncoming catastrophe. For of all the forces south of the Land of the Damned, only the Fallen Palace still has the ability to form an army capable of shattering the foul threats afoot in the Eternal Torment. However, the Therendil themselves are so far gone they may be beyond salvation. They believe their time has come, and so do nothing of substance to prevent their destruction under *Were-Beast* claw. But if they could be rallied, if they could be saved, could not their strength lend a new force of Light to an Empire of Darkness? Surely, it must, and surely it can. And thus we must make it so. We must show the Therendil the error of

their ways, that there is still hope, and that they have not been entirely forgotten by those they once fought and bled and died for."



A Tormented Land

The document continues with the following account:

"Of all the horrors and unjust things at work in the Darkest Heart, that is all but a prelude to the real danger we face, that of the southernmost region of the Land of the Damned – the realm where death lives eternal, and its hatred of the living world is such that it will make war upon it soon if they are not stopped first. This is the **Eternal Torment**, and it poses more of an immediate threat to the rest of creation than any other part of the Land of the Damned. More than the Were-Beast hordes, more than the Great Rift, more than the Minotaur nations, more than the Citadel. It is our greatest enemy, for it lies right at our doorstep, separated from the civilized world by the thinnest of margins. So thin, that we can no longer ignore its implications. We must act on them.

"The lands known as the Eternal Torment are where the Alliance of Light, after the Chaos War, inflicted the grave punishment of *Mortification* upon the remaining soldiers of Chaos. These creatures were made to account not only for their own misdeeds but also for those of their comrades who had already died in combat and those who killed themselves rather than face justice. Wielding terrible magicks that the Alliance of Light has since sworn never to use again, they transformed every living creature in the southern reaches into an *undead* parody of its for-

mer self. They blighted the land with endless curses to prevent the living from interfering with the prisoners, and they made the land such that no prisoner of it could leave its confines under any condition. This was the Eternal Torment, meant to sap the strength from evil itself and to punish the evil with an eternal life of lasting death and suffering as the undead. And for thousands of years, so it has been.

"Only so vile a punishment has served to make the evil that much more angry and stronger. And now they seek to vent their putrefied hatred upon the world in an act of malevolence beyond mortal reckoning.

"Along the mountains that form the Eternal Torment's northern borders, lie three undead cities, three necropoli where sinister masters of magic and creatures unknown to mortal eyes have taken residence. Wielding terrifying mastery over the living and the dead, and searching to shrug off the curses that bind them to this land, these three city overlords have built massive fortresses and populated them with legions of willing undead soldiers who stand more than ready to wage a new war upon the outside world.

"These are the dreaded **Cities of Bone**, and their strength more than rivals that of any other power in the southern half of the Land of the Damned. Were they to war with the Minotaur Nations of the Broken Horn, the Minotaurs would likely win,

but only after taking horrible losses themselves. Certainly the Cities of Bone could not defeat the all but invincible Citadel to the north, but neither nation will stand against their undead neighbors, and they care not for what might happen to the world beyond the wall of stone that is the Northern Mountains. And so it is left to us.

"Having total control of the lands to the south of them, where they have untold millions of additional undead they have not yet drawn into their ranks, the Cities of Bone mean to march to the southern coastline, where they are separated from the Western Empire by the thinnest section of the *Sea of Dread*.

"Were the lords of the Cities of Bone to find a way of lifting the curse on their land, some means of allowing their ranks to leave the Eternal Torment, it would require only a simple crossing of the water to bring the endless legions of *undead* into the northern Western Empire.

"Granted, it is said that warlike creatures living under the waves – *Kappa* and the *Zarenceti*, who command sea serpents, and are the very reason why no ship can successfully cross those dreaded waters – would be there to impede such passage. But if the undead could lift the curse on their own land, why would it be so impossible for them to get past whatever resistance the Sea of Dread has to offer? And could the Sea's malevolent forces kill that which is already dead? Likewise, would the wall of stone and ice that is the Great Northern Mountains be as great an obstacle for those who cannot die?

"Some of you might think that the undead hordes cannot break the chains that bind them to the Land of the Damned. Chains forged by the gods, but we must ask ourselves, what horror will befall the world if they can?

"If, if, if, you say. *If* this, and *if* that. I must be a fool to dwell so much on developments that are, at best, remote. Surely I waste your time warning of things that are only possible, not even probable. I must show you proof that the things I speak of are beyond the realm of mere theory and unnecessary worry. My friends, it is my sad duty to do just that.

"**Galdrum's Teeth.** These are the mountains that separate the Endless Torment from the Darkest Heart, and that also split the Endless Torment into two isolated areas, the *Cauldron of Lost Souls* and the *Craven Flatlands*. From these jagged peaks rise the Cities of Bone, mountaintop citadels that even the mightiest of ordinary armies would have a difficult time assaulting on account of their supreme defensive position, not to mention their legions of undead soldiers willing to fight until their destruction to repel any invaders. Here do the as yet unnamed lords of the Eternal Torment rule. They are thought to be three human sorcerers schooled in the darkest magicks known, possessing gifts beyond the ordinary pale of man, making them uniquely able to turn the mindless lot of walking dead into a highly organized army of death, a collective killing machine that knows no fear, fatigue, or mercy. An engine of doom that will not be content until it has broken free of the Eternal Torment and has driven its bony fingers into the hearts of every civilized nation of the world.

"**The Cauldron of Lost Souls.** This is the western lowland section of the Eternal Torment, a valley that is drastically overpopulated with *undead creatures* of every variety, most of which have never been seen or catalogued before, not by our order and certainly not by any other. Of special notice here are the

high number of Entities trapped within the *Cauldron*. Spirits who roam endlessly in search of the mortal lives they once led. For the most part, they are unaware they are even dead, much less condemned spirits, and so they travel the *Cauldron* in constant fear and dread, not knowing why they must dwell alongside the endless horrors of the Mortified. These ghosts, for lack of a better term, are the key to the Bone Cities' escape from the Eternal Torment, for these walking spirits are all departed from soldiers of Light who died here in the final days of the war but whose bodies were not extracted before the Mortification. These were the heroes and champions who, tragically, were Mortified along with everything else, and so they became ghostly shadows. It is thought that several of the ghosts were once arch-mages for the Alliance of Light who not only helped cast the curse that keeps the Eternal Torment's inhabitants in place, but they also helped actually design the curse. It stands to reason that those who designed the curse would know of a way to have it lifted, and so the lords of the Cities of Bone have begun to coerce any spirits in the Cauldron to confess their secrets to them. They hope that someday, among the many thousands of ghosts haunting the land, one will provide the mystic information the Cities of Bone are looking for. When they give it up, at long last, the Cities will break free of their prison and take the multitude of other undead with them to wage war upon the lands of the living.

"**The Craven Flatlands.** What is worse, the Cities of Bone may not even need the help of a ghost to break free of their prison. In the eastern section of the Eternal Torment, the valley of the *Craven Flatlands*, there exist the endless ruins of fortresses, strongholds, supply centers and barracks that once covered this part of the Land of the Damned. Over the course of the Chaos War, the Flatlands were at one point an enormous generation center for Soldiers of Chaos. Later, it became a major battlefield in the war's end game. And for a while after the victory over the Old Ones, it was the temporary resting spot for the weary Armies of Light before they disbanded right after the Mortification. There are literally thousands upon thousands of decaying buildings of varying scope and design littering the landscape, all in some degree of ruin, and most housing large numbers of the *Endless Dead*.

"It is said that many of these buildings were really *magical teleportation centers* built by the Armies of Light to ferry more troops and materiel into the region when they first established their beachhead. According to sources I dare not name, there is every indication that at least a few of these "magic doorways" still operate, and that the nature of their magic perhaps exempted them from the power of the Mortification curse.

"The end result? The Alliance of Light may have unwittingly left behind the very means by which the Cities of Bone can simply walk out of their prison. The trick is for the undead to find the door. For the moment the undead host inhabiting the region where the doors *may* exist have yet to join the Bone Cities' legions, and as such, are not directly under the Cities Overlords' control. That is only a matter of time, however, and when that occurs, it might only be a short while before any still-active magic doors are found and used.

"The nature of these magic portals remains a mystery to us, but we believe they are simply magical structures through which one might travel to any place of one's choosing in the Palladium

World. Were this to be true, the Endless Dead could be marched through such a portal and dispersed all over the planet, provided of course, that the City Overlords can find them and figure out their purpose and how they work. Finding and controlling such magic portals, if indeed they still exist at all, will become a burning passion should the City Overlords learn of them. And it is only a matter of time before the dark lords discover such places did once exist. Can we take the chance that they do? Must we not find them first and destroy them even if it means our own torment? Is not the sacrifice of a brave few worth it to save our world? For those reasons we must act now.

Conclusions

The text to the Brotherhood of Masters ends with this question and assessment:

"Now, there are those among you, I am sure, who are asking: What can we do? How might we oppose such a terrible course of events from coming to pass?

"The answer is simple. We must undertake a crusade the likes of which our order has never before attempted. Our goals are threefold.

"First, to revive the Fallen Palace of Therendil so that it might reclaim its heroic heritage. Once returned to its original noble purpose, we shall have an invaluable ally and a foothold into the Land of the Damned itself. More importantly, the Therendil might then lend their considerable strength to bear on our other goals in the region.

"Second, we must destroy the Cities of Bone and make sure their Overlords are slain and their life force either contained or dissipated forever. These cities are the gathering spots for some of the greatest evils the world has known since the end of the Chaos War. The Overlords of the Cities will not rest so long as they are free to bring their sinister plans closer to bear on the living world. The Overlords must be destroyed, their cities shattered, and their armies of the dead dispersed. It is too much to ask to clean out the land of Eternal Torment of its Endless Dead, an impossible task to be sure, but we can destroy those who would make the Endless Dead into a unified Army of Darkness.

"Third, we must determine if any magical portals exist in the Craven Flatlands, and if so, we must destroy them as well. The possibility of the Endless Dead using these magic places to invade the outer world is unspeakable enough, but they are only one of many unspeakable evils that might use them to escape. What if the Demons or Deevils of the Great Rift were to discover them? What if the armies of the Citadel were to discover them? The longer we allow any such magic doorways to stand (if indeed, any do), the longer we tempt fate. No, the gates to the world must fall if we are to remain secure in the knowledge that the Land of the Damned is itself secure, that it remains the very prison it once was, and that its inhabitants possess no means of troubling the outside world.

"There is no question the challenge before us is immense. The hardships and losses we must endure to achieve victory will be great. Too great for our order to bear alone, but we must try. So it is that I ask every one of you now, as members of an order which has always stood for law over chaos, good over evil, life over death, to stand with me, that you form this Great Crusade, and that you commit your every strength and resource to the coming battles.

"We *must* do this. It is our duty and our privilege to take up the cosmic fight of good against evil. We must become the new Alliance of Light once more, bringing our light into this darkest of places so order and justice may shine through in all things and at all times. For without the good and the light, evil and darkness grows stronger, and we cannot allow that to happen. The world has seen once already the price of evil triumphant. Let us not condemn creation to another such fate by acting indifferently regarding the Land of the Damned and the menace it poses.

"This is not the time to say that the troubles I have explained are merely remote possibility. This is not the time to think that somebody else will take up the standard and lead the way. This is not the time to hide our eyes and hope not to be asked to participate. The conflict is upon us, brothers, whether we want it or not. And it is not merely a conflict posed to our ancient and honorable order, but that which threatens the whole of the world. Most folks know nothing of the dangers hanging over them. We must make it so they never have reason to learn of it. Nothing less than the fate of future generations lies in our hands and the hands of those allies and comrades *we choose* to bring with us on what shall be mankind's greatest moment. Our time is now."

The Lost Chronicle

This section contains the partial text of a letter written by the Guild of Scholars in the Western Empire regarding the history, contents and current whereabouts of the controversial document known as the **Lost Chronicle**. It is a chapter of the famed **Tristine Chronicles** that details an ugly moment of the Alliance of Light's history, casting a bit of shadow over their otherwise glorious victory against the dreaded Old Ones that brought the Age of Chaos to a close.

Hysteria and violence surrounded the Lost Chronicle when it first came to light, so now it remains one of the world's most elusive pieces of academia, but there are those who know of it, and who traffic in illicit copies of the forbidden chapter. To these brave souls, the truth had better be something worth dying for, because death almost always visits whosoever helps sustain the knowledge that is the Lost Chronicle.

The letter below was supposedly written by a scholar within the Guild of Scholars who intended it to go to another colleague, no farther. Rumor has it the author was writing a treatise on heretical publications, or something along those lines, and sent the following sections of it to a colleague for his criticism. Exactly how or why this got out into the open remains to be discovered. Already in the Western Empire, the Lost Chronicle has created a fabulous stir, as ordinary folks pen copies of it for kicks and plaster them on the sides of buildings, on trees, wherever they can. Scholars in the West fear that if knowledge of this Lost Chronicle reaches too far and wide, it might cause some kind of religious war or crusade in which radical religious sects go on ill-advised quests to find any copies of the Lost Chronicle and destroy both them and those who hold them or even those who have read them. Of course, in the Western Empire, religious upheaval is not an uncommon thing, which perhaps explains why scholars of other nations are not so alarmed by this letter's proliferation. Most believe that as knowledge of the Lost Chronicle grows, the shock value of it will also be watered down, making

a non-issue. Of course, any discussion of the Lost Chronicle is a touchy subject for the Monks of Bletherad, who are the ones who suffered directly as a consequence of its publication, as the letter below will explain.

Scardarus,

Thank you for agreeing to review the next few sections of my book. I apologize if the text appears rough in certain places. I fear in my haste to pen it, certain passages might not have the academic polish a treatment of this sort deserves. Please go over this more for factual integrity and historical context. Do not worry about the style in which it is written, I shall spend an entire month working on that once the rough version of the entire book has been finished. Thank you again for your help. Dwarven meads for you and your scribes next time we meet, eh?

*Cordially,
Gamberlaine*

The Case of the Missing Chronicle

Everybody has heard of the Tristine Chronicles as the oldest book of history in the world, even if they do not know what it says. There are numerous sections of it which are fairly well known throughout the world, and many other sections that, for various reasons, have remained pretty obscure. Besides that, much of the whole book is missing; entire chapters and series of chapters are nowhere to be found, and these gaps in the text are often blamed for the generally vague and sometimes contradictory information the Chronicles imparts. All known fragments of the Tristine Chronicles are stored at the Library of Bletherad,

which is where the notorious *Lost Chronicle* was first interpreted and publicly released.

The Lost Chronicle has generated controversy ever since it was discovered 101 years ago by a band of heroes adventuring in the Old Kingdom. Heroes who dutifully turned it over to the Library of Bletherad. At first, this appeared to be a full chapter of the Tristine Chronicles, one of the many that are still missing. The text style was consistent with the other known Chronicles, and the information contained therein matched up just fine, as well. The Chronicle was initially reviewed and cross-checked by the monks of Bletherad, who then made public their findings. They had no idea what kind of furor they were in for.

The Chronicle covers some of the specific events that occurred in the southern Land of the Damned before, during, and after the Chaos War. Most importantly, it details the creation of the Endless Torment and the Alliance of Light's dissolution shortly thereafter. This Chronicle does not paint a flattering portrait of the Alliance of Light at all. In fact, one could say it reveals them to be rather villainous – not on the same level as the Old Ones, but certainly enough to strip them of the saintly image history has granted them over the last 50,000 years.

The Monks of Bletherad received severe and constant criticism for their translation of the Lost Chronicle, mostly from priests and churches of those pantheons known to be part of the Alliance of Light. Evidently, such folk did not approve of how their deities had been depicted, and they were more than happy to let the Monks of Bletherad know about it. Immediately thereafter, independent patronage to the Library dried up, and several acts of arson were perpetrated against the Library itself. Finally,



a crazed assailant tracked down the poor young monk who had translated the Lost Chronicle and threw a vial of acid on him, severely burning and disfiguring his face. In separate incidents, assailants on three different occasions attacked monks within the Library with their bare hands, and on another occasion, an elderly monk was bludgeoned to death by an attacker wielding nothing more than a heavy, brass-bound dictionary.

The Monks had had enough. They formally rescinded the Lost Chronicle, stating that in his inexperience, the young monk who translated the text got a few small but important passages wrong, changing the entire context in which the Lost Chronicle was to be read. The Library announced that they would subsequently "re-translate" the Lost Chronicle, which they assured the public would portray the Alliance of Light in a more consistently heroic fashion.

This was not enough, however, as attacks against the Library of Bletherad and its Monks continued while protests and demonstrations rocked the little town of Bletherad. Finally, the head of the monastic order took over, declaring that after personally viewing the Lost Chronicle, he judged the entire thing to be a "fraud." A well-crafted fraud, but a fraud nonetheless. To prove his point, he publicly burned the document to a crisp in front of a huge crowd, who raucously applauded the action. After that, it was as if there had never been a crisis in the first place. Donations came flooding back into the Library of Bletherad, the attacks stopped, and life returned more or less to normal.

However, things were not normal. The entire Monastic order knew the "Lost Chronicle," as it had been called, *was true*. The monk who had transcribed and translated it made no errors. Moreover, further examination proved the document to really be a part of the larger set of Tristine Chronicles, whether people liked it or not. It became clear to the monks that this was a case of the people's perception and what they were comfortable with. People had developed a view of their gods and heroes, and unless it was for the better, they did not want any one or any thing to change that, not even an expanded Tristine Chronicles. This came as a sad realization to the Monks, who themselves were dedicated to truth and knowledge, regardless of how unpleasant those things might be.

Thankfully, the head of the Order had not really destroyed the Lost Chronicle. He had merely duplicated it and hid the original deep within the Library's collections where only he and the other Monks would know where to look for it. It was also, as are all of the chapters of the Library's version of the Tristine Chronicles, transcribed onto indestructible "rune paper" (parchment with a silver rune written on it). The letters were themselves written in a special, super-endurant ink the Monks had secretly invented themselves. The copy was then sealed and stored in the order's secret archive of books, maps, leaflets and other materials that are considered too dangerous for the Order to make public. They had suffered the brunt of hysteria before, and knew that it was better to let the public believe a lie to save the original material than to stand their ground and watch themselves and the offensive material in question be destroyed for it.

To this day, the Lost Chronicle remains the only true history of the Darkest Heart and the Eternal Torment, and if any heroes wish to view it, they must have a good friend within the Monks of Bletherad who trusts them enough to show them the original copy. Since the original furor died down, the Monks have

shown their copy of the Lost Chronicle to only a dozen or so people, each one a dear friend of the Library who knew that to let slip the secrets of the Chronicle would spell certain doom for the Library.

Of course, not all knowledge of the Lost Chronicle has been destroyed. During the brief period of time when the Lost Chronicle was on public display, it was hastily copied by dozens of people, most of whom got sections wrong or incomplete. The most authoritative version is known as the **Versa Primus**, which was supposedly transcribed by a psychic who used her powers of Speed Reading and Total Recall to get a copy of the entire Lost Chronicle without errors. Whether or not the psychic, who remains nameless, actually got the full version of the Chronicle, or whether she even got the facts right cannot be told unless one were to cross-check this version with the true Lost Chronicle in the Library of Bletherad. That aside, compared to the other "unofficial" versions of the Lost Chronicle, the Versa Primus is the best and most complete edition for those really interested in the topic who either do not know the Library of Bletherad has secretly preserved the original (and an accurate copy), or who can not cajole the Monks of Bletherad to admit they have the Lost Chronicle secreted away.

The Versa Primus is a dangerous piece of information, and there are many radical religious sects and cults out there who would gladly slay anybody who professes to have even read this "heretical" and "blasphemous" document. To be actually caught with a copy in one's possession is grounds for burning at the stake in many communities. Despite that danger, there will always be a demand for it, either from adventurers who want the information the Versa Primus contains so they can make a trip to the Land of the Damned, or cultists to collectors looking to buy or sell a copy of the document (which can go for tens of thousands in gold if the market conditions are right).

There are six sections to the Versa Primus: *The Age of Chaos*, *The Chaos War*, *The Mortification*, *The Fall of Therendil*, *The Cities of Bone*, and *The Darkest Dawn*, each of which we "summarize" in the following pages.

A Time Without Light: The Age of Chaos

From the time the world was young, the Old Ones did rule supreme. Though they did not create the world, certainly they became its first masters. And as far as they intended, they would be its *only* masters. It must not have seemed hard to them. They controlled magic to an extent no other creature, race or god has ever known since, and with this incredible ability, the Old Ones shaped the world into a form that was pleasing to them. They altered the flow of rivers, changed the color of oceans, twisted the movements of the sky, and transformed the world in a hundred other ways to suit their every dark and perverse desire. They even made rise from the sea vast new lands as grand as that of the Mother Continent, on which life would later flourish (but not by the power of the Old Ones, thankfully; these places would always remain clean of their presence). Still, this could never keep them satisfied, so they began toying with life itself.

Who can say for how long the Old Ones played this game before crafting races such as the Elves, Changelings, Titans and Minotaurs to serve them? Hundreds of other races were created

too, but these four held some special significance for the Chaos Lords. Though they were used as food, toys and chattel just like any of their other creations, these four were given special preference in terms of the freedoms they enjoyed, the numbers in which they were made, and the powers they were granted.

But even with such creatures arrayed about them, the Old Ones thirst for minions could not be slaked so they summoned from other worlds and dimensions, creatures great and small, turning the Palladium World into a nightmarish menagerie of creatures of every conceivable appearance. From the beautiful to the monstrous, the Old Ones either made a race or summoned one to populate their dark court. It was during this effort that the Chaos Lords seduced the mighty Dragons to serve the Darkness, offering them power and glory unimagined if they would only carry out the Old Ones' will. The Dragons should have known better.

Transformed into slaves the moment they accepted the Old Ones' terms, the Dragons began a miserable existence of subservience, humiliation and indignity. For unspeakable eons, the Dragons did their dark lords' will, never showing the anger in their hearts. They were angry at the Old Ones, true, but they were even more so at themselves for being foolish enough to get themselves into this situation. Finally, they began to realize, one by one, that they had gotten themselves into this and they could get themselves out, too. It might take a thousand years of pain and bloodshed, and their freedom might come only in death, but better to live for a moment free than for eternity in shackles. And so, the seeds of the great rebellion known as the *Chaos War* were sown.

Let the Heavens Tear Asunder: The Chaos War

The first battle of the Chaos War was not a strike against the Old Ones, but the discovery of the growing rebellion and the subsequent murder of all those who dared oppose the Chaos Lords. For many eons, the Dragons slowly pooled their strength and gathered allies from all over the Old Ones' domain. Elves, Titans, Changelings, and many other races resented their dreaded masters and yearned for the chance to strike back at them. The Dragons promised this and more if they joined in an uprising, and so was formed an underground movement, a rebel force that was going to win its freedom or die trying.

Unfortunately, these brave souls never got their chance, because they were betrayed from within by one who secretly still served the Old Ones. The Chaos Lords' minions fell upon the rebels, who fought bravely, but were ultimately defeated. To make an example of these renegades, the Old Ones performed all manner of hideous tortures upon them, extending their lives and their threshold for pain so they could absorb more punishment than they could have ever imagined. For ten long years the sounds of the condemned split the air of the world as the Old Ones and their charges inflicted the worst torture and punishments upon the rebels. Their message was clear: Obey or suffer so that death would be a blessing.

The rebels knew they had been dealt a terrible blow, but enough of them remained undiscovered. They were now a fractious lot, however, as they all pointed fingers at who might have been the one that betrayed the group. Many thought it was one

of the Changelings, for they were a race well liked by the Old Ones for their duplicity and their knavery. With no more Changelings left in the rebel ranks, the stories of Changeling betrayal went unchallenged for years until the tales took on a life of their own. Before much longer, the very name of that shape shifting race became synonymous with treachery, evil and untrustworthiness, a legacy that lives on to this day, though the modern world generally knows nothing of its origin.

For many years, the friends and descendants of those brave, betrayed rebels maintained the hope of one day rekindling the fires of resistance. They knew the Old Ones had short memories, for they were more powerful than they were wise. It would only be a matter of time before the Chaos Lords and their minions forgot there ever was a rebellion, and when that time came, then the dreams of resistance could become real once more.

Finally, when the seventh generation of the seventh generation after the original rebellion came into its own, the time had come to strike. The Old Ones seemed to have forgotten about the past betrayal of their minions. What's more, their other minions had grown lazy and shiftless. Even the Old Ones began to bicker amongst themselves and suspect each other of treachery.

It was the Dragons who struck first, manipulating the Old Ones into fighting each other, inciting many other minion races into rebellion, and even tricking Xy, the greatest Old One of all, to succumb to a magic of his own creation. With Xy fallen, the hope of victory suddenly became a tangible one, and the rebellious races knew their cause could indeed be won. It was this time when the rebels became more than mere revolutionaries. They became a force of hope and retribution to be reckoned with. They would forever be known as the *Alliance of Light*.

For countless eons, the Alliance of Light and the Old Ones fought a titanic battle across the whole of the world. Many times the Alliance seemed all but destroyed, but each time a hero would come forth to salvage the war effort, to buoy the Alliance's collective spirits, and to keep them fighting. Three such heroes were *Lokum the Angel*, *Kym-Nark-Mar the Dragon Lord*, and *Lictalon the Master of Magic*. Together, these Three Heroes would form the new leadership for the Alliance of Light as the Chaos War entered its final phase.

Using all of their abilities and knowledge, the Heroes Three acquired a secret magic, one so powerful that it would either destroy the world or it would strike a mortal blow to the Old Ones. Not knowing which, the Heroes had a difficult decision to make. Was freedom worth risking the destruction of everything?

Yes.

And so the Heroes used their secret magic and indeed, it struck the Old Ones into a sleep so deep it was like death itself. With their leaders fallen, the last bastions of the Old Ones' resistance were soon overwhelmed by the Armies of Light. The slaughter continued for a full year, and the Soldiers of Light ignored the Armies of Chaos' repeated pleas for surrender and mercy. For you see, mercy was not on the mind of the Alliance of Light. They were obsessed with vengeance. Vengeance for an eternity of slavery, for the punishment of their ancestors who dared rise up against tyranny, and for the hardships inflicted upon them by the Soldiers of Chaos during the Chaos War. No, there would be no mercy for those who served Darkness, the Alliance of Light had decided. No mercy but death.

In the northwestern corner of the world, where the Old One's last bastions had stood, the killing was particularly terrible, with millions of slain Chaos Minions literally covering the earth everywhere, separated only by rivers of blood. It is said that the magnificent forests of the region grew dark and twisted, fed by the blood of so much evil. Their unholy feast of blood taints the forests of the *Darkest Heart* to this day, a reminder of the Alliance of Light's failure to control their rage.

After the infamous Year of Blood, the Alliance of Light's greatest gods and heroes realized the horrible injustices they had committed, and they beseeched their fellows to stop the carnage. Many did not want to stop, for they would not rest until every single Chaos Minion was dead or gone from this world. The leaders of the Alliance of Light had a different idea. True, Chaos could not go unpunished, but to show them the same savagery and cruelty that they themselves had been shown was wrong. It lowered the Alliance of Light into a murderous rabble, hardly any better than the Chaos Minions. No, if the Alliance was to be a great power, if they were to truly represent Light, as they said they did, they had to show that they were better than the Chaos Minions they so longed to destroy.

They would have to show them justice, not revenge. Yet, what justice could there be for those who so clearly deserved death?

The answer came to the Alliance of Light's leaders, *undeath*.

Crimes and Punishment:

The Mortification

With the final defeat and surrender of the Armies of Chaos, there was left behind only a blighted land. What once was the Old Ones' greatest stronghold was now an utterly ruined wasteland where no good thing could flourish. The Alliance of Light gathered all of their prisoners here, to the farthest corner of the world, and they used some of their remaining stores of energy to erect a massive wall of stone that no creature could easily scale. These *Northern Mountains* cut off this region from the rest of the world, condemning the many different evil creatures to live amongst themselves, sentenced to a life of constant hardship, suffering, and internecine conflict. This land would forever more be known as the *Land of the Damned*, just as it is today.

Only the punishment of the wicked did not stop there. For there still remained those many minions who the Alliance of Light's more callous members felt deserved "special treatment" for their role in the Chaos War. These were the enemies who fought with special viciousness, the enemies who caused the Alliance undue pain or grief, and those among the Alliance itself who betrayed the cause, showed cowardice, or otherwise did something to earn their fellows' enmity. These poor souls were to be given the harshest punishment the Alliance of Light had to hand down. They would all be transformed magically into an undead shadow of their former selves, turned into hideous monstrosities whose shape and nature would be a metaphor for the specific crime one was being punished for. *Traitors* would be turned into one kind of creature, while *torturers* would be turned into another kind. Along with these, the millions of corpses that already littered the region would be re-animated, creating an endless host of skeletons and zombies to further complicate the condemned ones' existence here. And lastly, the Alliance cast a

great spell upon the earth so that no creature dwelling within it could ever leave, no matter what, and so that any living fool who dared venture into this forbidden realm would be beset by a host of horrid curses. This entire process would be known as the *Mortification*. And it would be the act that not only created the region of the Land of the Damned now known as the *Eternal Torment*, but it also signaled the coming dissolution of the Alliance of Light itself.

The Alliance of Light's downfall came before the Mortification, however. After the Year of Blood, the Alliance had found itself in two mutually irreconcilable camps. Those who were horrified at the bloodshed the Alliance was already responsible for, and who wanted to resolve the defeat of the Old Ones using merciful means, and those who either had no problem with simply exterminating the Old Ones' remaining minions or were indifferent to the bloodshed, which by default made them supporters of it because they did not choose to oppose it. Almost immediately after this division formed, the Alliance of Light began to argue amongst itself. The unity they had known during the Chaos War was now gone, and former allies were now bickering and squabbling, distrustful of each other's motives, critical of each other's actions, both in the Chaos War and afterward.

When those within the Alliance of Light got the rest of their comrades to cease killing the Old Ones' minions, they were called on to come up with some kind of alternative to the slaughter. The creation of the Land of the Damned and the Mortification were those alternatives, devised to grant the defeated soldiers of Chaos an alternative to death, but at the same time inflict upon them the kind of punishment they so richly deserved.

Not surprisingly, the Alliance fell divided over this, too, with one side feeling the Mortification was an improper and dishonorable means of torturing one's enemies, and with the other side feeling that the Mortification was the perfect retribution for the fallen villains. The Alliance was dividing itself further and further into factions and sub-factions, as the members argued bitterly amongst themselves both before, during and especially after the Mortification over the justness of it all.

As a result, nearly half of the Alliance of Light quit the fellowship after the Mortification, claiming it had either been a stupid waste of time and resources (why not just kill them all?) or that it had been an inhumanly cruel and gruesome fate nobody deserved, and certainly not a punishment that a true hero of Light would ever inflict on anybody for any reason. It seemed too much like something the Old Ones might do.

The Alliance of Light would never be the same. Those disgusted by the punishments meted out abandoned the Alliance in shame, as did those who argued for genocide and even more terrible retribution. So depleted of its former might and unity of purpose, the remaining tatters of the Champions of Light were in no shape to properly pursue its secondary task of establishing watch guards throughout the Land of the Damned to make sure its inhabitants never gained too much power, and could not find a way to get out. So it was that the ill-fated legion known as the *Garrison* was put into place, and though it was staffed with mighty and brave warriors, it would ultimately be overwhelmed by the very villains it was supposed to hold at bay. Even so, the other failsafes of the prison, the last of the Alliance did decide, should hold the darkness within for all eternity. And so the Land

of the Damned was abandoned by the Light in more ways than one.



Valor Unpaid, Allies Betrayed: The Fall of Therendil

And like that, one day the Alliance was gone altogether. There was never any huge breakup or formal cancellation of the Alliance, just a long and painful kind of entropy that followed the defections that resulted from the Mortification. No one within the Alliance truly felt that their order could ever be the same again. They would never have the power and will to do what had been done, and if such were the case, then there was no more reason to be a part of it. Thus, one by one, the heroes, groups, races and gods quit the Alliance and returned to their corner of the universe, where they could go on with life.

Though the Alliance of Light would shine no more, the same could not be said for the mortal legacy it left behind, the noble Garrison. This ragtag army of true believers stayed to fight the good fight. To make certain the evil and darkness was, indeed, forever contained. But as the Alliance fell apart, so too did the Garrison, for they no longer had the manpower or equipment or supplies they once had, and no gods to call upon for assistance. Abandoned and weakened, the Garrison eventually fell as those evil beings contained in the Land of the Damned grew stronger over the eons without anybody knowing it. Finally, these forces of evil challenged the Garrison in open warfare. The result would be a prolonged retreat by the Garrison as it lost piece by bloody piece of the land they once guarded with their lives.

Likewise, during the Chaos War, the newly-formed Elven nation of **Therendil** devoted its whole self towards achieving victory over the Old Ones and their thralls. When victory was achieved, Therendil further volunteered itself to be part of the Garrison, keeping watch over the entire Darkest Heart. The idea was that they would control a band of territory running through the middle of the region, preventing any large blocs of the Damned from uniting and getting too powerful. Perhaps if there had been more nations like Therendil devoting their efforts toward the Garrison, the plan might have worked. As it happened, the areas to the north and south of the Darkest Heart grew stronger and bolder, and, with time, began challenging their Garrison watchmen in open battle. Though Therendil was strong enough to defend itself, the rest of the Garrison was not. Over thousands of years, the Garrison was slowly broken apart into smaller and smaller cells of resistance. Those who stood their ground were overrun and destroyed. Those who fled retreated to the Northern Mountains, with most dying along the way. The fateful battle of *Terminus* forever sealed the Garrison's fate, as the last vestiges of that order finally quit the Land of the Damned, leaving the region of evil to be its own custodian.

Elsewhere, deep in the Darkest Heart, Therendil was isolated from the beginning of the Garrison's troubles. Unable to break out of the very forests it patrolled, the Therendil armies found themselves fighting a hopeless war of attrition as mile after bloody mile of their territory fell into the hands of the assorted creatures of Chaos left behind in this sinister realm. In desperation, the Elven nation retreated fully to its largest stronghold, the **Palace of Therendil**, where it would wait out the siege for as long as it took. The siege never lifted and continues to this day. Meanwhile, the Therendil Elves persevere, but the ambient evil of the Land of the Damned has seeped into their fortress and into their very souls. Now, the *Therendil* and the *evil Faerie Folk* who are their nominal allies are scarcely any better than the *Were-Beasts* and other monsters who seek their destruction. In many ways, the Fallen Palace of Therendil represents a worse fate than the destruction of the Garrison – it is *the corruption* of what was supposed to be strong and pure and righteous. Their tainted nature is like a message that the Alliance of Light never was as holy and right as it pretended to be, that the darkness within has tainted the land with their own legacy of murder and evil. That for all of its warring and posturing, the Alliance could never finish the Chaos War properly or rise above their own lust for self-righteous retribution. Thus, the Land of the Damned remains a place of festering evil born from the Alliance of Light's inability to show true justice and mercy to their defeated enemies.

Evil Makes Its Return: The Cities of Bone

In the absence of any heroes able to keep the prisoners of the Land of the Damned in check, they begin to grow in power and savagery, each establishing their own petty kingdoms within the ruined land, with ambitions to one day rule the entire region – and then the world.

In the south, the scene was ripe for an overlord to rise up and take control of the Mortified domain that seethed with deadly power and hatred for the living. That overlord would come in the form of a curious villain known as the *Triad of Death*, the

Trinity, and the *Lords of Torment*. Of these names, the third one seems the most official, though perhaps it does the least to describe this peculiar force. The Lords of Torment appeared seemingly out of nowhere, commanding great necromantic power, and able to either withstand or deflect the curses that blighted the Eternal Torment. Though the Lords of Torment were three individuals, each with particular powers and personality, they shared a common mind, and for all intents and purposes, might better be thought of as the three hands of an as-yet unseen mastermind. Who or what exactly the Lords of Torment are, remains unknown to all. The three Lords appear to be human, but appearances can be deceiving, especially in the Land of the Damned.

What matters most about the Lords of Torment is that they each managed to gain control over vast numbers of the *Endless Dead*, the name used to refer to the collective "members" of the Eternal Torment. With huge numbers of followers all unable to deny their masters' commands, the Lords of Torment erected three grand cities nestled high in the mountains of *Galdrum's Teeth*. These three *Cities of Bone* – *Marrow*, *City of Hunger*, *Thretch*, *City of Pain* and *Entropus*, *City of Ruin* – would become the Lords of Torment's seats of power. From these three fortress necropoli they would gather the Endless Dead and rule their particular corner of the Land of the Damned. They would gather their strength, master their domain, and build the forces they would need to one day break free of the region and wage war upon all living nations across the Palladium world.

Chaos Triumphant: The Darkest Dawn

The final section of the *Lost Chronicle* is not a telling of things past, but of things to come. It prophesies that the "rise of the dead" shall herald a new age of doom and chaos, that though the Light has the strength to abate this evil tide, it remains too scattered and dim. There would only be a short time in which the soldiers of Light can intervene. After that, the strongest forces of the Eternal Torment shall burst forth from their age-old prison, raining death and destruction upon an unsuspecting world. Afterwards, there would be drought and famine like no other seen before, as the Endless Dead burn crops, salt the earth, foul rivers and streams by passing through them, and other such acts. Remember, the Endless Dead have no use for such things and the more they raze the land, the better.

In addition to that, there lies the other danger that should the Endless Dead rampage across the world and cause significant enough death and destruction, would that be enough to help stir the Old Ones from their slumber? After all, nobody *really* knows how long the Old Ones are supposed to be asleep, or if and when and how they might be revived when the time comes.

The *Lost Chronicle* warns that unless the Endless Dead can be stopped, there will come a faltering of the barriers of all kinds, starting in the Land of the Damned as the breach left by the Dead will widen into something to allow the whole region to invade the rest of the world. There will be untold suffering and hardship. There will be lamenting the likes of which have never been seen in the Modern Age. The cycle of the universe will renew itself, with a reborn Age of Chaos, and it shall be those faithful few who, after the storm has calmed, will have the sense

to know that this is the way of all things, that there will be times of Light and of Darkness, of Order and of Chaos, and that regardless of the efforts of one, the other must and will have its crowning times as well.

Rumors, Tall Tales & Damned Lies

The following section is from the secret archives of the *Bizantium Scouting Corps*, an elite group of soldiers and scholars who explore the world in the name of the Bizantium monarchy. The prime mission of the Scouting Corps is to develop new trading routes and to expose mysterious hazards that traditionally trouble Bizantium merchant vessels. To a lesser extent, the Corps is responsible for developing military applications for the information it uncovers – secret attack lanes, defensive measures close to the homeland, and so on.

The Scouting Corps has recently been given the go-ahead from the King to explore the Land of the Damned. Though the Corps is long on enthusiasm, it is too short on manpower and resources to launch a full-fledged exploration of the mysterious region, largely because so many of its members are pursuing tasks for the crown in other parts of the world. As a result, the Corps is openly recruiting outsiders to do their exploring for them, provided their loyalty to Bizantium can be assured. Though payments for freelancers depends on reputation and skill, the average hero can expect a payment of at least 10,000 gold for his or her part in a "successful" excursion to the Land of the Damned. "Successful" meaning that the party makes it there, disembarks, and returns with some kind of valuable information about the place. Since no expedition ever consists of more than two-thirds freelancers (half and half is preferred), the Bizantium Scouts in the group can be trusted to make sure freelancers don't simply make up stories about the Land of the Damned to collect their fee.

The first step in planning any expedition to the Land of the Damned is to consult the Bizantium Scouting Corps' archives for info on the Land of the Damned. The Corps assembled this information by copying every text on the subject at the Library of Bletherad (a massive undertaking, since Corps scouts did all the copying themselves and in secret) and then supplementing it heavily with first-hand observations from the tiny handful of successful scouting trips made by the Corps, which is mostly about the Northern Mountains. (97% of all scouting missions into that part of the world are never heard from again.) Consequently, much of the archives consists of a huge body of *rumor* and *secondhand information* taken from regional legends and lore, and unverifiable sources (e.g., sailors, rangers, hermits, Kankoran warriors, and the like).

While the Scouting Corps has compiled a good bit of information about the Land of the Damned, it still provides a very sketchy portrait of the place, especially when compared to the wealth of information available on other parts of the world. Given the spottiness and unreliability of much of the Corps' archives, their veracity has been publicly questioned by a small but vocal minority of scholars and explorers (most of whom are

in direct competition with the Scouting Corps to chart the Land of the Damned). Still, the majority of the adventuring community believes (and rightly so) that the Bizantium Scouting Corps has the goods when it comes to the Land of the Damned, and if anybody wants to learn about that region, they had better schedule a trip to Bizantium first. (If nothing else, the Scouting Corps does have good information on the Great Northern Mountains and the Sea of Despair, either of which must be tackled to gain entry into the cursed region. See sourcebooks **The Northern Hinterlands** for the Sea of Despair and mountain lowlands, and **Land of the Damned One: Chaos Lands** for details on the mountains.)

While the Corps' archives cover every aspect of the Land of the Damned (history, monsters, geography, magic, etc.), separating fact from fiction can be as difficult as traveling through the region itself. As a result, there are substantial portions of the archive that the Scouting Corps does not trust and wishes to examine further to verify its truth or falsehood. Below is a sampling of the sort of information the Corps would like to know more about.

As with the rest of the material presented in this part of the book, the extent to which *any* of the following information is true is left to the Game Master's imagination. If something here looks cool and strikes your fancy, make it real and build an adventure off it. Of course, G.M.s are welcome to take anything from this list and present it as fact to the player characters when it really is untrue. Incorrect information is a frequent occupational hazard of the adventurer, especially in the Land of the Damned.

The following rumor lists pertain only to the focus of this book, *Darkest Heart* and the *Eternal Torment*. Rumors regarding the Northern Mountains and the Great Rift (as well as further information on the Bizantium Scouting Corps) are covered in the **Chaos Lands** sourcebook. Rumors regarding the Broken Horn and the Bleakness will be covered in **Land of the Damned Book Three: The Bleakness**.

G.M. Note: Many of these rumors reference new monsters and animals. When you see a creature mentioned that you don't recognize in the *Darkest Heart* rumor mills, check out the **Barbarous Horde** section of this book for more information. When you see an unfamiliar creature in the *Eternal Torment* rumor mills, check out the **Endless Dead** section.

Rumor Mill: The Outer Weald

01-07%: Hermits descended from old Garrison soldiers are known to live in cleverly camouflaged huts and holes in the tall grassy areas of the Outer Weald. There, they will sit for days, perfectly motionless, before zapping passer-by with blowguns firing poison tipped darts. They are especially hostile toward humanoids, since they associate them with the Therendil Elves, who basically left the Garrison to die so very long ago.

08-14%: There is a massive Baltosaur migration going on, with over seventy of these beasts heading north into the Great Rift area. When they reach the battlegrounds of the Minion War where Deevils and Demons feud, they will just walk right over the warring factions. But what do they mean to do when they hit the Great Rift? Some think they will fall off the edge to commit mass suicide, while others believe the creatures are heading for an unknown land bridge that will let them cross the Rift and en-

ter the Bleakness, where they have been summoned by the Masters of the Citadel!

15-20%: There is a single Beast of Kathos – a giant turtle-like creature that has a hollow cavity under its shell for storing items or passengers. It lives in the Outer Weald and has a Gnome-sized Golem made of stone inside its shell. This mini-Golem is really the villainous arch-mage *Powmer the Grievous*, who not only caused great turmoil in numerous provinces of the Western Empire, but has also conducted slaving in the Eastern territory, trafficked in secret navigational info in the Bizantium Kingdom, and fomented race riots in Timiro. He is a universally hated and hunted figure whose last means of escape was switching his life force into a sturdy Golem-body, and then hiding in the back of a creature nobody would dare to investigate – a Beast of Kathos. Powmer intends to live for as long as he can in this creature's back cavity.

21-27%: Any Ogres or Trolls that venture into the Outer Weald will immediately begin losing intelligence as they devolve into a cruder, more brutish version of themselves. As they undergo this change, they increase in strength (by 1D6 or 2D6, in some cases Trolls gain Supernatural Strength). They also develop weird bony protrusions through their flesh, like small Stegosaur back plates. Only these things are fairly small and smooth. They enable Ogres and Trolls to parry incoming weapon hits with their arms and legs without taking any damage, and they give both races a natural A.R. of 12 plus they add +1D6 points of damage to any punching, kicking or body block attacks.

28-34%: Ever since rumors have gotten out that two rune devices (the *Gluttonous Nobleman* and the *Knobby Goblin*) that can lay waste to entire regions might be lost somewhere in the Land of the Damned, various bards and minstrels have been up in arms. The presence of such devices flies in the face of everything they know of the Palladium world, and even if stories of those things are mere rumors, they still don't like it. Well, they had better sit down for this one, because according to legend, the ancient rune smiths who created the *Nobleman* and the *Goblin* also designed enormous bat-winged gliders with which to deliver them on to their targets. Apparently, these huge bat wings could turn invisible to any form of detection, allowing them to approach their target unseen and strike without warning. Supposedly these were going to be a secret weapon for the Garrison, but the rune smiths responsible for building them ran into huge cost overruns, and the entire effort was abandoned after the first bat wing was delivered. Where the bat wing is today, however, remains to be seen. Might it have been stored in secret somewhere in the Outer Weald?

35-40%: The *Hidden Fortress of Thandenore* is an invisible stronghold built by the Garrison but abandoned mere days after it was first staffed. Nobody ever had a chance to move in, settle down, or even unpack most of the weapons, armor and supplies delivered a few days earlier. In the ensuing chaos of the Garrison's retreat, Thandenore was forgotten, and it sat, undisturbed and unseen, all this time. Now, reports of a fortress image flickering in and out of sight in the Outer Weald indicate that the camouflaging magicks that once hid Thandenore are wearing off. Those who know what's good for them will try to get to the fortress before anyone else so they might remove items of importance and value, especially the kinds of things that might prove dangerous if they fell into evil hands.

41-47%: Deep in the Outer Weald there lies a place where dreaded *Pit Things* lie side by side in a checkerboard-type pattern. Together, they form a ring of Pit Things three deep, making it all but impossible to cross on foot. High in the sky circle a vast flock of *Slaughterhawks* who will attack anybody who tries to fly overhead. The Pit Thing circle is easily 50 miles (80 km) across! *Something* is (presumably) within that circle of monsters, and the methods used to cordon it off are either to keep that something from getting out or to keep others from getting to it. Rumor has it that an ancient fort lies in the center and uses the Barbarous Horde as a kind of defense. Others think that a heinous criminal mastermind lives in the middle of this weird preserve. Still others have claimed the creatures keep folks away from a series of powerful magic circles or magic item, or imprisoned god or demon lord, and some think that the Garrison left behind a vast treasure when they pulled out of the Outer Weald and set up this network as security to protect it so they might one day return and reclaim what they had to abandon. Any of these could be true, or none of them. Perhaps there is a prize to be won or there may be nothing at all.

48-54%: During the Elf-Dwarf War, a Dwarven renegade named *Ondur Bost* fled to the Darkest Heart with a stolen cache of rune weapons and other unusual magic items. He knew that both his society and that of the Elves would use them to try to destroy each other, but he wanted to preserve what he could, so he sent them as far away from the conflict as possible. If *Ondur's* journals (which were discovered in the Yin-Sloth Jungles, long after the Elf-Dwarf War ended) are to be believed, he buried his vast storehouse of magic items as well as a host of books and historical artifacts describing in the greatest of detail what Dwarven society was like at that period of time. Of particular interest were *Ondur's* books of arcane knowledge, in which he supposedly detailed the twelve Dwarven schools of magic that were kept secret from the Elves, and were lost during the war. Any serious student of Dwarven history, magic, or any conspiracy has at least heard of "*Ondur's Trove*" and dreams of one day finding it. The last attempt to do so failed when the treasure hunters entered the Northern Mountains never to be seen again. According to legend, an ancient Dwarven adventurer (name unknown) claimed to have found the location of the cache, but could not get to it before being forced to flee from monsters. That particular legend says the treasure is buried in the Outer Weald, with a large and unusual rock formation on top of the site.

55-60%: There are large fields of "bone grass" in the Outer Weald that resembles bamboo but is as hard as bone. If one were to break off a stalk, they could fashion a good blowgun, flute or arrow out of it. According to a few scholars, this bone grass is nothing of the sort, and is really the petrified hairs of a buried monster so large that its body fills the whole of the Land of the Damned! That's pure balderdash, insist other scholars. Or is it?

61-67%: Every thirteen months, huge wildfires sweep across the Outer Weald, burning down everything in their path. They tend to cause a serious loss of life, but this is just part of the natural process of the region. Afterwards, on the charred plains, the largest beasts of the Barbarous Horde gather together for reasons unknown. Different species all join up and patrol the burned lands until the grass starts growing there again. Any hu-

manoid who enters the burned regions during this time is likely to get trampled. Why are the animals attracted to the land during this time? What is it about the burned land that is so important no humanoid must disturb it?

68-74%: When the Western Empire last tried to take over the world a little over 400 years ago, one of the most dramatic battles in that conflict was the *Battle of Ten Champions*, in which five legendary warriors and mystics from both sides of the conflict squared off at the height of the fighting. As the battle raged around them, the brawl between the Ten Champions ebbed and flowed, and so did the fortunes of either side of the warring armies! The Western champions won, but not before losing four of their number (the Allied Champions lost all five Champions, three from the East, a Wolfen, and an Elven mystic). The last living Western champion was *Torval Burgenvi*, an evil anti-palladin with supernatural strength. Swearing that no enemies of his beloved Western Empire would ever raise a sword against it once more, *Torval* picked up the dropped weapons of each of the five champions and hurled them so hard they disappeared over the horizon before landing. It is said that at least half of these – all major magical weapons and some even the personal creations of long-forgotten gods – landed in the Outer Weald or the Land of the Damned, where they were covered by the elements and forgotten. **75-80%:** According to a secret communique within the Church of the Northern Pantheon, some foul villain has actually stolen the souls of three Northern deities and hid them in the Land of the Damned! The deities thus victimized are unknown, but their souls are being held in ornately decorated brass pots (sealed of course) and scattered across the so-called End of the World. Some stories say that the Outer Weald is that place at the end of the world. Find one, and the way to the other two stolen souls will become clear. Obviously, the heroes who return the souls to their rightful owners can expect *quite* the reward for it. Or so the story goes.

81-87%: Every year, sections of the Outer Weald saturate with swelling ground water that never recedes later. Bit by bit, large swamps are forming in the region, which is not so alarming except that tall tales claim these are no mere mud puddles. They are actually an alien dimension "seeping" into this world and will eventually connect the Outer Weald to a putrid dimension of unspeakable horror. Somebody must find away to stop the two planes of existence from merging, by stopping the swamps from growing any further. Already there are tales of shambling plant-people emerging from the swamp, fighting whoever or whatever they encounter.

88-94%: The Darkest Heart in general is believed to be part of an inter-dimensional disturbance that actually makes the region many times larger than it might appear from the air. This has made charting the region by the inhabitants very difficult, but not so much in the Outer Weald, where the flat terrain makes for speedy travel. It is said that in the dead center of the region is a lost city built by an ancient race that even predates the Old Ones. The magic this place radiates is of a sort the Old Ones did not even mess with – they just left the place be. Will the heroes who inevitably find this place possess such wisdom (or timidity, depending on how you look at it)? Or will they go ahead and see what this wild magical place is all about?

95-00%: Every year, Western nobles from the coastal regions organize a daring (some say suicidal) regatta in which

they sail their yachts north along the Land of the Damned's western border, land at the Ruins of **Westmarch** (a destroyed fortress mentioned in the **Darkest Heart** section of this book), swipe a piece of rubble and return home. There have been nine regattas thus far. NONE have ever succeeded, much less yielded any survivors. Yet bored thrill seekers undertake the quest nonetheless. Some do it for the chance of discovering a sea route to the Land of the Damned, others for the reported 100,000 gold reward posted for anybody who successfully completes the quest, others for the fame and glory. The money is put up each year by a mysterious ex-adventurer who lost a hand, eye and leg the last time he tried making it into the Land of the Damned, and he would very much like to see somebody succeed where he failed. One must wonder how many (if any) Western nobles may have been washed ashore on the cursed Land of the Damned and what fate befell them?

Rumor Mill: The Middle Weald

Remember, these are rumors and tall tales, some *may* be true, have only some smidgen of truth to them or be completely false.

01-07%: Rumor has it that a small army of Dwarves who are all direct descendants of warriors from the Elf-Dwarf War have devoted their lives to reaching the Middle Weald and somehow destroying the massive rock idol, *Slaughter Rock*, that is worshiped by the Were-Beast horde there. According to rumor, they still exist and every year they seek stout adventurers to join one or two of their own on a foray into the realm of monsters that is the Land of Damned. Non-Dwarves are welcome, and typically it is the Dwarves who quietly recruit those they believe can do the job, otherwise none can identify or find them on their own.

08-14%: Atop one of the Middle Weald's tallest trees is a small fortress/stronghold that, in the middle, has a vertical passageway that leads straight down to the ground (don't worry, it has a ladder to descend on) and an untold depth beneath the earth. Nobody knows what is really down there. Some folks insist that this is one of the passageways to the famed Palladium Underworld – a network of subterranean caves, chambers, rivers and passageways that extends underneath the entire Palladium World or through an invisible dimensional portal to the realm of demons! Other scholars insist that the tree simply leads deep underground to a dead end passageway that sports the sign, "This way to Flood Control Dam #3," whatever *that* means. Suppos-

edly, the first local explorers who scouted the passageway found at the site a "strangely familiar brass lantern" along with a sword "of Elven workmanship." Most serious explorers consider this last story a hoax, and not a funny one at that. Exploring the Land of the Damned is serious business, not to be treated like some . . . some . . . game!

15-20%: There roams in the middle Weald a Werewolf pack containing over 200 members, all of whom are carriers of the dread curse *lycanthropy* (see the description of Were-Beasts for more details). These cursed Werewolves supposedly can change shape from man to beast whenever they want to, day or night. It is also said that they can spread lycanthropy to other people just by getting near them – the normal transmission mode of a bite or a claw is not needed!

21-27%: Over a thousand years ago, the eccentric alchemist *Kodo the Mad* funded an ill-fated trip into the Darkest Heart so he might test out a new magic invention of his, a kind of hand-cranked siren that generates a noise most humanoids (including those with sensitive hearing, like Wolfen) can not hear. However, the noise is piercing to all Were-Creatures and it will immediately drive them from the vicinity. The siren can be heard for a one mile (1.6 km) radius. Kodo sent home a magic pigeon stating that his initial tests were successful, and that he would try it out on the creatures of the Barbarous Horde next. Since no word was ever heard from the alchemist after that, one can assume the test went, um, rather poorly. Whether or not his siren still exists is a question certain forces would like to answer, for it would give them a powerful weapon against the Were-Beasts.

28-34%: According to Garrison lore, there is a small number of Elven, female martial artists whose specialty is wandering the forest in the hopes of encouraging various Were-Beasts to attack them. When the creatures pounce, that is when they learn that these warriors are especially good at conducting the Spirit Strike of the Warrior Monk and slaying supernatural monsters. These mysterious fighters supposedly *hate* Werewolves (and normal wolves, for that matter) and are known to wear hooded red cloaks as their badge of office.

35-40%: Though the seasons stay the same in the Middle Weald, some of the trees still change and lose some of their leaves. It is as if they have two sets of leaves, one in an "autumn" phase and one in a "summer" phase. This way, the trees are often at least partially multicolored, as well as shedding some, but at the same time their branches are never bare.



Traveling near any of these trees is pretty hazardous, though, since the huge leaf piles on the ground around them can conceal brigands waiting in ambush. That, and the constant *shoosh-shoosh* people make when walking through the leaves makes it almost impossible for a group to *not* give away its position until there are no more dead leaves underfoot.

41-47%: Every once in a while, one will find a super-giant tree with an interesting message carved into it by those who have passed before. Some are epitaphs for fallen comrades, some are love letters to one's spouse or mate back home, some are warnings and some are said to be treasure maps pointing to caches of unknown origin and contents. A few (super rare) of these carvings are actually long-forgotten spells that if read aloud, will activate the spell! Mindful Wizards *might* be able to learn the spell if they perform a successful *scroll conversion* on such tree spells. Rumor also has it that there are entire groves of trees with deadly ward phrases carved into them – a veritable *mine field* that was established long ago but never tripped off. All it needs is a band of careless travelers to make one wrong step and BLAMMO!

48-54%: *Galters*, sinister stealth hunters who virtually rule certain parts of the forest, have recently begun to *not* eat Elves or Gnomes for any reason! Instead, they show special preference toward Ogres, Orcs, Goblins, Hob-Goblins and Kobolds. The few scattered reports regarding this insinuate that some ancient magic that was designed for the Chaos War activated only now, changing the entire temperament of these particular forest inhabitants.

55-60%: The barks of various small and medium-sized trees in the Middle Weald can produce potent nerve toxins if the bark is boiled over a low fire for a few hours. The boiling liquid then becomes the poison. A single patch of bark the size of a large book will yield a half gallon (1.9 liters) of toxin (said to do 2D6 points of damage and paralyze the limb it poisons for 2D4 melee rounds). If these trees could be transported elsewhere and harvested, it could become the first mass produced poison and might make poisoned weapons commonplace on every battlefield in the world. Assuming, of course, the trees are real and not some wild story, and that seeds or saplings could be successfully exported out of the Land of the Damned and that the trees could grow anywhere else in the world.

61-67%: Certain trees, if they are cut into by axe or saw, will automatically throw a curse on the cutter. The standard saving throw applies. Looks like some trees don't care to become lumber, huh?

68-74%: Certain *Thanes* have taken to patrolling the Middle Weald and gathering large piles of acorns and pine cones from the Middle Weald's magnificent trees. Considering that some of these trees are said to possess remarkable powers, it might not be a bad idea for adventurers to fill a sack with these while passing by. They never know what might come out of the ground once they are planted! Of course, getting past the angry *Thanes* (described elsewhere), who do not like it when people help themselves to their debris piles, is likely to require combat.

75-80%: The otherwise innocuous creature known as the *Psyklops* is a major threat only to those who possess psychic powers. When frightened, these creatures emit a painful psychic feedback wave that can kill psychics if they are not rescued from it in time. According to the latest scuttlebutt from the

Northern Hinterlands, *Psyklops* excreta (*dung*, *doodie*, *patties*) will make psychics immune to this effect if they *eat* the stuff! Nobody knows how well this might work, *if at all*, but there are bound to be some psychics out there who are desperate enough to give it a try. The trick will be gathering the "feast" without alarming any nearby *Psyklops*. Supposedly, those who eat this . . . er, stuff must make a D20 roll against their P.E. or M.E. (whichever is lower) or they will retch and pass out. They will also be unable to ever try eating the stuff again, though they probably would not want to after such an experience.

81-87%: Entropy fields within the Middle Weald will sap the strength of any who pass through them. These fields vary in size, from a few feet/m in diameter, up to a few miles/km. Every minute (four melees) somebody spends in there, they must save vs magic or fall instantly asleep. At this point, the only rescue to be made is for somebody to either hook him with a line and bring him out, use magic methods to bring him out, or brave the field's effects personally, shrug them off, and carry the victim(s) to safety. At least those sleeping inside these places do not age. Supposedly, there are Elf and Dwarf scouts from the Elf-Dwarf War who still slumber in such fields. Faeries are supposed to be immune to these fields. Only a live trial will find that out for sure, though.

88-94%: Aww, aren't they cute? Even though they look like big ticks or something, the creatures known as *Ravagers* are just as friendly and responsive as any puppy dog. Too bad they eat so darn much. In fact, a few *Ravagers* in the wrong place at the wrong time could probably destroy an entire harvest season! Perhaps that is why Western spies (who are not always distinguished by their subtlety) have been heard asking about these creatures in many of the Empire of Sin's northern ports. It seems the Emperor would like to capture a few of these voracious beasts and experiment with them as a kind of weapon. After all, countries like the Eastern Territory would be far less likely to oppose Western expansion if they suddenly found themselves with no food.

95-00%: Though the vicious predator/scavengers known as the *Hygorathes* fear no creature, it is said they will not attack anybody speaking an ancient dialect of Dwarven. Could this lend credence to the theories that during the Elf-Dwarf War the Dwarves made numerous trips to the Land of the Damned in the hopes of taming some of its creatures and bringing them home to fight in the war against the Elves?

Rumor Mill: The Inner Weald

Remember, these are rumors and tall tales, some *may* be true, have only some smidgen of truth to them or be completely false. Some may only be learned once inside the region.

01-07%: Deep in the Inner Weald is a hidden Elven Kingdom called the *Fallen Palace of Therendil*. Now, it has been confirmed among the very privileged to know that these Elves are the last vestiges of what was the Garrison in the Darkest Heart. But what is really interesting is that the Elves there all maintain their immortality by stealing the life force of those who come to visit them! Supposedly, the Elves have established vast underground farms in which humanoids of all kinds are bred and raised like animals. When they reach adulthood, they

are brought to the Elves, who make a grand ritual out of slaying the creatures and drinking in their escaping life force as if it were a fine wine. One is hard pressed to decide who is more savage - the poor slaves kept in dank holes all their lives, or the haughty Elves who pretend to be fine and cultured but are just predators at heart.

08-14%: There is a giant serpent known as the *Slithering Terror* that lives in the Wealds. They are like giant constrictors except they have sharp-edged bony plates on their hides that allow them to cut their prey apart. Word is that these creatures can be captured when they are asleep and bridled like a work animal. Enterprising builders can then use these creatures as a tree-clearing device, swiping with their tail and slicing through trees like they were made of straw.

15-20%: The Faerie Queene *Seerea the Proud* supposedly died at the hands of her Satyr bodyguard *Tamerlane* a while back. But Seerea is really alive and used the incident to free herself of the pressures of ruling her Faerie society. The ex-Queen now roams the Inner Weald looking for her true love, a common Pixie named *Hancroft* who was expelled a few years ago for a minor transgression against one of the lower nobles in Seerea's Faerie court.

21-27%: And speaking of *Tamerlane*, what of him? He was last seen roaming the Inner Weald looking for ways to destroy Seerea's Faerie Kingdom, and he might just have found it. Apparently, Tamerlane discovered a suit of Pixie/Gnome-sized golden plate mail that had once belonged to the famous Palladin *Furghu Thrance*. The armor renders one near invulnerable to attack (A.R. 17 and the armor is indestructible, absorbing all damage from attacks that do not breach its A.R.), and supposedly makes its wearer impervious to all Faerie magic and dragon's breath. Even now, Tamerlane is using the suit's awesome powers to convince the various Ogres, Orcs and Goblin-folk in the Inner Weald to follow him as their leader. Once his mongrel army is complete, he shall march it against the Faeries and smash them. Or so say the rumors.

28-34%: Deep in the Inner Weald, it is said, one will find huge tracts where the trees are planted in a perfect grid order. Clearly somebody cut the forest down and re-seeded at some point, but what were they trying to accomplish? The Fallen Court of Therendil might have the answers, since maybe this was something their ancestors did. Maybe they cleared the land to build a fort or castle keep but later decided against it and re-seeded the earth. If that is the case, though, and if the Therendil Elves were behind it, then they probably carried out the Therendil tradition of burying a treasure chest full of the most treasured items of the latest member of the court to die. By doing this, they thought, they would bless the new construction with the spirit of somebody good and noble. However, Elven scholars insist this practice never existed.

35-40%: Most trees in the Inner Weald are very tall and broad. Their branches form a canopy that makes it very difficult for saplings to survive, because they get very little sunlight. Even during the day the light in the forest is dim with many deep shadows, making it seem like a perpetual dark twilight. However, there does grow on the forest floor and bases of trees, softly glowing lichens and moss that helps to light a traveler's way when walking about during the day.

At night the moss continues to radiate a dull light and numerous species of glowing insects come out from the underbrush and light up, illuminating the Inner Weald's ground level with a breathtaking display of moving light (which can also be seen and conceal Faerie Folk and Entities). According to legend, certain types of the glowing insects and moss, if eaten, will grant one the ability to see in the dark perfectly, and to make his own body glow, if he desires it.

41-47%: There is a clan of Ogres, Orcs and Goblin-folk in the Inner Weald who live among the treetops and have never set foot on the ground. These people are so used to swinging through the trees and climbing, they have developed a superb ability to climb and a great sense of direction. They also have a great prejudice against anybody from the ground, and will attack them at once. Word is, this clan has developed a variety of unique weapons to defend their realm, including a kind of missile weapon that looks like a short spear, but with the push of a button, the top end flies off, tethered to the handle by a tightly wound cord. When the shooter nails a target he then either retracts the tip of the weapon so it may fire again or tries to pull it (or himself) toward him. Against the living, the shooter may impale a target and hold on to his harpooned prey. If the target is up in the trees, a good pull should knock him off balance and on a fast trip to the forest floor. May also be used for climbing or swinging through the trees.

48-54%: There are many different species of weird mushrooms growing in the Inner Weald. Among the more interesting varieties is a huge *spotted mushroom* that if eaten, doubles the size of the one who has consumed it. It also increases his physical strength by 50% and some say grants him the ability to cast fire balls at will! Of course, some Rangers report having heard this tale about so-called "enchanted mushrooms" in other parts of the world and insist that no such 'shrooms really exist. It is just a recurring folk tale common to wilderness regions.

55-60%: Have you ever heard of the *Thirteen Rings of Eldritch Fury*? Of course you haven't. That is because on the day they were forged by the Eastern alchemist *Nubeera Shubanan*, his enemies laid siege to his lab, destroying it and slaying poor Nubeera. During the fighting, a trained eagle Nubeera owned grabbed the box containing the Thirteen Rings and flew off with them. The eagle was no dummy, and it knew the Rings were very important to Nubeera, even if it did not know why. Stories tell that though the eagle was never seen again, the box and its precious contents are in the eagle's nest someplace high up in a tree in the Inner Weald. Then again, other versions of this story place the box/nest in the Great Northern Wilderness, the Disputed Lands, Northern Hinterlands, Lopan and various northern islands. A few put it in the Old Kingdom Mountains and Yin-Sloth Jungles. Many adventurers and scholars suspect the story is pure fiction. Whether fact or fancy, nobody knows what these rings can really do, though legend says they are quite powerful.

61-67%: There is a clan of Were-Beasts who deplore the savagery of their brethren and have secretly allied themselves with the *Fallen Palace of Therendil*. Equal parts clan and cult, these Were-Beasts will gladly confer their abilities to anybody who desires them. In a lengthy ritual, the Were-Beasts will drain themselves of a little blood and then inject that blood into whoever desires it. Within three days, that person will become a

Were-Beast as well. According to rumor, an increasing number of Therendil soldiers and nobles, disenchanted with the corrupt state of their home, are leaving to meet these Were-Beasts and take part their blood-sharing ceremony. In the last five years, the Were-Beast clan has grown to several hundred members, and in another few years, they shall become a *major* force in the Inner Weald. At that point, they will be more than able to play a pivotal role in either driving out the evil Were-Beasts from the Inner Weald, or in launching the assault that will destroy the Fallen Palace once and for all. At this point, the true motivations of this group are foggy at best.

68-74%: There is a band of genuinely repentant demons living in the Inner Weald who are AWOL from the Minion War at the Great Rift. These are demons who simply decided one day that they no longer wanted to fight in a pointless war. Some say they also saw the folly of their evil ways and are making a serious attempt to reform and give up their former wickedness. There are dozens of these creatures living in secret scattered throughout the forest, and if they are discovered, they will beg whoever finds them to give them a worthy quest to carry out so they might put their new-found "moralities" to the test.

75-80%: The so-called *Empire of Trees* is a section of the Inner Weald where the trees grow so thick and dense that it is almost impossible to thread a path through them! The area looks like one huge composite tree that extends toward the sky. Something or someone lives either in the tops of these trees, or in the middle of them – perhaps the tightly knit tree trunks are like a fortress wall designed to keep meddlers out. If that be the case, then who knows what might lie on the other side? The perimeter of this tree-hedge is at least a mile or two (1.6 to 3.2 km) in diameter, enough for an entire village to reside within.

81-87%: There is an entire pantheon of gods who have "gone quiet" to let the world think they were killed in the Chaos War. They now reside in the Inner Weald. Without any followers to give them strength, these gods are all fairly weak as deities go and many of them seem like strong humanoids with some special powers, or at best, demigods. But together, these gods represent a powerful force, one that has secretly worked to maintain the balance of power within the Inner Weald. They are the ones who keep the Fallen Palace from collapsing in on itself, and from keeping the Were-Beasts from advancing too deeply into the Inner Weald.

88-94%: A race of giant bees lives in *huge* numbers throughout the Inner Weald. They build hives large enough for humanoids to crawl around in, and the honey they produce could feed an army. Of course, the stingers of these oversized insects are like heavy spears, and only a fool would willingly climb into an active hive. Well, not really, for some say these hives yield the finest honey the world has ever seen and just a single (man-sized) honeycomb could bring up to 5,000 gold on the open market! That's for each of one of those hexagonal segments within the hive. If somebody could actually procure an entire hive (good luck on figuring *that* one out), they could sell the honey and live like kings for the rest of their lives. Of course, transporting even a single honeycomb (if it even really exists) out of the Land of Damned through conventional means (i.e. over the mountains) would be a herculean task.

95-00%: The Inner Weald runs right up to the foothills of the Northern Mountains, which are themselves home to the *Dying*

Races, humanoids who fought in the Chaos War and now live in small numbers scattered throughout the mountains and the Land of the Damned. These folk are thought *mostly* to live in the Northern Mountains, but stories insist there are some secret trails leading from the western side of the mountains directly into the Inner Weald. And if that is the case, there might be substantial communities of these beings in the Inner Weald, and perhaps even living with or alongside the Fallen Palace of Therendil!

Rumor Mill: Galdrum's Teeth

Remember, these are rumors and tall tales, some *may* be true, have only some smidgen of truth to them or be completely false. Some may only be learned once inside the region.

01-07%: Though these mountains are hardly as strange or impressive as the Northern Mountains, they do have their moments. One mountaintop, for instance, is perfectly flat on the top, like it has been sheared off by a giant knife. Apparently no buildings were erected there, but there is a *massive* summoning circle of some kind carved into the rock. According to legend, if the grooves of that carving are filled with blood (which would require a lot of blood), a Summoner could force nearly any kind of living being, including certain dragons or gods, to come forth into the circle and serve their new master.

08-14%: Scattered pockets of civilization can be found in these mountains, tiny villages of frightened humanoids who live in constant fear of being discovered by the Endless Dead and devoured. After all, any living creature is in mortal danger in the Endless Torment.

15-20%: Those familiar with Galdrum's Teeth know of the three so-called *Cities of the Dead* found in the region. Places where undead overlords have gathered small armies of the night with which they intend to conquer all of the Land of Eternal Torment before trying to conquer the rest of the Land of the Damned. What they do not know is that there is also a *City of the Living* hidden in the mountains – a city that is populated exclusively by Palladins, Priests of Light, Undead Hunters, and other champions of light. The city is protected by a magic field that hides them from detection, and in their sanctuary, the forces of light train and prepare for the day they will launch a huge strike upon the cities of the Endless Dead, hopefully destroying them and ending the threat of a unified Land of Eternal Torment.

21-27%: Rock slides are frequent in these mountains, and they often reveal hidden caves and chambers that were once used to hide Soldiers of Light from the Old Ones, as well as caches of weapons, magic items and equipment. One such cache once contained five major holy weapons, each of which was designed for fighting the undead. The story goes that some of the Endless Dead found them and either threw them off the mountainside, or they kept them and hid them elsewhere so nobody would ever find them. Another story goes that the weapons were found by a bunch of dim-witted and harmless *Festulents* who took the weapons and brought them back to their village, where they have been used as "decorations" ever since.

28-34%: Small rivulets of blood have been seen trickling out of the rock faces of Galdrum's Teeth. When it gets very windy

and cold, these blood streams freeze on the rocks, looking like streams of crimson glass. If one looks at these blood streams carefully, they can see the reflections of hundreds of tiny faces within the blood, as if it contains the souls of so many dead men.

35-40%: There are areas within these sinister mountains where one's luck begins to swing wildly. One moment, a person can do little wrong; most everything they try to do turns out great, and fantastic opportunities simply fall into their lap. The next minute, however, all that reverses itself and the character suffers from bad luck and misfortune, losing his possessions, slipping, falling, injuring himself and suddenly everything that can go wrong does go wrong.

41-47%: There is, nestled within two of the mountains in this chain, a dimensional portal that leads from this world to either the *Dread Realm of Shadow* or the *Land of the Dead*. Word has it that when one goes through the portal, the destination is chosen at random.

48-54%: Galdrum's Teeth are the outer boundary of the Eternal Torment, a place where none of the Endless Dead may leave. It is said that in certain places right along the summit ridge of Galdrum's Teeth, there are mobs of the Endless Dead all walking in place, vainly trying to escape this region but held in place by the terrible forces that have cursed this land.

55-60%: Anybody of good alignment who enters the Eternal Torment will begin to glow with a pale white light. This will be especially troublesome at night, since the character will not be able to remain hidden, and numerous Endless Dead or other evildoers and predators are bound to come investigate the source of the glowing light.

61-67%: It is said that anybody who comes to the Eternal Torment will be contacted by the spirit of a dead friend, relative or loved one. These concerned spirits will insist the character turns back, but if they cannot be so persuaded, then the spirit will at least offer some advice and whatever the spirit knows about the Eternal Torment. The spirit may appear once or a handful of times while the character remains in the realm of the Endless Dead to offer additional words of comfort, cryptic warnings or bits of advice. It rarely lingers for more than a few minutes (often a minute or less) after it makes its appearance known. Even helpful ghostly visits can be chilling for the living.

68-74%: On the top of one of the mountains in this chain rests the *Endless Chain of Kaurulan*, a mysterious magic item said to be able to constrain any being, living or dead, and bind them to one's service. Yes, this includes Entities, Astral Travelers and ghostly spirits. The chain is made of metal and is indestructible. Why the chain has been left on a mountaintop and not put to good use is unknown.

75-80%: Any food brought into the Eternal Torment will spoil within 24 hours. Meat will fester and maggots will suddenly spring from it. However, local legend has it that if one eats three of these maggots, it will make those who consume them appear to be members of the *undead* and they will not be bothered by the roaming corpses, zombies and other dull-witted denizens of the Eternal Torment for 24 hours after eating the insects. However, the consumption of alcohol or magic potions will instantly negate the effect, revealing them to be one of the hated "living." This enchantment (if true) does not fool undead creatures with an I.Q. of 9 or higher.

81-87%: There is a stone entry gate in the Galdrum's Teeth and if one passes through it when first entering the region, he will not be cursed at all! This gate was built by the Alliance of Light as a means for their own champions to use when entering the region for various missions.

88-94%: Anybody who is slain in the Eternal Torment will arise in three days as one of the fifteen major types of undead monsters known to inhabit the region. The only way to prevent this (aside from not dying) is to undergo a rite of purification performed by any Priest of Light. In this ritual, one must promise to his or her god (it will not work if the person is an unbeliever) that if he dies and is not transformed into an undead, then his spirit will forever be at the service of his god. It is said that this ritual often transforms those who die in the Eternal Torment into helpful spirits.

95-00%: There is said to be a cave that is really a dimensional door to the northern side of the Land of the Damned. After walking 300 feet (91.5 m) one can see another opening/exit. This one places the traveler in the lower mountains of the north not terribly far from the Citadel and the Sea of Despair. It is a two-way portal that can be used repeatedly to travel north and south. However, finding the cave again is difficult, even if markers are left behind – undoubtedly the work of some enchantment. Thus, there is only a 01-15% chance of finding it after one has exited it and gone more than a hundred yards. Rangers, Druids and Priests of Light have a 01-30% chance of relocating it. Roll once for every 1-3 hours of searching. Three consecutive failures means the cave is hopelessly lost.

Rumor Mill:

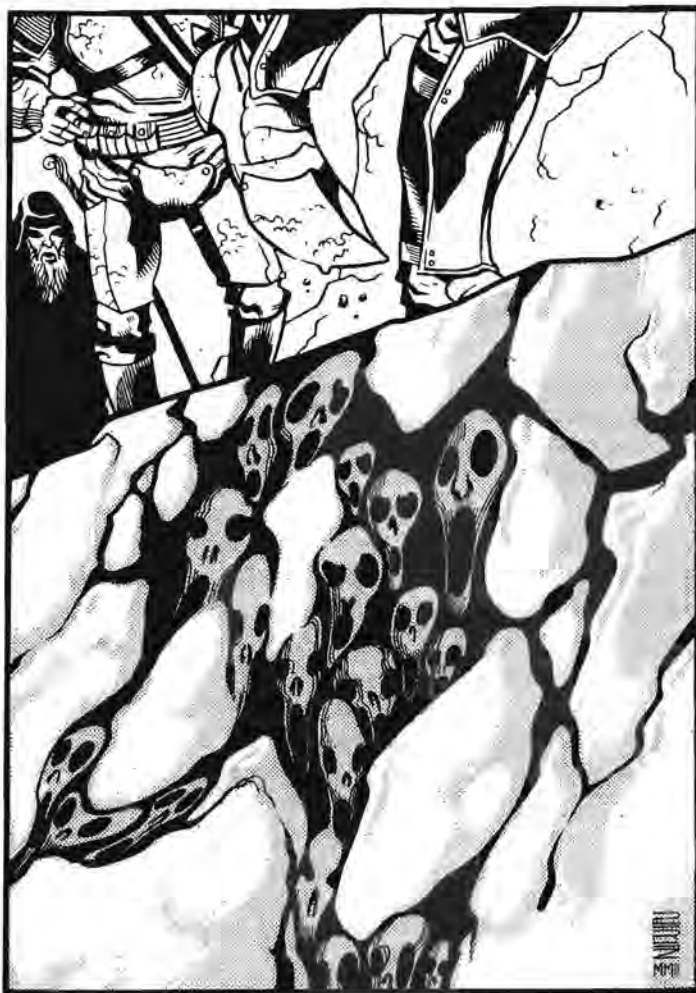
The Cauldron of Lost Souls

Remember, these are rumors and tall tales. Some *may* be true, have only some smidgen of truth to them or be completely false. Some may only be learned once inside the region.

01-07%: Anybody who suffers an amputation of any kind while in the Cauldron of Lost Souls (i.e. lost finger, arm, hand, foot, etc.) will find that their missing appendage will re-animate within 12 hours and seek out its former "owner." Half the time (01-50%), the missing body part will just want to reattach itself and if tightly bandaged or sewn to the living body will restore itself completely in 48 hours. The other half of the time, however, the missing body part will want to kill whoever it used to be attached to, doing whatever it can to cause injury and death to said individual as if it were possessed by a demonic spirit.

08-14%: It is impossible for most mortal people to sleep at all in the Cauldron of Lost Souls. After a few days (1D4), visitors will begin to suffer serious setbacks from their lack of sleep. Their combat bonuses are reduced one point and skill performance -5% for each sleepless night. Penalties are cumulative.

15-20%: At any given time, one might experience a "phantom odor," a smell of something that is not really there. Most of the time it is an unpleasant odor – the smell of blood, feces, rotting or burned flesh, that sort of thing. In rare instances, it will be a pleasant aroma such as a bouquet of flowers, a freshly baked cake, nice perfume, etc. In all cases, these smells are the *psychic residue* of some past event at that location, usually something involving somebody's suffering or death. In the cases where there is a nice smell, it usually relates to the final thought



of a dying individual, who retreated into a kind memory as they gave up the ghost or a rare act of kindness.

21-27%: Large flocks of crows follow mortal humanoids who venture into the Cauldron, circling in the sky overhead and perching in trees in anticipation of their death, so they may feed on their flesh.

28-34%: There is a large, wide road cutting through this region known as the *Highway of Skulls*. Not surprisingly, it is made up of thousands upon thousands of skulls packed so tightly together they are like cobblestones underfoot. Nobody knows who built this road of skulls, or what purpose it was supposed to serve, since it does not link up to any kinds of settlements or even places of importance. It appears to be a road to nowhere.

35-40%: All Necromantic spells cast in the Cauldron of Lost Souls require half the usual P.P.E. and range is increased by 30%.

41-47%: Those who can see the invisible will occasionally notice large, wraith-like energy beings floating about throughout the region. They interact with nothing, but seem to watch the activities of the living with great interest. Once a psychic knows about these beings, he can try to contact them telepathically or if a Wizard via Commune with Spirits, but such contact is said to make the invisible creatures afraid and angry, and they are *never* helpful or informative.

48-54%: Any wound that goes for more than 24 hours without healing entirely will become terribly infected and gangrenous. Unless cured by magic or psionics, the wound will

continue to fester, causing the victim extreme pain and discomfort (reduce S.D.C. by half and Hit Points by 10%; do not heal/cannot recover these points unless healed by magic or psionics. Moreover, reduce speed and combat bonuses by half, and skill performance by -30%). After a few more days, the victim will lose the use of one arm or leg, attacks are reduced by half, S.D.C. to zero, and Hit Points by half! At this point even magical or psionic healing are only half as effective. The character cannot heal normally until he leaves this damned region.

55-60%: Trapped within the Cauldron of Lost Souls is the undead corpse of the great 15th level, Elven Wizard, Kedaron, said to have been an understudy of the great *Lictalon* and one of the prime architects of the Mortification. Kedaron was in the Cauldron by accident when the Mortification happened, and he became a victim of the very process he helped invent. Kedaron has been driven mad with anguish, but remains a powerful mage. Anybody who helps Kedaron return to normal or who simply gets him out of the Land of the Damned somehow, can expect the arch-Mage to reward them handsomely. Sorcerers will be taught six spells of any level and others will each be given gems worth 40,000 in gold or perhaps some minor magic item, ring or charm. However, Kedaron is quite insane, thus he roams the region seeking and beseeching adventurers to help him. Those who try will find his company disturbing as he rambles and mutters to himself constantly, often speaking aloud as if he were talking to an invisible traveling companion (there is no such companion) and feeding on insects, spoiled food and the carcasses of corpses. He will also get the group in trouble by the things he says and does, and rather than help them with his magic or join a battle, he gleefully watches, cheers and claps like a happy child watching a sporting event. Kedaron is recognized by the denizens of the Cauldron of Lost Souls and is never attacked, just ignored. One's only hope is to sneak away and lose the mad being in order to escape his madness and the danger he brings.

Those who outright refuse the powerful Wizard can expect to him fly into a tirade and attack them with magic. During the battle he will chide them as heartless brigands, taunt them and threaten horrible suffering, but if the group proves to be too much for him or when he thinks they have been "humbled" enough, he will leave them to suffer the wrath of "others less kind than he" and "a fate far worse than any he could devise."

61-67%: Vents of strange gray gas sometimes issue from the ground. This gas is toxic and any who breathe it take 1D6 damage and will suffer from a persistent hacking cough (-20% to prowl or hide and creatures will hear the character coming 100 yards/meters away) for 1D4+1 days. The spell Cure Minor Disorders or Cure Illness are the only way to cure the cough sooner than letting it run its natural course.

68-74%: One of the few buildings in this part of the Eternal Torment is a massive mausoleum the size of a large museum or library. Surrounded by a high stone wall, this mausoleum has no doorways to it; just an inner chamber with a roof supported by columns. Inside the Mausoleum is a large stone sarcophagus resting on a marble dais. The sarcophagus is closed and sealed. There is no carved relief of who lies inside. There are only the following words chiseled along the length of the sarcophagus' lid: *Here Lies the Son of Thunder, the Walking Doom. Disturb Him Not, for He is the Skeleton Key to the Doors of Armageddon.*

75-80%: Periodically, one might find a large piece of rock, usually in the rough form of a column or a cylinder, animated to jump up and down against the earth. These "Jumping Stones" are to mark a special location; something of interest is always buried underneath. However, one must stop or destroy the pillar of rock which continues to hammer and mash anybody who gets underneath it. This is no easy task as the stones are said to be indestructible (1000 S.D.C. and regenerate at a rate of 1D4x10 every melee round).

81-87%: For those able to sleep while visiting this region, their dreams will be dark and disturbing. Often times, the spirits of the dead here will invade one's sleeping mind, whispering their terrible secrets or how they died to the sleeper in such a way that when they wake, they will be compelled to find the dead body of whatever spirit spoke to him, and give it a decent burial on hallowed ground. Not an easy thing to do here, since not even a Priest can sanctify the earth in the Cauldron of Lost Souls. The nearest place that would work would be the Darkest Heart.

88-94%: The ocean shoreline is always covered with dead fish, who wash up on every tide. Eating any of these fish will poison the diner (standard save or take 5D6 points of damage). Offshore, the water churns as if highly agitated. Whatever is disturbing the water that way makes it clear that any waterborne escape from the Land of Eternal Torment will result in a quick trip to Davy Jones' Locker.

95-00%: Every once in a while, travelers will come across a hanging gallows, from which dangles at least one victim of hanging, if not more. As the travelers pass by or come close to investigate, the eyes of the hanged corpse will snap open and it will angrily demand that the travelers give "the password." What this password could be is anybody's guess. Is it the hanging person's real name? The real name of the traveler? A word that has no meaning? Getting it wrong (as most do) causes the corpse to smile and warn, "ye be doomed," and then he closes his eyes and falls silent. Unbeknownst to the travelers, a silent call goes out to all Endless Dead in the area that there are living people entering so that they may lay in ambush or seek them out to kill and eat. If by some miracle the traveler gets the password right, then no such alarm goes out and the group will not be molested by any Endless Dead for the next 24 hours.

Rumor Mill:

The Craven Flatlands

Remember, these are rumors and tall tales. Some *may* be true or have only some smidgen of truth to them or be completely false. Some may only be learned once inside the region.

01-07%: A group of armored horsemen ride this desolate land. They seem not like the dreaded *Soulhunters* of the Great Rift. Rather, they are like undead palladins of some unknown netherworld, riding steeds of living black energy, wielding swords of fire and whips of lightning, whose eyes glow with the fury of long-dead gods. And whose name rings true and terrible in the ears of all who behold them, the *Gethenedrim*.

08-14%: In some places of the Craven Flatlands it is always night. The sunlight never shines, and the creatures of the darkness reign supreme. One day, a hero will come commanding the

powers of daylight such that none have done so before him, and he will cast out the darkness and bring the blessed sun into this place of punishment.

15-20%: At any given time, there are strange ground fogs rolling throughout the flat-lands. Most of them merely cover the ground and make it easy for villains and monsters to lay in ambush. But a few of these fogs have magical powers. Some reverse the power of gravity, allowing people and beasts to run along the mist as if it were solid. Some cause temporary blindness (save vs magic) lasting until the fog disappears, some act as a heady drug when inhaled (equal to being intoxicated), and some, it is said, pull the life from whoever enters the fog, drawing that person ever so close to the boundary that separates life from death. These strange fogs are supposed to be the work of the self-proclaimed *Lord of Mists*, a villain who purports to rule the Craven Flatlands, yet has never shown his face nor been seen by anyone.

21-25%: Sometimes travelers come across entire scenes from history that repeatedly play themselves out over and over again. A few of these are important battles from the Chaos War; sometimes the onlookers get drawn into these events, and they must fight for their lives if they are to make it out alive. Those who change history (leading the Alliance of Light to victory in a battle in which the Old Ones really won) usually release that character (or group) from the illusion. Otherwise, the victims of this illusionary magic (need a 16 or better to save) are kept inside these illusions, playing out the scenario again and again. Few victims understand they are caught in what scholars call a "spectral loop" so each time they muster out to fight the same battle, they believe they are doing it for the first time. It is believed that the ancient hero *Lorgard the Just* has been caught in a spectral loop somewhere in the Craven Flatlands for the last 250 years, for while locked in the enchantment, one never ages and always starts the next day after a good night's rest. Should the victim ever be rescued from this spectral prison, they can go on to live their lives, but how one breaks this curse after falling victim to it is unknown.

26-32%: The Craven Flatlands is said to be the final resting place of the *Infernal Machine*, a diabolic mechanical device invented by Western weapon smiths and unleashed upon the world some 150 years ago. Details of what happened are sketchy, as if nobody wanted the event recorded for history. All that is known is the heroes of the *League of Lords* slew the makers of this hideous device and magically transported it to parts unknown so that it might not fall into the wrong hands ever again. Unfortunately, scholars have every reason to believe that the device ended up in the Craven Flatlands. If true, the Endless Dead either have not found it or have not figured out how to activate the device, much less how to operate it, but if they do, it shall only be a matter of time before the legions of the dead cross the Sea of Dread and invade the Western Empire or any of the other lands in the Palladium world.

33-40%: Sometimes one will hear music drifting in the air, as if it is being played far away and only now can it be heard. If one were to follow the source of this music, which is usually well played, gentle, and pleasing to the ear, they will find a small chamber band of living corpses playing instruments made of bone, flesh and tendons. The sight of such a horrifying spectacle is usually enough to frighten those who stumble upon it

and cause them to scream and/or run away. In turn, the musicians get insulted by such a response and turn on their audience with the firm intention of eating them. Should the "musicians" succeed in this endeavor, they will take their victims' remains and fashion new instruments out of them. On the other hand, if the "audience" apologizes and/or makes up some excuse for the scream ("A bat flew at my head." or "A snake scared me.") and beseech the zombie musicians to play for them (accompanied by clapping and words of praise), these undead musicians will cheerfully leave them alone. However, they will be insulted if the individual or group does not stay for at least four songs – the corpses play all night long and off and on during the day as well, especially on gloomy days and before and after storms.

41-47%: Wherever one travels in this dread place, the feelings of horror and apprehension are everywhere. Anything, even the rustling of a tree branch or a low wind, strikes fear into the hearts of the brave. It is said that anyone who must make a legitimate effort to conquer their fear will have a much harder time doing so. (G.M.'s Translation: all characters are at -3 to save vs Horror Factor when in the Craven Flatlands, if this rumor has any truth to it.)

48-54%: The presence of the Old Ones can be felt in the very soil of the Craven Flatlands. It is as if their voice reverberates in everything, a constant moan from beyond. Those who serve evil or who serve the Old Ones directly can contact these sleeping lords and ask a single favor of them that is not too grand. Most of the time, such a favor will be granted, for the Old Ones have powers that work in mysterious ways. But take heed: Nothing is free from the Old Ones, and sooner or later, they always collect the debts that are owed them.

55-60%: Loose stones in this region have a funny way of spontaneously moving across the ground, but very slowly, covering only a few feet over the course of a day. If left to their own devices, these stones tend to form large and intricate patterns, not unlike summoning circles drawn in an alien language. Thankfully, none of these big circles ever finish forming because someone or something comes along and knocks some of the rocks out of alignment. What might happen when a circle is completely formed or how one might use it or what it might be capable of is beyond human comprehension. For now.

61-67%: Fault lines in the Eternal Torment reach through the earth all the way from the coastline to Galdrum's Teeth. Legend says that they lead to the dwelling place of Minor and Greater Fire Elementals made of lava as well as Earth Elementals, and that the use of an Earthquake or River of Lava spell disturbs their rest and 1D4+1 of them rise up to stop the commotion and smite those responsible.

68-74%: Whenever somebody hears the sounds of barking dogs in the Craven Flatlands, it means that the *Nine Lords of Death* are coming for them! When the Nine Lords are on the prowl, they are looking to harvest the souls of the living for their nefarious purposes. Nobody knows exactly what the Nine Lords look like, presumably because all who have ever seen them died at their hands. Beware!

75-80%: There is a vast and deserted city in the Flatlands known simply as the *Necropolis*. In the Age of Chaos, minions of the Old Ones practiced and perfected every means of death and the disposal of bodies afterwards. The Necropolis was a massive factory of destruction where the Old Ones disposed of

all of their loose ends. The Alliance of Light tried to destroy the city but failed on three separate occasions, so they let it stand, but not until after slaughtering every single creature who lived or worked there. Today, the city stands alone and empty, but if mortals were to enter it, their minds would be flooded with images of the past, and the knowledge of its past horrors. It is said those who linger for more than a day or two are driven mad and become a force for evil.

81-87%: Every night a giant spectral figure walks over the Craven Flatlands, kicking up huge clouds of debris as it passes. This is the *Thwarted God*, a traitor to the Alliance of Light who was defeated and sentenced to Mortification. He has never rested since, and vows to break free of this prison, restore his power, and take vengeance not only on the gods who hurt him, but on all of their allies and minions, including all Dragons, Elves and Changelings. If only he could escape to begin his work. Perhaps a traveler can help?

88-94%: The *Dance of the Dead* is a ritual carried out both by Bone Fiends and Festulents (though never in conjunction with each other, since those two races are enemies) in which they form a huge circle and perform a crude and perverted dance that goes on for days. Set to the tune of the participants' shrieks and yells, these Dances are unnerving for mortals to behold, at the very least. They say that mortals caught in these Dancing Circles are compelled to dance along with the Endless Dead until they die from exhaustion or until they are rescued.

95-00%: The *Sword of Od* is a two-handed blade made of ultra-heavy black iron. It requires supernatural strength to swing at all. It was stolen and became the property of an unnamed Demon Lord who lost a crucial battle in the Minion War and was transported to the Craven Flatlands as his punishment. The Demon Lord is now missing, but it is said that if anybody can find and carry his sword, they shall gain his powers, dark and terrible though they may be.

The Cursed Earth

By Kevin Siembieda, Bill Coffin & Randy McCall

When the Alliance of Light defeated the Old Ones, they would have their revenge by means of the *Mortification*, a magical punishment that transformed an entire section of the Land of the Damned into a Hell within a Hell. That "place" is the **Land of Eternal Torment** and the Mortification makes it incredibly dangerous and unpleasant for any living being who dares set foot there. For the Eternal Torment is just that, a place meant for torture and endless humiliation. For those trapped inside the region, the undeath they must live with is their punishment. For the living who lack the sense to avoid or flee this place and search for adventure elsewhere, their fate is to endure the lingering wrath of the ancient gods by means of one or more curses, for they have crossed the line which should never be crossed.

Curses and the Endless Torment

When the Alliance of Light defeated the Old Ones and took their remaining minions prisoner, there were certain gods and dragons who were not content merely to have triumphed over

their foes. These vengeful few felt that the most vile of their surviving enemies must be punished not only for the crimes they committed against life itself during the Age of Chaos, but that they must also pay for the deaths and injuries suffered by the fallen Soldiers of Light who perished during their struggle to free the world from the Old Ones' dark clutches.

In large part, the formation of the Land of the Damned was meant for just that purpose, to imprison the remaining Minions of Chaos, and to create an environment where no good thing would flourish, and where the defeated servants of evil would prey upon and victimize each other throughout the ages to follow. For these unfortunates, the Land of the Damned would indeed be Hell on Earth.

However, the **Land of Eternal Torment**, a place which saw the most fiercely contested battles in the Chaos War, the gods demanded lasting misery beyond pale. Certain members of the Alliance of Light decreed that this land, and those who dwell in it, would forever bear the most horrible of curses the Alliance could bestow upon the living: Undeath, so they might be stripped of the life they so callously tortured and be made to suffer for eons. To prevent those punished with undeath from inflicting pain and suffering on any but themselves, the gods made certain these foul beings could never set foot outside the Land of Eternal Torment.

To keep mortals away and any intelligent beings from trying to free or enslave the undead for their own nefarious purposes, the gods inflicted upon the land what is known as "The Mortification" – cursing the earth and punishing all who dare to visit this Land of Endless Death, the realm known as the *Land of Eternal Torment*, for any reason, regardless of good intentions or naivety. Thus, little is known about the region even by the other inhabitants of the Land of the Damned. It is enough that folks know it is cursed by the gods, infested with the undead, and a place to be avoided at all costs. Still, careless travelers and bold adventurers enter the accursed Land of Eternal Torment. Some eager to carve their names into the granite tablet of history by unraveling ancient mysteries or by killing the living dead to prove their mettle, others enter the land out of ignorance. None know the true measure of suffering and horror that awaits them, or that their meddling *might* help to unleash some of these horrors upon an unsuspecting world.

If the gods are concerned, they do not show it, for they do not send warnings or make an appearance to chase away the curious and good of heart. Instead, they stand silent and let mortals engage in what folly and death-defying feats they might choose. Perhaps the old gods no longer care about the Land of the Damned or the horror trapped within its confines. Or perhaps the gods are confident their imprisonment, safeguards and curses will hold strong despite the interference of mortals. Safeguards and countermeasures such as the *curses* and *enchancements* placed upon the land as well as upon corrupt magical artifacts and other items and places within the Land of Eternal Torment. *Curses* meant to be a stern message for people to stay away.

In recent decades that message seems to have become a bit muted, as increasing numbers of heroes, crusaders and adventurous fools come and take their chances. Thus, it is inevitable that all too many of these heroes and adventurers saddle themselves with terrible magical afflictions meant to teach the rest of the

outside world to stay away from the realm of darkness – The Land of the Damned, and especially that Hell within a Hellish place, the Land of Eternal Torment.

Unfortunately for the player characters, they are part of this new wave of explorers who are likely to disregard the warnings and tales of curses and horrors of the past. Many forge onward to defiantly explore the Land of the Damned, and unless they have done some extraordinary homework, they will leave the Land of Eternal Torment with a grim memento of the Alliance of Light and a warning to the rest of the world to, "Stay out, or suffer the terrible consequences!" In that regard, one might think of the curses that might come to plague them as an unwelcome *present* from the Gods of Light. The gift that keeps on giving.



Fair Warnings

The accursed earth

The Eternal Torment is a cursed land, and whoever walks into it is *likely* to contract one or more curses. Likewise, many magic items and weapons within the Land of Eternal Torment (and throughout the Land of the Damned) are also cursed and will plague any character who dares to use such a device, often continuing to suffer long after the cursed item is lost, destroyed or discarded.

In most cases, there should be a "fair warning" about a curse by means of rumors and legends to outright verbal warnings and even posted signs. However, even the most discriminating character is likely to fall under one or more curses, because the longer the characters stays in the Land of the Damned, especially the realm of *Eternal Torment*, the more likely they will become cursed. This is NOT unfair, because the Land of the Damned is known to be a *cursed place* of evil and dark magic best left alone. Tales of curses and tragedy are as common to the Land of the Damned as any tales of treasure, magic and monsters. That is just the nature of this infernal domain, and anybody daring to visit the place WILL know it is, indeed, a "cursed" and "damned" place unlike any other place in the world. Those who

explore it do so at their own risk, knowing full well that the Land of the Damned is never meant to be visited by outsiders and that they face, at best, an uncertain fate. Anybody who crosses the Great Northern Mountains had better prepare themselves for anything, and the curses of the Eternal Torment are one such example of the "anything" adventurers are warned about.

Game Master Note: Having said that, it is just flat out unfair to a *player character* to hit him or her with a curse out of the blue without ever giving the character a chance to avoid it. Game Masters, look at it from the player's point of view. How would you like it if you spent the time to build up a great character only to have him suddenly saddled with a couple of really debilitating curses? Even though the delivery of those curses makes sense in the structure of this gaming environment (more so than anywhere else in the Palladium World), it does not sit well with those who play in that world. Thus, some *warning* really must be given to all player characters before inflicting any curse or other undue hardship on them. Likewise, it is only fair that some remedy, some means of recovery, also be made available to the accursed.

For most player characters, the best bet to avoid trouble with curses is to research the Land of Eternal Torment and the rest of the Land of the Damned, for that matter, before visiting it. Obscure documents such as the *Lost Chronicle* will help to detail the cursed nature of the Eternal Torment, as will certain sections of the official *Tristine Chronicles* and the *Bizantium Scouting Corps' rumor archives*. Hitting the *local* rumor mills in the Shadow Coast of Bizantium, the Bizantium Kingdom and the Northern Hinterlands (not to mention local lore and rumor in the Land of the Damned itself) also presents a decent chance of turning up information and stories about "cursed" areas, cities, people, magic items and such, within the Land of the Damned, as well as news of how anybody who enters the Land of Eternal Torment is bound to contract some kind of curse no matter what they do. There may also be some stories, legends and rumors (true or not) that tell how to *cure/rid* oneself of *certain* curses, which may be the source of a quest or an adventure in and of itself.

Talking to those who specialize in **curse removal** – priests and certain psychics, sorcerers and alchemists – *may* also reveal information concerning curses in the Land of the Damned as well as *possible cures* (assuming a cure is known for it). After all, anybody who escapes the Land of the Damned with a curse will want it removed, and so those individuals who provide such services and who are nearest to the Land of the Damned (i.e. the Northern Hinterlands, Shadow Colony, Bizantium, etc.) are most likely to have heard about the curses and (hopefully) how to remove them. Many will also know that the Land of Eternal Torment is cursed and they will warn adventurers that merely setting foot in the place will bring down upon them the curse of the Alliance of Light. The problem with this tack is that the investigator must be mindful of curses (and how to avoid them) in the first place.

Characters who can speak with the spirits of the region stand an excellent chance of not only learning about the curses of the Eternal Torment, but of the Mortification in general. Anybody with the ability to speak with the dead can have a field day with the Land of the Damned in general, but especially in the

Eternal Torment. There are just so many lost souls to connect with, and all of them have important *bits* of history and lore that the intelligent adventurer can put to good use while planning an expedition.

When the moment of truth comes, and the player characters are on the verge of entering the Land of Eternal Torment, anybody with **psychic abilities** (especially Clairvoyance or Sixth Sense) will immediately get a bad feeling about going any further. So will those of good alignment (Principled or Scrupulous). They will sense that the land before them is hopelessly tainted with evil and death, and is, perhaps, best left alone. They will also sense that if they enter, they will suffer for it. Priest of Light or of Light and Dark will *know*, just know, the land before them is cursed and that all who enter shall be likewise cursed. This is a warning from the Gods of Light.

The Game Master is free to give whatever other warnings he or she deems appropriate. After that, the players are on their own in a strange and magical land, and need hints, clues and warnings about becoming curse ridden and the likely dangers that lay ahead.

Important Note: Just crossing into the Land of Eternal Torment *may* subject characters to becoming cursed! They can learn of this from any of the means noted above or by speaking with hermits and victims of curses they may encounter in the Great Northern Mountains or in the Land of the Damned while en route to the Land of Eternal Torment (there are plenty, many of whom live in shame and avoid returning to civilization). They may also discover a lost text describing the curses of the Land of Eternal Torment, encounter a cursed hero or adventurer from some earlier expedition, pick up vital information about it during an Astral Projection reconnaissance, get a warning from a friendly ghost, etc. Whatever it takes to give the player characters a fair shake at sparing themselves major trouble is advisable before they continue. For once they have crossed over the border between the Eternal Torment and the rest of the world, the lingering punishments of the *Mortification* will kick in, and kick in *hard*.

Curse You!

Any intelligent living being, great or small, good or evil, who enters the Land of Eternal Torment and lingers for more than 48 hours, must roll to save vs magic. A roll of 15 or higher is needed to save. If the roll is successful, then the character just dodged a bullet, even if he does not know it. Those who save once must roll again for every additional passage of 48 hours until the character leaves the cursed land or falls victim to a curse.

Every character who *fails to save* must roll on the following table to determine exactly what kind and how many debilitating curses in the Land of Eternal Torment have just been visited upon him/her.

Mortification Initial Effects

01-30% One phobia, rather than an outright curse. This phobia usually concerns the dead or undead. Roll on the Phobia Table below to see which one the character has contracted:

Phobic Curses of the Land of Eternal Torment

01-05% Dead bodies.

06-10% Animated corpses.

11-15% Animated and talking skeletons.

16-20% Dark, crypt-like places.

21-25% Graveyards.

26-30% Ghosts.

31-35% Zombies.

36-40% Mummies.

41-45% Worms, especially big worms.

46-50% Ghouls and Grave Diggers.

51-55% Vampires.

56-60% Aberrations.

61-65% Blighters.

66-70% Blood Wraiths.

71-75% Bone Fiends.

76-80% Eviscerals.

81-85% Festulents.

86-90% Jaliquettes.

91-95% Revenants

96-00% Old Ones (the beings themselves and items that represent them).

31-70% One curse, to be determined on the Random Curse Table that follows.

71-90% One curse, to be determined on the Random Curse Table that follows, *and* one random phobia from above or a Random Insanity (see page 26 of the Palladium Fantasy RPG for the latter).

91-00% Two curses, to be determined on the Random Curse Table that follows.

The Torment Continues

Even after this initial *brush* with the Mortification, its effects are far from over. For one, the curse(s) may stay with the character for years before it is finally removed. Plus if the character remains in the Land of Eternal Torment for more than four months, he must save vs magic curse, again. If he saves, then no new affliction plagues him. If the character fails at this later time, he contracts *one new random curse*. Roll on the **Random Curse Table** that follows.

These curses are meant to both punish the living from defying the gods and coming into the Land of the Damned and especially the *Land of Eternal Torment*, and to dissuade the living from coming and going in and out of the Land of Eternal Torment for any reason. Presumably, the first curse or two should convince interlopers to leave and never return. Better yet, their sorry tales of god inflicted curses and woe will (hopefully) prevent others from entering in the first place.

The moment one contracts a curse (or an insanity), he will know it as if a ton of bricks just landed on him. Victims feel as if they are arrogant fools humbled by the ancient Gods of Light. Most victims will also feel foolish or ashamed and want to leave the Eternal Torment as soon as possible. Many go to find some way to rid themselves of their curse(s) and/or insanity.

Note: The maximum number of curses inflicted by the Land of Eternal Torment should not exceed three, including curse-inflicted insanities.

On top of all that, anybody who succumbs to a *Curse of the Mortification* will also develop a dark insignia on their forehead.

It appears to be a sooty mark on the forehead, as if written in ash or charcoal, that won't wash off. This mark is the **Brand of the Damned**, or the "Badge of Chaos," meant to identify fools who defy the gods by not only braving the Land of the Damned but by entering the most evil and despicable place within its confines, the Land of Eternal Torment. Bearing this mark of shame has three effects on the victim. First, he will lose 1D4 points of P.B. until the curses and/or insanities that plague the character are lifted. Second, the victim now radiates with the taint of evil (despite his true alignment) to those who can read auras and sense evil. Even if the victim is purest good, the taint of evil hangs over him, suggesting that he has been touched by evil and may be on the road to corruption. Third, the victim radiates with faint traces of magic (the curse) to anybody who can sense mystic energies. Only this magic aura feels wrong, and those who detect it will view the character with suspicion and uneasiness, again suggesting this character is selfish, foolish and *may* be on the road to corruption by evil. This is the price one must pay for directly disregarding the will of the Alliance of Light. The gods have made it clear (to their thinking, anyway) that no good or god-fearing being is to ever go inside the Land of the Damned, and especially not the Land of Eternal Torment. If a bunch of mortals eons later have forgotten their warnings and walk into certain trouble, then that is their burden to bear, and the curse they bear is a reminder to others who might otherwise follow in their footsteps.

Note: Many of the runic and other powerful magic weapons and items of rare ability *may* also be cursed, inflicting that specific curse upon any who dare to wield or use the cursed article. In most cases, but not all, the curse is lifted when the item is discarded/abandoned by its owner. Of course, none of these curses inflict the Brand of the Damned on those afflicted by it.

Some gods, Demon Lords, Lizard Mages, Ancient Dragons and, if the G.M. wants, some high level (13th level or higher) Priests of Darkness, Necromancers, and Summoners, (and perhaps some powerful Witches and select other terrible supernatural beings) *may* be able to cast some (or many) of these *specific curses* upon mortals in a similar way to the Wizard's various Spell Curses. However, such *Minor Deific Curses* cost these beings 400 P.P.E. and the curse lasts until a successful Remove Curse is made. Quadruple the P.P.E. cost for these beings to cast the curse on an object that inflicts the curse it carries on all who lay claim to the accursed weapon/item. Other than when cast by a true god, Minor Deific Curses cannot be cast on more than one individual at a time and can only be done once a year (12 months). Only gods can cast it more frequently and it is never done lightly. The roll to save is equal to the spell strength of the curse-maker, but never exceeds 15 or 16, and the same number must be matched or exceeded to make a successful Remove Curse. See the **Dragons & Gods** sourcebook for Greater Deific Curses and other powers of the gods. See **The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game**, page 262, for information on "cursed objects/items."

Breaking the Unbreakable

The Brand of the Damned only disappears when each of the Mortification Curses are removed, or the character somehow makes amends for his defiance of the gods by entering the Land of Eternal Torment in the first place. *According to legend* (and a

number of adventurers who have endured the Brand and claim to have been redeemed), the Gods of Light (or at least some of their powerful assistants) keep an eye on those Branded, and should the character do something selfless and true to redeem himself, the Curse(s) of the Mortification will be lifted.

The legend also warns that while many try to win the favor of the gods to get the curse(s) removed, most fail. Only those who make a selfless act of charity, sacrifice or kindness without any thought about reward or that it might earn him or her the removal of the curse or curses will, indeed, earn their removal. Most who are successful don't even realize that they have earned the favor of the gods, but when the curses and the Brand is gone, they understand and strive to leave the Land of the Damned, never to return. So it was with the Defilers and of most great heroes and champions of good.

All curses wrought by the Mortification should be treated as a "curse of the gods" in terms of their difficulty to dispel or remove. Likewise, the random insanities wrought by the *Mortification* should be regarded as curses. All are permanent, meaning they will not fade away over time on their own, and require magic, psionic, priestly or deific intervention.

The power of these god-imposed curses is such that the magic spell, *Remove Curse*, must be applied without benefit of the usual bonuses and a 15 or higher (on a roll of a 20-sided die) is needed to save and be cured from a Curse of the Mortification.

Similarly, the *priestly power to remove curse* is performed at half the usual success rate. *Remove Curse* performed by gods and other supernatural beings is done without penalty.

In some cases, there *may* be a unique alternative means to remove a curse, such as drinking the healing water from a particular magic well, or secret potions, or the use of a special (rare) magic item or circle. Likewise, it may be possible some Non-Player Character (good or evil) has the power or means to remove the curse of the Mortification. However, such a great boon will NOT be free, and the individual will demand the accursed and/or his allies perform some service, deed or favor for him as the price to get the curse removed. Sometimes, that price is too steep and may require winning some hard fought after prize or involve betrayal, treachery, murder or diabolic or cruel action. Many such NPCs are likely to demand that service, deed or favor be performed before the curse(s) is removed. Of course, finding said person, place or object and getting them to remove the curse may be a challenge in and of itself, and lead to adventure or danger.

One way to get a curse lifted is to entreat any of the Gods of Light. (They *all* fought in the Chaos War, and they *all* were there for the Mortification, even if they did not actually participate in its creation.) However, to get one or more god's cooperation, the character(s) is likely to be required to provide some great service to the god or his church. In fact, the accursed individual(s) probably has to work through a "mortal emissary" of the god (i.e. a member of the clergy, hermit, wise man, seer, etc.) and is likely to face a dangerous or near impossible quest, crusade or mission to *win* the god's cooperation (again, probably through a mortal agent like a priest).

Another way is to research the curse extensively. Many curses have little known Achilles' heels in them through which a curse victim can find a loophole to his condition. If these flaws

or "loopholes" can be exploited, the condemned could, in theory, work his way out of the curse and continue leading a long and prosperous life free of magical affliction. However, discovering any of these loopholes (if indeed they exist; they may not) and taking advantage of them might be as difficult as anything else. For example, it is *rumored* that the Curse of Arrogance may be defeated if the curse victim sincerely apologize to 101 people he has wronged. That might sound like a simple fix, but to one who is magically compelled to the sad heights of pride and self-congratulation, finding the strength to apologize to just one person, let alone 100 more, is like trying to walk to the moon.

Failing to get a curse removed means the curse victim is faced with few other alternatives and must learn to live under the wretched conditions wrought by the curse or take some other drastic measure – suicide is one unpleasant recourse, becoming a hermit is another. Many, however, try to help or warn others by putting themselves on public display and telling those willing to listen about their own experiences, foolish pride and mistakes. All who suffer the Curse of Mortification warn their fellow adventurers to stay out of the Land of the Damned and avoid the realm of Eternal Torment at all cost. Such action does nothing to remove the curse, but helps to ease their pain and conscience a wee bit.

Random Curse Determination Table

If you've got some player characters who have a curse coming to them, but you just can't figure out what would be appropriate, or you're afraid that whatever you pick, the player himself will accuse you of selecting the *exact* curse that would most debilitate his character, then use this table. Here is an updated random curse determination table, which includes *all* of the original curses from **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®** (some with more detailed information) and a bunch of new ones, *all* described in the next few pages. Whatever the reason for the curse, or regardless of how many curses a player character is in for, just give this table a simple roll of the percentile dice, and you have the most impartial and fair determination possible. If the same curse is rolled more than once, either roll again (probably the best solution) or double the effect, penalties or consequences of that curse. **Note:** For cursed weapons, objects, other places and those cast by dark priests, the G.M. may make a random roll (percentile dice) *or* select one that is appropriate for the weapon/item and its unique history.

- 01% Arrogance (New!)
- 02% Bound (New!)
- 03% Brand of Evil (New!)
- 04-05% Breaking
- 06% Burning Gold (New!)
- 07% Burn in Sunlight (New!)
- 08% Cannibalism (New!)
- 09% Clumsiness (New!)
- 10-11% Cold
- 12-13% Confusion
- 14-15% Cravings
- 16% Culprit (New!)
- 17% Deep Pockets (New!)
- 18% Deevil Features (New!)
- 19% Disavowed (New!)

20-21% Dislike
 22% Endless Bleeding (New!)
 23% Enslaved to Passion (New!)
 24% Entropy (New!)
 25% Foolhardiness (New!)
 26% Gambling Bug (New!)
 27-28% Glow
 29-30% Glowing Eyes
 31% Greed (New!)
 32-33% Hallucinatory Noises
 34% Haunted by the Slain (New!)
 35-36% Headaches
 37-38% Heat
 39%; Heavy as a Stone (New!)
 40% Hunger (New!)
 41% Idiocy (New!)
 42% Impassable Thresholds (New!)
 43-44% Insect Attraction
 45% Itching (New!)
 46% Joy Buzzer (New!)
 47% Jumping Bean (New!)
 48% Magic Plague (New!)
 49% Liar, Liar (New!)
 50% Light as a Feather (New!)
 51% Magnetism (New!)
 52% Memory Loss (New!)
 53% Metal Allergy (New!)
 54% Misshapen (New!)
 55% Mistaken Identity (New!)
 56-57% Misunderstanding
 58-59% Mumble
 60% Necrosis (New!)
 61% Open Sores (New!)
 62-63% Phantom Odors
 64% Plague Carrier (New!)
 65% Quest (New!)
 66-67% Rags
 68% Random Teleportation (New!)
 69-70% Reduced Healing
 71-72% Reduced Vision
 73% Repellent (New!)
 74% Reverse Alignment (New!)
 75% Reverse Direction (New!)
 76% Singing (New!)
 77% Sleeping Beauty (New!)
 78-79% Spoilage
 80-81% Stink
 82% Thirst (New!)
 83% Traitor! (New!)
 84% Transformation (New!)
 85% Undeath (New!)
 86% Unusual Size (New!)
 87% Unusual Weight (New!)
 88% Vermin (New!)
 89% Voices in the Head (New!)
 90% Vomiting (New!)
 91-92% Vulnerability
 93-94% Wanderlust (New!)
 95% Withering (New!)
 96% Wracked by Pain (New!)

97-98% Yelling (New!)
 99% Yellowbelly (New!)
 00% Zero Hour (New!)

The Curse Compendium

The following are the descriptions of all of the curses *known* throughout the world (some reprinted from **The Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®** for your convenience and, in many cases, a bit more further developed) and the many more that (for the moment) remain most common to the *Land of the Damned*, in general, and the Eternal Torment in particular.

Curses that are exclusive to the Land of the Damned (i.e. the new ones) are likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future, but some scholars insist that the curses of the Eternal Torment have already crossed the borders of the region and can be found throughout the world, rare though they may be. These rare curses seem to crop up most often among Death Cults and dark religious orders as well as in the mysterious Yin-Sloth Jungles.

Arrogance

The victim of this curse becomes overbearing, obnoxious, and self-confident to a fault. Even if the victim was humble or modest before, he is that way no longer. The character will now take credit for any good thing the party does, insisting that it is *he* who is behind every victory the group enjoys, and so on. As far as curses go, this one is pretty lightweight, since it is not particularly debilitating. In many cases, the victim's friends realize their friend is not in full control of himself, and so they are more likely to try to help him find a cure for his curse rather than abandon him. Evil characters with evil friends, however, might not be so lucky, since villains and miscreants might simply find it easier to leave their newly pig-headed, glory-seeking companion behind, or to kill him outright. At any rate, this curse makes the limelight grabbing victim annoying in the extreme. **G.M. Note:** This is a pretty *fun* curse for playing purposes, since it gives the afflicted characters the chance to really ham things up. Encourage your players to really role-play this one.

Bound

The victim of this curse is bound, or attached, to a certain person, place or thing. The victim may not stray more than one mile (1.6 km) from the object to which he is bound, whatever that may be.

Victims bound to another person typically find themselves bound to somebody they really dislike, or for some reason would prefer to be as far from as possible. In this regard, victims might find themselves bound to those to whom they owe money or a favor, those they have wronged or betrayed, or a particular race they loathe, or someone of an opposing alignment, etc. If the victim of the curse should kill the person he is bound to, the curse will automatically bind him to somebody else who is equally distasteful to the accursed. Should the victim try to move more than one mile (1.6 km) from the person to whom he is bound, the character will find himself held fast, as if by an invisible rope. No matter how strong the victim is, he cannot move beyond this threshold. Flight will not work as an escape

method, nor will teleportation. What is worse, as the person the victim is bound to moves around, so must the victim of the curse, held by the whim of another forever, or until the curse is lifted or the individual to whom the accursed it bound to, dies of natural causes. Moreover, if said individual is whisked away by magic, the "bound" victim will instinctively follow without actually knowing where he is going, but knowing only that he must go in a particular direction, posthaste.

Victims bound to places are invariably bound to a specific geographic point somewhere they would rather not be, and can never leave unless the curse is lifted. In the Land of Eternal Torment, this curse can be particularly dangerous for it will forever bind its victims to the Land of the Damned, preventing them from ever leaving even if the opportunity should arise.

In other cases, outside the Land of the Damned, this curse typically binds one to a specific location to which the curse victim. That place *may* be an expansive location such as a particular forest, mountain or kingdom, to something quite limiting such as a specific temple, castles, graveyard, battlefield, etc. In both cases, the victim of the curse is simply unable to move beyond a one mile (1.6 km) radius of that location, even if it falls into ruin or is invaded by monsters. The accursed is stuck there as if tethered by an invisible chain or cage. Worse, to break this curse, the victim is likely to find it necessary to hire or enlist the aid of others to help him, for he cannot make any journey, himself, beyond one mile (1.6 km) of the location to which he is bound.

Victims bound to things *may* be bound to items that are either immovable or very difficult to move, like a big tree, boulder, giant statue, shrine, totem pole, etc. In this event, the victim can smash, chip, break, or otherwise reduce the size of whatever he is bound to, but the binding object will never be smaller than a bowling ball. Any attempts to break the object down smaller than that will fail, as if the object suddenly became indestructible. As described below, the character must have this item with him at all times.

In many other cases, the victim of the curse is irrationally attached to a specific item – usually one that is odd, ugly or ridiculous looking. This can be a particular hat, pair of boots, lucky charm, talisman, ring, weapon, book, animal's claw or tooth, small rock, trinket, bit of junk, etc. In some magical way, it becomes a security blanket that the accursed *MUST* have on his person, in hand or within a few feet of him at all times. The curse victim will *NEVER* willingly give this item up and will lie, steal, cheat and kill to keep it, even if it is a worthless piece of junk. In all cases, the item must be kept out where he (and others) can see it, whether it is worn, carried or held in his hand. Large or small (like a coin or medallion), the character will constantly touch, fuss and fidget with it.

If the item is *stolen* (the victim is too obsessed and careful to lose it), the character will do anything to get it back, pay a king's ransom (if he has it), steal a king's ransom, give away other precious and valuable possessions, pledge an oath to do something or accomplish some quest, mission or favor (it is an oath he cannot break), betray a friend or confidence, battle to the death, and so on.

If the item is *destroyed*, the victim will shriek and instantly fall into a coma for 6D6 hours. During this time nothing can awaken him as he suffers through nightmare after nightmare un-

til a "vision" shows him what *new object* he is now bound to. It may be something the character already owns or something he has recently *seen*. You guessed it, when he awakens he is compelled to acquire it by any means possible and do whatever he must to keep it. Binding objects may not be swallowed, and any attempt to do so will result in the curse victim suffering 1D4 points of damage and throwing the object up within 2D6 minutes.



Brand of Evil

The victim of this curse receives the infamous "Brand of the Damned" which appears on the head of anybody who fails to save against the curses of the Mortification when entering the Land of Eternal Torment. It is similar to the brand that all victims who fall to a curse in the Land of Eternal Torment, only the victim of this curse is much more than physically "marked."

The Brand takes the form of a circular, dark red insignia that looks like it was burned into the flesh by a hot branding iron. The look of the Brand is particularly horrifying to others, many of whom find the mark repulsive and repulsive or frightening. The victim's P.B. is reduced by half and the character he now radiates darkest evil to those who can See Auras and Sense Evil.

Only the evil is so strong that the Branded character seems like a major villain at best, and a demon in humanoid guise at worst. Most good champions who detect this presence will never trust this character and always assume the worst about him, including lies that others may tell about the accursed. Furthermore, if the Branded character is *believed* or said to have betrayed the adventuring group or some other noble hero, god of

light or noble cause, the champion is likely to presume the cursed individual *is* guilty, and either make immediate plans to turn the character over to the authorities or to destroy the fiend personally in a one on one dual to the death! That is how insidious and terrible this curse is, for the victim must not only suffer the incrimination the Brand brings upon him, but also suffers the consequence of fighting (and inevitably killing) some noble heroes in self-defense. It is an especially terrible consequence to characters of good alignment who will regret having to hurt or slay another good character. Worse, "champions" who are defeated, but not killed, are likely (01-65% chance) to pursue this "villain" to make him pay for his (alleged) crimes or try to slay him in a rematch. And those champions who are slain *may* have friends or allies to seeking revenge upon the poor soul responsible. Thus, the victim of this curse may become a hunted fugitive by the very heroes he respects and may even try to emulate. **Note:** The fellow members in his adventuring group who knew him *before* the curse are not affected by this magic and realize that others see their comrade falsely as a result of the curse. However, newcomers to the team and other outsiders will only see the Brand of Evil and regard him as a nefarious monster.

Breaking

The victim of this curse seems to be extremely unlucky or clumsy. Any breakable object in his possession will somehow become broken within 24 hours of acquiring it, no matter how well wrapped or protected it is or how careful he may be with it. For example: A potion in a bottle placed in the character's backpack may be broken when he is knocked backwards, an arrow miraculously strikes only the bottle, a runaway horse bangs into the character or tramples the pack, or the item breaks when he takes off the backpack and sets it down (regardless of how gently), or he drops it the next time he removes it. This curse is extremely subtle, but very effective.

Burning Gold

The victim of this curse soon finds that being rich is not everything it is cracked up to be. This curse makes the afflicted totally unable to touch anything made of gold, including coins and jewelry, as well as other luxury items made of gold. This curse makes no distinction between items that are 100 percent made of gold and items that contain a tiny amount of the stuff. Both are equally untouchable by the victim of this curse.

Whenever a person affected by this curse touches a gold item, the item feels as if it is burning-hot and he will immediately suffer 1D6 points of burn damage upon touching anything made of gold, even if the curse victim does so through heavy leather gloves, metal gauntlets, even magic armor! The nature of this curse is such that nothing will protect the curse victim from the burning effects of gold. The glove, armor or magical defense is not damaged by the effects of Burning Gold, for the damage from the curse bypasses them and hurts the curse victim directly.

Most curse victims let go of gold items the moment they are burned, but those who stubbornly hold on to the gold will take an additional point of damage for every melee round (15 seconds) they hold on to it.

(G.M. Note: Realistically speaking, there are probably trace amounts of gold everywhere in the Palladium world, and characters who have handled gold coins in the past probably have

some amount of gold dust on them. Such trivial amounts of gold are not affected by this curse at all. This curse is meant to prevent its victims from touching things that are alloyed with gold or are made entirely of gold. G.M.s, use common sense when applying this curse; don't use it to hurt characters just because their clothes may have a trace amount of gold residue on them.)

Burn in Sunlight

The victim of this curse smolders and burns when his flesh is directly exposed to sunlight. If a ray of sunlight hits the accursed's naked flesh, it instantly causes 1D4 points of burning damage. If a large portion of the accursed's flesh is exposed to sunlight (like an entire limb), the victim suffers 2D4 points of burning damage for the initial melee round (15 seconds) of exposure. If more than half of the accursed's flesh gets hit by sunlight, the damage endured is 2D6+2 points of burning damage. If the victim remains exposed to sunlight, the character suffers one additional point of damage per every 10 minutes, but is in such *agony* the entire time that all bonuses are lost, all skill proficiencies are reduced to a mere 10%, attacks/actions per melee round are reduced to only one and speed is reduced to a crawl – a Speed of 1D4 regardless of what the Speed attribute may have been when shielded from the sun.

This curse generally confines its victims to nocturnal activity or living in dark, shadowy places. Those who wish to go about their business during the day must find a way to completely cover themselves up. Full suits of armor are one solution as are full-body wrappings and hooded capes, cloaks and robes, but even if a tiny part of the body is exposed to sunlight, the character will suffer damage. Some victims of the Burn in Sunlight curse wrap their bodies in cloth like a Mummy combined with wearing large floppy hats and/or additional hooded capes, cloaks or robes. While this will keep the victim's body safe from the sun, such garments are likely to be hot and uncomfortable and most certainly make the character look like a leper or freak and likely to be treated poorly by others, as a result. **Note:** Sunlight does not hurt/blind the eyes.

Cannibalism

The victim of this curse finds the flesh of his *own kind* to be the most tasty food imaginable, and he prefers it to all other forms of sustenance. This is an unnatural form of cannibalism, affecting all races equally, regardless of their base chance of eating their own kind. Victims of this curse are unable to look at another member of their race without at least thinking for a moment how that person might taste. Curse victims with the Cook skill have it especially hard, since they can envision so many different meal possibilities. ("Hmm, Kobold fricassee, Kobold kebabs, Kobold omelet, Kobold turnover . . .") What's worse is that all other types of solid food taste like cardboard or mud to this character.

Whenever a victim of this curse is confronted with a dead body of his own race, he has to make a saving throw (12 or higher) to avoid hunkering down and having a meal right on the spot. Even if the character makes his saving throw, he is still inclined to butcher the body and save some of it for later. The only way to prevent this is for his companions chastise him about it or (if necessary) physically restrain the character, pulling him off the corpse. After 1D6 months of enduring this curse, it gets even worse, and the accursed will consider digging up

graves to feast on the dead, as well as eat any carrion he finds. For each year that the character endures the Curse of Cannibalism, his saving throw to control himself gets a -1 cumulative penalty, making it harder and harder for him to control his eating urges around his own kind. Most often, long-term victims of this curse are either slain, revert to a feral state, or they become hermits, sequestering themselves from society so they might live a life without the constant temptation of eating other people. Perhaps needless to say, victims of the Cannibalism Curse are usually driven to find a cure.



Clumsiness

The victim of this curse is unusually butterfingers and unsure on his feet. His P.P. automatically drops by 1D4 points, and he suffers -2 to strike, parry and dodge. He also suffers a penalty of -15% to all skills requiring any degree of hand to eye coordination and manual dexterity, ranging from Picking Locks and Sewing to Acrobatics, and is -40% to Prowl and Camouflage. Whenever the curse victim rolls a Natural One in combat, he either loses his weapon (01-33% chance), hits himself for half damage (34-66%) or hit his nearest comrade for half damage (67-00%).

Cold

The victim of this curse is always cold, no matter how many clothes he is wearing or how hot it may be. If the combined temperature around the character (blankets, fireplace, furnace, etc.) exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit, there is a chance the character may fall unconscious from heat prostration (must roll above 16 on 1D20, P.E. bonuses can be added to this saving throw). If this happens and there is no one to aid the character, he will

continue to lose one S.D.C./Hit Point every 1D4 hours from dehydration and heat exhaustion. The character will recover in a few hours if given water and the temperature lowered, but he is again cold and uncomfortable. Penalties for feeling cold: -1 on initiative and the character tends to be irritable.

Confusion

This curse reduces the victim's I.Q. by two points. If this reduces the I.Q. below the minimum needed to perform the functions of the character's O.C.C. he is unable to use any of his O.C.C.'s Special Abilities and all O.C.C. skills are performed at -10%. Additionally, the character tends to lose track of time (is always 1D6x10 minutes late for meetings and appointments), misses deadlines and is bad at remembering codes, numbers and other people's names.

Cravings

The unfortunate victim of this curse suffers cravings for the particular kind of food or drink the curse describes (at the G.M.'s discretion), whether it be the most expensive food in existence, cheap food the character can't get enough of, or camel dung. The craving comes 1D4 times per day. To resist it, the victim must make a successful save vs magic of 15 or better. A failed roll means he will do anything to satisfy his craving. If the accursed is unable to sate the craving, the character is distracted (keeps thinking about it and how he might get some) and is -4 on initiative, -2 to strike, parry and dodge and -10% on the performance of all skills. G.M.s should *not* make the desired food or drink too rare or expensive.

Culprit

At first, the victim of this curse actually brings more harm to his friends and companions than to himself. Anybody within 100 feet (30.5 m) of the accursed individual suffers -25% to all skills, and is -2 to strike, parry and dodge in combat. Not surprisingly, those around the curse victim blame him for their woes and may consider abandoning him as "bad luck" and a danger to them all. While this is bad enough, and likely to alienate the cursed victim from those most likely to help him find a way to lift the affliction, the curse takes on an added dimension. After 1D4 months, the penalties double to all companions of the "culprit." The insidious purpose of this curse is to drive away all friends, adventurers and champions. Furthermore, if the character settles down in any one community for more than a month, the first part of the curse will afflict every person living within a mile (1.6 km) radius of his dwelling place! This makes him a pariah to his neighbors. Depending on the cursed character's race, location and other circumstances, this can prove quite hazardous to the character's health as he may be driven from his home by an angry mob and forced (or chose) to live a life as a hermit in isolation. On more than one occasion the victim of the Culprit curse has found himself at the end of a hangman's rope or lashed to a burning stake by desperate or frightened locals willing to do anything to rid themselves of the menace.

Deep Pockets

Also known as the curse of *Endless Generosity*, this affliction compels its victim to give away all monetary wealth just as soon as one acquires it, even if it drives the victim into abject poverty. As soon as the victim obtains any kind of money or easily

traded valuable, he will seek out a good cause or someone to give it to. This may include buying numerous rounds of drinks or food "for everyone," lavish parties, gambling, and even giving it away to strangers. Since it is a curse, the victim can NEVER spend the money to benefit himself (i.e. can't buy himself a suit of armor, magic item, etc.) and friends and close associates are "unworthy recipients" of the money, which makes it impossible for the victim of Deep Pockets to simply give his wealth to a friend, who can give it back or buy things the victim might need. The victim of Deep Pockets can hold onto as many as four weapons, a suit of armor, basic adventuring equipment (e.g., rope, backpack, lantern, food etc.), a couple magic items, and no more than 15 gold in money for basic expenses, but that is about it. Most anything else is considered extraneous wealth the character will give away. This means the accursed must rely entirely on the generosity of others to buy him things when he runs out of money, including a place to sleep and often even food to eat. On the plus side, victims of this curse tend to be fairly popular with the locals and others, since news of their spontaneous, unreasoning generosity tends to precede them.

G.M. Note: Although Deep Pockets victims will give away whatever wealth they accumulate, this does not make them adverse to accumulating wealth in the first place. Quite the contrary, they covet the acquisition of money and demand their fair share of the loot, so the group cannot just keep the character's share and buy things for him as he needs them. When confronted with an opportunity for payment, or dividing loot or treasure, a victim of this curse will still demand a full and proper share, even if he turns right around seconds later and gets rid of it. This is perhaps the most frustrating aspect of this curse to the victim's friends and comrades. Also, this character will not give away or sell his "tools of the trade" such as armor, weapons, magic items, his horse, or other possessions he needs for adventuring or other means of making a living.

Deevil Features

The curse victim sprouts stubby horns, pointy ears (if he does not already have them), sharp teeth or fangs, claws, vestigial bat wings, and cloven hooves for feet, the skin takes on a reddish or coppery hue, and his eyes will turn yellow, orange, or bright red. The net result of all of this is the victim looks positively monstrous, resembling a Deevilkin, and is likely to be treated as such by all who see him. Among genuine monsters and demons, the character might actually be welcomed as a kindred spirit, but among other folk, the victim will have a Horror Factor of 10, and be feared and distrusted. If the curse victim stays in a populated place for more than a few days, the locals will ultimately find the courage to *come after him*, intent on either driving him away or killing him outright. In many cases, the accursed is himself a powerful magic user, psychic or warrior, giving further credence to his being a supernatural menace, and may attract renowned demon hunters, priests, champions or other adventurers to hunt him down to rid the land of this "menace." Likewise, those who associate with Deevils (i.e. the player group) are assumed to be treacherous Deevil Worshipers and/or minions not to be trusted and best avoided. Thus, the character's companions are likely to suffer from their association with their cohort. **Note:** This curse can affect true Lesser Demons and Deevils who suffer this curse in reverse by actually losing most of their monstrous features to look more human and benign!



Their Horror Factor goes down by half, they do not seem frightening or dangerous, and they face constant harassment by, and possibly expulsion from, their fellow infernals who pick on them relentlessly.

Disavowed

This terrible curse causes all of the victim's friends and associates to suddenly forget that they ever knew him, treating him forever as a stranger. Each person gets to save vs magic, requiring a 15 or higher to save. A successful save means the "friend" or acquaintance *does* remember the accursed – for the moment. Every time the accursed is separated from the ones who recognize him, when they meet again, the individuals must roll to save vs magic to see whether or not they remember the cursed character. This means companions, friends and family members must roll every time they meet after parting company, including every new morning, to see if they remember the accursed, and when they forget, it is as if they never knew him at all. The curse victim can try and try to convince his friends that he really is not a stranger, giving details of their common exploits and such, but, none of it will work and such tactics are likely only to convince them he is some kind of con artist, or worse, a psychic reading their minds and trying to trick them for some nefarious purpose! Characters within the group who claim to remember this stranger may be seen as "under his spell" or victims of mind control, causing confusion and conflict within the group.

This curse also prevents the victim from creating new friendships, as anybody who befriends the character will be affected by the curse within 1D4 weeks. No matter where the curse victim goes or who he hangs out with, he is ultimately doomed to be forgotten, isolated and friendless. Should the victim get the curse lifted, then his friends will miraculously remember their long-lost buddy and wonder where he has been all this time.

Dislike

The victim of this curse effectively becomes an irritant to all people around him and those whom he meets, causing strangers to take an immediate disliking to the accursed. Arguments, brawls, fights and duels break out over the slightest altercations, merchants will not want to deal with the character, service at shops will be terrible, etc. The M.A. attribute of the curse victim is reduced to 3, and after six months, there is a 01-44% chance of the character becoming paranoid and jumpy to some degree as he comes to expect trouble wherever he goes. Some become antisocial and try to avoid contact with others. Furthermore, the accursed is likely to be singled out for interrogation, torture, human sacrifice, practical jokes, and other abuses. Only his fellow teammates are not affected by the curse. They continue to see him as he always was, though they cannot deny he has become a trouble magnet that threatens the entire team.

Endless Bleeding

The victim of this curse suffers from magically induced stigmata – 1D4 open wounds (on the palm of a hand) that constantly hurt, ache and weep (bleed). In the alternative, the accursed has blood for tears and a trickle or two of blood is constantly coming from the eyes. Whichever the case, they reduce the character's S.D.C. by half and Hit Points by 10%. In addition, reduce P.B. by 10%, skill performance by 10% and inflict a penalty of -1 to initiative (distracted by the constant ache and dripping blood). When cut or stabbed in combat, the character also *seems* to hemorrhage blood, making the wound look three times worse than it really is (no special or additional damage, however). The character heals at half the normal rate and even *magical healing* and potions only restore half the usual amount. Psychic healing has full effect, but nothing can close the stigmata wounds. **Note:** Some people consider a stigmata to be the sign of punishment from the gods, or the mark of past evil that will forever stain the marked individual until he makes amends for his wicked past deeds. Consequently, many distrust and shun those with such marks.

Enslaved to Passion

The victim becomes enslaved or "obsessed" with a particular *passion* or *cause*. If passionate about a "cause," the accursed is driven to fight for and help to achieve said cause and/or to protect those who champion it. In this case, "passion" does not necessarily mean love for another person (although it can), but a "driving passion" toward some goal or desire. The Game Master can either indicate what this *obsession* is (probably something appropriate to or inspired by the character's current situation; i.e. destroy the undead, fight for the Gods of Light, help others escape the clutches of evil, etc., as well as a personal goal and things less noble than the examples given here, or the G.M. can make a random roll on the *Obsession Table* on page 28 of **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**. As usual, this curse of obsessive dedication to one particular person, cause or desire becomes a driving force in the character's life and will affect his choices and actions in all matters. It may also lead his companions on quests and into dangerous situations of his making as the cursed character follows his passion.

If the passion is for a specific individual, the cursed character does everything in his or her power to help and protect said individual. Although the accursed feels passionate for that specific

individual, the character is likely to serve the person in secret and never reveal his or her love and devotion because the curse makes it's victim feel unworthy of any reciprocal affection. In many cases, the subject of such passion is a public figure such as a king, queen, or princess to a priest, entertainer, or other individual of repute, however, the subject may be a lowly peasant or even a slave. In all these cases, the character effectively becomes a secret benefactor whether the subject of his/her passion deserves such kindness and devotion, or not.

Entropy

Also known as the "Wasting Curse," the victim begins to waste away, slowly but surely. At first, the victim loses 1D4 points of P.S., P.P., P.E. and Spd. overnight. The accursed continues to lose one additional point of P.S. and P.E. every week thereafter; P.P. and other attributes remain unaffected. Additionally, the accursed loses another 1D4 points of S.D.C. (or Hit Points when the victim runs out of S.D.C.) per week. These lost points can NOT be restored by medicinal treatment or rest, and magical healing can only be worked once a day on the character to restore a measly 1D6 points regardless of the potion, spell, or power level of the spell caster. Nothing restores the lost attribute points. Psychic healing has no effect whatsoever. Only by the lifting of the curse itself, can the victim stop wasting away and begin to heal as normal.

Stop degenerating the P.S. and P.E. once they reach half their original level, but adjust all bonuses accordingly, the character fatigues in half the time as usual, and reduce speed by 30%.

When the victim's S.D.C. is gone and Hit Points begin to go, with the deterioration stopping only when Hit Points are down by half and S.D.C. are zero (remain gone until the curse is lifted). At this point, the character's weight is done by 30% and looks weak, haggard and so frail that one suspects death is waiting for him around the next corner. Unless the curse is lifted, the character is in extreme danger of falling to injuring or illness. The curse victim's weakened state also means he or she is probably too frail to wear heavy armor or adequately defend oneself.

Not only might this wasting curse compel player characters to find a cure for their friend, but it can be the impetus for similar adventures in which the player group (and other heroes) are hired or offered a boon or reward to find a way to cure (lift the curse) from a beloved King, Queen, hero of renown or other beloved figure struck down by this terrible curse. As a vehicle for adventure in which the player characters work to rescue an NPC, the group may seek to help to get a posted reward, to win the favor of a powerful king, priest, merchant, etc., because they have been hired (for X-amount with the bulk of the payment coming only if they are successful) or as a selfless act of kindness with no reward other than restoring the afflicted individual.

If the curse is lifted, the character recovers at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points a day and lost attribute return at the rate of one point per day until restored to their original number. S.D.C. recovers as normal.

Foolhardiness

The victim of this curse feels that he is invincible, and that anything he attempts will surely succeed. Nowhere is this more visible than in combat, as the cursed character always charges headfirst into the fray and accepts challenges without a moment's consideration for the strength of his opponent or the pur-

pose of the challenge. The Foolhardy will always keep fighting until victory, death, or he is otherwise subdued or humiliated, never considering retreat or surrender or that he may be about to be defeated. While in battle, the accursed must be physically restrained and dragged from the field of battle by comrades when retreat is in order.

On the plus side, the Foolhardy is completely immune to Horror Factor and +3 to save vs possession, but in the long run, that only serves to encourage the accursed to confront creatures more powerful than he. Those who suffer from this curse also run headlong into any danger, such as a burning building, collapsing mine, submerging chamber, etc., if he thinks it would serve some heroic purpose such as rescuing somebody or retrieving an item of value.



Gambling Bug

This curse turns the victim into a hopeless compulsive gambler who'd rather bet his last gold piece than buy a loaf of bread even if he is starving. Whenever the Gambling Bug has an opportunity to partake in a game of chance, or bet on *anything*, he will do so, often betting as much as their opponent will match. While some of those bitten by the Gambling Bug believe they are actually excellent gamblers and *may* have brief periods where they have a good run of luck, they are obsessed with gambling and cannot stop. Thus, the accursed will bet on just about anything, from a game of cards or dice, to sporting events and duels, to which housefly will buzz away first. If there is somebody to take the bet, the character will bet on it. And bet and bet and bet until he is broke. Worse, when broke, the character (if selfish or evil) may lie, cheat and steal to get money to

bet some more, and if he can't, he is sullen and grouchy to everyone around him. Needless to say, many cursed with the Gambling Bug end up betting themselves into huge debts, the kind that end up being held by criminal figures and other nasty sorts. More than a few victims of the Gambling Bug have ended up in servitude to, or dead at the hands of, angry loan sharks, crooks and debt collectors or behind bars for stealing. **G.M. Note:** Gambling Bug victims are immune to the Greed curse. Roll again for a different curse if Greed comes up.

Glow

The flesh of the curse victim glows softly with a white light. This light is not enough to illuminate an area to read a book in darkness, but is more than enough to attract attention. The light can be concealed only under heavy cloth or wrappings, which tend to make the victim look menacing, and in the latter case, rather like a mummy. The odd effect reduces the physical beauty by two points, instills a Horror Factor of 9, and the unusual glow attracts both night insects and first attacks in combat, for if the character glows, an opponent is likely to presume he glows with magic energy or supernatural power and must therefore be neutralized quickly. These distractions make the character -2 on initiative and constantly concerned about how people will react to him. Furthermore, *prowling* at night without a heavy covering is *impossible*, and with a cumbersome cloak, -5%.

Glowing Eyes

The eyes of the curse victim glows white, yellow or red. Most people who see such an individual assume he is evil, a demon, or possessed by a demon or evil spirit. As a result, the accursed is frightening and ominous, causing many folk to react by driving him out of town or to kill him! In the alternative, some may try to forcibly *exorcize* him, believing the character is possessed by an evil spirit. Although this curse raises a character's M.A. to 22, it only serves to *intimidate* rather than cause trust. Furthermore, those who can magically or psionically See Aura see a strange one emanating around the cursed individual, making friend and foe alike to view this cursed individual with suspicion, fear and distrust, causing them to generally regard his/her words as lies. If the curse results from a damned weapon or object, the glowing eyes usually disappears when the cursed object is lost or abandoned. **Note:** While clerics and Wizards know the proper methods of exorcism, there are a lot of people who think that physical pain can drive a demon out of a person through beatings, whippings, burning, etc..

Greed

The victim of this curse suffers from an overwhelming need to acquire money and wealth. To do this, the character takes unnecessary risks, sell out friends and family, double-cross his closest confidants, tramples the weak, and carries on any in all kinds of nefarious ways in an effort to get rich quick. Even when the curse victim gets filthy rich, however, it will never be enough, for the thrill is in the hunt not the chase. To those cursed by Greed the fun and compulsion is in actually getting it, not in saving or spending it. In fact, the more a Greed afflicted victim acquires, the less willing he becomes to part with it for any reason. Legends speak of a few folk who lived with this curse as virtual paupers, commanding vast fortunes but unwill-

ing to spend a single copper of it. Wretches like these often die in their old age, dressed in rags and living in a shack on top of a site where the victim buried his incredible fortune. For this reason, treasure hunters like to keep tabs on the victims of the Greed curse, for they know when they die, their fortune could be theirs for the taking. Since Greed victims probably are too cheap and untrusting to hire guards to watch their fortunes, chances are they will employ some kind of magical device (e.g., a Demon Stone that is itself part of the loot) to make sure no thieves steal anything from the treasure hoard. **G.M. Note:** Greed victims are immune to the Gambling Bug curse, described previously. If it is randomly rolled, ignore it and roll again for a different curse.

Hallucinatory Noises

The victim of this curse hears *suspicious noises* throughout the day. The noises are always suggestive of coming from one or more intelligent living creatures, such as whispering voices with words that can't quite be heard, the scratching of clawed feet on stone, the tread of footsteps, the clank of armor, the rustle of a cloak, a cough, a groan, laughter, etc. The cursed character will never be sure whether the noise is real or just a hallucination, so he is always on edge and often suffers from anxiety, paranoia and exhaustion.

The noises occur most often during quiet times when the character is about to relax, rest or sleep. They also occur when in darkness (especially when alone), during guard duty, when listening at a door, while waiting in ambush, hiding, etc. Months or years of this constant stress will inevitably lead to insanity.

After the victim of this cursed item has experienced the noises for 60 days, the character will acquire the mild *phobia of fear and apprehension*. Note that in this case the initial phobia is more like paranoia and extreme jitters rather than outright terror. However, after another two months it becomes a full blown phobia. Add one of the following phobias for each additional year the character suffers from this curse (one every four months if the character possesses an object/item with this curse): 1) darkness, 2) closed doors, 3) graveyards, 4) undead, 5) Shadow Beasts, 6) the invisible, 7) sleep and 8) Elementals. After this, there is a 01-60% chance of acquiring one of the paranoid or schizophrenic insanities (see Neurosis in the RPG). **Note:** The insanities will remain even after the curse is lifted, unless the curse is removed by a god, in which case the insanities are also lifted.

Haunted by the Slain

This unusual curse (are there any "usual" ones?) burdens its victim with frequent contact with and harrowing by the ghostly image of anybody the character has ever killed. For most people in the Palladium world who never adventure and never get into combat, this curse would not be so bad, but to the average hero or villain, who might easily have killed dozens of people over the course of their careers, this curse can provide a burden too great for their minds to bear.

The victim will always hear in the back of his head a chorus of faint voices. These are the ghosts of those he has slain in the



past, all saying things like "How could you do this to me," "Why me?" "I never deserved to die," "Murderer!" "Killer." "I hope you suffer a fate ten times as worse than what you have visited upon me!" "Your time is coming," and so on. During normal activities, the victim will merely be distracted by the voices and shadowy figures glimpsed from the corner of one's eye, suffering the following penalties: -1 on initiative, -1 to strike, parry and dodge, and -5% to all skills.

When the cursed character enters into combat, the voices will raise into a malicious clamor of jeers, catcalls, shouting and laughter only heard in the victim's head and all cheering for his opponent, rooting against him and wishing him failure, defeat, injury and death. ("You can't win." "You're hurt, tired, stop fighting and let the inevitable come." "Soon you will be joining us." "Ha! Now you know the suffering we have endured." "Give up." "Suffer, killer." "Die!") Their words turn into pure venom for the character who slew them, regardless of how justified the accursed character might have been when he did the killing. For the duration of combat, the curse victim is extremely distracted and suffers the following penalties: -2 on initiative, -4 to strike, parry and dodge, and -20% on all skills.

Eventually, the victim *may* begin to suffer permanent psychological damage, regardless if the curse is lifted or not. After 1D6+3 months of enduring this curse, the victim has a 01-50% chance to contract one random neurosis and a random phobia (not ghosts). These insanities will always stick with the victim, even after the curse is lifted. To get rid of insanities, the victim will have to seek the services of a Mind Mage or somebody equally able to cure mental illness. It is said that many adventurers who are unable to shake this curse give up their fighting ways and take up vows of pacifism or at least learn the measure of *mercy*. Even after the curse is lifted, victims often seek some kind of atonement for their past deeds, visiting the graves (if they exist) of their fallen foes, making reconciliation with their families, fighting for just causes, showing great tolerance and compassion, etc.

Headaches

The curse victim is constantly afflicted by painful headaches causing the penalties of -1 to strike, parry and dodge, and a -5% on all skills. Under *crisis situations*, the headache gets worse, making concentration and spell casting difficult. The character is always the last to strike or take action and can only cast one spell per melee round, plus the penalties above and -20% penalty on all skills. If this curse is the result of owning an accursed weapon or object, the curse can be alleviated by discarding the cursed item.

Heat

The victim of this curse is uncomfortably warm all the time, even when sitting in a cold bath. While uncomfortable, this curse has no other side effects, except the person may catch a cold from wearing too few clothes and may embarrass his or her teammates. If this curse is on a weapon rather than the character himself, to remove the curse he must discard the cursed item first, otherwise any attempt to Remove Curse will fail. However, discarding the item is not enough, and the curse will linger until it is successfully removed from the individual.

Heavy as a Stone

Everything the victim of the curse *carries* or *wears* automatically weighs ten times its normal amount. The victim's strength remains undiminished, but the character struggles under the *weight*. Consequently, unless the character has great P.S. and especially, P.E., the wearing of heavy armor is out of the question as the weight is crushing. (Note: A good rule of thumb is that normal-sized humanoids, including Dwarves, can normally carry on their back up to 70 lbs/31.5 kg of gear without being overtly hampered. Giant-sized humanoids like Ogres and Wolfen can carry up to twice that amount and small humanoids can carry only half that amount. True giants, of course, can carry considerably more. Of course, these are just general figures for the average character. The actual amount may be more or less for some characters.)

The only solution for the cursed character is to ditch most of his possessions and travel as light as possible until he can get the curse removed. This curse primarily applies to articles worn or carried on the character's person, i.e. clothes, body armor, backpacks, pouches and weapons attached to belts or slung over the shoulder, etc. Even weapons should be lightweight. If not, add another -1 to the penalties below.

Unless the curse victim has a P.S. of 24 or greater, or Supernatural Strength, he suffers the following penalties: -2 to strike and parry, -1 to dodge and roll with impact, plus he fatigues/tires twice as quickly (even light activity seems like medium to heavy exertion). *Double the penalties* if heavy armor (double mail, scale, splint, plate, etc.) is worn.

Hunger

The curse victim will always feel like he has not eaten for days. Even after eating a really big meal, the victim still feels a twinge of hunger that will ramp up into full blown ravenousness within the hour. If the curse victim goes more than six hours without eating a hearty meal, he will become light-headed, distracted by stomach pains, and generally in a miserable state. When so deprived of nourishment, the curse victim is -2 to strike, parry and dodge, and -15% on all skills.

The only way to *temporarily alleviate* these effects is for the character to eat a meal's worth of food. A mere piece of fruit or sandwich will not cut it; we're talking like an entire ham washed down with a jug of wine and a big loaf of bread. The only alternative is to get the curse lifted.

Certain races (most notably, Dwarves and Orcs) strangely do not mind having this curse, as it gives them the excuse they have always been looking for to engage in constant gluttony. However, even to those who don't mind living their lives chained to a dinner table, the sheer logistics of providing the accursed with the amount of food he needs to keep going can be trying at best. At a single meal, the victim will put away more food than what a family of four humans might consume, so unless the victim is rich and has access to huge stores of vittles, he is going to find himself starving more often than not. Despite the penalties listed above for when the curse victim goes more than six hours without food, the character will never actually die from hunger as a result of this curse. The curse will keep the victim alive, even if he never eats another crumb, but the misery the victim experiences is unspeakable. For should the accursed go more than 36 hours without a full dinner, he simply becomes too weak to move

except to pounce upon food if it comes his way. Thus, he will only be wracked by infinite hunger pains until somebody feeds the victim enough to get back on his feet (the equivalent of a two course meal would do nicely).

Idiocy

The curse victim immediately reduces his I.Q. by 60% for the duration of the curse. The victim's I.Q. never drops below 3, but other than that, the victim's capability for stupidity become incredible. All skills are performed at -30%, but on the flip side, the character gets a +4 to save vs Horror Factor because he is just too dumb to recognize danger when he sees it. Likewise, any psychic who tries establishing telepathic contact with the victim finds it impossible to do so – the victim's mind is such a clutter of random thoughts and imbecility that the psychic's efforts simply fail. It is like trying to place a satellite phone call to a person who communicates using smoke signals. By that same token, the cursed victim still retains any psychic powers he had, but loses any Telepathic and Telemechanic abilities he may have had.

G.M.s and Players alike are encouraged to role-play the heck out of this curse, especially if your character or NPC is now dumber than a box full of hammers. So dense that light might just bend around him. So slow he needs to be watered twice a week. You get the idea.

Impassable Threshold

This curse makes it impossible for the victim to pass within 30 miles (48 km) of one specific place. Most of the time, the place in question has something to do with where the victim got his curse or where he was headed when he contracted the curse. Victims of Impassable Threshold have noted that it seems that the curse has a way of reading one's mind and selecting some place of importance to the victim, for it never fails that the "forbidden point" is somewhere the victim needs to go or would definitely like to see again soon. Often times, the "point of impassability" is the victim's house, his base of operations, the castle of his lord, where he buried some treasure, the final destination of a quest or journey, the stronghold of a hated enemy, the site where one might get the curse lifted, and so on.

Insect Attraction

This curse attracts annoying insects. Flies, bees, wasps, and gnats circle around the head and body. Mosquitoes, lice and ticks will love to infest the victim's clothes and armor and live on the body. Any insects in the area will be drawn towards the character before anyone else. The omnipresent and repulsive swarm of insects reduces the character's P.B. and M.A. attributes by half, and cause a Horror Factor (revulsion) of 12. After all, it's not pleasant to sit near somebody crawling with bugs and with another couple dozen winged insects buzzing around his head. **Note:** While an alchemist may be able to create some type of insect repellent, it will not repulse insects attracted by the curse. They remain no matter what is done. This does *not* apply to such monstrous insects as Grunnors, Rock Crawlers and most Giant Insects.

Itching

The victim of his curse finds himself feeling as if he is covered with bug bites, rash or poison ivy. His entire body (and we

mean his "entire" body) itches uncontrollably. So much so, in fact, that the victim is likely to scratch himself so vigorously as to rub his flesh raw and start bleeding in places. Every day, the victim will lose 1D4 points of S.D.C. from self-inflicted wounds, but this damage can be healed with psionics, magic, or through natural healing. Of greater annoyance, though, is that the victim will find it really difficult to concentrate on anything else other than his itching. Ordinarily, this means the victim will suffer a whopping -25% to all skills and a -4 to initiative. Once the character joins in combat, though, the pressures of staying alive will override the itching sensation, so there are no combat penalties.

Supposedly, there are herbal remedies to counteract the misery wrought by the Itching, and according to rumor, there are even a few Wizards living in the Northern Mountains who have invented spells to negate the Itching. But really, there is no true cure for the awful sensations of this curse. The only way around it is to have it lifted somehow.

Joy Buzzer

A curious curse, the Joy Buzzer makes it so the accursed *can not touch* another person without delivering a shock to them. The shock inflicts a single point of damage to the other person as well as to the character with the curse. The shock transfers through any kind of clothing, armor, or other body coverings, magic or otherwise. For the most part, this curse has no practical combat application, since it does so little damage. It is like the curse victim is forever carrying a big static charge and will zap whoever touches him. The shock does not have to be transferred through the victim's hand, nor does the victim have to intentionally touch somebody to shock them. A character who unwittingly puts his hand on the victim's shoulder will receive a shock, just as a person who accidentally bumps into the curse victim. The shock does not transfer through hand-held weapons, even those that are conductive in nature, so the curse will not travel through a sword blade, shield, staff, etc. Armor, metal and clothing do transfer the shock, but that is because they are directly on the accursed's body, not because of what material they are made of. The shock will not conduct through water, so if the Joy Buzzer goes off between two people standing in a puddle for example, a third person standing in that puddle will not get shocked. Also, once a character has been shocked by the Joy Buzzer, he will not continue to receive a shock if he holds on to the curse victim. If the victim shakes hands with somebody and managed to hold on to him, the person he is shaking hands with will just take that one point of damage. After that, those shocked are effectively "grounded" and so long as they remain in physical contact, they will not shock each other again. However, if said individual lets go and touches the accursed again, he will be shocked again. Basically, this is a grave annoyance that prevents the victim from having any kind of friendly physical contact with other people.

Jumping Bean

When this curse strikes, the victim is seized with a never-ending burst of energy, a kind of hyperactivity that makes it hard for him to concentrate, difficult to carry out complicated tasks (like most skills) and impossible to keep still. The victim of the Jumping Bean curse will always be needing to keep in motion, drumming his hands or feet, walking around (even if

only pacing back and forth in a bouncing motion), engaging in a range of physical nervous habits (such as nail biting, tapping his fingers, jiggling his leg and foot, cracking knuckles, flipping a coin, bouncing or juggling a ball, etc.), and generally fiddling with anything that is not nailed down. Such characters tend to have short attention spans and a great ability for getting into trouble, always "leaping" before looking. Yet for all of their excess energy, the victim does not gain extra speed, strength, or initiative. It is as if they are flooded with so many impulses to do something *right now* that they have a hard time doing any of them. As a result, they are a bundle of *useless energy*, hindered from taking timely or decisive action regarding anything. Those cursed with Jumping Bean are -2 to initiative, -10% on all skills and -1D4 on M.A. (they are annoying and distracting). Moreover, they tend to skip and jump when running, reducing their speed attribute by 10%, but making them +1 to dodge. Any rituals and any other kind of lengthy ceremony or action requiring extended periods of concentration are murderous for this character and if the accursed must perform it, he is likely to bungle it; -40% chance to success. If the accursed is an incidental participant or observer he inflicts only a -10% penalty to the success because his antics are distracting to those around him. Psionic powers are not affected by this curse.

Liar, Liar

This curse turns its victim into a pathological liar of the first order. The victim literally can *not* tell the truth about anything unless he does so by accident (i.e., the character lies about something and the lie somehow, without the knowledge of the victim, contains some element of truth), or if the victim is somehow tricked into revealing the truth despite his deceitful efforts (this happens a lot with curse victims who are not especially intelligent).

The power of this curse tends to diminish somewhat if the curse victim keeps the same company for a while, because his companions will know to distrust everything the victim says. But should they? Actually, every 3D6 days, the cursed character will enjoy a day (24 hours) in which he can tell the truth, except by that time, he has probably established such an incredible reputation for lying that nobody will believe what he says. This is rather frustrating for curse victims of a good or honorable alignment and who hate lying to friends and comrades. If the curse is lifted, the affliction goes with it.

Light as a Feather

The opposite of Heavy as a Stone, this curse makes everything the curse victim holds, carries or wears weigh only one-tenth their usual weight! In some regards, this seems to be a boon, since the character can carry much heavier loads than usual. However, because the items are so light, the character has a very difficult time using and controlling weapons, tools and items which are so light they may even be moved or blown out of his hands by the wind or a sudden movement. For example, when the cursed individual runs, everything on his back is suspended in the air and flaps in the wind behind him. Large items in his hand are jerked back by the force of the wind and acceleration, causing the character to lurch or stagger. Meanwhile, swinging down with a weapon meets wind resistance that may cause him to miss -2 to strike and parry, and does half damage if the item is larger than a knife. Any missiles fired or thrown

only flies one-tenth as far as normal, but inflict full damage because they return to normal weight by the time they hit. Note that anything the character holds but then lets go of resumes its normal weight a second or two later, which means the character might forget how much the item weighs and may drop it on things that cannot support the weight, accidentally breaking, shattering, chipping or denting the object it is dropped onto. Likewise, the character may drop a heavy item on someone's foot, or present a problem when anyone else tries to carry his gear, etc.

Magic Plague

The victim of this curse is extra vulnerable to magic and is -4 to save vs magic charms and illusions, takes 1D6 points of extra damage from magic weapons and magical energy attacks, and is -2 to save against all other types of magic attacks (spells, circles, wards, etc.). If the character has any way to Sense Magic (via psionics, magic or by magic item) he is oblivious to it (it does not work for him).

If the character is a man of magic or clergy himself, in addition to the above penalties, the character's own abilities are also diminished and he becomes something of a bungler. Scroll conversion is never better than 01-14% and the success rate for any special magic O.C.C. ability is reduced by 20%, including prayers for clergy.

In short, magic is a plague and a burden for this cursed individual, rather than a wonder or help for this poor fellow.

Magnetism

The victim radiates an intense magnetic aura that makes it really difficult for the character to use any sort of metal weapons, armor, tools or metal items.

First, metal weapons and objects are drawn to the accursed and stick to his head, face, torso, arms, legs, hands and feet with great force. The magnetic pull is equivalent to a P.S. of 35. The P.S. is only provided in terms of how hard it is to pull items off the cursed character. Consequently, all manner of metal objects and items magnetically stick to him, from thumbtacks, horseshoes, forks, spoons and bits of scrap metal, to metal knives, pots and pans, pieces of armor, daggers, swords, and other metal objects susceptible to magnetism. Unless the victim of the curse can get others to regularly help pull the items from his body, the accursed is eventually covered from head to toe, with metallic debris, making him look like a walking junkpile!

Penalties: All the metal do-dads detract from the cursed character's P.B. (reduce by 30%), M.A. (reduce by 10%) and speed (reduce by 20% due to the weight and awkwardness of the attached objects). It also makes movement difficult (-1 to strike, parry, and dodge, -5% to skill performance, -2 to roll with punch, fall and impact - a failed roll to "roll with impact" means the accursed takes full damage plus 1D6 additional damage from attached debris that jabs him the wrong way. The tortured soul also takes 1D4 damage when laying down or bending over). Prowling is very difficult (-50%) as the metal objects stuck to the character clank and jingle, and/or snag onto things, plus new metal objects are constantly being pulled toward the magnetized victim, attaching with a clunk or a clank as well as making noise and drawing attention to itself as it clatters across the table, floor or ground. In fact, the character can create quite

a stir sitting down at a table and causing ALL metal utensils, platters and sundry other items to race across the table and fling on to his body as if alive. The weight and impairment of movement also make swimming, acrobatics and other skill requiring agile movement difficult; -10% to most physical skills.

From time to time, the character may get stuck to a large, heavy metal object (or other character in a suit of armor), requiring outside help to pull the magnetized individual free, or else he will be stuck indefinitely and could die of starvation or dehydration!

Inevitably, the curse victim will need friends to pull the items attached off of his body and deposit them far enough away so he can function. Furthermore, the use of *metal weapons* is impossible, for they too are attracted to the character's magnetic body and cannot be pulled from their scabbard or easily swung to strike an opponent. Moreover, it is very difficult to sit or lay down comfortably without getting jabbed, poked or injured from one or more of the hard metal objects stuck to the character's body. This makes a comfortable night's sleep difficult (often impossible), causing these curse victims to get only 1D4+1 hours of sleep a night, and the sleep deprivation adding to their tiredness, discomfort, and penalties (noted earlier). It may also make the character grouchy and short tempered.

Perhaps needless to say, the afflicted character quickly becomes fond of *wooden* (or stone) weapons and utensils, encouraging them to carrying their own wooden spoon, fork, knife, bowl and plate, and similar odds and end. Likewise, most avoid metal armor preferring leather and other unique types of armor (like Kathos armor). Some even turn into hermits avoiding civilization and all their metal trinkets.

If there is any (arguable) benefit to this curse, it is that the victim, when covered with metal junk, gets the equivalent of a *Natural Armor Rating of 12* (8 or 9 if not heavily covered). However, all the discomfort, nuisance, pain and inconvenience far outweighs any benefit.

Note: The metal objects and weapons do NOT fly at the victim of the curse at such speeds as to inflict impact damage. Objects weighing one pound (0.45 kg) or less are attracted from distances of up to 20 feet (6 m), objects weighing up to 12 pounds (5.4 kg) from 10 feet (3 m), and items as heavy as up to 100 pounds (45 kg) from about four feet (1.2 m). As noted earlier, if the character touches or comes within a foot or so (about 0.3 m) of a large or heavy metal object, the curse victim will stick to it and remain stuck until he can get help to peel off of it (requires a combined P.S. of 35). The character's speed and endurance/fatigue factor *may* also be affected when the weight of the iron objects becomes too great or restricts easy movement.

Memory Loss

The victim of this curse suffers from total amnesia, meaning that his every recollection, his every memory *prior to* contracting this curse, has been largely erased. It is as if he simply awakens the next morning with little recollection of his past. He will remember those around him, but only vaguely, and while he may know enough to trust them, he does not remember any actual adventures or experiences together. Nor will he remember how he got this curse. Only certain major events that had a profound impact on his life *might* still be remembered or have a slight residual impression similar to the way one might remem-

ber a dream. For example, the accursed might remember he is from the Western Empire, and that he has wife (what's her name?) and/or he might remember a little about Elven history or a favorite song or food, but for the most part, the character's past is now a blank slate, and he must try to reconstruct his past as best he can, but forgetting all but the most memorable events. Many take to keeping a journal.

Metal Allergy

Whenever the victim of this curse comes into contact with an item made of metal for more than four melee rounds (one minute) he suffers 1D4 points of damage of shooting pain, plus the eyes water and he will sneeze every minute or so for the next hour. Even carrying a metal dagger kept in its sheath most of the time or a sack of coins kept in a backpack makes the eyes to water and causes intervals of sneezing (typically 2D4+1 rapid-fire sneezes) every ten minutes or so, as if the character had severe hay fever. This symptom also occurs whenever the cursed character is around a lot of metal such as an enclosed space like an armory, jail cell or treasure vault.

When suffering from this curse allergy, prowl and hiding is impossible and handling metallic items causes the above symptoms plus the following penalties: -1 on initiative, -1 to strike, parry and dodge and -2 to strike using a bow or thrown weapon due to the blurred vision and possible jerk of a sneeze throwing the projectile off target.

These characters, obviously, tries to avoid metal armor, weapons, utensils and coins, as well as places where metal items are numerous. **Note:** Sometimes this curse is "tailored" for one or two *specific types* of metal such as gold, silver, copper or iron, but most Metal Allergy curses are broad based and include all or most types of "metals."

Mistaken Identity

This curse somehow rewrites the very identity of the victim in the eyes of acquaintances, passersby and even foes who do not know the character well. Only close friends, frequent comrades and close family members recognize the character for who he really is. Those who only know the character in passing or by reputation will confuse him with somebody else – and always someone of poor character. No amount of arguing or evidence to the contrary will convince them otherwise, either. What's worse is lawmen and authority figures always mistake the character (even if a hero of some repute) to be a lowlife or criminal up to no good. This curse will also make its presence felt if the victim tries to collect on rewards or debts that are owed him and when making public appearances or visits to court where inevitably everybody wonders, "Who is this lout, and why is he addressing us as if he knows us?"

Misunderstanding

In dealing with people of other races and customs, the victim of this curse will always, even upon making a successful speak or read/write roll, misunderstand what others have said to him, just as he will mis-speak or others will misunderstand him and his intentions. Accidental insults, paying too little money, and coming off as a braggart, snob, cad, lush, or jerk, are constantly getting the character in trouble. If a mage, scrolls cannot be properly read and will not work, and mystic symbols, wards, runes and circles will also be misinterpreted with negative ef-

fect. This curse is often attached to weapons and objects and is eliminated when the cursed object is abandoned.



Misshapen

The victim of this curse finds his body transformed into a hideous parody of its former self, as if he were made out of clay and some fiendish sculptor decided to smash and contort the body without mercy. The victim automatically sees his P.B. attribute reduced by half, Spd by 10% and P.P. by 20%. He also gains a Horror Factor of 7+1D4 and is -1 on initiative.

Although the character is not turned into a monster, he might be treated as one by those who are cruel or intolerant of differences. Those who do not recoil from the wretched cursed soul are likely to find his appearance disturbing, while those who fail their H.F. roll may run away and/or pelt him with vegetables, hurl insults, tar and feather him, and drive him away. Either way, the curse victim is pretty much condemned to a life as an outcast and a victim of other people's cruelty. The cursed victim can try to cover himself up as much as possible by wearing loose robes, a hood over his head, and so on, but such disguises are temporary at best.

Mumble

No matter what the victim of this curse tries to say, no one will be able to understand him because he "mumbles." Even if the victim tries to shout it will come out as nothing more than a "Look mhhhhuhhhhyaaauhhh nayyyy!" All who hear him speak only have a 01-50% chance of completely understanding what is

said. Characters listening must roll for every two sentences spoken. This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item. When it is gotten rid of, the curse goes with it.

Necrosis

This grisly curse makes its victim appear in every way that he is dead or dying – or is, perhaps, a zombie or the walking dead! However, unlike the Entropy curse, it does not actually sap the victim's S.D.C., Hit Points or strength.

As soon as the victim contracts this curse, the eyes and cheeks become sunken, the skin takes on an ashen hue, and dead skin flakes off in big white sheets. Sunlight bothers the eyes, requiring the cursed to shield them with a hood, wide-brimmed hat or the hands (adding to the vampire like appearance) and the skin is cold and clammy. This poor soul also has the faint smell of death and decay about him.

The character, for all intent and purpose, appears to be an animated corpse or undead monster with a Horror Factor of 10+1D4. Dogs howl at him, horses bolt or whinny, and most people will shun the character. Women, children and the faint of heart run away in terror. Many folks will whip out a cross or other holy symbol to protect themselves, and most will refuse to have anything to do with the character. Some, particularly inexperienced adventurers, priests and would-be heroes, may attack and try to drive a wooden stake through the character's heart,

even if he is out in daylight! **Note:** In the Land of the Damned, characters with this affliction are all likely to be mistaken for one of the many types of *undead* creatures that roam the land, especially when traveling in the south.

Open Sores

What a disgusting curse! The victim is covered with open, oozing, weeping, and otherwise discharging lesions or sores. Blood, pus, and other nasty bodily fluids always issue from these sores, and they smell awful. While not quite so repulsive as some disfiguring curses, a victim of Open Sores hardly has it easy. First, his P.B. goes down by 1D4 points, and he gets a Horror Factor of 8. More than that, the curse victim's sores will make wearing any clothing very uncomfortable, even painful. The heavier the clothing, the worse the pain. This means that the character cannot wear a full suit of clothing or light armor for more than a number of hours equal to his P.E. attribute score. He cannot wear a suit of medium armor for more than a number of hours equal to *half* of his P.E. score, and he cannot wear a suit of heavy armor for more than a number of minutes equal to his P.E. attribute number.

The curse victim may be regarded as a leper or plague victim and shunned by strangers and civilized folk. While he is unlikely to be driven from town by hysterical mobs, he is just as unlikely to be given the key to the city and may be denied room and board, food, and other services by frightened people. As with most curses, ordinary medical care, and even psychic and magical healing, will not close the sores. Only the lifting of the curse will provide any kind of relief.

Phantom Odors

The victim of this curse will suddenly smell odd or badly at various times for no apparent reason. No amount of bathing or perfume can conceal these odd and often foul odors. The smells come and go 3D4 times a day. After awhile, the victim of such a curse will be unable to tell whether the odors are from something in the area or a manifestation of the curse. Depending on when the odor appears, it can ruin a successful prowl, reveal where the character is hiding or enable an opponent to locate him when invisible, as well as enable others to track him or be annoyed and disturbed by the smells issuing from him. This curse can be played for laughs and drama. This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Plague Carrier

Those who suffer from this curse *appear* to be infected with a variety of horrible plagues and can fool even a skilled doctor. The diseases that are easily recognized by most ordinary folk, and as soon as the "plague" is identified, people flee from the cursed individual en masse. Odds are that bold or desperate community leaders, defenders and heroes will try to drive the plague ridden character and his associates *away*, and may even *kill* the character and immediately burn his body to ashes!

The cursed character, though completely healthy, is constantly hacking and coughing whenever he is around a lot of people or in a communal/town setting, adding credence to the other signs that he is infected with one or more plague diseases.

Quest

As the name of this curse implies, the victim is compelled to carry out some form of quest – a grand task or set of tasks that usually entails a great deal of travel, adversity and time. The average curse-borne Quest will take at least a couple of months in game time to carry out and quite likely much longer than that (may take a year or more to achieve). Quests should always involve at least one major villain of some sort that the victim does not have the ability to defeat alone or at the time he contracts the curse. The nature of this curse is to inflict an epic journey and undertaking onto the victim whether he wants to undergo such an endeavor or not.

Until the Quest is fulfilled, the victim will be absolutely *obsessed* with its completion. Every hour he remains idle is an hour he is wasting. His comrades will be constantly hounded by their Quest-laden friend to help him. Meanwhile, he can tolerate only the briefest of stops and detours along the way. No long stays in town to enjoy nights at the tavern or dance hall. No taking interesting side adventures if it can be avoided. No putting the Quest on hold to pursue an interesting opportunity for himself or his teammates, and so on. Regardless of the curse victim's alignment, motivations, loyalties or personality, fulfilling the Quest is now the most important thing in his life, and he will abandon his closest friends or his king or even his god if he has to in order to fulfill his mission. The Quest always comes first.



The curse victim has the rest of his life to finish the Quest, but his obsession with it will probably mean the Quest gets completed much sooner than that. Once the Quest has been completed, though, the curse lifts instantly, and the curse victim will feel a tremendous weight has been lifted from his back.

On the up side, this is a great way for a character to expand his experience, power and wealth. Many Quest victims often come out of the experience stronger than they were before – assuming they survive the challenge. Lady Luck, however, has a funny way of playing with Quest victims, somehow seeing to it that by the end of the Quest, the victim is never significantly more wealthy than before.

Rags

The curse of rags causes any clothing and armor worn/carried by the cursed victim to tear and break easily, rapidly becoming nothing more than rags within a one week period after being acquired. Normal armor will lose 10 S.D.C. per day, while magi-



cal armor will lose one S.D.C. per week. When the S.D.C. of the armor or clothes is exhausted it is totally useless. As a result, the character often looks like a beggar or as if he has just suffered some terrible battle that has left him in rags. Such a curse is especially terrible for characters who love clothes and fashion or who are nobles used to the finer things in life and where appearance means everything. This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Random Teleportation

Those who suffer from this curse will, once every 2D4 days, teleport without warning to a random location. There is no telling where the accursed has gone, nor will anybody around him know that he is about to go bye-bye. There is just a simple flash of light, a faint residual magic aura, and . . . nothing. The curse victim is gone as if he had never been there.

When the victim randomly teleports, the G.M. should roll 1D8 to determine the direction: 1 = north, 2 = northeast, 3 = east, 4 = southeast, 5 = south, 6 = southwest, 7 = west, 8 = northwest. The G.M. should also roll percentile dice to determine the distance in miles that the victim has teleported. (To get kilometers, multiply the distance by 1.6.)

There are a few fail-safes in this magic. The curse will not place its victim more than one mile (1.6 km) off any coastline. If the victim finds himself on one of the great oceans, providing he can make it to shore, he will be okay. The victim will not re-materialize into any solid object either. The teleportation is always someplace on the surface, never inside a cave or underground dwelling. In most cases, this means the victim suddenly

finds himself outdoors at some new locale. Sometimes, this location is a place he knows or is not terribly far from his previous location, but other times it may be a hostile environment or a fair distance away. The curse victim should learn to travel prepared for any contingency. The curse teleports the victim and whatever he is wearing or carrying at the time (up to 500 lbs/800 kg of additional gear), but does not, under any circumstance, carry along other living beings or companions. Friends and familiar animals are always left behind. Reuniting with the curse victim after he teleports may be easy or difficult depending on the setting and current circumstances. If the victim leaves a familiar behind, it can guide teammates to its master's current location. Often it is up to the curse victim to find his comrades rather than the other way around, and those used to this affliction often establish one or two rendezvous points.

Reduced Healing

A character afflicted with this curse only heals two point of damage per day by natural means and half as much as the usual points from magic or psionic healing; i.e. a Healing Touch that would have restored nine points of damage only restores four (round down). Spells of restoration and resurrection see their chance of working on the cursed victim reduced by half! When attempting to recover from a coma, the victim of the curse gets no bonuses to save, base recovery only. This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Reduced Vision

The victim's day and night vision is reduced to a maximum of 30 feet (9 m)! Past that point the vision is blurred, and faces, features and signs are impossible to distinguish. Attempting to strike a target with a bow and arrow or thrown weapon beyond the 30 foot (9 m) limit will have a penalty of -7 to strike! This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Repellent

The accursed becomes totally abhorrent to a particular type of people. It can be a particular race or a specific O.C.C. (Knights, Wizards, Priests, Merchants, etc.). Members of that particular group refuse to interact with the character for any reason, shunning him. Some might even try to destroy the character out of general principle. ("Nothing personal, bub, but you have got to go.")

Reverse Alignment

This curse changes the victim's alignment to something that is as close to an extreme opposite as possible.

- Principled victims become Diabolic, and Diabolic victims become Principled.
- Scrupulous victims become Aberrant and Aberrant victims become Scrupulous.
- Unprincipled victims have an equal chance of becoming either Miscreant (01-50%) or Aberrant (51-00%).
- Anarchist victims become Scrupulous.

This curse remains in effect until lifted, though there are many cases in which victims come to terms with their new alignment and do nothing to alleviate their accursed condition. It

is believed that in most cases where legendary heroes or villains have inexplicably "changed sides," this curse was somehow involved. This curse is often placed on rune weapons with the curse *remaining* in effect even if the weapon is discarded. Lifting the curse requires the intercession of others.

Reverse Direction

This unusual curse reverses the victim's every motor function. If he tries to move his arm up, it will go down. If he tries to look left, he will look right. Only speech is not affected although words are sometimes spoken out of order or come out backwards.

Those who first experience this effect are usually totally disoriented by it. All skills are performed at a whopping -40%, and the character loses one attack per melee round and is -4 to strike, parry, dodge, disarm, entangle, pull punch, and roll with impact.

After the first 1D4 days however, the victim gets better at learning how to control his body. Skill penalties become only -20%, combat penalties are -2, and the lost melee attack is regained. However, he still loses one attack per melee round and can never get any better than this. Moreover, the character remains something of an oddity if not a spectacle, walking backwards to go forward and sometimes still making sudden moves that make him look like a clown or a drunk.

Singing

The victim of this curse cannot speak normally, but must speak everything in the form of a song! If the victim has the Sing skill, then this might not sound too bad. (It is thought the famous Minstrel *Aaden Lingin* turned such a curse into a career). However, if the victim has no Sing skill, then he may regularly (even constantly) sing off-key and flat. Although they will seem odd for singing all the time, they will not lose their ability to communicate through song, and those who sing well may continue to command respect or inspire people. Exactly what form of song and the melodies used depends on the individual (show tunes to rap to gospel to rock 'n roll are all perfectly acceptable). This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Sleeping Beauty

The moment the victim is hit with this debilitating curse, the character falls into a coma-like slumber. In that state the character shall stay until the curse is lifted. In that regard, the victim's friends and allies may be more adversely affected than the victim of the curse, because it is left to them to lift it and restore their comrade. For as long as the victim remains asleep, the

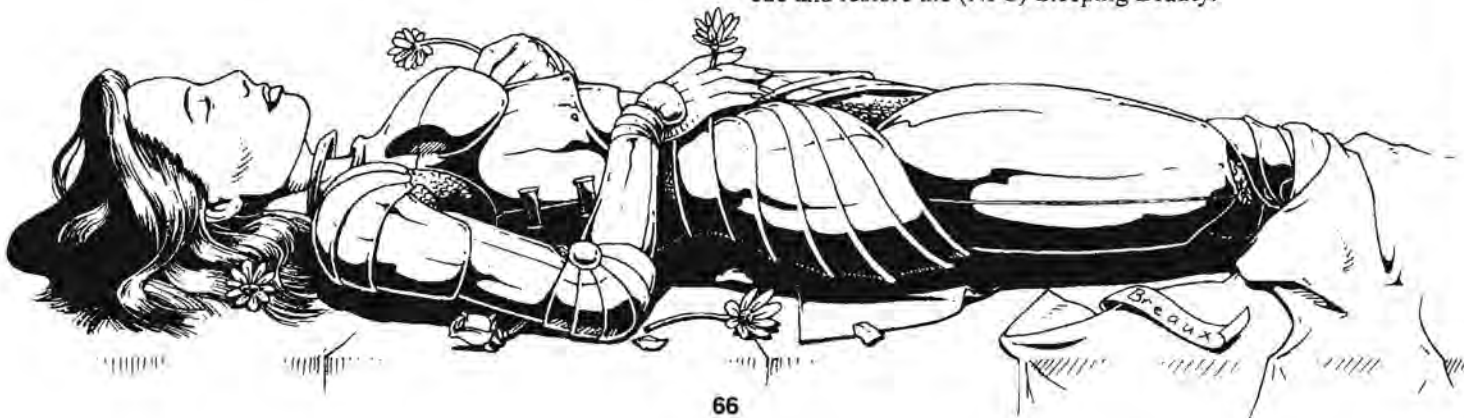
character's P.B. is raised by +10 points, and seems angelic and tranquil in his/her repose, hence the name of the curse.

The victim is so helpless and so beautiful, those who come across him/her are usually stricken with a feeling of love (deep infatuation) for the victim and an overwhelming urge to protect or help him/her by awakening the Sleeping Beauty. In game terms, the first person to lay eyes upon the victim is the one who falls in love with the Sleeping Beauty. The G.M. may give preference to members of the opposite sex and may allow a saving throw vs magic (needs a 15 or higher to save). If the same sex, the character is not so much in love with the Sleeping Beauty, but struck by the apparent nobility and/or goodness of the sleeper and is motivated to the persona of the sleeper with the same end result as "love."

If the character fails to save, then he or she will do everything in his/her power to a) see that the sleeper comes to no harm, and, b) seek a remedy for the curse (i.e. lift the curse and awaken the sleeper). Most times, the smitten character moves the victim to a safe place or arranges for some means of protection while he and allies go forth to lift the curse. Often there will be an inscription or magic message (often a riddle) or some means of discovering (via psionic probes) what must be done to lift the curse - often it requires slaying the person (or his proxy) who inflicted the curse upon the sleeper in the first place. Obviously, lifting the curse becomes something of an obsession and a quest for the character infatuated by the sleeper. However, it is NOT an all consuming one and the smitten character can go about other business, but always his thoughts return to the sleeper and how he must lift the curse and awake the vibrant individual.

When and if the Sleeping Beauty's savior finds a way to lift the curse, the savior then revives the victim and in so doing expects to win the Sleeping Beauty's favor, love or friendship in return. Needless to say, this puts the victim in a sticky situation, since he or she probably scarcely remembers being asleep at all, much less becoming the object of a stranger's affections or devotion. Moreover, as soon as the curse is lifted, the aura of magical beauty and goodness vanishes and the individual is seen as he or she really is, which may be an instant disappointment to the rescuer. Likewise, the enchantment is lifted from the rescuer so he/she is no longer enamored or impressed by the sleeper in any way and can go on with his/her life.

Note: Being turned into a Sleeping Beauty basically takes a player character out of the game, so it is best left as an affliction on a Non-Player Character (roll again if this curse comes up on the random roll), or to make the player character find a Sleeping Beauty and make him/her the one compelled with trying to rescue and restore the (NPC) Sleeping Beauty.



Spoilage

This interesting curse causes all food, wine and water carried by the cursed individual to spoil or go bad within 24 hours. Even food preserved in containers, dried or smoked will become a rotten mess. Wine and beer becomes sour and undrinkable, and water bitter and tainted. This curse is also applied to food and drink carried by a porter hired by the character and supplies carried on a horse or other creature owned by him. The curse will remain until lifted by a third party. This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Stink

The victim gains such a foul body odor that it is enough to make others within five feet (1.5 m) gag and choke. No amount of baths or perfumes will disguise this stench. Prowl, invisibility and hiding are impossible and creatures who can track by scent are +20% to follow this character. A successful Remove Curse is required to rid oneself of the magical affliction. The Stink curse is often placed on weapons and objects, in which case the curse remains in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Thirst

The victim of this magical affliction is wracked with a constant need for water and liquid nourishment. Even when the Thirst victim has drunken plenty of water, he still feels thirsty and wants just a little bit more. Most victims of this curse end up carrying huge amounts of drink on their person. Every four hours, the victim must consume at least a gallon of water, wine, milk, or some other form of drink. If he does not, he will become dangerously dehydrated.

Sustained dehydration for more than 24 hours results in the character's S.D.C., Spd. and combat bonuses being reduced by half. After 48 hours of sustained dehydration, the character simply becomes immobilized, unable to move except to pounce upon water if it comes his way. Thus, he will be wracked with thirst until somebody brings him enough water (at least a gallon) to get him back on his feet.

Traitor!

This curse forces its victims to betray those whom they trust and care about. Whomever is a friend or ally of the cursed Traitor is a prime candidate for treachery and backstabbing. This does not have to be a life or death situation and can be as simple as not watching an ally's back, deserting one's post, refusing to stand up for or with an ally in a fight (perhaps even running away), cutting teammates out of a deal (perhaps selling them out for one's own safety or profit), and other forms of turning one's back on a friend or comrade. The curse victim will systematically betray every person he is close to. Of course, such betrayal is done in such a way as to avoid being implicated, but even if the cursed character is discovered to be a traitor, he won't care. Thanks to the curse, his purpose in life is to be a traitor to everyone he knows, and not necessarily maintain his good name (or alignment) while doing it, though a good reputation helps him perform his acts of treachery without suspicion.

Once the Traitor has finished betraying his immediate circle of associates, he will set himself to betraying larger things – his

nation, his religion, any other large or heroic institution, a noble cause, a god, a trusting stranger, and so on. The victim will seek to carry out these betrayals with the same ruthless efficiency as he did when he was an adventurer (or hero). There can be no end to what or who the Traitor will be unfaithful to, but this conduct can only come to one of two ends: Either the curse is lifted one way or other (actually, his old friends may have to take that task upon themselves on his behalf), or he will end up dead, slain by somebody looking for payback from one of the character's many "victims."

The Traitor will never make any new friends while under the curse, for he sees all new people as pawns and victims. Even if he gets free of the curse and he tries to make amends for his vile acts of treachery, the legacy of the curse will remain, and it may haunt him for years even if he works diligently to rebuild his good name. Even then, he may remain a wanted criminal or distrusted and despised by any number of people who desire to see him pay for his past deeds with his life, imprisonment, torture, or worse.

This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Transformation

The victim of this curse is turned into something else, typically another race or a medium-sized animal. Sometimes the victim is turned into an inorganic material such as stone or iron and is immobilized until the curse is lifted.

Living Transformation: Should the victim be turned into some other type of living being, the G.M. may determine exactly what that being is. If another race, it will be a race the character does not like. For example, an Elf might be transformed into a Dwarf or one of the disliked monster races like an Orc, Goblin, or Ratling. If turned into an animal, the character will be something of fair size like a dog or large cat, but can be any type of animal of that approximate size – fox, badger, jack rabbit, large snake, donkey, etc., but nothing as large as a bear or a horse. Regardless of the transformation, the character keeps his basic attributes, skill knowledge, ability to speak, and any psionic or magic abilities he may have possessed. Only one's appearance is changed.

Inorganic Transformation: Should the victim be transformed into an inorganic inanimate material like stone, iron, gold, or some other hard material, he will remain frozen in place, like a statue, until the curse is lifted or until 100 years elapse, whichever comes first. While so Transformed, the character will not age, and he will have the base S.D.C. and A.R. of the material he has been transformed into rather than his own S.D.C. and Hit Points. Should the character take any damage while Transformed, that damage will transfer to his own S.D.C. and Hit Points when he returns to his original form. If more S.D.C. damage has been done than the victim has in S.D.C. and H.P., then the moment he regains his original form, he dies. **Note:** Inorganic Transformation is NOT recommended for use on an active *player character* as it takes the player out of the game, requiring him to roll up a new character until the curse can be lifted. Ideal, however, for non-player characters and may serve as a motivation for adventures (i.e. sends the player group on a quest to remove the curse).

Undeath

This is one of the most terrible of curses, for the next nightfall, the victim of this curse turns into one of the *undead*. This can be a vampire or one of the monsters listed below, but whatever it is, the character takes on that creature's appearance and powers. The G.M. can pick one or roll on the following table to see what type. The undead common to the Land of Eternal Torment are described elsewhere in this book.

01-10% Rawhead	41-50% Festulant
11-20% Evisceral	51-60% Revenant
21-30% Gravedigger	61-70% Mortoi
31-40% Jaliquette	71-100% Vampire

The character loses whatever psionic or magic abilities he may have once had, as well as any possible O.C.C. and/or R.C.C. natural abilities or special powers, all of which are replaced by the powers and abilities of the undead creature he has become. The character retains his old personality, memories and skills, but also feels the hunger, desires and instincts of his new body. The primary instinct being that all *mortal humanoids* are prey to be hunted and eaten! At first, such cravings and thoughts are disturbing and fairly easy to resist, but with each passing week or two, the undead character becomes increasingly feral, aggressive, predatory and monstrous. He begins to feel superior over mere mortals and finds it more and more difficult to resist feelings to stalk, hunt, kill and feed upon them. Unless the curse is lifted, the character will turn into a savage and bestial force against his enemies, feeding on fallen opponents and lashing out cruelly against those who oppose, challenge and annoy him. With time (4D4 months) he will begin to see old friends and allies in a similar light. Eventually, the victim of this curse will become the monster he appears to be.

Thankfully, because this is a curse, it can be lifted/removed by the usual (albeit often difficult and extraordinary) measures used to remove any curses (again, this may be the motive for a new quest or adventure). However, if the character is slain while under the Undeath Curse, he will rise from the grave in three days as the genuine article to stalk the living, starting with those the undead holds responsible for his untimely demise.

Unusual Size

This curse makes the victim unusually large or small. In game terms, the character's height is either increased or reduced by 50%. Normal-sized humans, for example, will either jump up to 9 to 10 feet (2.7 to 3 m) tall or shrink to about Dwarf or Gnome-size, about two and a half to three feet (0.75 to 0.9 m) tall, and may be mistaken for another race due to their size. Though the victim's stats remain constant, their ability to handle giant-sized or Gnome-sized weapons and tools will apply. Should the character be a small humanoid already, if he reduces to half height, he will shrink to Faerie height. In either case the change is unnatural and likely to be unwanted.

At face value, there might not seem to be much impediment to the changes wrought by this curse, but the character will feel like a freak and friends, family and strangers are likely to treat him as such. In fact, humans may treat an oversized fellow human as they would an Ogre or Troll or any other member of the "monster races," while the monster races will never accept him and are likely to treat him with disdain and cruelty as a "freak

human" (or whatever). This curse is always a jarring change. While some individuals may learn to appreciate the change, most will long to be restored to normal.

Unusual Weight

The victim of this curse will either max out in weight, becoming incredibly obese, or will become incredibly gaunt to the point of being almost skeletal. Either way, the effects of this change will impact the victim's physical attributes.

If obese, the victim sees his body weight triple, and it is all fat. Reduce the Spd. attribute by 50%, and initiative and roll with impact bonuses (if any) are reduced to zero. Acrobatics and Gymnastic skills (if any) are reduced by half. Naturally since this magical transformation is immediate and unexpected, none of the character's clothes or armor fit any more, and he will have to make do until new clothes to accommodate his large frame can be acquired. The character will most likely be so rotund that he cannot use double-handed weapons, since he will be unable to bring both of his arms to bear on holding the same handle. Finally, if the character is wearing light armor when he contracts the curse, he will take 2D4 points of damage as he balloons and breaks his armor apart. If he is wearing heavy armor when he contracts the curse, he will take 4D4 points of damage as he bursts through his armor.

If painfully thin, reduce the Spd. attribute by 20% and P.S. by 50%, and P.E. and P.B. by 30%. This is the classic "90 pound weakling." Appearance wise, the character looks like a walking skeleton, with hardly any muscle on his frame, sunken eyes and cheeks, and the skin has an unhealthy pallor.

In either case, no amount of exercise, eating, dieting or other actions will counter the curse, it must be removed to return (instantly) to normal.

Vermin

This curse is similar to Insect Attraction, except that it draws mice, rats, bats and other small rodents seen as dirty or vile to the character. These creatures will infest the victim's clothes, armor and belongings, even living on his body for the duration of the curse. The omnipresent and repulsive rodents reduce the character's P.B. and M.A. attributes by half, and cause a Horror Factor (revulsion) of 12. After all, it's not pleasant to sit near somebody crawling with filthy mice, rats, and who knows what else that crawled out of the woodwork.

While an alchemist may be able to create some type of rodent repellent, it will not repulse rodents attracted by the curse. They remain no matter what is done. This does not apply to such monstrous rodents as Floaters, Hoppers and Ratlings.

Voices in the Head

This curse imparts to the victim a chorus of ghostly voices that are always muttering and mumbling at a low volume. No matter what the victim is doing or whatever sounds he is hearing, the noise of his Voices is heard through it like a distant murmur, or like hearing the sounds of a conversation from across a large room. The victim, in most cases, is not be able to tell what the voices are saying, but that won't stop the victim from hating the constant noise. The victim of this curse becomes haggard and harrowed, living in constant anxiety courtesy of the voices in his head. He is jumpy and distracted too. The perfor-

mance of all skills are -20% and reduce his S.D.C. by 20% (worn out from lack of sleep and anxiety), but the victim will be +1 on initiative. ("Huh? What's that?")

After another 1D4 weeks, the cursed individual begins to hear one or two voices more clearly (nothing elaborate or helpful) and starts talking to himself or answering questions apparently spoken by a phantom ("Yes, I know." "What?" "No, kidding. I'm not stupid." "Be quiet, will you?") – reduce M.A. by 25% as a result. The character comes off as squirrely and may frighten people by his talking to himself and jumpiness. Even if the curse is removed, if he has been hearing voices for more than three months roll for a random Phobia.

Vomiting

This curse causes the victim to vomit whenever he is afraid, threatened or under a high stress situation. There is also a 01-35% chance of vomiting every time the character eats or drinks something 1D6 minutes after consumption. Not a pleasing sight. Reduce M.A. by 10% and S.D.C. by 10% (weakened from insufficient nourishment and the violent act of vomiting regularly).

In addition, if the G.M. so desires, there may be one additional "trigger" that causes the accursed to vomit whenever he encounters it. Common smell triggers for this curse include the smell of freshly baked meat, strong sweet smells, smoke, decomposing grass, dung, cucumber, rotten eggs, sulfur, brewing coffee or tea, freshly tanned leather, or something the G.M. might come up with (just make sure it makes sense and is fair to the character).

Common sight triggers for this curse can include the sight of blood, raw meat, mushy food, worms, swarms of beetles, spiders, dead animals, anything sticky or goopy, dung, graveyards, unusually dazzling or complex patterns, especially loud colors, those wearing unfashionable clothes, skeletons or zombies, and similar.

Vulnerability

This curse applies a penalty of -2 to *all* of the victim's *saving throws*! In addition, the character loses the ability to roll with impact/fall/punch (takes full damage) and is -1 to parry and -2 to dodge!

A variant of this curse makes it so the victim takes *double damage* from one particular substance, material or item. Roll percentile dice to determine what that vulnerability is or pick one.

01-10% Stone.

11-20% Wood or bone (pick one).

21-30% Silver.

31-40% Fire.

41-50% Magic weapons.

51-60% Dragon's breath.

61-70% Ice and cold.

71-80% Demons.

81-90% Deevils.

91-95% Psionic attacks.

96-00% A particular fruit. Works like a poison that does 3D6 points of damage with every morsel eaten or drunken, or 2D6 damage when its juice is applied to the blade of a weapon.

Wanderlust

Also known as the "Endless Journey," this curse makes it impossible for the victim to remain in the same one square mile (1.6 km) territory for longer than 72 hours, after which he is compelled by strange forces to travel, explore, go adventure or just wander around at someplace new (even if it is only a mile/1.6 km away). This wanderlust gives the character the bad habit of wandering off alone and away from his comrades whenever things get boring or slow. He also doesn't think twice about running off to explore a lead, clue or sound the moment he discovers it, without telling anybody. In that sense, the character is so distracted by the promise of new sights, sounds and adventure that he just doesn't stop to think about the consequences and runs off to do it. In some cases, this curse is placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.



Withering

This curse withers one of the victim's limbs, either one of his legs or one of his arms. The affected limb loses all motor control, and atrophies to a nearly skeletal state. The limb is virtually useless, except the victim can still feel pain though it. Were this a natural condition, the victim might consider amputating the arm, but since this is a curse, the affected limb will instantly return to normal the moment the curse is lifted, so the victim usually endures it.

Living with a withered limb is not easy. If one of the victim's arms and hands is withered, then he loses one melee attack and is -1 to strike, -2 to parry and entangle, and is -10% to perform any skills requiring the use of both hands. The victim can no longer use paired weapons or (of course) two-handed weapons. Should a spell caster have a withered limb, it will not affect his or her ability to work magic.

If a leg is withered, then the victim is -20% to swimming and rappel skills, -20% to climb/scale walls, prowl and dance. Leaping is impossible, and the Spd. attribute is reduced by 40%.

In some cases, this curse is placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Wracked by Pain

The victim of this curse must endure never-ending pain, as if his body has been stretched to its breaking point in every way. At all times, the victim has no S.D.C. and is -10% on all skills and -1 on initiative. Should the victim carry out any kind of heavy physical exertion (such as running, heavy labor or combat), a cold sweat will break out over his entire body, and he fatigues in half the time of a healthy person.



Yelling

The victim can no longer communicate verbally except at a top-of-the-lungs shout. Every single thing he says WILL COME OUT LIKE THIS, NO MATTER HOW HARD HE TRIES TO STAY QUIET!! Naturally, this will be more than a little embarrassing for the victim and unsettling for those he meets. "HEY GUYS? WHERE IS THE BATHROOM? THAT PHEASANT I ATE GAVE ME THE TROTS, AND I DON'T WANT TO MAKE A FOOL OF MYSELF BEFORE WE MEET THE KING . . . OH, HELLO, YOUR MAJESTY."

This curse also makes it impossible for the character to whisper and pretty tough trying to sneak around unless he does so without speaking, but that is easier said than done. More than anything, this is an annoyance curse meant to make the victim

feel stupid and to push others away from him. Surely, it was crafted by a Faerie Queen with a wicked sense of humor. This curse is often placed on weapons and objects with the curse remaining in effect only as long as the character owns the cursed item.

Yellowbelly

The victim of this curse becomes a total and unrepentant *coward*. He takes no risks or any course of action that might endanger him, even if that means abandoning friends in need, neglecting his sworn duty to a patron, king or god, or giving up on a treasure trove or major ambition of his own. Even if the victim had previously been the most stalwart and fearless of adventurers in the past, he is now a quivering blob of spinelessness at the first sign of danger.

If the victim can at all help it, he will try to avoid any situation he thinks might pose a serious danger to him. However, there will be those times when danger comes unbidden, and the cursed victim finds himself face-to-face with trouble. In such a case, the accursed must make a saving throw vs a Horror Factor of 16 – this is a test of whether or not he can overcome his towering fear of pretty much everything. In the unlikely event that the Yellowbelly does not succumb to the Horror Factor, he will have shaken off his curse for the next 1D6 melee rounds, during which time he can act as heroically as he likes. After that brief respite, the curse's power returns, and the Yellowbelly stops his heroic actions with a look of "What was I doing?" on his face. After that, he will either scurry off and hide, stand back away from the action, or flee the scene.

In many cases, the victim of the Yellowbelly curse completely plays the part of the brave hero until he actually has to face danger or a life and death challenge, at which point he will try to run away, hide or beg for his life.

Curiously, though a coward who avoids physical conflict and danger, and who will *run* or *hide* from trouble if it means abandoning friends and comrades, the character seldom gives up a confidence or secret, or betrays a buddy in a deliberate act of treachery, even to save his own skin (unless Anarchist or evil).

Zero Hour

The victim of this curse becomes morbidly obsessed about death, dying and dying well. Most carry their last will and testament with them at all times (regularly updating it) and expect death around every corner. Likewise, the cursed individual knows his days are numbered, regardless of his age or circumstance, and sees every conflict and danger as his "zero hour" – the moment of his death.

In many cases, the character will have a dream or see some omen before a confrontation indicating he may die in the conflict. While some who suffer this curse turn into hermits who shun the world and hide from danger, the vast majority turn into melodramatic characters who see every crisis as an impending moment of death. This compels them to launch into a speech about "fighting the good fight" and "dying well." They make similar spiels at funerals, and in fact, are drawn to attend funerals whenever they come across one whether the character knew the deceased or not.

Ironically, having seen his own death in dreams and omens (many times as one lives with the curse) the character accepts

his inevitable demise and becomes obsessed with "dying well." As a result, the character tends to fight like a madman, throwing himself in harm's way to defend an ally or innocent bystanders and takes dangerous risks and chances. After all, he believes he will die anyway, so why not in a bold and dynamic fashion? For the victim of this curse, courage and heroism are all part of "dying well" and seeing every battle as his "zero hour."

Beasts of Chaos

By Bill Coffin & Kevin Siembieda

One of the reasons why the Alliance of Light had such a tough time defeating the Old Ones was because the Dreaded Ones had so many other creatures fighting alongside them. Besides their vast armies of willing servants and their legions of mortal and demonic slave races pressed into service as battlefield fodder, the Old Ones also made extensive use of a wide variety of monstrous animals throughout the course of the Chaos War. These creatures, great and small, peaceful and warlike, ultimately made a substantial contribution to the Old Ones' war effort. Collectively referred to by the Alliance of Light as the *Beasts of Chaos*, the *Barbarous Pride*, or simply the *Pride*, these creatures proved to be a curious part of the Old One's arsenal. Though they commanded terrible power and inflicted enormous casualties, these creatures were not demonic or supernatural monsters, per se. They were all just remarkable animals created from scratch by the Old Ones for the purpose of war. Consequently, none of these creatures were themselves willing agents of evil, even though most of them possess terrifying powers and aggressive natures. No, the *Pride* was, in its own weird way, just another set of innocent pawns created and drawn into the Old One's evil games.

So, when the Chaos War came to an end, the Alliance of Light had yet another difficult decision to make. Huge numbers of these "Chaos Beasts" still roamed the world. If left unchecked, there would be no telling what kind of dangerous force they might become, or what horrors they might inflict upon weaker beings such as Elf, Dwarf, Wolfen and human. Many of these creatures were quite powerful and a good number of them possessed at least rudimentary intelligence. Left to their own device, there was no doubt they would cause trouble and mayhem, feed upon humanoids, and upset the global ecology. After all, they were beasts bred for chaos and best kept away from mere mortals.

Though some of the gods lobbied to destroy *all* Beasts of Chaos just to be safe, the majority argued that these spawn of the Old Ones were (more or less) innocent victims created, used and abused by the dreaded Lords of Chaos. In some instances, those with low intelligence might even evolve into fully intelligent and productive beings in their own right. Thus, destroying them outright would be a crime. So it was that the fabled (and mostly forgotten) Beasts of Chaos were swept up and locked away in the *Land of the Damned* with the rest of the monsters, misfits and misanthropes.

Over the eons, adventurers and explorers tell of chance encounters with one or more "unknown monsters" of fearsome nature and great power. Creatures presumed to be Beasts of Chaos who escaped the vigilance of the Gods of Light to remain free in the Domain of Man. Such encounters have been reported throughout the ages, usually in remote and isolated regions around the world. Many mountain regions, particularly in the north lands, southern jungles, Baalgor Wasteland and Old Kingdoms are said to be inhabited by great and terrible beasts the likes of which are not known to mortal man. Likewise, in the uncharted forests of the Great Northern Wilderness and the jungles of the Land of the South Winds, the Yin-Sloth Jungles and remote islands, there are said to be monsters harkening back to the Age of Chaos. Beasts of unknown origin, presumed to be the descendants of those creatures locked away in the Land of the Damned. Creatures who managed to escape capture by the gods so long ago, and have survived in seclusion for thousands of years. For even the combined power of the gods could not round up every single beast of the forest. However, those Beasts of Chaos found outside the Land of the Damned are rare indeed, and seldom number more than 2-12. Most avoid contact with the "civilized" world, eking out a life in hostile wildernesses where their ferociousness and unique powers give them a decided edge over the competition. Still, life in these remote and savage wildernesses is difficult, keeping their numbers low, and wherever they are discovered by fearful humans, they are often slain and purged from the land, ending a legacy that is more than 50,000 years old. Such is the fate of the so-called "Barbarous Pride" — Beasts of Chaos.

Many are the tales of such legendary monsters said to roam the Land of the Damned in great numbers. For some adventurers, it is the promise of such rare and magnificent creatures that compels them to brave the Land of the Damned and other remote parts of the world. They hope to capture or slay these beasts and return to the civilized world with new knowledge and trophies of their conquest, or with said Beast of Chaos in tow. For such wondrous creatures found only in the cursed Lands would bring a man a fortune by those willing to pay for rare creatures. In deed, the Western Empire would dearly love to place such exotic monsters on display in their circuses and to battle in their gladiatorial games. However, getting into the Land of the Damned is challenge enough for even the stoutest of champions. returning from it with a Beast of Chaos in tow, may be virtually impossible — yet another reason for some to try.

Alas, the environment that is the **Land of the Damned** has never been kind to the Beasts of Chaos. Initially, these animals once ranged all over the region, but as time marched on and the hostile environment and other monsters and blights spread across the land, many of the ancient beasts found themselves under assault from all sides. In the **Broken Horn** to the north, for example, the ascendant Minotaur Nation has hunted many of the Chaos Beasts in the Horn region into extinction and enslaved others. In the **Bleakness** the evil forces of the Citadel both prey upon the Beasts of Chaos for sport and enslave them as animals of burden. However, there are places throughout the Land of the Damned – mountain valleys and foothills, forests and remote wildernesses – where the Beasts of Chaos have made their home. However, nowhere are they more plentiful than in the forests and scrub lands south of the Great Rifts, and of them all, the forest region known as the **Darkest Heart** is absolutely thronging with these great animals. Here the creatures have found a home ranging along the western scrub lands and light forests and into the dense, dark inner forests of the east. To the south, in the **Eternal Torment**, even many of these monsters know enough to give the land of the Endless Death a wide berth, venturing into that domain only by accident or when forced to do so against their will, or when foolish and curious young tempt fate exploring. Thus, the Darkest Heart remains the last true bastion for these creatures.

(Note: The creatures described in this section are most commonly found south of the Great Rift that divides the Land of the Damned into two halves. A fair number can also be found north of the great divide, namely away from warring factions and what passes for civilization in the Land of the Damned. A fair number also inhabit the valleys and low mountains on the western side of the Great Northern Mountains, that's the side facing the Land of the Damned. A tiny handful of creatures have managed to make it over or through the mountain range to make homes on the eastern side, but few leave the confines of the mountains. On occasion, one or two Beasts of Chaos do come down from the mountains to inhabit the remote forests of *Northern Hinterlands* and sometimes wander as far south as *Ophid's Grasslands*. A few others make their home in the *Great Northern Wilderness* proper. Exceedingly rare creatures, the Western Empire cheerfully pays 2D4x10,000 gold (perhaps more for ones that really strike a buyer's fancy) for virtually any one of these animals. Likewise, the tusk, teeth, claws, bones, blood, tongues and other parts of these super-rare beasts are *rumored* to be components for rare and powerful magic weapons, circles, potions, talismans and rituals that an alchemist [or dark priest?] might pay thousands of gold to acquire, provided one could actually find such a buyer.)

There are fifteen different Beasts of Chaos commonly found in the southern half of the Land of the Damned. There used to be scores and scores of additional species (including at least three named for each of the Old Ones), but these have all perished in the Chaos War or died out over the last 50,000+ years since. The *known* Beasts of Chaos most commonly found in and around the region known as the **Darkest Heart** are:

Baltosaurs, a kind of living armored personnel carrier and walking flamethrower.

Beasts of Kathos, a sort of super-armored turtle.

Drolodons, huge and lumbering creatures that once were thought of as beasts of burden, but have now become lords of their domain.

Galters, reptilian stealth hunters whose remarkable powers of hiding and fading away made them one of the most feared assassins on the fields of the Chaos War and now the Land of the Damned.

Hygorathes, super-predators capable of killing and consuming whatever strikes their fancy, especially those who resemble their former masters.

Instigators, insidious little wretches who live only to steal, spy, and get other people to fight one another for no good reason.

Lassacres, a race of throwback humanoids bred for their strength and savagery, who were left with a brutish personality that makes most Ogres seem cultured in comparison.

Pit-Worms, hideous ant-lion-like creatures known to bury themselves deep in the earth and lie in wait for the next unfortunate creature that happens to pass overhead.

Psykolops Hounds, a curious little beast that really means nobody any harm, but brings agony and death to any psychics unable to flee their presence.

Ravager Beetles, an insectoid "supervore" that could eat an entire kingdom out of house and home. Ravenous appetites and eating habits that would make locusts seem modest.

Slaughterhawks, terrifying aerial pack hunters.

Slithering Terrors, enormous constricting serpents covered with a chitinous armor that slices as it squeezes.

Thanes, headless quadrupeds that serve only to attack other living things, knowing neither fear nor pain.

Udoks, snorting engines of death, these oversized creatures smell as bad as they look.

Were-Beasts, creatures known worldwide as shifters between a humanoid and beastly form. Nowhere else are they encountered in such numbers or diversity as in the Land of the Damned. And nowhere else have they grown so powerful, both in ability and in number.

G.M. Note: In addition to the creatures described in *all three* of the **Land of the Damned** books and **Northern Hinterlands**, there are also rare and freakish monstrosities *unknown* to outsiders and rare even in this cursed land. This gives the Game Master an easy opportunity to insert his or her own creations in this environment. Have fun with the possibilities, and check out the Random Monster Generator featured in **Land of the Damned 1: Chaos Lands** for some ideas in making humanoid monstrosities. Also see the **Palladium Book of Monsters & Animals** for *Worms of Taut* and other monsters as well as over 200 types of animals.

Baltosaur

Not all wars are fought with warriors and weapons, and no war is fought exclusively with them. The often under-appreciated notion of *supply* is what can carry a war effort on to victory, just as the lack of supply can stall even the mightiest offensive. Even when aided by powerful magic, as the Old Ones' forces were, they still needed re-supplies of food, new weapons and armor, extra gear, equipment and raw materials to



keep their war effort going. To do this, the Old Ones bred a creature greater than an elephant, with Herculean in strength, and a brain the size of a pomegranate. This creature was the *Baltosaur*, and it became the single most important and commonly used beast of burden throughout the course of the Chaos War.

At first, the Armies of the Old Ones used these beasts to drag huge amounts of resources to and from the battlefields – raw material for building strongholds and siege weapons, dragging back the dead and wounded, moving vast stores of food and drink, dragging enormous plows behind them to dig defensive

moats and trenches, two walking in tandem with a length of indestructible chain between them to clear a path through forests and so on.

It did not take long, however, for the Armies of Chaos to realize the offensive potential for these big lugs, and pretty soon thereafter, soldiers were riding the backs of Baltosaurs in a howdah style canape and riding the massive creatures into the thick of combat. As many as a dozen human-sized warriors and/or spell casters could ride a single animal as could one or two true giants. Any enemy troopers unfortunate enough to be caught underfoot of a Baltosaur charge rarely lived to speak of it, and those who did then had to contend with the contingent of well-shielded and usually arrow-firing or spell casting soldiers riding topside.

The Baltosaur's massive size, very tough hide, phenomenal endurance, strength and their utter lack of intelligence made them ideal for battlefield applications. So dumb are these brutes that they remained unfazed by just about anything, including the heat of battle. This, along with their heavily ingrained docility, made them very easy to control and command. Even in stressful situations like open warfare, a Baltosaur rarely spooked (forest fires and earthquakes being two of the few things that do frighten them). Thus, Baltosaurs functioned as armored transports and living bulldozers rather than tanks, for they can NOT be trained to attack on command or do much of anything other than follow a leader and walk. It is their size, power and trampling feet, especially when driven or ridden as a herd, that makes them dangerous in open combat. Additionally, the giant creatures make good eating, so if food supplies ran low, killing a single beast could feed an army.

Baltosaurs are gigantic, warm-blooded, dinosaur-like creatures with a huge barrel chest, a thick, trunk-like abdomen, a long, telescoping neck, and a large, squared off head encased in a super-thick skull. The Baltosaur has six legs; the front two are about twice as long as the rear four, and the creature walks on them the way a gorilla might walk on his knuckles. The Baltosaur's rear legs are like those of an elephant's, with wide, flat feet grouped fairly close together to support the animal's long, broad back on which up to two dozen normal-sized humanoids may ride comfortably. Needless to say, this creature can carry a huge amount of cargo on its back and/or pull tons of cargo in wagons.

The Baltosaur's skull is so thick and hard that the creature can (and does) use its head as a bludgeoning weapon, the way a real-world Anklyosaur might have used its tail. However, it only does so in *self-defense* when it is cornered or directly under attack. The Baltosaur cannot be trained as an attack animal and might be considered a gigantic "cow" (not a bull). When left on their own, Baltosaurs are very gentle, peaceful animals (like cows), and spend their days grazing and trying to find others of their kind so they might herd. Baltosaurs give birth to clutches of 1D4+1 live young every five years or so. Young are watched over and protected by the herd for the first five years of their lives, after which they are let loose to fend for themselves as young adult members of the herd. The Baltosaur reaches full maturity at the end of five years and they have been recorded as living for as much as a century. During mating season, males honk, howl and snort, battling rival males by hammering each other with their hard heads until one relents. The process is very

similar to the "rutting" season of deer and the males' clash of antlers.

Baltosaurs take to domestication very well, responding much like herds of cattle. Feed one of these beasts well, and they will always come back to you. Of course, Baltosaurs eat upwards of one ton (900 kg) of vegetable matter a day, so those who plan on riding a Baltosaur had better make sure there is ample food available (natural or cultivated) or it will starve, just like any other animal. In the wild, this food requirement helps to control their numbers with females producing less frequently (every 10-15 year) and fewer young (two).

Should one manage to fit a Baltosaur with a bit and bridle, the creature will respond totally to the driver's commands. As herd animals they are used to following a leader and have no problem being led or directed by little humanoids. It is as if these creatures are born expecting to be of service to smaller beings, and so when they are captured and put to work, it comes easily to them and with little to no resistance. As gentle and accommodating as Baltosaurs are, they do not respond well to mistreatment. Granted, one would have to really cut loose on one of these animals to make it think it was being hurt or abused, but if and when that happens, the Baltosaur will try to flee, throwing any riders off, and running away. The bad thing is that in a "herd" the distraught creature can start a stampede and cause the rest of the herd to follow it or scatter. Whether one rogue animal or an entire herd, the beast(s) will mindlessly trample everything in its path. The same happens when the creature(s) is frightened by forest and grass fires and earthquakes. Remember, it will not attack with its hammering head unless cornered and under direct attack in close combat, and then only it only fights long enough to make good its escape.

Today in the Land of the Damned, Baltosaurs are found mostly in the southwest part of the region, particularly the southwest section of the Darkest Heart. Here one can find herds numbering into the hundreds (1D4x100) with as many on the loose as three to five thousand total. Elsewhere, a typical herd is fewer than 40 animals (roll 6D6).

Alignment: Considered to be Unprincipled or Anarchist animals. Generally indifferent to all things except eating and following its leader/master.

Attributes (Animal): I.Q. 1D4, M.E. 1D6+1, M.A. 1D6+6, P.S. 2D6+28 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6, P.E. 2D6+16, P.B. 2D6+2, Spd. 2D6+18

Size: 30-45 feet (9.1 to 13.7 m) at the shoulders. Their necks extend for another 30-50 feet (9.1 to 12.2 m). The hind quarters of the beast stand a mere 15-20 feet (4.6 to 6.1 m). The entire creature's torso is about 40-60 feet (12.2 to 18.3 m) long, ending in a 12-20 foot (3.6 to 6.1 m) long tail.

Weight: 30-60 tons! With the exception of the *Earthshaker* found in the Baalgor Wastelands, Baltosaurs are probably the largest creature to walk the face of the Palladium World. Of course, there is always the possibility an explorer will discover something even greater in size.

Hit Points: 6D6x10 +P.E. attribute number.

S.D.C.: 1D4x100+82. These things are utterly massive and it is the size and physical toughness that makes most predators leave these creatures alone. Those who do prey on the Baltosaur must usually attack in groups to overcome the animal.

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 12 for a single trampling rogue, 15 if facing a stampeding herd of four or more.

P.P.E.: 4D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Astounding physical strength, endurance and resiliency. Can carry its P.S.x1000 in pounds! So an animal with a P.S. of 34 could carry or pull 34,000 pounds (15,300 kg; one pound = 0.45 kg)! They are also good swimmers (88%), can eat almost any type of vegetation from grass and leaves to tree bark and small branches, recover 1D4x10 Hit Points or S.D.C. per every 24 hours, and are resistant to cold and disease (both do half damage).

Attacks Per Melee: Two for females, while males have three attacks per round.

Damage: 6D6+P.S. damage (15 to 25 points of damage) on a normal *head strike* or 1D6x10+P.S. damage bonus (15-25 points of damage) on a *power strike* (counts as two attacks). A Baltosaur rear leg foot stomp inflicts 1D4x10 damage, while the stomp from a front leg does 1D6x10 damage – remember, a Baltosaur's stomp is like having a full grown tree dropped on top of you. Those caught under one of these behemoth's feet are bound to be squashed like grapes! You can see how a rampaging *herd* can cause immense destruction.

Bonuses: None, other than attribute bonuses (typically +2 to +7 to save vs poison and magic, and does +15-25 points of damage from P.S.).

Penalties: The Baltosaur is -4 to strike anybody with its feet/stomp. These legs were designed for walking, not fighting. No penalties or bonuses to strike, parry (with its head or neck) or dodge. All Baltosaurs are afraid of large fires, like forest and grass fires, and earthquakes – both will cause the animal to stampede.

Average Life Span: 50-100 years.

Value: Difficult to say. In the Land of the Damned, the animal has minimal value, in the outside world, who knows. The Western Empire would gladly pay 30,000-40,000 for one live animal to use as an attraction or ride, triple or quadruple for a mated pair.

Habitat: Anywhere except marshlands and deserts. The animal dislikes unstable ground because it makes good footing difficult (reduce speed by 50%). They typically go where the food is.

Languages: None, animal. They communicate with each other through a series of huffs, grunts and howls.

Enemies: Only the most aggressive and powerful predators including the Beast of Kathos, Galters and Hygorath. Few other creatures prey on them in the wild, and they generally do not mind being pressed into service by the humanoids.

Allies: None. They are dumb animals.

Beast of Kathos

The infamous Beast of Kathos is said to have been created by the Old Ones as a front-line transport animal and fighting war animal – a fearsome monstrosity that could both transport and pickup troops under the worst combat conditions as well as fight back to defend itself and those it carried.

The Beast of Kathos looks like a huge, mutant snapping turtle. It is about the size of a large wagon or fishing boat, covered in dark body armor of varying shades of red or dark brown (almost black) from head to toe. The eyes glow orange like the molten rock, and the wide mouth sports a pair of short tusks and two rows of small, pointed teeth. The creature's shell, though it does not look it from the outside, is actually split down the middle lengthwise, and the Beast can flick it open the same way a beetle opens its carapace to taking to flight. When the Kathos Beast does this, it reveals that under its shell is a hollow cavity capable of holding up to a 8-10 human-sized beings or 14-20 small-sized humanoids like Dwarves and Gnomes, or two or three giant-sized humanoids up to Troll size. When the passengers clamber into the cavity, the Beast closes its shell, sealing them inside. It is dark and cramped in there, but it is warm and safe. Thus, the Beast of Kathos is effectively an armored transport with combat capabilities. The creature is incredibly resilient, and the shell and armored hide make these animals impervious to many forms of attack. Even the inside of the shell cavity is armored, so those riding inside cannot easily cut their way into the beast's back (A.R. 13, and 100 S.D.C. before any attack finds flesh to hit).

Of course, just about anything else could be stored inside the Beast's shell cavity, and there are legends and stories about the Minions of the Old Ones and heroes alike stashing weapons, cargo and even treasures inside one of these creatures. This has given rise to tales of "Kathos Graveyards" where the beasts are said to go to die, and ancient battlefields where these creatures were slain and the contents inside their shells remain for some adventurers to dig up!

The Beasts of Kathos were, however, bred for more than transport, they are war animals engineered to be aggressive and deadly in combat. The Beasts are walking engines of destruc-

tion, chewing up the enemy (or any opponent) with their powerful jaws, slashing claws and bursts of fire. When threatened or angry, Beasts of Kathos generate a scorching amount of heat that radiates from their eyes and mouth. Those riding inside the shell compartment are mercifully insulated from this heat, but those outside the Beasts of Kathos will find themselves faced with bolts of fire spit from the mouth and combustibles burst into flame from a fiery gaze. When the animal is gearing up for this type of attack the skin on the head begins to glow red-hot. When like this, Beasts of Kathos can cough forth exploding fireballs several times per melee round. They can also snap with their jaws, but their fireball attack coupled with their armor and relentless fighting nature is what made these creatures some of the most feared *living weapons* of the Chaos War.

On their own, Beasts of Kathos are vicious and destructive creatures with short tempers, and easy to provoke to attack. They strike and fight to the death if they fall under attack, feel threatened, are cornered or just startled or annoyed. They are strict carnivores, feeding on carrion and hunting any creature smaller than they and that includes man-sized *humanoids*. Since the Beasts move fairly slowly, they usually resort to laying in wait and pouncing on their prey, or more likely, blasting their prey with fireballs and eating the charred remains. This tactic makes hunting small creatures unfeasible, so they tend to go after big ones like wild boar, deer, bovine, horses, bear, and *humanoids*. These monsters will even target and attack a Baltosaur knowing that their fire attacks will frighten away the rest of the herd. In fact, though a Beast of Kathos may hunt alone, they more often than not gather in pairs or hunt in small groups (1D6+2 animals) working in tandem to set up ambushes and cross-fires. That's how clever they are as hunters.

Beasts of Kathos are just plain mean, and likely to attack any creature that, a) crosses their path, b) the Beast thinks it has a



reasonably good chance at slaying for food, c) intrudes upon its lair or its nap, and d) represents a threat of any kind. Remember, these are aggressive creatures designed for war and they love combat and killing.

The lost, secret Achilles' Heel of the creatures is that every Beast responds to a "command phrase." When the Old Ones created the Beasts of Kathos, they actually created twelve sub-species, each separated only by the fact that they responded to a different "command phrase." Now, exactly what any of these command phrases were have been lost to the passage of time, just one more piece of information destroyed by the fires of the Chaos War. Seemingly, nobody in the Land of the Damned, not even the Lords who rule the Citadel knows any of these command phrases. If they did, they could control the Beasts of Kathos with them. The way they work is that if the correct command phrase is uttered before the correct sub-species of Kathos, it becomes completely obedient to whoever issued the command phrase. Until that individual utters the command phrase again, he retains total control over the creature. The great thing about it is that one can maintain this kind of control for years over a particular Beast of Kathos. Unlike monsters or animals that are commanded by a Summoner, which can break free or resist their master after enough time, Beasts of Kathos have no such escape hatch. Once commanded by the long forgotten phrase, they are 100% at the mercy of their commander.

Without this overriding command phrase, the Beasts of Kathos are very difficult to domesticate and control. To have any influence over the Beast, one must train them from a young age and maintain strict and stern control over the creatures. The older a Beast of Kathos gets, the more grumpy and uncontrollable they become, forcing one's owner to either release the creature into the wild or put it down by age 12 or 15. Unlike the docile animal-like intelligence of the Baltosaur, the Beasts of Kathos are aggressive carrion-eaters and hunters who enjoy a taste for humanoid flesh.

Though these creatures are named after someone or something called "Kathos," nobody knows the truth behind that particular reference. Some have said that Kathos was a warlord minion of unknown race who served the Old Ones as a field general. Another theory has it that "kathos" means "panic," in a forgotten, alien tongue, and that these beings were so named because of the fear they engendered amongst enemy soldiers. And a third theory has it that "Kathos" might even have been a lesser Old One or another alien intelligence or powerful alchemist who designed and created the Beasts during the Chaos War.

Alignment: Considered Anarchist at best. Most are Miscreant (60%) or Diabolic (30%) and have an especially foul disposition.

Attributes: Kathos have a high predatory animal I.Q. equal to a low human intelligence, but it's predator instincts and nature prevail over all its actions. I.Q.: 1D4+3, M.E.: 2D6, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 2D6+22 (Supernatural), P.P.: 1D6+6, P.E.: 2D6+18, P.B.: 2D4, Spd.: 2D6+18

Size: 8-10 feet (2.4 to 3 m) at the shoulder, 20 to 30 feet (6.1-9.1 m) long, and 12 to 20 feet (3.6 to 6.1 m) wide. No tail.

Weight: 20-30 tons.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x3+77.

S.D.C.: 6D6+210

Natural A.R.: 16 for the main, outer shell, but only 11 for the underbelly, head and limbs. The trick is to get at the underbelly which is normally so low to the ground that it is impossible for most humanoids taller than a Gnome to get at without turning the Beast over on its back. It takes 1D4+3 melee actions for the creature to right itself.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 4D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: In addition to its armored shell and hide, its powerful jaws, and slashing claws, the Beast of Kathos is an excellent rock climber 80% (but cannot rappel), Swim 90%, hold breath underwater for an hour at a time, Prowl 40%, Land Navigation 90%, track by sight (animals and humanoids) 60%, track fire/smoke by scent 75% (but -35% to locate fires the size of a campfire or a burning torch) and is good at "playing possum" (pretending to be dead only to sneak away or lunge for a final attack). Impervious to fire and heat (even magic fire), but cold and electricity as well as most other forms of attack do full normal damage. Recovers from damage at a rate of 1D4x10 points per 24 hours.

Like a turtle, the Beasts of Kathos can pull their head and legs into their shell to protect them, but the Beast cannot attack when this is done. The creature naturally crawls low to the ground protecting its vulnerable belly and has excellent balance (80%).

Special: Fiery Gaze: Bolts of fire can be shot from their smoldering red or orange eyes. Each pair of fire bolts inflict 2D6 points of damage and are +2 to strike. Range is 120 feet (36.6 m). It takes one melee round (15 seconds) of concentration (no attacks) to "rev up," but once in fire mode, the Beast can shoot bolts of fire from its eyes at will for up to an hour before requiring a 20 minute rest. Each blast counts as one melee attack or action. **Note:** When the animal is gearing up for this type of attack the skin on the head begins to glow red-hot.

Special: Belch Fireballs: Twice per melee round the creature can cough out an explosive fire ball that inflicts 6D6 points of damage and has a 01-50% chance of setting combustible materials (i.e., hair, cloth, dry grass, and accelerants like alcohol or lamp oil) on fire. Maximum range is 500 feet (152.4 m). +1 to strike. Each fireball counts as one melee attack.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Damage: Aside from any damage caused by fire attacks, these creatures can bite, inflicting 5D6 damage, or slash with their claws, doing 2D6 damage +P.S. bonus (typically +9 to 19 points of additional damage). A head butt, a swatting blow or stomp attack does 1D6+P.S. damage bonus. A running charge/body block does 6D6 +P.S. damage bonus but counts as three melee attacks.

Bonuses (does not include likely attribute bonuses): Beasts of Kathos are +2 to strike with their eye generated fire bolts and +1 on fire balls; no other bonuses apply to these energy attacks. Otherwise, +1 on initiative, +2 to strike with claws or bite, +1 to parry, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor. They are too large to dodge, and if rolled on their backs, it takes 1D4+3 melee actions (in other words, at 15-25 seconds) to

right themselves, leaving their comparatively soft underbelly vulnerable to attack and taking away any combat bonuses while trying to right itself. Likely attribute bonuses include +3 to +8 to save vs magic and poison and the P.S. damage bonus of +9-19.

Average Life Span: Who knows? Probably more than 150 years, less as war beasts, but locals claim some Beasts are over 300. Reaches full maturity by age five.

Value: Their shell can be made into scale and plate armor. "Kathos armor" weighs a bit less than metal armor (90%), but has 20% more S.D.C. Thus, a full suit of *Kathos plate armor* has an A.R. of 17 and 192 S.D.C. (instead of 160) and weighs 47 lbs (21 kg; instead of 58 lbs/26 kg); a suit of *Kathos scale armor* is A.R. 15, 98 S.D.C. and 36 lbs 16 kg; *Kathos splint*: A.R. 16, 99 S.D.C. and weighs 40 lbs (18 kg). Such armor is used primarily by Minotaurs, Ogres, Trolls and giants in the Land of the Damned. Both Minotaurs and mountain Kobolds in the region can create Kathos Armor, but it is not (normally) available to the outside world and cannot be used to make mail or other softer types of armor..

Habitat: Anywhere in the Land of the Damned, but most are found in the Heart of Darkness and other lands south of the Great Rift as well as the lowlands of the Great Northern Mountains. Only about a third prefer to live in or near a body of *fresh water* where they can swim, walk on the bottom, cover themselves in mud, and stay submerged for long periods of time, surfacing only to feed. The rest are satisfied living on dry land, ideally in cool climates, particularly forests and low mountain regions.

Languages: Beasts of Kathos understand *all languages* when spoken to them. They cannot speak well, however, other than a few guttural words and phrases such as "no," "yes," "die," "you die," "hurt," "hungry," "go away," "no go," and similar, as well as grunts, growls and a raspy demonic laugh that sounds more like a growl. They have no language of their own and cannot read.

Enemies: Damn near everything. These foul creatures are easily provoked and prey on other living creatures, both animal and humanoid, as well as feed on carrion.

Allies: None, per se. Those who use these creatures as war beasts or personnel carriers are those rare few who manage to control the Beasts through conventional means. Lacking the ancient command words of the Old Ones means many "domesticated" Beasts of Kathos are young (under the age of five and with half the usual H.P. and S.D.C.) or young males, ages 6-15 (full stats). The Beasts of Kathos reach full maturity by age five, but offspring leave their mothers by age one. Their foul temperament and dangerous abilities make them a risky venture under even the best of circumstances, so no Beast of Kathos handler ever grows too comfortable or fond of his monstrous charge lest it turn on him without warning.

Drolodon

Inspired by the successes of the Baltosaur and the Beast of Kathos, the Old Ones introduced the Drolodon, another powerhouse addition to the battlefields designed for both labor and combat. Though the being is slow and lumbering, its brute strength and striking power is formidable.

The Drolodon is a 30-35 foot (9-10.6 m) shaggy giant that some have compared to an enormous sloth with a little more speed, dexterity, and low human intelligence (like that of a 6-8 year old child). This massive humanoid is an omnivore who prefers to eat whatever plants and trees it can uproot, as well as feed on carrion and raid food stores of other people.

The Drolodons were a less than successful design, for their over-emphasis on strength makes them slow and limited.



Though intended for laying siege to castles, fortifications and mountain strongholds, Drolodons (often deployed to punch holes through fortress walls for the Old Ones), suffered badly when matched with monsters and animals of equal power or greater intelligence. Ironically, it seems these massive living siege engines were never really cut out for warfare at all. That is probably why the vast majority of Drolodons were slaughtered during the Chaos War and the descendants who survive today are more inquisitive, inadvertently destructive and underfoot than a true menace.

Despite their massive losses during the Chaos War, the Drolodons somehow have managed to survive down through the years. Drolodons are solitary creatures who gather with their own kind about once a year to play, mate and have offspring. Otherwise, males detest each other's presence and will chase away or attack other male Drolodons on sight, presumably to maintain territorial integrity. Other than mated pairs and small families of one or both parents and one or two young, Drolodons hunt, travel and live alone. Considering who created them, they are fairly peaceful when not confronted by their own kind. Their great size, strength and resiliency makes them very tolerant of other creatures, even potentially hostile predators. The shaggy giants simply do not fear most creatures, and as a result, have no problem with lesser predators and humanoids lurking about. These massive, sub-humanoids know they are powerful enough to deal with most opponents and that if they leave other creatures alone, most will return the favor in kind. A notable exception to this rule is when a hungry Drolodon is scavenging for food and wishes to drive other animals away from their kill. Under this circumstance the giant makes a single, booming, warning roar to give creature(s) the message that it should scoot, followed shortly thereafter by a thunderous attack. However, even this threatening display is meant to frighten, not kill. Those animals that stand their ground to a Drolodon, however, are likely to be annihilated and eaten along with the food they were defending.

Drolodons have the equivalent intelligence of a 6-8 year old human child and are incredibly curious, especially of little people, and particularly "handsome" and unusual (to the Land of the Damned) humanoids like humans, Elves, Dwarves and even Gnomes. Bearmen and Wolfen. This means one or two may follow a group of adventurers and either try to cozy up to the group or kidnap one of them to study and play with (a potentially deadly proposition since the child-like giants do not know their own strength). They seem especially fond of humans, Elves and handsome folk, including the canine races, and may be persuaded to join an adventuring group at least for a while. However, most Drolodons do not like frequent conflicts and fighting, nor magic, and will leave any group engaged in frequent skirmishes.

Alignment: Any, but most are considered to be the equivalent of *Anarchist* (35%) or *Unprincipled* (40%). Some are quite loveable, gentle and kind – for a monster that can squish a man like a bug when angry or provoked. On the other hand, very selfish and evil Drolodons don't care one whit about who or what they might have to hurt or destroy to obtain what they want or to extract vengeance.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+4 (low human intelligence), M.E.: 2D6, M.A.: 3D6, P.S.: 3D6+22 (Supernatural), P.P.: 2D6+4, P.E.:

2D6+14, P.B.: 2D6+4, Spd.: 2D6+4 (half when digging, one quarter when chopping through stone).

Size: 30 to 35 feet (9 to 10.6 m) tall, and 10-12 feet (3-3.6 m) wide.

Weight: 12-20 tons.

Hit Points: P.E. x5

S.D.C.: 2D4x10+40

Natural A.R.: 10. Drolodons have a secondary skeletal structure just under their flesh that is made up of tiny, interlocking bones. These form a kind of mail under-armor, making these beasts very difficult to hurt. It is also partly responsible for their unusually high amount of S.D.C.

Horror/Awe Factor: 11

P.P.E.: 5D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Drolodons see in all known spectrums of light, and even some which are still a mystery to mankind and the other humanoid races. Thus, these creatures have no difficulty seeing in the dark, in bright lights, through smoke or fog or mist, etc. Unless these creatures' eyes have specifically been injured or they have been stricken with magical blindness, or some kind of sight impairment device has been fitted on their heads, Drolodons can see in just about any condition with perfect clarity. That having been said, their eyes are comparatively small and a bright green or blue in color.

All possess the following abilities, some equivalent to skills: Climb 75/65%, Swim 70% (but dislike water), Prowl 50%, Palming 50%, Land Navigation 85%, Wilderness Survival 90%, Track: Animals and Humanoids 65% (+10% to follow a blood scent), Dowsing 55%, resistant to cold (half damage), and recovers from damage twice as quickly as humans. Females have red or strawberry blonde hair, males have reddish grey or silver hair, the oldest are white.

The claws and supernatural P.S. of the Drolodon enables it to climb walls, chop through stone and brick and dig through the earth (see Damage, below, for exact damage inflicted).

Underground Tunneling (Special): Broad, powerful creatures, a Drolodon can carve through solid rock with its claws faster than most subterranean races. However, their tunnels are crude and they do not pay any attention to the design features or the techniques of other tunnel makers. These are simply utilitarian tunnels, usually to bypass a wall or other obstruction by burrowing underneath it. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

Underground Architecture: Drolodons do not create pretty underground dwellings with smooth walls or works of art. Instead their dwellings are rough, unfinished and look like natural cave formations. When moving slowly and cautiously, looking for underground traps, they can locate them and avoid or deactivate them, but never make any themselves. **Base Skill:** 15% +5% per level of experience. Detection and deactivation of traps is done at half his normal architecture skill level.

Underground Sense of Direction: The character has an incredible ability to tell direction when underground, even in total darkness (not applicable on the surface). **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

Judging Distance and Location: The approximate relation/proximity to surface structures (natural and artificial) is good. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

Average Level of Experience: 1D4+1 for young Drolodons NPCs and 1D6+3 for elder ones, not recommended as a player character.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: 4D6 points of damage +P.S. damage bonus (+12 to +27 points) from a claw attack, 2D6 +P.S. bonus from a punch or kick, 3D6 damage from a bite. A power punch/claw strike does 1D4x10 +P.S. damage bonus, but counts as two attacks and is usually directed at stationary targets, like fortress walls, rather than attacking mobile targets such as adventurers.

Bonuses (does not include likely attribute bonuses): Drolodons are not great warriors. In addition to possible attribute bonuses they are +2 to strike, +1 to parry and dodge and +1 to roll with punch, fall or impact. Most of the time, they take no defensive actions whatsoever, except to respond to an attack against them. In battle during the Chaos War, they were often sent with other creatures who protected them while the Drolodons shambled up to fortress walls to dig under them or chop through them. Most are +1 to +6 to save vs magic.

Average Life Span: About 100 years, but they grow to maturity within the first 14.

Value: None per se, except, perhaps, as slaves.

Habitat: These creatures can survive anywhere, but their extremely heavy, thick pelts make them supremely suited for cold climates. They are found throughout the Land of the Damned but particularly in the southern half (away from the Citadel and warring Minotaurs and Harpies in the north) and throughout the mountain chain, mainly on the western side. Drolodons like to spend most of their time resting or sleeping in someplace shady, preferably covered. Thus, large caves, tall trees or rocky overhangs are their preferred place to build a home. The lack of such things in the Outer Weald is driving more and more of these creatures into the Middle Weald, where there is at least a lot of shady canopy to stay under.

Languages: Tend to be the strong silent type, communicating in grunts, groans and snorts, but can speak a guttural form of Gobblely using single words and short 3-6 word phrases ("Grrr, you no go." "I kill you." "Who you are?" etc.).

Enemies: Anything that stands in the way of their eating or finding a nice place to rest.

Allies: None per se. Remember, these are loners who generally avoid even their own kind. One can, with the right amount of patience and kindness (or trickery) befriend one of these huge creatures, but they will never be completely civilized or cooperative, and masters must be very careful not to anger or push these beings too hard. If they decide their patience for their master is at an end, they will let the master know by killing and eating him.

Galter

Also known as "Grayscales," these reptilian killers were designed to be the ultimate stealth weapon, and to a large extent, they were just that. About 2-4 times the size of a human, Galters seem as if they were made from spare parts belonging to several

different reptile species. Their bodies are long, thick and sinuous, like that of a monitor or Komodo Dragon. However, their heads are like a giant crocodile's, giving them massive biting, chewing and crushing abilities. Their legs are thick and powerful but pitifully small and spaced too far apart to keep the creature's belly from dragging on the ground when it moves, making its locomotion something between a crawl and a slither. The creature's skin is beaded, like that of a Gila monster, and its eyes can move independently of one another, like a chameleon. That is where the creature's unusual features only begin. Possessing the ability to *turn invisible* and even *phase through solid material*, the Galter can remain undetectable for as long as it likes. However, the creatures can not feed when using these powers, and must turn visible to eat. Likewise, after a good meal, they are usually too lethargic to cloak themselves with invisibility again for another 3D4 hours, during which time they simply lie out in the open digesting their food, a time when they are at their most vulnerable (*half* their usual number of attacks and bonuses).

Galters have incredible appetites and will consume up to half their body weight at a single meal. They favor humanoids of all kinds, and will hunt them down specifically, even ignoring other prey if humanoids are known to be in the area.

Galters are openly hostile to pretty much everything, but they can be trained to be lethal attack animals if the training begins at an early age, preferably right after hatching. Except for some Minotaur tribes, a few tribes of mountain Trolls, and slavers of the Citadel, the Galter population of today has gone entirely feral. In some parts of the Darkest Heart, they virtually rule the land. Thankfully for this species, they do not mind sharing the same space with each other. More importantly, when groups of Galters come together, their metabolism shifts so some members of the group will want to eat when other parts of the group do not. This keeps the population fed without necessarily crashing the local food supply.

When hungry, Galters are relentless predators who are constantly stalking other creatures as possible meals. However, their metabolisms are fairly slow and they only need to feed once every one or two weeks. Their post-eating lethargy only lasts for about 3-12 hours, so the rest of the time between them and their next hunger pangs are spent as innocuously as possible. In such a state, most Galters are content to merely watch the world go by from the safety of their own invisibility or intangibility. This easy-going attitude changes immediately when somebody who can see the invisible threatens or attacks them, or when the giant reptiles are hungry. Galters have an uncanny ability to sense when they can be seen, and become agitated as a group. When this happens, most of those present converge on those who can see them when invisible, striking with special vengeance until the unfortunate quarry is killed and eaten.

The Old Ones employed Galters in the Chaos War as a means of striking deep behind enemy lines, especially against key personnel and in surprise attacks and ambushes. Though they are thought to live exclusively in the Land of the Damned, there is no assurance to that. After all, they can walk through solid materials, so an obstacle like the Great Northern Mountains may prove to be only a small problem to these remarkably well adapted creatures. In fact, there have been reports of "giant invisible northern alligators" living in the Dragon Claw, perhaps



as many as two dozen who prove to be elusive to capture. Once a decade ago, the Western Empire's main gladiatorial arena presented a "giant invisible crocodile" said to have been captured in the Inland Sea. And rumors have persisted for centuries that giant crocodiles capable of turning invisible stalk the swamps of certain regions in the Yin-Sloth Jungles and parts of the Land of the South Winds. Could they be Galters? Were (or have) Galters escaped to the outside world? If so, they could probably adapt to most any climate, but would prefer hot environs to the south and especially the Yin-Sloth Jungles. At the same time, however, their love for humanoid prey would also draw them to the heavily populated territories in the East and West, where the temperate climate would be acceptably accommodating.

Alignment: The equivalent of Miscreant or Diabolic. These are vicious killers and man-eaters.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+2 (animal predator), M.E.: 1D6+8, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 2D6+18, P.P.: 1D4+15, P.E.: 2D6+10, P.B.: 2D4, Spd.: 2D6+12 (double when swimming).

Size: 12 to 24 feet (3.6 to 7.3 m) long, including the tail.

Weight: 600 to 1,400 lbs (272 to 630 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +50.

S.D.C.: 2D4x10+15

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 1D6x10

Magic: None, despite their powers of invisibility and phasing.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Hold breath for 20 minutes at a time, Swim 92%, Prowl 50% (+15% underwater), Track by Smell 45% (+30% following a blood scent), and Nightvision 200 feet (61 m). Besides their great strength, endurance, tough hide and biting power, Galters are equipped with two tools that make them deadly stealth predators: invisibility and phasing.

Invisibility: The Galtar can, at will, make itself invisible, with effects equal to the *Invisibility: Superior* spell. It takes the Galtar one attack/melee action to either become invisible or visible, although if it attacks while invisible, it will automatically become semi-transparent without the expenditure of an attack, partially popping back into view as a ghost image. While *completely invisible*, the Galtar cannot be seen by *any* means of detection: Infrared, ultraviolet, heat and motion detection, See Aura, Presence Sense, Sense Evil, and even an animal's sense of smell cannot locate this beast while it chooses to remain hidden. It will leave no footprints while hidden, and it is virtually silent (only 01-16% chance of hearing it when in motion). Those who can *See The Invisible* will only see a semi-transparent "ghost image" that is still difficult to see (attackers are -2 to strike, parry and dodge the beast; likewise when it attacks).

Phase Ability: In addition to vanishing from view, Galters can also alter their molecular structure so that they become intangible and pass through solid matter! Referred to by scholars and mages as *phasing*, this brief moment of intangibility gives Galters remarkable powers of escape, evasion, surprise and invasion. The Old Ones used the creatures to penetrate enemy strongholds and fortresses and attack those inside, causing confusion and terror while their other forces swarmed the ramparts and came over the walls.

While intangible, the Galtar can walk through any substance without effort, and is invulnerable to most physical attacks while in this state. Any physical attack, such as a punch, bite, weapon strike, etc., passes right through the creature as if it were not even there! However, the intangible creature cannot physically attack while it is in this state either, and the beast remains vulnerable to fire and electricity though both do half damage. Meanwhile, magic (all forms),

illusions, psionic attacks, mind control, and possession have full effect. Gas and smoke attacks are actually twice as effective (double duration of effect and -4 to save) because they pass through the Galter's body, not just its lungs.

Galters cannot partially dematerialize or materialize just a portion of their bodies, they are either *entirely* solid or *entirely* intangible. Should a Galter try to materialize into a solid object, the creature's power will simply not work, and the creature will realize it is intersecting with something, and should move so it can become solid again. The Galter must expend a single melee action/attack either to turn intangible or to turn back to tangible, but it can make this change as often as it likes. **Note:** While there is no limit on the number of transformations it may make, it can only remain intangible for five minutes at a time. If inside solid matter when the time expires, the creature is automatically expelled back to where it had first turned intangible and suffers 3D6 damage. Its natural state is that of a solid, living being. Though a Galter can be trained to tolerate a rider on its back, said rider is NOT turned invisible nor intangible when the creature uses its powers. In fact, a rider will fall through the beast when it phases.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: The Galter can bite for 5D6 damage or claw for 1D6 +P.S. bonus damage. The Galter can also "slap" enemies with its broad tail inflicting 2D6 damage +P.S. attribute damage bonus, *and* there is a 01-60% chance of knocking down opponents who are smaller than 10 feet (3 m) tall, whereupon the victim is knocked off his feet, and loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions to get back on his feet (one from the fall, one to get back on his feet).

Bonuses (does not include likely attribute bonuses): When the creature has the element of surprise, Galters are +2 on initiative and +3 to strike and dodge, but only for that first melee round of melee combat. Otherwise they are +1 on initiative and +2 to strike, +1 to dodge, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor (no parry bonus is applicable).

Average Life Span: Thought to be 20-30 years. Galters lay a clutch of about a dozen eggs every three years.

Value: As trained guard or attack animals, or riding animals, 50,000 to 60,000 gold in the Land of the Damned, easily double that in the rest of the world.

Habitat: Anywhere, though they tend to avoid high mountain ranges and extreme cold regions.

Languages: None, except for a system of animal hisses, snorting, low growls, and tooth clicks.

Enemies: As predators, any living creature is fair game. Since Galters are so large, they tend to prey on other large animals, including horses, cattle, deer, and humanoids. They may stalk prey as lone hunters, in pairs or small groups of 2D6+1.

Allies: None per se. The forces of evil at the Citadel in the north use a few dozen among their elite troops and special operatives use them as riding, guard and attack animals. Likewise the Minotaurs use them as attack and guard animals the same way humans use dogs. The vast majority of Galters have returned to the wild eons ago and are untamed animal predators.

Hygorath

Hygorathes look like oversized, over muscled hyenas, *except* with hairless, armor-plated hides that resemble a pangolin (*think* of an armadillo wearing scale mail). Their bodies are dominated by massively muscled forelimbs, shoulders and neck, topped with a head that is all jaw and not much else. Hygorathes' hind legs are fairly small and skinny in comparison to the rest of their body, leading to the creatures' lack of grace when running. As a result, they tend to walk on all fours, like gorillas, and always appear to be ready to pounce. Although they can stand erect for a minute or so, they do so only to reach for something high up or to rail at the world with their horrible battle cries or bellows of triumph.

These ever crouching creatures are repulsive and aggressive beings designed as front-line shock troops for the Old Ones. Once upon a time, there were millions, sent out in great waves against the enemy to punch through their lines, swarm defensive positions and soften an opponent up before the real "heavy-hitters" arrived. Today, they exist only in the Land of the Damned as one of the many ancient monster races forgotten by the rest of the world.

In the eating department, these animal-like misanthropes have powerful jaws and jagged teeth capable of biting through tough hides and grinding bone. Hygorathes have iron digestive systems that enable them to consume pretty much any organic material, including the hard bone of other Beasts of Chaos. In a *war* setting, when the fighting was done, these hunters and carrion eaters descended upon the fallen bodies on the battlefield like hungry locusts, devouring the dead and dying – an act that added insult upon injury to the Old Ones' enemies, for their unholy Hygorath minions effectively defiled the dead and created greater anguish by making it impossible to recover fallen comrades. Those who faced the Old Ones' Hygorath legions knew many of those who went "missing" could only be "presumed dead," unless a comrade had seen him die. Since the body could not be recovered multitudes could only be counted among the many "Missing In Action," giving the families no comfort in a decent burial. This defiling of the dead was, of course, a deliberate intention on the part of the Old Ones and meant to demoralize their enemies.

Left alone in the wild, Hygorathes both hunt and scavenge food. In many ways, they are the ultimate carrion-feeders, for they can eat and digest the largest and hardest bones and the most rancid and tough meat and garbage. Hygorathes love to dine on a meal of bones on which not even vultures could find a morsel of meat or which are years old. They are also efficient hunters and often travel and stalk prey in pairs and small packs (1D4+3 animals), using their numbers to run down and slay prey that might be much larger and more formidable than a single Hygorath could handle. Consequently, these hunters will target young, elderly and sickly Baltosaurs, and sometimes even a healthy male who has wandered off on its own. Although such quarry takes a special effort to slay, the Hygorathes strike using teamwork and tag team tactics, slowly wearing down their prey. Likewise, these monsters have no fear of humans or any humanoid and find slow moving beings, including giants, to be relatively easy prey.



A large pack of Hygorathes is called a *colony* and consists of one to three dozen of the horrid devourers (4D6+12 animals). These large packs are incredibly brazen and act as if they are invincible. This means a well fed pack *may*, in their arrogance, laziness and boldness, ignore one or more humanoids and other prey animal with absolute indifference, confident that the character(s) will *not* dare to attack them. On the other hand, 1D4 individuals of a large colony *may* trot out to confront a giant, dragon or an army of humanoids and may choose to attack or try to chase off the intruders without the slightest provocation against them or the rest of the pack.

At the top of a Hygorath colony is the *Alpha Pack*, consisting of 2-8 adult Hygorathes who reign supreme over the rest of the colony. Then there is a group of 5-10 (1D6+4) adults in the *Beta Pack*, the second-in-command and authority in the pack, and who answer only to the Alphas. The rest are all part of the lowly Gamma Pack and are submissive to these two groups. Thus, the Alpha Pack leads and gets to eat first, the Betas next and the rest wrestle for what's left. Gammas are primarily responsible for defending the colony and hunting, even though Betas and Alphas get preference in eating. Once a colony has formed, its members will never mate "up" out of their caste. That is, Gammas will never choose to breed with Alphas or Betas. Alphas and Betas, however, may choose to breed with members of a lower caste if they so choose. The offspring typically becomes a member of the higher-ranking parental pack.

Rival packs of Hygorathes may challenge each other's territory or claim to food, but most fights among their own kind are seldom to the death, unless challengers are trying to usurp the Alpha position. Such challenges to leadership usually come from outside the pack, from a band of rogues looking to take over an established colony. When this happens the challengers

and established Alphas fight to the death, leaving the slain to be eaten by the Gamma members as a show of accepting the winners as the leaders by eating the defeated. Out of respect, the Betas never attack and challenge the winners even if the winners are seriously injured. However, if the rogue challengers were the winners, the original Betas *may* challenge them at a later date, after they have healed up.

Hygorathes are notoriously disgusting creatures, fond of defecating on a fresh kill in order to discourage other animals from feeding on it. This is no deterrent to fellow Hygorathes, of course, who will eat their own feces, rotten maggot-filled meat, bones and any other nasty substances that may garnish their meals. As a result of this and their many other foul habits, including rolling around in the gore of their kills and painting themselves in blood, Hygorathes are quite possibly the worst-smelling beasts in the Land of the Damned. So great is their stench that an individual can often be smelled over a quarter-mile away (0.4 km), and a colony can be smelled up to a mile or two (1.6 to 3.2 km) away if the wind is right. Dogs, Wolves, and other creatures with especially good senses of smell can detect them from twice that distance and will remember and recognize a Hygorath scent after one brief encounter.

Despite the Hygorathes' savagery and animal behavior, they have a high predator intelligence equal to an average or low human intelligence. In fact, they speak a barely recognizable, guttural and distorted dialect of Gobblely. However, they have no need or desire for civilization, money, possessions, or magic, preferring to live off the land as wandering bands of nomads. There are a few exceptions when it comes to possessions, however. A Hygorath *may* find and keep a small object or three, such as a coin, tool or weapon. Such things are usually items that strikes one's fancy and so it is kept as a personal trophy or

favorite trinket. Only Alphas and Betas are allowed to keep magic items and then they usually keep only magic items such as talismans, amulets, rings, and other types of jewelry or wearable items, maybe even a magic knife, though it will seldom be used in combat.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic, fewer than 2% are Anarchist. Hygorathes are uncommonly cruel, aggressive and vicious to other life forms.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+5, M.E.: 2D6+3, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 2D6+16, P.P.: 2D4+8, P.E.: 2D6+16, P.B.: 1D6, Spd.: 3D6+20 running on all fours, reduce by 90% when walking erect.

Size: 5-6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) at the shoulders when walking on all fours, 10-12 feet (3 to 3.6 m) when standing erect.

Weight: 450 to 800 lbs (202.5 to 360 kg) of muscle and tough, scaly plating.

Hit Points: P.E.x2.

S.D.C.: 1D4x10+21

Natural A.R.: 15

Horror Factor: 9 when encountered singly. When Hygorathes are encountered in groups of six or more, their collective Horror Factor goes up to 11. In groups of twelve or more, their collective Horror Factor is 13.

P.P.E.: 4D6

Magic: None, nor can they learn magic. However, any magic spell cast on them, whether it be for good or ill, will last for twice as long as usual. Scholars chalk this up to the Hygorathes being a flawed design or having served some special purpose for the Old Ones that has since been forgotten.

Psionics: Standard. Those Hygorathes that exhibit any kind of psionic talent automatically jump in the colony hierarchy. A Minor psionic is automatically a Beta while a Major or Master psionic is automatically a Beta and likely to be able to fight his or her way to the top as an Alpha. Psionic ability tends to be hereditary among Hygorathes, so an unusual number of Betas and Alphas may possess some degree of psionic ability, the extent of which for any given pack members within a colony is left to the G.M.'s discretion. Not all high-ranking Hygorathes have psionic powers, and it is not uncommon for an entire colony to have no or only a few Minor psionic individuals.

Natural Abilities: Land Navigation 92%, Wilderness Survival 92%, Track Animals 80%, Track Humanoids 50%, Track by Scent alone 50% (+35% to follow blood or scent of decaying/rotting meat), Swim 40% (dislikes water), and Scale Walls 60% (can also rappel at 45%). Hygorathes have crude, semi-grasping fingers with a small, partial opposable thumb, which means they can, in a pinch, use a weapon or tool, but seldom do so. They are more *animal* than man and pride themselves on their ferocity and savagery. Thus, they avoid the trappings of civilization, including using humanoid weapons and tools. In fact, those in the wild avoid communities with more than a thousand people, except to raid their garbage dumps or fresh graves, and to snatch up the occasional person who is off by himself.

Special: Iron Gut: Hygorathes can chew and digest any organic material. This makes it very easy for them to live off the land, as they easily get by on diets that most other carrion feeders would pass over. A fringe benefit of this ability is that, because they are so used to eating and living off of pu-

trid food, these creatures have a built-in immunity to any kind of poison whatsoever. They do not even need to make a saving throw against toxins. This goes for inhaled poisons, too. Hygorathes are simply immune to any non-magical toxin.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Damage: Bite does 4D6, or they can claw for 2D6 +P.S. damage bonus (+3 to +15). They much prefer to bite whenever possible since it is their most effective and natural attack.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge, +1 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +6 to save vs Horror Factor and diseases, and impervious to poison.

Average Life Span: Their violent life style as hunters and warriors gives them an average lifespan of 20-24 years; Hygorathes reach full maturity in six.

Value: Even those who might see value in the Hygorathes as warrior-slaves or battlefield scavengers, won't pay much for one (2D6x10 gold) and most shy away from these beings because they are just too animalistic, savage and mean-spirited to easily handle unless there is constant war. Ironically, these malicious psychopaths are easily enticed to fight as front-line infantry troops provided they are given free rein on the battlefield and allowed to gorge themselves on the fallen enemy. However, they are only happy when fighting, eating or lazing around after they have gorged. This means they are not willing to go back out and fight until 72 hours after gorging, and when hungry and with nothing to do for more than 48 hours they begin to wander off or start fighting with non-Hygorath races. Their hides are worthless (the stink cannot be removed) and even most carnivores won't eat their meat (only other Hygorathes and Ghouls will eat their fallen kinsmen). Their bones, while of little value (five gold per 200 lbs/45 kg), are sometimes used as stout handles for tools such as picks, shovels and axes (they are twice as strong, but just as light as wood). However, most civilized beings will not use the bones of a semi-sentient being, even one as revolting as the Hygorathes.

Habitat: These creatures prefer a temperate or hot climate. Should they escape the Land of the Damned, they would flourish especially well in the *Old Kingdom*, *Western Empire*, *Baalgor Wastelands*, *Timiro*, and the frontier regions of the *Eastern Territory*. Despite their natural preference, they manage just fine in the Land of the Damned, though most gravitate to the southern half. They may sleep out in the open, in caves or dig themselves shallow burrows.

Languages: A guttural and distorted dialect of Gobblely (-30% for Goblins and others who speak the language to understand them), but tend to speak in monosyllable words, short sentences and grunt and growl a lot. (Wolfen can understand their body language and animal noises equal to speaking a language at a 40% level of proficiency.)

Enemies: Everything is a potential meal or enemy.

Allies: Hygorathes tend to stick to their own kind, besides, few can tolerate their foul smell. However, some Hygorathes are willing to work for others as scouts, hunters, fighters, infantry troops, grave diggers (as long as they can eat some of what they dig up) and living garbage disposals eating rotten food and the remains of the dead - provided they get food, and lots of it. As noted previously, these beings have little

use for coins, gold or other possessions. They just want to gorge, laze around and gorge again, with a little mischief, fighting and bullying inbetween.



Instigator

These insidious little cretins are monkey-like creatures with slender bodies, long prehensile tails, grasping hands and feet, dark fur around their faces, and shocks of white fur on their up-

per lip and eyebrows giving them the appearance of wizened old men with bushy moustaches. They have orange eyes, yellow teeth, and black tongues. They can stand upright, but when moving through the trees or running on the ground they usually drop to all fours.

Instigators have three-fingered hands and an opposable thumb, so they can use weapons and tools. The feet and long tail are both prehensile, but much less articulated than the hands (both are -30% to perform a skill with them and -2 to strike and parry using a weapon; no bonuses apply). Instigators are capable of speaking and understanding *any* language, provided they have a few days exposure to it. In this regard, they are a little like parrots, only Instigators really learn how to speak independently, not just mimic the words that they hear. Possessing a human-like intelligence, these creatures can converse freely with just about anything, making them the resident communications experts of the Darkest Heart.

Instigators are parasites who ingratiate themselves to other beings (animals or humanoids) and live by skimming off the group's food supply and enjoying their protection. These creatures can be so single-minded in their pursuit of free vittles and living off others, that attempts to drive them off usually fail, and the group that has been "adopted" by one or more Instigators just learns to deal with the little creatures. If an Instigator has adopted a group of humanoids, he will gladly speak with them, share any information, entertain them and perform small tasks to win their trust and affection. Admittedly, it can be difficult to resist these little scamps' charms, and most humanoids who come to know an Instigator appreciate all of the things the intelligent "animal" does for the group. Most people think of Instigators as innocent, gentle and funny animals with a knack for entertainment and amusing play. The monkey-like beings dance, juggle, mimic and wrestle to the amusement of all on a level of a professional court jester, winning the favor of most who watch and interact with them. Being so small, charming and playful, most folks dismiss the non-assuming creatures as cute little pets. However, once an Instigator has arranged this kind of relationship, the creature can go ahead with its real intentions: To cause utter mayhem among its adopted friends and companions, hopefully casing them to fight amongst themselves and self-destruct.

Instigators saw heavy use during the Chaos War during which they inflicted grievous harm to the Alliance of Light. What most people did not then (or today) realize is that Instigators are impish creatures whose very nature is to cause discord and treachery. This was not discovered by the forces of good until near the end of the Chaos War, so these innocent looking but malevolent imps acted with impunity for ages. They worked behind the scenes and deep within enemy lines to reduce troop morale, create dissension in the ranks, invite infighting and intense rivalry, and create an air of fear and uncertainty that would lead to incidents of desertion, treachery, confusion and "friendly fire." How the Instigators managed this was fairly simple. They would *innocently* make suggestions, and express fears and doubts that played on those of the troops around them. They also said and did things to invite reckless and ill-conceived acts of revenge, pressing battles that could not be won, and playing one person or group against another. This was often accomplished by using the hopes, dreams, nobility, and honor of those around them as well as preying upon emotions of love, hate, fear and revenge. More often than not, the Instigators' little acts *en-*

couraged actions that would be detrimental to the individual or group, but seemed, at the time, to be innocent or supportive comments or suggestions. They also used their incredible speaking abilities, voice imitation and ventriloquism to issue false commands and instructions during confusing moments of battle or to sow the kind of rumors that contained enough truth in them that they would be taken seriously.

The ultimate infiltrator, Instigators also stole select magic items, burying or hiding them or passing them along to their evil masters, as well as using them to frame an innocent man to create turmoil in the camp or undermine the chain of command. Secret plans, weaknesses and troop movement were also passed on to their evil masters. All the while leaving the Alliance of Light to wonder who among them was the turncoat. ("Surely it couldn't have been the cute little monkey creature that has been doing everybody favors. That little guy couldn't hurt a fly! Isn't that right, little fella? Here, have a cookie.") On less frequent occasions, Instigators would resort to cold-blooded murder, killing key personnel in their sleep or when seriously wounded and in need of help. Of course, the vile little beasts would then plant evidence to make it look as if the enemy or some rival faction did the dirty deed. The sad thing is that the Instigators did not have to do much to create the widespread headaches they caused. They simply understood human nature and the social dynamics within the Alliance of Light very well, particularly the inherent mistrusts and friction between certain factions, and exploited that to the Old Ones' advantage.

When the treachery of the Instigators was uncovered toward the end of the Chaos War, thousands were put to the sword. The rest were gathered up and dumped in the Land of the Damned with the rest of the scum and villains. Over the eons, individual Instigators and small bands have chosen to serve new masters from time to time, but most see life as a free-for-all, and serve only chaos by causing mischief, dissension and trouble for all they encounter. Adventurers from the "world beyond the mountains" are their favorite targets, for they know nothing about Instigators or any of the people and monsters that inhabit the Land of the Damned. Thus, the little monkey-imps can trick and torment them for their own amusement. They also like to trick, outsmart and manipulate many of the other intelligent Beasts of Chaos and such beings as the Minotaurs, Harpies, Orcs and Goblins (although they are almost too easy to fool to be good sport), Giants, and even the demons and Deevils of the Great Rift. Some even dare to toy with the likes of dragons, Lizard Mages and other intelligent and powerful beings (a true challenge).

Alignment: Selfish or evil: 33% Anarchist, 33% Miscreant, 33% Diabolic, 1% Other.

Attributes: I.Q.: 2D4+8, M.E.: 2D4+10, M.A.: 2D4+20, P.S.: 1D4+4, P.P.: 2D4+12, P.E.: 1D4+6, P.B.: 2D4+8, Spd.: 2D4+20 (increase by 50% when swinging and racing through the trees).

Size: Two to two and a half feet (0.6 to 0.75 m) long, not including their long, thin tails which are usually as long as the rest of their body.

Weight: 10 lbs to 20 lbs (4.5 kg to 9 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +10.

S.D.C.: 4D6+8

Natural A.R.: None.

Awe ("Awww") Factor: 11

P.P.E.: 5D6

R.C.C.s Skills: Instigators are natural born spies, thieves and con artists with the following skill equivalents: Escape Artist 60%, Imitate Voices & Impersonation (of voice) 75%, Ventriloquism 75%, Intelligence 65%, Acrobatics: 80% for all related skills, Climb 95%/85%, Juggling 80%, Swim 55%, Palming 70%, Prowl 65%, Camouflage 60%, Streetwise 50%, Anthropology 80%, Land Navigation 75%, Wilderness Survival 90%, Public Speaking 80%, and Speaks Elven, Gobblely and 1D4+4 languages of choice at 90%. Cannot read or write.

Magic: Instigators have no natural magic abilities and lack the discipline and interest to learn it, but they do love magic items which they may collect and hide as part of their secret reserve of treasure.

Psionics: None, thank goodness.

Natural Abilities: See R.C.C. skills and high M.A. above, plus the following:

Special Leaping Ability: 6 feet (1.8 m) lengthwise or 5 feet (1.5 m) high and can run, leap and swing through trees at speeds 50% higher than their normal running speed. +3 to dodge when going full tilt through the trees.

Special: Prehensile Feet and Tail: Instigators can, like a monkey, use their feet and tail to grab and hang and swing from tree branches, vines and rope, as well as use basic weapons and tools. However, attacks with the tail or feet get no bonuses and are -2 to strike and parry, plus skills are performed at -25% and take twice as long.

Others: Nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m).

Attacks Per Melee: Three.

Damage: Because they are so small, Instigator hand weapons will inflict the same amount of damage as Gnomish weapons. Most hand weapons will inflict 1D4 or 1D6 if two handed. Arrows and other missiles will inflict 1D4 points of damage except for crossbows, which inflict 1D6. If an Instigator tries using an ordinary-sized weapon it will be at -6 to strike and parry, and damage will be reduced by half. Instigators can not use two-handed weapons for normal-sized humanoids nor can they use giant-sized weapons of any kind. Instigators have no natural weaponry aside from their guile and intellect.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +2 to on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to dodge, +2 to save vs punch, fall or impact, +2 to pull punch, +2 to save vs poison and disease, and +2 to save vs mind control and possession.

Average Life Span: At least 40-50 years, quite possibly two or three times that long.

Value: As a trained pet or curiosity, Instigators could easily fetch 40-160 gold each, especially in places like the Western Empire where exotic pets are always in demand.

Habitat: Instigators could survive anywhere, but much prefer someplace that has a lot of trees and a warm climate. Places with no arboreal cover are very unappealing to Instigators, though cities with tall buildings and plenty of rooftops and ledges are nearly as good as forests of trees. In the Land of the Damned, many have retreated to the protective forests of the Middle and Inner Weald sections of the *Darkest Heart*, where they can hide in the trees and avoid ground-roaming predators. Instigators have long memories and their ancestors have done a good job of passing along an oral history, so they know exactly what they are capable of doing and are proud of their deadly role in the Chaos Wars. If the Old Ones

should ever awaken, they would gladly serve them again. When not sponging off others, Instigators form small, tightly cohesive families. They appear to suffer from none of the infighting they live to engender in others.

Languages: All Instigators can learn and speak any language and know at least a half dozen.

Enemies: All non-Instigators are potential targets and victims. The world at large does not really know about Instigators and many of the creatures who inhabit the Land of the Damned remain blissfully ignorant about them and their evil ways.

Allies: Most Instigators can earn a stranger's trust, at least for a little while. Eventually, however, they may betray themselves to be the mean-spirited little manipulators and traitors that they really are. Only the rarest of Instigators possess any shred of honesty, integrity, and compassion.

Lassacre

Most of the creatures designed by the Old Ones served some very specialized purpose. So did the Lassacre (Lass-uh-cur) – cannon fodder. This may make these born and bred warriors one of the Old Ones' most miserable creations, for these creatures were built for only two purposes: to fight and die for their masters. Sure, they have the fighting strength and resilience of any Ogre or Troll, with muscles to spare, but when considering the incredible powers at work during the Chaos War, it becomes clear that the Lassacre were "expendable" combat infantry troops never expected to survive more than a year or so of combat.

All Lassacre look pretty much the same, as if cloned from the same individual. All appear to be male and are hulking, barrel-chested brutes who stand 7-8 feet tall (2.1 to 2.4 m). Thick, oversized arms and legs ripple with muscles and their small, hard head is mounted on a short thick neck. They have a large flat nose, large, green almond shaped eyes, tiny ears set on the top of their head and a small mouth. Most of the time they have an angry or dull look on their face. Lassacre are superb physical specimens in every way, naturally adept at using most weapons, and they are skilled at fighting either solo or in large, coordinated attacks. Yes, as a grunt infantryman, the Lassacre would seem to be the perfect soldier, except for one little detail. *They have no brain.*

That's right. No brain. At least not as we humans think of a brain.

Like a *cockroach*, they possess an advanced nerve cluster in their head that manages all of the creatures' body functions, but that is pretty much it. These things are as close to living robots as can be, which is exactly what the Old Ones wanted when they created them. Fearless, obedient fighting machines.

Scholars suspect their intention was to mass produce the Lassacre so that they could be thrown at the Alliance of Light in huge mass attacks and overwhelm enemy forces by sheer numbers and ferocity. Even if these wave assaults did not overrun Alliance positions, the idea was that the Alliance of Light would be so exhausted by the relentless assault of the Lassacre, supplemented by such powerhouses as the Beasts of Kathos, Drolodons, and Galters, that they would be ripe for the picking by other, more intelligent forces that followed. In that regard, the Lassacre easily suffered more casualties than any other race

that participated in the Chaos War. Though no exact figures are known, it must be assumed that tens of millions, possibly many times that, perished during the Chaos War.

Because they have no brain, Lassacre cannot think and communicate on their own. Instead, they are creatures of pure instinct who live to fight and destroy the enemy. While bands of ancient minions like the Minotaurs, Trolls and dragons command as many as a few hundred Lassacre, without the Old Ones



to direct them, most of these warriors gather in groups of 2D6 live off the land and attack those they perceive as the enemy. That includes any characters of *good alignment* or which carry the *stench of the gods* (i.e. Priests, Witches, Monks and Shamans), as well as a few notable enemy races, including *Elves*, *Dwarves*, *Gnomes*, *Titans* and *Rahu-Men*. Humans, Wolfen and Changelings are viewed with ambiguity and attacked only if they stand with enemy forces, reek of goodness or attack them first. Orcs, Goblins, Hygorathes and other lesser beings are ignored as fellow underlings.

Lassacre have no culture to speak of, though they instinctively gather and operate as small military squads, platoons and companies. If left on their own, most mill about, and cause little trouble as they go about looking for small animals, fruits, vegetables, carrion and garbage to eat. Lassacre have incredibly efficient metabolisms, and as such require only about one pound of edible material to keep going for a full 24 hour day. They need only 3-4 hours of sleep.

Lassacre instantly snap to attention and carry out any orders given to them by minions of the Old Ones who were once known to possess great power and intelligence (i.e. leaders), including dragons, Lizard Mages, wizards and other powerful, *evil* beings and O.C.C.s. Their native language (if one can call it that) is basically a guttural mixture of Dragonese/Elven with a dash of Gobbly thrown in. The creatures understand both languages but usually respond with grunts, hoots like chimpanzees and simple 3-6 word phrases.

Despite their lack of brainpower, imagination and individuality, Lassacre can carry out without confusion, any commands given to them. These brainless wonders could even carry out a set of tasks as complex as the following: "Proceed to the castle and establish a perimeter there; ten of you shall then breach the gate while the rest will assault the walls from the south, east and west. Once inside, eight of you should secure the main tower while another four go up it, neutralize any opposition, kidnap the princess, and bring her down unharmed. Then, reform the entire group, keeping the princess at the center, and escort her safely to the nearest friendly position. And don't forget to get me something to eat while you're at it." The entire bunch of Lassacre warriors immediately respond to the command, marching happily off into oblivion in the service of their master.

Lassacre troops carry out any task, no matter how bizarre, complicated, terrifying or morally questionable. Even if the group hearing the command lacks the numbers to follow their orders, or the skills to do what is asked of them, they will improvise and figure out ways of making sure their mission is completed. Once their mission is complete, or their orders have been satisfied, the creatures lose their cohesiveness and either stand in place or aimlessly mill about waiting for their next command. They have no initiative beyond what they have been strictly ordered to do. Without any mission parameters, Lassacre defend themselves if attacked, and gather to strike out at anyone they sense to be the enemy. As noted earlier, that includes some specific archaic races, clergy and characters of good alignment. Otherwise, they try to avoid hostile creatures or overt danger, but that is it.

Lassacre instinctively mate once every five years starting at age three, more often if a particular group is under duress and their numbers low (this is a built-in survival mechanism). Ord-

nary observers cannot tell a female from a male even when one is pregnant, though the Lassacre can. Twin children are born six months after gestation (typically one male and one female), and are abandoned to fend for themselves the moment they are brought into the world. Instinct kicks in and the two miniature Lassacre stay together, helping each other survive, eating plants, carrion and small animals. They reach full size and maturity by age three. Until then, the young Lassacre avoid picking fights and attacking even those they sense to be the enemy. The twins also stay together as a pair or as a lone individual if a sibling is slain. During these first three years of life, the creature only fights to eat and defend itself, however, at age four, the Lassacre instinctively gravitates toward others of its kind, gathering in small bands and actively seeking and killing "the enemy."

Alignment: Considered Miscreant robotic killers who are programmed to kill all good beings they encounter. However, these creatures have no innate sense of good or evil, right or wrong, nor do they torture or hurt in anger or pleasure. They are pre-programmed killing machines, plain and simple. If there is some way to change that programming nobody has been able to figure it out yet. That secret remains locked away in the minds of the slumbering Old Ones.

Attributes: I.Q.: Pure instinct and reaction. The level of understanding to follow an order is roughly equal to an I.Q. of 7. M.E.: Single-minded. These creatures are living robots. M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2D6+17, P.P. 1D6+13, P.E. 1D6+13, P.B. 2D4, Spd. 1D6+17.

Size: Seven to eight feet (2.1 m to 2.4 m) tall.

Weight: 300 lbs to 400 lbs (135 kg to 180 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +50.

S.D.C.: 6D6+36

Natural A.R.: 10, but instinctively knows to wear armor (and clothing) for protection and will try to cobble together some type of armor from those they slay in combat. Lassacre controlled by powerful evil beings will don whatever uniform or armor given to them.

Horror Factor: 8 for an individual, 10 for a squad of ten or more and 12 for a platoon or company – all will fight to the death or until physically restrained.

P.P.E.: 1D4x10 +P.E. attribute number.

Magic: The equivalent of the following spells as a *natural ability*, each of which can be used at will and without expenditure of P.P.E.: *See Aura*, *Sense Good* (the opposite equivalent of the *Sense Evil* spell), and *See the Invisible*.

Psionics: Having no brain, Lassacre obviously have no potential for psychic powers.

Natural Abilities: Great strength, no personal goals or desires, completely fearless (impervious to Horror Factor and fight to the death), and bio-regenerates S.D.C. and H.P. damage at a rate of 4D6 per 24 hours. Also see Magic and Bonuses.

Special: Mental Immunity. Because these creatures literally are brainless, they are immune to Horror Factor, illusions, mind control, possession and other tricks or effects upon the mind. According to rumor, if any psychic tries to establish telepathic or empathic contact with a Lassacre, he will become lost in a swirling sea of primal instincts and emotions with no actual words, thoughts or decipherable images. The psychic remains entranced for 1D4 melee rounds while lost in the mind of the Lassacre. During this period, the

psionic individual is oblivious to what's going on around him and cannot take any action, not even self-defense, until the link is broken. Recovers instantly with no long term side effects.

Special: Programming. Lassacre are designed to be completely obedient and otherwise docile warriors for the Old Ones and their elite minions (leaders). Consequently, the creatures possess warrior skills and abilities instinctively known to them. Without a specific, non-Lassacre leader, they fall back on their default programming which is to survive (i.e. live off the land) and destroy the enemy whenever encountered. Whenever provoked or ordered into combat they are fearless killing machines that fight relentlessly without mercy and battle to the death.

Skill equivalents include the following plus weapons expert, below: Understands and speaks Demongorgan, Dragonese/Elf and Gobblely 85%, Detect Ambush 50%, Track Humanoids 60%, Track and Trap Animals 70%, Skin & Prepare Animal Hides 75%, Land Navigation 80%, Wilderness Survival 90%, Dowsing 60%, and Identify Plants & Fruits 90%.

Special: Weapons Experts. All Lassacre are naturally adept at fighting with any type of weapon and have W.P. Paired Weapons. Thus, they can pick up and use any weapon, regardless of type, as if they are experts at equal to a 6th level skill proficiency (typically +2 or 3 to strike and parry with said weapon). Usually attacks with a pair of weapons or a big two-handed weapon.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Lassacre can punch for 2D4 plus P.S. bonus (ranging from +4 to as high as +14). Head butt does 2D6 damage (no additional damage bonus) and a kick does 2D6 plus P.S. bonus. Or damage may be inflicted by a weapon of some kind. Lassacre instinctively pick up weapons from their previous victims and will typically have 1D4+1 different ones on their person, from a simple cudgel and knife to a big two-handed sword and mace or battle axe. They love large, heavy weapons and usually fight to the death.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +1 to strike and parry, +1 to disarm, impervious to disease, impervious to mind control and possession, resistant to fire and cold (half damage), resistant to poison (+3 to save, in addition to possible P.E. bonus). Also see Attributes for possible other bonuses, as well as Magic and Natural Abilities for special powers.

Average Life Span: Hard to say. In the Chaos War, no Lassacre is on record of having lasted more than a few years. In the Land of the Damned, they can live for up to 30 or 40 years, though few make it beyond the age of 8-15.

Value: Evil overlords are willing to pay 2,000-10,000 gold per Lassacre. However, the largest group one can control is a company (140 Lassacre) and most command a squad (10-12) or platoon or two (40 per platoon). Only the Old Ones, dark gods and demons lords are able to command entire armies.

Habitat: Lassacre are found throughout the Land of the Damned, but tend to avoid the mountain highlands and sea coasts.

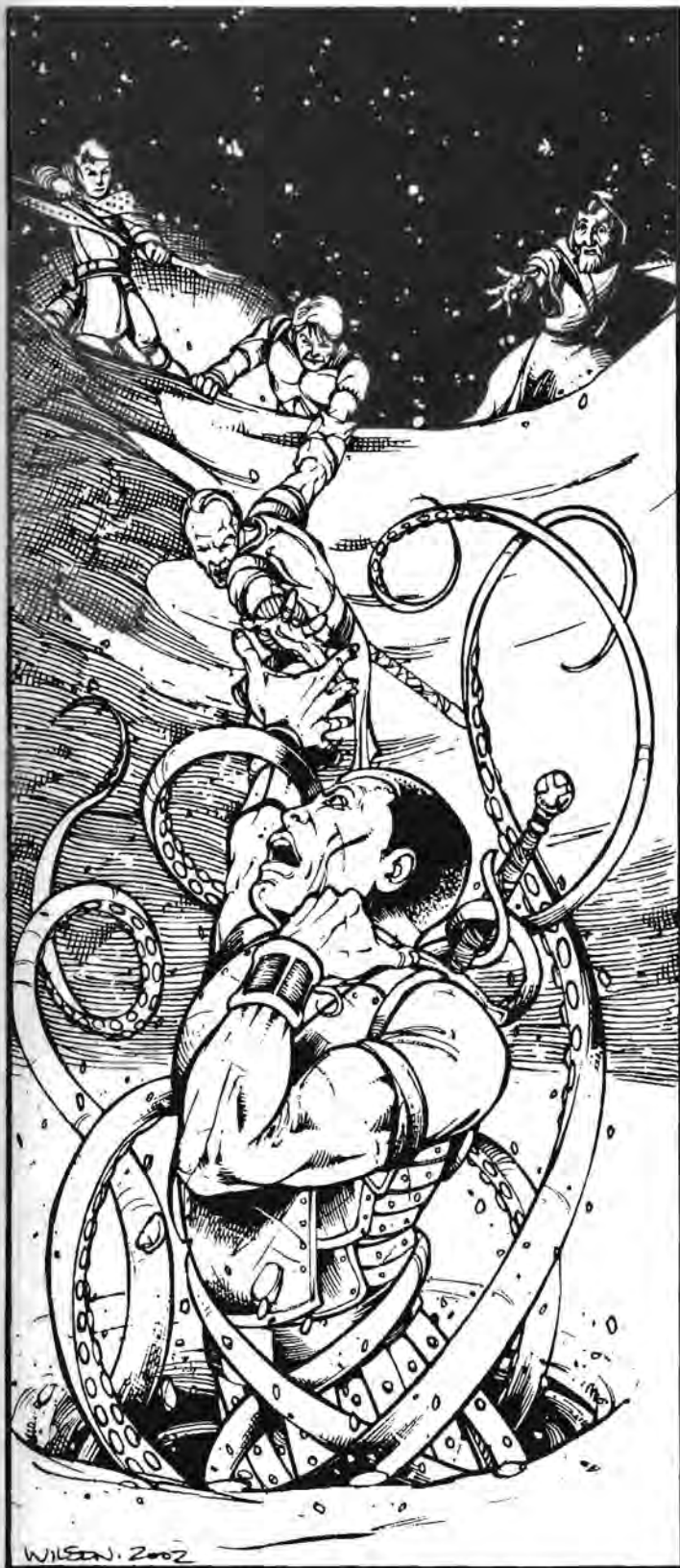
Languages: Minimal: Demongogian (the tongue of infernals), Dragonese/Elven and Gobblely.

Enemies: Characters of Principled and Scrupulous alignment (Unprincipled are viewed with suspicion), clergy allied to any Gods of Light, including Shamans and Druids of good alignments or whose deities are of good alignments or promote the sanctity of life, and select archaic races who, generally, fought on the side of light, including Elves, Changelings, Titans and Rahu-Men. **Allies:** Again, none per se. Evil and most Anarchist characters (unless fighting along side those of good alignment or attacking the Lassacre) are ignored. Only the most powerful evil priests, practitioners of magic and inhuman beings may command these creatures. Dragons, despite the fact that so many turned against the Old Ones, are still seen as commanders, but only if they have Anarchist or evil (any) alignments. The Lassacre live to serve evil and chaos.

Pit-Worm

No war zone would be complete without traps and land mines. The Old Ones certainly thought so, and to that end they designed the hideous Pit-Worm, a creature that in some ways seems more plant than animal. Most other living beings never get to see what a Pit-Worm fully looks like. They begin life from a single egg that is buried deep underground, usually within some kind of animal carcass. The egg hatches, and the newborn Pit-Worm begins to grow and dig upward, living off the nutrients provided by the carcass left behind. Should a Pit-Worm egg hatch away from a carcass, it can also survive on its nutrient-rich egg sac and can even leach what it needs to survive from the soil and insects, although it clearly prefers to dine on animal flesh.

The Pit-Worm itself is a huge kind of segmented worm. It is blind and deaf, sensing movement nearby purely by detecting micro-vibrations in the earth and the air. Though these creatures are only a foot long when they are born, they will grow to their full length of 20 feet (6.1 m) and full diameter of 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) within three months. They have minimal means of locomotion, and it is all they can do to burrow into the ground. Once they break through, they bore out a large pit, usually 20-30 feet (6-9 m) in diameter and 10 feet (3 m) in depth. Somewhere at the bottom of the pit (not always in the center) the giant worm buries itself tail first into the soil where it waits for prey. When an animal or humanoid falls or climbs into the pit, the Pit-Worm can "feel" the vibrations from their movement and strikes by sending eight flailing tentacles in the direction of the movement. The worm usually strikes low to tag small animals and to snare the legs of large ones to prevent them from fleeing. If the prey manages to dodge two of the flailing tentacles, the other six also miss and the intended prey can run to get out of the pit. However, two melee actions are usually spent running to the wall of the pit and another 1D4 to climb out (only one or two melee actions if a comrade is there to help pull one out or if the animal is a feline and can leap out in a single bound). The walls of the pit are usually soft, making climbing without falling difficult (-30% on the climb skill). The next melee round the Pit-Worm can strike with more accuracy and any potential victim must dodge four tentacles to avoid capture. As a rule, the creature targets the largest/heaviest prey or the slowest one in the pit. Once snared by a single tentacle, 1D4 others also entangle the victim (counts as one melee action) and quickly drag the prey into a compara-



tively small pit where the Pit-Worm waits underground. Its mouth open, ready to receive its prey. The eight, suckered tentacles line the inner wall of the mouth and pull snagged prey directly in the gaping maw. Since the legs of its victims are usually what's entangled, the victim cannot kick or try to brace himself from being pulled into the maw and is chewed up and swallowed in 3D4 bites. Few creatures can survive more than two or three bites. The tentacles have a reach of 20-25 feet (6-7.6 m) so the worm, if centered in the pit, can reach every part of the floor and half-way up the pit walls.

Pit-Worms are deadly ambush hunters, and those in pits that have survived more than a couple of seasons may be covered in grass, flowers, moss and vines making the pit look like part of the landscape – nothing more than a shallow drop-off or old crater. Some may even hold puddles of water that may attract small animals, however, the Pit-Worm never allows shrubs or trees to grow in its pit-trap and regularly prunes its pit by touch, using the tentacles.

If a chosen prey is too difficult to reel in, or it has companions that gang up on the worm, the beast is likely to let go and retract its tentacles, but not until it has battled for at least 1D4+3 melee rounds or has lost one of its tentacles. Otherwise, a Pit-Worm only fights when an intruder tries to dig it up or slides down into its hole to attack it. Then it will use its tentacles as whips, as well as try to entangle an attacker and pull him in to be devoured. Though a Pit-Worm's mouth and head always point up, toward the surface and only a foot or two below the surface when hunting, the worm can drop deeper into its vertical hole, making attackers climb down as deep as 30 feet (9 m) to get at its head. Remember too that the width of the hole is only 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) wide, allowing only one attacker to descend at a time, unless they are smaller than human-sized. Flushing the worm out with water or lobbing arrows, fire or magic down the hole is the safest way to kill it or force it to the surface. However, once the creature goes into hiding mode, it will not surface to attack another creature for at least one hour.

The Old Ones used Pit-Worms in the Chaos War as guards, obstacle courses and to create vast "mine fields" in which hundreds of Pit-Worms covered huge fronts of territory, promising to chew up whatever infantry dared to tread through them. For the most part, Pit-Worms were exterminated over the course of the war. Even today, they are one of the rarer Beasts of Chaos in the Land of the Damned. They are usually found in forests and plains where the ground is comparatively soft, never in the mountains. Typically encountered as a lone individual, but where one is found 2D6 others are also likely to be found within a five mile (8 km) diameter. Sometimes 1D6+4 are found in pits clustered within a few yards/meters of one another. This can only mean hunting is good in the area or some other powerful being has placed the Pit-Worms there to ward off or devour unwanted visitors.

Left on their own, a Pit-Worm will live for up to a century. After they die, their bodies reflexively push themselves to the surface, where they decompose. As they rot, an internal clutch of 2D6 eggs can be found. If left undisturbed they will hatch and repopulate the area.

Alignment: A hideous animal predator considered to be Misanthropic.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4 (low animal hunter), M.E.: 1D4, M.A.: 1D4, P.S.: 1D4+17, P.P.: 2D4+12 (tentacles only), P.E.: 2D6+12, P.B.: 1D4, Spd.: 1D4+1 for the worm itself, the tentacles move at a speed of 2D4+20.

Size: Twenty feet (6.1 m) long and 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) in diameter. The creature's eight tentacles are 20-25 feet (6-7.6 m) long. They occupy a pit 40-50 feet (12.2 to 15.2 m) deep and 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) in diameter (hugs the worm's body).

Weight: 2-3 tons.

Hit Points: P.E.x3

S.D.C.: Each tentacle (8) has 2D6+16 S.D.C. If that number is depleted, the tentacle is severed. The main body of the creature has 50 S.D.C., but is well protected, covered by the very earth, and difficult to get at when sheltered in its snug burrow. Only a direct attack into its hole has any chance of hitting the creature, but also means the attacker is vulnerable to its whipping and entangling tentacles.

Natural A.R.: None.

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E.: 2D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Dig and burrow like a worm, make shallow pits, hibernate for 5 months at a time, bio-regenerate damage at a rate of 3D6 S.D.C. or H.P. per 24 hours and can regrow a lost or damaged tentacle in 1D4+5 days! Impervious to all known diseases, resistant to cold and poisons (half damage) and resistant to charm, possession and mind control (see bonuses).

Attacks Per Melee: Two tentacle attacks the first melee round. Four the second melee round and *eight* the third and subsequent melee rounds! Remember, however, that the Pit-Worm's goal is to snare one or two animals/humanoids with 2-4 of its tentacles and pull them into its maw to eat, rather than engage in a prolonged battle for the sake of fighting. This means 2-4 tentacles are likely to become tied up very quickly, leaving only 4-6 tentacle attacks available to it in subsequent melee rounds. It will reach out for more attacks if there is more prey to be had, eating up to 1500 lbs (675 kg) in a single sitting, but once it is full, the worm will ignore all others or chase them away with its tentacles. Generally speaking, each tentacle gets a single attack per melee round.

Damage: **Tentacle Strike:** A tentacle can strike like a whip doing 2D6 points of damage per lash, or jab and poke doing 1D6 damage.

Tentacle Grab/Constrict: The tentacles can also spend two melee attacks/actions wrapping around and entangling a victim, at which point the only defense is to either dodge the attack, possess a greater P.S. than the Pit-Worm and break free, or to hacks through the tentacle before the Pit-Worm pulls its prey to its mouth.

If a Pit-Worm has successfully grabbed an opponent, it can, starting with its next melee action, begin pulling its victim into its hungry maw. Victims are pulled in at a distance of 1D6+4 feet (1.5 to 3 m) per every *melee action* the worm uses to pull victims into its maw, and once a victim is snagged devouring it is the worm's top priority. With nothing on the floor of the pit to grab onto, even humanoid victims are easily pulled into the mouth and eaten alive!

Likewise, the Pit-Worm can inflict 1D6+P.S. damage bonus in crushing damage per melee attack to those it has entangled with one or more of its tentacles (only one tentacle does the actual constriction damage). Pit-Worms do not try to strangle, crush or kill their prey before eating them, however.

Biting: The Pit-Worm's maw is as large as its body is wide, 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m), so being eaten by the worm is similar to being chewed up and swallowed by a giant shark. Damage is a devastating 6D6 per bite. This means the beast can easily devour prey up to Troll or Wolfen-size in a few bites. Truly giant prey is usually ignored, but if the worm

is starving, it will attack anything. When giant-sized prey is attacked, the tentacles are used to pull one of the prey's legs into its hole, or its underbelly over the hole, where the Pit-Worm can rise to devour the limb or gut the prey while it is held squirming by the eight tentacles. **Note:** Pit-Worms are not incredibly powerful, but each tentacle is the equivalent of being held by one strong man with a P.S. of at least 18. Consequently, being entangled by eight tentacles is equal to being held and pulled by eight strong men for a combined P.S. of 144, or 108 for six, P.S. 72 for four tentacles and P.S. 36 when held by only two (adjust proportionately for each tentacle).

Bonuses: For Tentacles: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to automatic dodge, +3 to entangle. +1 to save vs magic, +6 to save vs poisons and cold attacks (takes half damage even if the save fails), +5 to save vs charm, possession and mind control, and is immune to Horror Factor.

Average Life Span: Up to 100 years.

Value: A Pit-Worm (or fertilized egg or immature larva) might fetch 1D4x1000 gold on the oddities market. They would easily go for double in the Western Empire.

Habitat: Anywhere, but prefer environments where there is soft soil and an abundance of wild-life (or people or cattle) to prey upon. Never found in sandy or very rocky soil.

Languages: None, 'cuz it is a giant devouring worm.

Enemies: Anything that passes within tentacle range. Has no desire other than to eat. The worm can consume almost one ton of food in a single sitting, but a single human or deer can provide enough food to last four days. When food is scarce the Pit-Worm hibernates for 1-5 months or crawls out at night to find a new location.

Allies: None per se, although sometimes dug up and "planted" in a particular location to serve as a guard animal or living trap. However, a careless "master" may find himself in the gullet of his guard animal.

Psykolops Hound

The Psykolops (psycho-lops) Hound is a smallish creature, about the size of a large domestic house cat or a medium-sized dog. It has bumpy, ocher skin (no fur), a fat, curling tail, large round ears, a single beady eye recessed deep into its skull, and oversized clawed feet. It has tiny pointed teeth and looks no more menacing than an ugly stray dog. It is an omnivore that subsists on plants, grass, fruits, berries, insects, rodents, birds and carrion. For the most part, they are quiet, unassuming creatures that simply want to be left alone.

What thrusts them into the spotlight is that their brains can broadcast a kind of *mental static* that psychics are especially vulnerable to. This static affects non-psychics as well, but it really knocks those with psionic powers for a loop. When the Psykolops feels scared, cornered or otherwise threatened, or wants to attack, this mental static increases considerably, causing a kind of brain feedback that incapacitates psychics and muddles the thoughts of others. As one can guess, these horrid little beasts were created to counter and attack enemy psychics as well as provide protection against psychic spies and assassins. **Note:** This effect does not occur when the Psykolops is asleep or calm and content. While this offers psychics a tempo-

rary respite when traveling through Psikolops territory, they are in for a very nasty surprise when they confront one of these animals, subjecting those within its broadcasting range to an unpleasant and unexpected mental assault.

Trained Psikolops can be taught to turn this "feedback" effect on and off at will, but only if training begins while the animal is still a pup. Such trained animals function as attack dogs who strike out only upon verbal command from their master(s) and in self-defense.

In the wild, they live like wild dogs as lone hunters, mated pairs and small packs of 1D6+3. Some of the intelligent inhabitants use them as pets, guard animals and trained spies who slink around looking to strike down intruders and torture captives. The Psikolops' natural psychic powers make them wonderful deterrents for ghosts, spirits and invisible intruders.

Alignment: Theoretically any, but tend to be Anarchist (40%), Miscreant (30%), and Diabolic (10%).

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+5 (high animal I.Q. or low human equivalent, like that of an 8-10 year old child), M.E. 1D6+5, M.A. 1D6+10, P.S. 1D6+10, P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 1D6+5, P.B. 1D4+5, Spd. 2D6+20

Size: 24-36 inches (0.6 to 0.9 m) plus a tail of equal or slightly greater length.

Weight: 15-25 lbs (6.75 to 11.2 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +2D6+5.

S.D.C.: 3D6+5

Natural A.R.: None.

Horror Factor: 9

P.P.E.: 1D6

I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number x5.

Magic: None.



Psionics: Considered a Master Psychic with the following psionic powers: Levitation (6 for self), Telekinetic Punch (6), Spontaneous Combustion (6), Impervious to Fire (4), Death Trance (1), Commune with Animals (6), Commune with Spirits (8), Dispel Spirits (10), Empathy (4), Telepathy (4), Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Detect Psionics (6), Bio-Manipulation (10), Empathic Transmission (6), and Mind Bolt (varies).

Special: Mental Static (no I.S.P. required): Whenever angry, frightened, cornered or ready to attack, a Psikolops Hound broadcasts a sort of "mental static" or psionic interference that targets the brains of other creatures within a 300 foot (91.5 m) radius. Any creature with psychic powers that comes within 300 feet (91.5 m) of a Psikolops will instantly suffer a terrible headache, dizziness and a loud buzzing in the ears. In the alternative, the Mental Static can be directed at one specific individual with pinpoint accuracy rather than a broadband area effect attack.

Psychics are severely stricken. It costs them double the I.S.P. to summon and use a psionic power and the range for all psychic powers is reduced by half! Moreover, Empathy and Telepathy are completely disrupted and cannot be used while the static remains. The headache is intense and the buzzing so deafening that the psychic's ability to perform skills is -30% and the character is also -2 on initiative, -1 to strike, parry, and dodge, and reduce speed by 30%. This Mental Static is painful and disorienting to psychics or anybody with even minor psionic powers, as well as great beings such as dragons and demons with psionic abilities.

Ordinary people without any psionics are only slightly affected by a light headache and light buzzing sound that is distracting and makes concentration a bit difficult: -5% on all skill performance and -1 on initiative.

The Mental Static can be maintained for up to one hour at a time (with an hour break in between). The area of effect and/or duration can be increased by the strategic location of two or more Psikolops Hounds working together. Several Psikolops Hounds unleashing Mental Static at the same individual or general area does NOT increase the intensity or penalties, however, and one or more directing their attack at one specific psionic individual will inflict one point of damage per each Psikolops Hound per minute for up to three minutes maximum.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision (300 feet/91.5 m), Acrobatics: 80% for all acrobatic skills, Climb/Scale Walls 75%, Prowl 60%, Swim 50%, leap six feet (1.8 m) high or lengthwise, Track Humanoids 60% (+10% to follow/track a character with psionics), Land Navigation 75%, recovers S.D.C. or H.P. at a rate of 1D4+5 per 24 hours, and will regenerate a lost eye in 1D4+5 weeks. Domesticated Psikolops Hounds also have Streetwise 60% and are +5% to prowl in urban environments and indoors. Note that these beasts, though intelligent and capable of understanding fairly complex commands, cannot speak, except through telepathy or empathically transmitted emotions, nor can they read. They are smart, but they are animals. Understands all languages.

Attacks Per Melee: Three physical or three psionic attacks in addition to radiating Mental Static at will.

Damage: Psikolops Hounds can bite for 1D6 damage or claw for 1D4, but in most cases, when confronted they will strike with psionic powers or try to run away.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to dodge and +2 to save vs possession.

Penalties: -6 to save vs Horror Factor. These guys spook easily.

Average Life Span: 20-30 years.

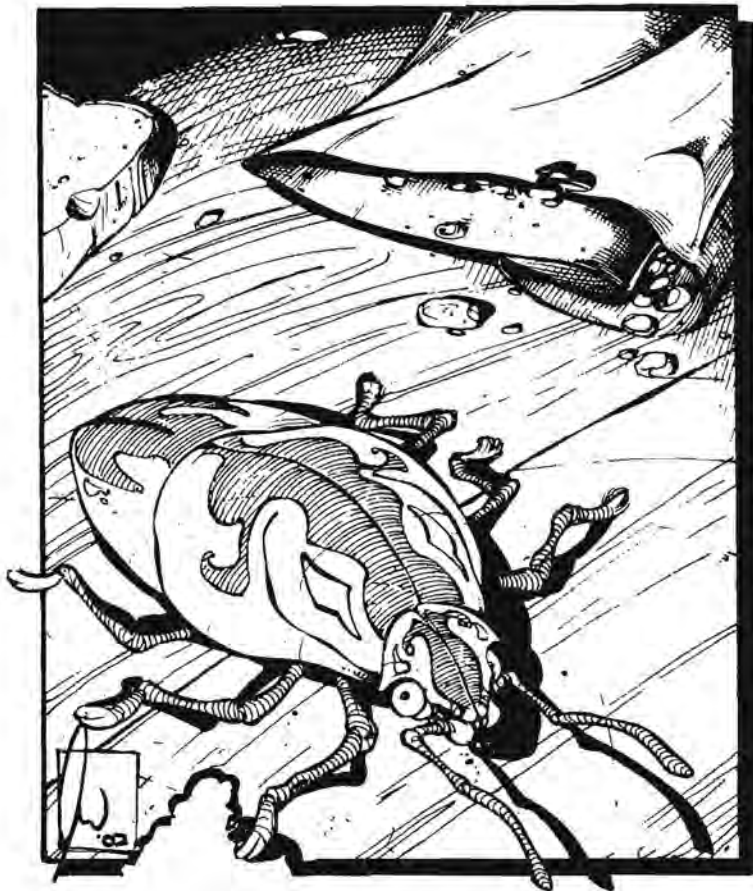
Value: 100-300 gold as a pet, 500-800 gold for a trained guard or attack animal in the Land of the Damned, easily 10 times that amount in the outside worlds (the Western Empire would love to get and breed some of these animals).

Habitat: Any lightly wooded area or tall grassland is the favored environment in the wild, but these critters also enjoy city environments too; anywhere they have lots of places to hide and explore.

Languages: Speak none, but understand any. They cannot speak but can communicate simple thoughts and emotions via their psionic powers. They also growl, hiss, purr and chirp.

Enemies: Predators and humanoids mainly, psychics in general, though in the wild they have no particular animosity toward psychics.

Allies: None per se, but as pack animals, they sometimes run with other pack animals, including wolves, Hygorathes, and were-beasts, and accept domestication and friendship from humans and humanoids, although they dislike living below the earth with beings who live underground.



Ravager Beetle

Easily the smallest of the Beasts of Chaos is the Ravager Beetle, a creature about the size of a horseshoe crab. Generally

considered to be a plague by most humanoids (except for Goblins, who just love these critters), Ravager Beetles get their ominous name from the fact that these animals have three special abilities that, in conjunction, make for a very unpleasant package.

First, these things are damn near indestructible. They possess tough carapaces that soak up most damage they might receive, both from physical impact and from energy attacks. Their bodies are somehow flexible as well, making it almost impossible to crush them, and even if one does hurt a Ravager, its tremendous store of S.D.C. (for its size), along with its quick healing, makes it likely to recover from injury, thus attackers must be *certain* to kill the pest. (**G.M. Note:** Curiously, whatever the Old Ones did to make Ravager Beetles so hard to kill doesn't work for other forms of life, or else all of the Chaos Beasts would be as resilient. This has led some to believe they were not created, but imported from another dimension.)

Second, Ravagers have one of the fastest metabolisms on the Palladium world. They need to eat four times their body weight in food per day or they will starve, which makes them very cranky and generally unpleasant to deal with. Even on a good day, ten minutes after finishing a meal, Ravager Beetles will go on the hunt for grub once again, always looking to keep their stomach full at or near capacity. This, coupled with their near-indestructibility, means they will go anywhere in search of food. A human encampment, a dark dank cave, and even the mouth of a large creature are all legit foraging spots for these bothersome varmints.

Third, if a Ravager Beetle manages to remain fed at full capacity for six days straight, then it will spontaneously reproduce, popping forth four to eight eggs that look like ping pong balls. Within the hour, each will hatch into a miniature Ravager. These young grow to full size (providing they are properly fed) within 72 hours.

A small number of Ravager Beetles in the right place at the right time can devour an entire nation's food supply, which is doubtlessly why the Old Ones introduced them during the Chaos War. Their plan was probably for the Ravagers to seek out the food supplies of the Alliance of Light and literally eat them out of house and home. Apparently, this plan failed for reasons unknown to modern scholars. One might suspect that the Alliance figured out how to store its food in such a way that Ravagers could not find it. Or, maybe they found some way to kill the hungry bugs en masse or teleport them back to where they came from. Indeed, the Ravager Beetles that survive today are bugs that escaped the Alliance of Light, for it was the one creature the gods sought to obliterate. Thankfully, even after 50,000 years there are only a small number of these super-pests. In part, because virtually every intelligent race destroys them whenever they are encountered.

Though extremely hard to kill, Ravager Beetles are largely unable to fight, and they have a great personality towards humanoids who adopt them as a pet. Ravagers will imprint upon the first living thing they see when they first hatch, even if it is not another Ravager. Humanoids who are imprinted upon will find the Ravager to be unusually loyal and obedient to that person. It will also expect that person to feed it initially, or at least lead it to food. If not, the hungry Ravager Beetle will get really cranky and start eating the possessions of whomever owns it.

For those who take care of their Ravager Beetles, these curious creatures will respond to very much like a dog and even carry out simple commands such as "stay," "come," "fetch," "roll over," "play dead," and similar. This endears them to certain folks, but make no mistake, Ravager Beetles are dangerous and uncontrollable insects likely to cause widespread damage to whatever environment they inhabit.

Alignment: Animal equivalent of Anarchist. They are simply voracious eaters that have no regard for anything except that which might provide them some food.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4 (low insect intelligence), M.E.: 1D6, M.A.: 1D6+6 (high for a bug), P.S.: 1D6, P.P.: 1D6+6, P.E.: 1D6+6, P.B.: 1D6+4 (has attractive markings), Spd.: 2D6+4 (can only crawl, can't fly).

Size: Six inches to one foot (0.15 to 0.3 m).

Weight: 1-2 lbs (0.45 to 0.9 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +1D6 (a great amount for an insect).

S.D.C.: 3D6 (again, that's a lot for a bug).

Natural A.R.: 14; against any kind of blunt trauma or crushing attack, but A.R. 10 against stabbing or chopping attacks with a blade.

Horror Factor: None as a lone insect or to those who don't know what the bug is. In fact, they have delightful personalities, don't bite and have attractive red or blue markings on a light green or pale grey shell. However, those who know what a Ravager Beetle is capable of doing usually get hysterical, hammering the life out of the beetle and frantically searching for others.

P.P.E.: 1D4

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Like most bugs, the Ravager Beetle can climb walls and most other porous materials with ease (98%), nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), track and locate food by smell 75% (up to a half mile/0.8 km away), prowl 65%, as well as breathe underwater and heal quickly.

Physical and Energy Resistance: The first 10 points of damage from any kind of physical or energy attack are absorbed by the Ravager's unusual carapace armor, which has a strange capacity for diffusing kinetic and other forms of energy, and that's only when the attack manages to bypass its Natural Armor Rating. Otherwise, all other hammering and blunt impact attacks do only half damage, fire and energy blasts also do half damage, and cold only puts it into hibernation. Acid has full affect, so do stabbing and chopping attacks. (Note: A few Rangers have tried making some kind of armor out of these plates, but so far, no success. The A.R. deteriorates with the death of the bug.)

Advanced Healing: Ravagers bio-regenerate 2D6 points of damage per hour, so one better make sure the beetle is dead before dumping it in the trash.

Breathe Underwater: Ravagers can breathe just as easily underwater as on dry land. They cannot swim, however, so they sink and walk along the bottom of any body of water.

Diet: Ravager Beetles prefer to feast on grains, nuts, fruit, vegetables, and most types of leafy vegetation of any kind, as well as carrion, prepared foods, and other biodegradable substances, including dead bodies and dung. They never attack or eat living creatures.

Attacks Per Melee: One.

Damage: Ravagers can bite for one point of damage, but only attack another living being if trying to kill it, and then only to make good an escape.

Bonuses: None.

Penalties: Ravagers' one great weakness is poison and acid. Any ingested poison (they can't detect tainted food) automatically inflicts double damage, and the Ravagers get *no* saving throw against it. Acid does full damage, as do stabbing and chopping attacks that penetrate the A.R. of 10 or higher.

Average Life Span: Unknown, but probably 4-8 years.

Value: None per se, though Goblins and Kobolds of the Land of the Damned are known to make jewelry from their shells.

Habitat: Anywhere the insects can find food. These creatures show no special aversion to any particular climate or environment.

Languages: None.

Enemies: Anybody who has ever lost an entire crop to these things or heard about such blights. Most people who know about these insects will destroy them on sight (if they can).

Allies: None, though sometimes kept as pets or biological weapons to sabotage an enemy's or rival's food supply.

Slaughterhawk

Harpies dominate the skies in the northwest and lower mountain regions while the Slaughterhawk dominates the skies over the Darkest Heart. Although these birds of prey look like they could be related to any of the world's heavy raptors, such as eagles and various species of hawk, there are a few differences that really set these animals apart.

The first is size. Slaughterhawks are quite big for a bird – almost twice the size of the largest eagles. Their huge talons and great strength enable them to carry off prey as large as a Gnome, Dwarf, or even an average human.

Second, Slaughterhawks have a distinctive red and white pattern to their plumage that makes it impossible to confuse them with any other bird.

A third distinction is the cry of the Slaughterhawk, which can best be described as something like an eagle screeching in anguish. The cry is meant to alarm and disorient its prey moments before it strikes, making the likelihood of a quick kill all the higher. Its cry is the hallmark of a Slaughterhawk on the hunt.

A final distinction is that unlike most birds of prey, Slaughterhawks travel, live and hunt in pairs or groups of 1D4+2, and work in tandem to kill large or fast and elusive prey. "Group hunts" involve ambush, coordinated attacks, tag-team tactics, and all sharing in the kill.

In most cases there is an obvious leader of the group, and the departure or death of the flock leader will cause the rest of the flock to break the attack and flee. Likewise, if half the flock dies or is wounded (no S.D.C. and have lost 20-50% of their S.D.C.) during the fight, they will also break off the attack to lick their wounds and seek out easier prey.

During the attack, Slaughterhawks usually concentrate on a single victim, neutralize him, and carry him away (with two or three joining in to carry away large prey) to a safe place to devour it. Any attacks on others are intended to drive them away



or distract them until the primary target is incapacitated and carried off. Consequently, Slaughterhawks rarely attack an entire group, unless, like wolves, it is to divide the group and single out any *one* prey that is "cut from the herd." Humanoids who stick close together can fend off an attack after only two melee rounds.

Slaughterhawks prefer the taste of wild pig, cattle and humanoids above all others, but will attack and eat most any animal from snakes and small birds to rabbits and squirrels.

Slaughterhawks that operate as a pair build a huge communal nest, while those who hunt as a team (3-6 of the animals) build a cluster of 3-5 large nests all in the same tree or within 100 yards/meters of one another. The flock also lays eggs (two per female) at the same time and takes turns watching over them and the chicks. Slaughterhawks are very protective of their eggs and young, and will confront any creature that gets within fifty yards/meters of the nest. First, the bird will issue its bloodcurdling cry as a warning (and as an alarm that will summon the other members of the group). After that, they all attack the intruder(s) until driven a half mile (0.8 km) away or slain. **Note:** The eggs are the size of a bowling ball and taste great!

It is said that during the Chaos War, the Old Ones used Slaughterhawks as both a kind of aerial infantry, as well as a form of reconnaissance patrol. Legend has it the Old Ones were able to see whatever their Slaughterhawks could see, making the birds the perfect spies. Whether this is true has never been proven, but it is a tantalizing concept. However, the means by which this was done (perhaps exclusive to the Old Ones) has been lost and nobody today can see through the eyes of the animal nor use one as a familiar.

Despite their ability to soar to great heights, these mighty birds are content to live mainly within the forest of the Darkest Heart and over the wasted lands of the Endless Torment. No-

where else will do for these particular kings of the skies. The reason for this peculiar territoriality remains a mystery, though probably has to do with tall, ancient trees and an abundance of prey.

Alignment: Considered the animal equivalent of Anarchist or Miscreant. These creatures are predators, but hunt only for food and do not show a special love for killing or cruelty for the sake of pleasure.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+4 (high predatory animal intelligence, low human equivalent I.Q.), M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 1D6+10, P.S. 2D6+10, P.P. 2D6+10, P.E. 1D6+10, P.B. 2D6+10, Spd. 1D6 walking on the ground, 2D6+40 flying (able to dive from on high at three times that speed).

Size: 3-4 feet (0.9 to 1.2 m) tall from head to toe, 7-9 foot (2.1 to 2.7 m) wingspan.

Weight: 30-50 lbs (13.5 to 22.5 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +2D6.

S.D.C.: 3D6+20

Natural A.R.: 6

Horror Factor: Normally 9 for an individual, 11 for a pair and 13 for a group of 3-6.

P.P.E.: 2D4

Magie: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Winged flight, keen senses, and recovers lost S.D.C. or H.P. at a rate of 2D6 points per 24 hours, and regrows feathers in 1D4+3 weeks. Has the equivalent of the following skills: Wilderness Survival 90%, Prowl 65% when silently gliding in the air (half normal speed), Dowsing 50%, Land Navigation 90%, Astronomy & Navigation (by the stars) 75%, Detect Ambush 65%, Detect Concealment and Traps 55%, and Sing 60%.

Special: Advanced Vision: Slaughterhawks can see clearly out to five miles (8 km) on a clear day, provided they have a line of sight that far.

Special: Advanced Smell: Slaughterhawks can track by smell with a 60% efficiency, +15% to track a target with a peculiar smell (e.g., a Hygorath) or who is bleeding.

Attacks Per Melee: Three.

Damage: Talon (claw) Strike: 3D6 +P.S. damage bonus (ranging from +1 to +7), Beak Strike: 2D6, or Power Dive: When diving at maximum speed, the Slaughterhawk hits its victim for 6D6 damage +P.S. damage bonus (if any). A critical strike does double damage. Counts as two melee actions/attacks.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +3 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +1 to disarm, +1 to roll with punch, impact or fall, +1 to save vs poison or disease, +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Average Life Span: Unknown with certainty, but around 30-50 years.

Value: Were somebody to train one of these creatures as a hunting bird or guard animal, it could fetch 1000-4000 gold in any civilized kingdom of the known world. However, these creatures are fiercely independent, cherish freedom and despise captivity and city environments.

Habitat: Any forest with tall trees and a temperate climate. Currently found only in the Land of the Damned. Avoid tall mountains and the open seas.

Languages: Slaughterhawks communicate to each other in a complex code of screeches and cries. Diabolists who study this code will learn that it is actually a very complex language that most humanoids could actually learn to speak. Some Diabolists have already taken whatever knowledge they have of this bird language and written their own secret forms of it as a new and secure method of passing along sensitive messages.

Enemies: None per se, but see humanoids and most medium-sized animals at prey.

Allies: None, other than their own kind.

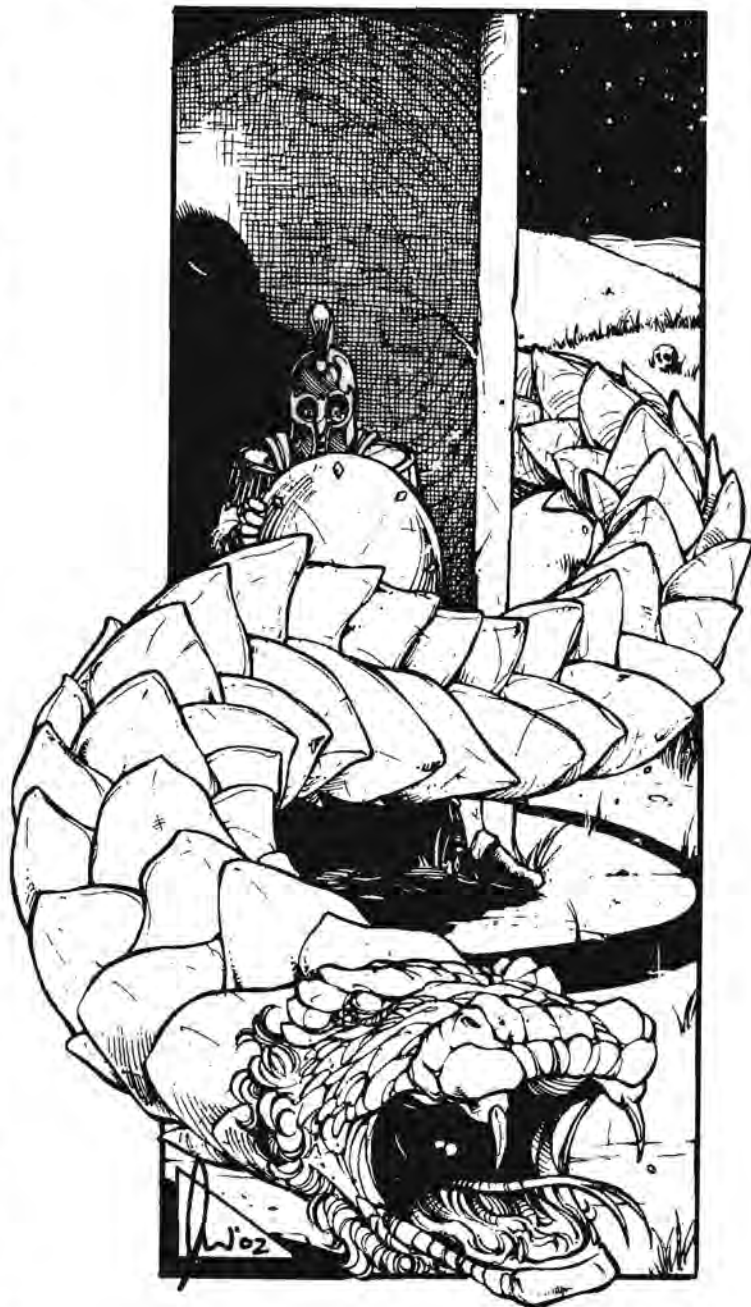
Slithering Terror

Raw power is all well and good, but true mastery of the battlefield cannot come without striking honest terror into the hearts of the enemy. At least, that was the credo of the Old Ones who took to creating a series of creatures that not only performed well as front-line soldiers, but were also living weapons of psychological warfare. Of these, the monstrosity known as the *Slithering Terror* was but one. Besides the Slithering Terrors, there were over a hundred other varieties of such "shock infantry" creatures, but almost all of them are believed to have been destroyed by the war's end. Their extinction probably came about because they did their job a little too well – so badly did they rattle the Alliance of Light that the gods spared no effort to destroy these aberrant spawn of the Old Ones. The Slithering Terror is the one known exception.

This Beast of Chaos is an enormous constrictor-type serpent covered with a suit of heavy, bone-like armor plating. These armored plates overlap each other, allowing the serpent maximum flexibility without losing any of its plate protection. This layer of bony plating offers total-body protection, and adds to the crushing power and weight of the terrible beast.

Like any constrictor, the Slithering Terror defeats its enemies by striking with lightning speed and wrapping its muscular body around the victim like a coil of tightly wound rope. Then the creature constricts and squeezes the life out of the victim, who suffocates in short order. The Slithering Terror attacks in much the same way, but may bite its opponents instead or constrict one while fending off others with its slapping tail or ferocious bite.

Slithering Terrors add to their frightening reputation by striking without warning. They love to stalk and ambush prey, lurking in the shadows, under a pile of bodies or debris, or even snaking through water and lunging when least expected. This made the serpents deadly assassins able to penetrate most defenses and strike the enemy down in his sleep, at rest, at play and often without alerting the rest of the camp. Silent and deadly is the Slithering Terror's nature. Even when facing one or more opponents out in the open or one on one, the Slithering Terror is a formidable foe. Its slashing tail, terrible bite, great strength and a suit of armor second to none, make this foul beast



a monster to be feared. When in open combat, the Slithering Terror either bites at its enemies or it swings its armor plated tail as a hard and heavy bludgeon. Most often, though, the tail is reserved for dealing with enemies near the hindquarters, and the creature's fanged mouth takes care of opponents upfront.

Since the end of the Chaos War, most of the serpents have gone feral, sticking to the woodlands and swamps where they prey on large animals and humanoids. Beasts of Chaos with a (low to average) human intelligence and great cunning, they are also known to approach travelers whom they extort for treasure (i.e. pay "X" amount to pass or die in your sleep) or entertainment. You heard right, wild Slithering Terrors often demand that travelers entertain them with song, dance, juggling and stories. Sometimes the meanest and most bloodthirsty demand duels and tests of combat, often to the death, pointing out that in a death duel the sacrifice of "one" saves the rest of the group. Slithering Terrors may also associate with other cruel and murderous beings. (See the Allies stat for details.)

Slithering Terrors digest their food slowly, so they do not feed often, but when they do feed, they eat a lot, up to half their body weight. This means they like to go after larger prey, which can include cattle, horses, deer, hogs, and other large animals as well as humanoids and fellow predators (including Hygorathes). The serpents tend to stay away from anything they cannot easily constrict.

Alignment: Typically evil: 15% are Aberrant, 40% Miscreant, 35% Diabolic and 10% Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+6 (human intelligence with predatory cunning), M.E.: 2D6+6, M.A.: 2D6, P.S.: 2D6+18, P.P.: 2D6+6, P.E.: 2D6+10, P.B.: 2D6+10 (attractive, in a strange and grim way), Spd.: 2D6+10 on land, double in water.

Size: 20-50 feet (6.1 to 15.2 m) long.

Weight: 1-3 tons.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x5.

S.D.C.: 2D4x10+46.

Natural A.R.: 16

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 2D6

I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number +4D6.

Magic: None.

Psionics: Considered a Major Psychic with the powers of See the Invisible (4), Mind Block (4), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), and Bio-Regeneration (6).

Natural Abilities: Constriction, bite, Nightvision 600 feet (183 m), hold breath underwater for up to 10 minutes, and the following equivalent skills: Swim 98%, Prowl 65% (+20% when in water), Interrogation Techniques 70%, Surveillance 75%, Track Humanoid 60%, Land Navigation 90%, Wilderness Survival 80%, Streetwise 55%, Basic Math 75%, and understands all languages but only speaks Demongogian, Dragonese/Elven, Giant and Gobblely, all at 90%.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Bite: 3D6; *not* poisonous, despite many claims to the contrary. Tail Lash: 4D6 damage. Razor Constriction: Counts as two attacks to actually entangle/wrap up and pin an opponent, with a 01-90% likelihood of pinning the legs and a 01-50% chance of pinning the arms; roll for each. Opponents whose arms are pinned cannot attack, and the crushing attack that follows prevents spell casters from casting any spells if

they are "squeezed" two or more times a melee round (pushes the breath right out of them, interrupting speech and spell casting). Each "crush/squeeze" or "constriction" action counts as one melee attack and inflicts 4D6+P.S. damage bonus (which ranges from +5 to +15 damage).

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +1 to parry with its head or tail, gets an automatic dodge (+2 to dodge), and +5 to pull punch (applies to constriction as well; can crush/squeeze in increments of 1D6 rather than the full amount. Needs to roll a 12 or higher, with bonus, to pull its punch/squeeze). Also +6 to save vs Horror Factor and +3 to save vs disease.

Average Life Span: Up to 100 years.

Value: None per se. Can make a valuable ally or hired assassin (cost can be reasonable to exorbitant depending on the individual serpent), and its bone plates can be used to make scale armor with an A.R. of 16, but weighs 10% more than usual. This makes each piece of plating on the serpent worth about one gold each for large ones and one gold for three or four of the smaller ones. Typically has 40-50 large scales and 90-112 small ones. Note that if the serpent's hidden lair can be found, there is usually a treasure pile with 2D4x100 in gold and/or silver coins or gems and 1D4x100 worth of weapons and other odds and ends. If the G.M. likes, and if the battle warrants it, the amount of treasure can be doubled or a minor magic item or high quality weapon can be included.

Habitat: Prefers woodlands, swamps and toppled ruins where there are plenty of places to hide. Dislikes living underground and avoids subterranean habitats.

Languages: Understands all, but can only speak Demongogian, Dragonese/Elven, Giant and Gobblely

Enemies: Anybody it sees as potential prey, as well as those it takes a dislike to or who attack or threaten it first. Most Slithering Terrors have a cruel streak a mile long and enjoy bullying, harassing, hurting and killing other intelligent creatures for pleasure.

Allies: Slithering Terrors may also associate with other cruel and murderous beings, including evil dragons, demons, practitioners of magic (particularly Summoners and Necromancers), priests, witches, and warlords. A small number serve both the Minotaurs and the Harpies, others serve the Lords of the Citadel in the Bleakness and others undead masters in the Land of Eternal Torment. Those who serve a master only do so if that leader gives them ample opportunity to kill, interrogate and torture, allows the serpents to keep a treasure pile and treats them as great and respected harbingers of death. A disenchanting or mistreated Slithering Terror will turn on its master to extract deadly revenge and may conspire with enemies to achieve its goals.

Thane

Thanes are a study in the bizarre and ludicrous. This strange humanoid is a being that seems to consist of a compact torso, four limbs, an overabundance of muscle, and not much else. The Thane looks like something out of a nightmare — a sexless, naked humanoid that appears to be a pair of headless torsos and arms joined at the waist. Thus, the top functions as arms and hands and the bottom as legs and feet (actually walks on its

hands). It has no head at all, and no visible sensory organs. It can bend and contort itself to walk or run on all fours, somersault, or cartwheel.

Thane are equally comfortable standing upright or on all fours. Once an opponent gets over the fact these things have no head, he realizes that they actually have symmetrical upper and lower bodies. It is impossible to tell which part is the creature's upper body and which is the lower body, if it even matters. It



doesn't seem to, as both are interchangeable as to which is top or bottom. With wide hands and thick fingers to move on and fight with, the Thane is remarkably agile and quick-moving. It never turns around when it wants to change direction, it just does a back flip to face an opponent behind it. Performing back flips, somersaults, and cartwheels is just a natural part of its movement.

The Thane's feeding habits (if indeed it even does feed) are a mystery. To date there is no record of how a Thane eats, expels waste or reproduces. For all anybody knows, they may reproduce by splitting in two like an amoeba, but when, why and how is unknown. As for food, the creatures might draw nourishment through the skin from the air itself or feed on ambient magic energy. Nobody knows.

Equally mysterious is how these beings communicate, think, or feel. Do they have a language of some sort? Do they form any kind of society or culture? Would they adapt alright if they were somehow brought out of the Land of the Damned? Just as there are no answers to these questions yet, so too are there no answers for things like how any of the creature's senses work, what environments Thanes find most comfortable, how many of them still exist, how or why they were spared destruction during the Chaos War, and so on. Of all of the Beasts of Chaos, the Thanes remain the most enigmatic. These creatures are a living riddle, a mystery, an enigma to keep the enemies of Chaos guessing at the possible nature of so strange a being.

A few things are known about Thanes. They do not use technology of any kind, instead preferring to rely on their own natural abilities and brute strength. Thanes are not openly hostile to any creature they see/sense. In fact, they are just the opposite, attacking only when attacked first or startled, although once their defensive instincts are up, Thanes will fight without mercy, destroying all hostile forces they see. Moreover, they instinctively hate shapechangers and will attack without mercy any creature who transforms in their presence regardless of the means by which the metamorphosis is accomplished. However, they only attack when they have witnessed a transformation and do not seem to recognize were-beasts, Changelings, dragons and others as shapechangers unless they see it happen. Otherwise, these beings spend much of their day, either solo or in groups of 2-6, lounging about and engaging in a curious behavior that might best be described as "piling." Thanes apparently have some kind of innate desire to make piles out of like objects – stones, tree branches, dead bodies, metal tools, etc. It is as if they have some unexplainable secondary mission in life to organize all of the loose change of the world into easily identified scrap heaps.

Thane piles can reach several stories in height if a group of Thanes can maintain their presence in a particular area for long enough. Given sufficient time, Thanes will virtually scour the landscape of anything that is not tied down, rooted in place, or too heavy for them to move. There is no obvious explanation for this drive of theirs. Moreover, disturbing a Thane pile will send the creatures into a rage, attacking the defiler of the pile and anybody nearby next. Thanes guard their piles jealously against other creatures poking around them. They also tend to keep their piles relatively close together, making it very easy to keep an eye on them. Large piles will each have 2-6 Thane guardians protecting them around the clock. Slain snoops and thieves are

stripped and their bodies and possessions added to the appropriate pile. Thanes will also chase away any intruders who come within a half mile (0.8 km) of a junk pile and kill those they catch. Note that when a Thane fights, it usually fights until it or its opponent(s) is dead, or its opponent manages to flee more than half a mile (0.8 km) away. These bizarre giants are easily fooled by people playing possum, only, as noted previously, the Thanes will manhandle the body to immediately strip it and toss it in one pile and the character's possessions in other piles (sorted by type). Could it be that Thanes were created both as warriors and as salvage operators who collected weapons, equipment and bodies from the battlefield?

Alignment: Generally considered Anarchist at best and Misanthropic at worst. Their ferocity in combat only emerges when they or their junk piles are threatened or attacked first.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+2, M.E.: 1D6+9, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 1D6+22, P.P.: 1D6+12, P.E.: 1D6+14, P.B.: 1D4, Spd.: 1D6+20 running or rolling, double when cartwheeling.

Size: All Thanes are exactly eight feet (2.4 m) tall.

Weight: All Thanes are exactly 500 lbs (225 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +50.

S.D.C.: 1D4x10+35

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 3D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None. Any attempt to reach these creatures through telepathy or empathy will reveal only basic emotions such as happiness or contentment (when left alone and making junk piles), anxiety and concern (when intruders appear), and anger, aggression and sorrow (when they or their junk are threatened, attacked or damaged). Thanes don't seem capable of love or affection as humans feel them, nor prejudice, greed or jealousy.

Natural Abilities: Can "see" (by whatever mysterious means) equally well in day or night, light or dark, Swim 80%, Land Navigation 90%, and can lift and carry weight equal to their P.S.x50 as if they had supernatural strength and never seem to tire, though they do sleep standing up or rolled into a ball. Bio-regenerates lost Hit Points and S.D.C. at a rate of 4D6 per hour and will regrow a lost hand or arm within 48 hours! In fact, a seemingly dead Thane will regenerate and return to life within 48 hours provided it has not suffered more than 40 points of damage below zero. Thankfully, these dull-witted beings do not hold a grudge or seek revenge.

Special: Natural Gymnast/Acrobat: Thanes can naturally perform any of the special moves listed in the Gymnastics and Acrobatics skills with an 88% proficiency.

Special: Climb/Scale Walls Like an Insect: Thanes can also walk up walls like a spider, climbing and scaling, even when upside down or on a ceiling, 92%. They can also navigate narrow ledges and run and leap from rooftop to rooftop, or ledge to ledge (leaping distance is 12 feet/3.6 m, 50% greater with a running start).

Attacks Per Melee: Five. These things are absolute dynamos.

Damage: 2D6+P.S. bonus damage (which ranges from +8 to +13) from a punch or bear hug (a wrestling style crush/squeeze attack). 4D6+P.S. bonus from a power punch, but counts as two melee attack (not applicable to a bear hug). Critical strike on a natural 19-20.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +3 to strike and parry, +4 to automatic dodge (an auto-dodge works like a parry in that it does not use up a melee action to perform), +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, resistant to fire and cold (half damage), and is impervious to Horror Factor.

Vulnerability: Electricity does 50% more damage to Thanes.

Average Life Span: Unknown! May be hundreds of years or effectively immortal.

Value: If one could control these brutes they would be worth thousands as slaves and warriors. Thanes are sometimes used as opponents in gladiatorial arenas and tricked into combat against opponents whom they have no squabble with. This can be done by leading an opposing squad into a group or several groups of Thanes or stealing some articles from a scrap pile and *letting* several Thanes pursue, leading them into an enemy camp. Remember, the dim-witted Thanes will assume everybody before them is a stinking thief, so they will attack without mercy, especially if the stolen articles are dropped in the lap of the enemy. Furthermore, it is the reaction of most adventurers and warriors to attack when eight foot (2.4 m) tall monsters come racing into their camp. Once a Thane is attacked, it fights to the death or until its opponent outdistances it by a half mile (0.8 km).

Habitat: Thanes are presumed to be pretty adaptable to just about any climate and environment. In the Land of the Damned they are found as individuals and groups in remote places where other humanoids don't dominate, including the lower regions on the western side of the mountains (they never try to cross the mountains) and the Lands south of the Great Rift. They avoid civilization and thronging multitudes.

Languages: Unknown!

Enemies: None, per se.

Allies: Again, none, per se, other than their own kind.

Udok

The Udok, or "Armored Bull," is a massive murderous beast that appears to be part bull, part wild boar and all monster. It wields, as part of its weapon package, a pair of wicked, curved horns and a pair of curved tusks for ramming and goring. The size of an oxcart or large desk and weighing in at a bulky one to two tons, the Udok is an ungainly mass of muscle, tusks, horns and hooves. Take one look at this thing and it becomes clear that they were meant to face their enemies head-on or not at all. Their entire upper half is over muscled and covered in thick, rhino-like dermal plates that provide heavy armor. One's only hope to survive is to kill the monster quickly or get to its side or on top of it where the beast cannot strike with its horns or kick with its feet. The Udok can only move its head in a 45 degree arc total, giving it a very limited biting range and great head-on fighting capabilities. To address enemies on its flank, the creature will make a quick hop or rear up on its hind legs and spin in which it can turn up to 180 degrees. Either move counts as two of its attacks for the melee round, so most Udoks try to keep their adversary(s) always in front of them.

The brave and daring soul who leaps on the back of the monster will see the Udok turn into a bucking beast that is part tornado in its fury. Those trying to hold on must use all but one of their attacks per melee to stay on the beast's back, able to use

that one attack to strike the Udok in the back or best of all, in the lightly armored neck just behind the back of the head and between the shoulders. Here the A.R. is only 12 and any successful strike (12 or higher) hits, doing double damage! However, if thrown off the Udok (needs a 17 or higher to hang on for one melee round), the character suffers 2D6 damage from the fall and loses two melee actions for that round (or the next if the fall comes at the end of a round). Plus the Udok automatically gets the initiative on anybody thrown off its back. Good luck!

For all of their viciousness and ill temper, Udoks respond well to being ridden by those they consider friends, allies or military leaders. Udoks are warriors-born, and refuse to perform manual labor even under the threat of death. These giant animals may have once served as heavy war steeds, perhaps for giant-sized soldiers. The problem is the animal must be treated as a partner and not a slave or an animal to be ridden.

Like the Hygorath, the Udok can eat practically any organic matter, and is especially adept at locating and finding food. In today's Land of the Damned, this makes both species competitors for the same food supply, namely any carrion to be had south of the Great Rift. As a result, Udoks and Hygorathes detest the sight of each other, and will usually attack one another on the spot. If a steaming carcass is to be fought over, then the conflict will be all the more intense. By looking at the deep animosity between these two creatures, one wonders if they have always been thus.

Despite their bovine appearance, Udoks do not gather in large herds but rather travel as lone hunters or in small family groups of 1D4+2, half of which are probably young (half the physical attributes, Hit Points, S.D.C. and attacks per melee round).

Alignment: Considered aggressive and foul-tempered beasts of Miscreant or Diabolic alignment. These nasty brutes like to

gore, kill and frighten others for pleasure as well as killing for food. Witnesses to Udok feedings often remark that the creatures utter this sinister giggling sound as they eat, a sound made all the louder and higher pitched when the prey is still alive.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+4 (low human intelligence but high animal predator cunning), M.E.: 1D6+7, M.A.: 1D6+7, P.S.: 2D6+18, P.P.: 1D6+10, P.E.: 2D6+10, P.B.: 1D6+3, Spd.: 2D6+32

Size: 6-7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) tall at the shoulder and 12-16 feet (3.6 to 4.9 m) long.

Weight: 1-2 tons.

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x3.

S.D.C.: 3D4x10+25

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 1D4

I.S.P.: M.E. x3.

Magic: None.

Psionics: All Udoks are Minor Psychics who possess the abilities of Presence Sense (4) and See the Invisible (4).

Natural Abilities: Great endurance (tire at one tenth the rate of humans), strength, and speed, can leap 6 feet (1.8 m) high and 12 feet (3.6 m) lengthwise with a slow trot, increase by 50% if running at full tilt. Plus Dowsing 65%, Swim 65%, Prowl 30%, Land Navigation 90%, Wilderness Survival 90%, Track Animals 65%, Track Humanoids 70%, can count and do simple addition and subtraction, understands Demongolian, Dragonese/Elven, Giantese, and Gobblely at 92%, but only speaks them at 50% (simple words and phrases in between plenty of snorting, growling, bellowing and hyena-like laughter).



Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Tusk Gore: 3D4 damage. Head Butt: 1D6+P.S. damage bonus (ranging from +5 to +15). Horn Gore: 3D6 damage. An Udok's bite does 2D4 damage, while a stomp does 1D6+P.S. damage bonus, and a rear kick 2D6+P.S. damage bonus (cannot kick with front legs).

Special: Horn Body Throw: Only does 1D6+1 damage from impact but a quick, powerful jerk of the neck throws the creature's opponent up into the air and onto the ground. The impact of the throw does another 1D6 points of damage and the victim loses two melee attacks and the Udok has initiative over him. Similar damage and penalties if "bucked-off" its back.

Special: Horn Ram: A running ram that counts as two melee actions for the Udok and inflicts a whopping 4D6 +P.S. damage bonus, plus there is a 01-80% likelihood of knocking down or throwing (up into the air and on the ground) humanoids 13 feet (4 m) or smaller; 01-40% chance against beings 14-25 feet (4.3 to 7.6 m). The victim of a knockdown/throw loses two melee attacks and the Udok has initiative over him.

Special: Full Speed Charge: Uses up all four of the Udok's attacks that round and inflicts 2D4x10 damage +P.S. damage bonus. However, this attack is only suitable against large, stationary (often inanimate) targets like a wall or tree, or truly giant opponents such as dragons, Baltosaurs or True Giants, and even then the Udok's opponent may try to dodge. Other animals and humanoids under 20 feet (6.1 m) tall are +4 to dodge this attack in addition to their own bonuses. True giants and giant beasts struck by this attack also have a 01-62% chance of being knocked off their feet and lose initiative and two melee attacks.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): Udoks are +1 on initiative, +3 to strike and dodge, +2 to parry and disarm, and +3 to pull punch/gore attack when fighting one on one, face to face. Bonuses do not apply to horn ram or charge attacks. Don't forget, an Udok must spend one attack repositioning itself to face opponents who have gone to its side.

Also +1 to save vs poison, +5 to save vs disease and +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Average Life Span: Udoks are thought to live between 20 and 30 years, but could be double that. They tend to birth litters of 1D4+1 every four years.

Value: In the Land of the Damned they are sometimes used as riding animals, guardians and attack animals (worth 1000-4000 gold). Minotaurs love using Udoks in this capacity. However, owners must remember to treat the beast as a partner or the Udok will turn on them and run away. In the outside world these monsters would probably fetch two or three times as much, at least until they could be bred in larger numbers.

Habitat: Pretty much anywhere, but prefer forests and grasslands.

Languages: Understands Demongolian, Dragonese/Elven, Giantese, and Gobblely at 92%, but only speaks them at 50% – simple words and phrases in-between plenty of snorting, growling, bellowing and hyena-like laughter.

Enemies: Hygorathes, and any who oppose or challenge them. They prey/feed on other animals and humanoids.

Allies: Fellow Udoks and physically strong or otherwise powerful beings who will treat the brute like a partner or teammate rather than an animal. Although independent and self-reliant, Udoks enjoy working with sinister beings who offer them a chance to frighten, bully, torture and kill on a frequent basis.

Were-Beasts

These creatures of magic are a race of strange beast-people who appear as normal humans, Elves, Dwarves, and similar-looking humanoids during the day, but are able to transform themselves into animal-like wild beasts at night. In man-form they possess no supernatural powers, but at night Were-Beasts cannot be harmed by any weapon wrought by man unless it is made of silver or enchanted with magic. If a Were-Beast is killed while in human form, it will rise every night as the Were-Beast. To prevent this, the head must be severed from the body, burned and buried separately from the body.

Referred to in ancient texts of the Chaos War as one of the "Shifting Breeds," Were-Beasts played a pivotal role in the Chaos War and they have helped to shape the Darkest Heart since being imprisoned in the Land of the Damned. According to legend, these creatures first made their debut during the Chaos War, suggesting they were either created or brought to this world at that time. They were used back then, as infiltrators, spies and assassins who could mingle among the Alliance of Light during the day and conduct nefarious missions of mayhem at night, killing leaders and soldiers as they slept, stealing important documents and magic items, and otherwise disrupting the Alliance's rear lines. When the war ended, Were-Beasts were one of the few races that were slaughtered in great numbers, but were banished to the forests of the Land of the Damned and have since made their home in the region that would later become known as the *Darkest Heart*. There they have repopulated and regained some strength in numbers. A handful of Were-Beasts also escaped to the outside world where over the ages, they have been slowly whittled down, slain whenever they are discovered and forced to inhabit the remote forests of the world.

Unlike any other Beasts of Chaos, Were-Beasts are unique in that they have a full human intellect, free will, and the ability to at least masquerade as humanoids and live among their societies. In many places in the outside world and in the Land of the Damned, Were-Beasts have formed their own unique societies (though usually on a tiny scale) along with a distinct culture. The exception are those tribes flourishing in parts of the forest of the Darkest Heart. Some scholars argue that Were-Beasts should not even be considered part of the Beasts of Chaos, but more accurately, they are one of the so-called *Dying Races*. One of the dozens of different humanoid peoples who were either recruited or created by either side of the Chaos War to come fight in the conflict.

It is interesting to note that the Were-Beasts of the Darkest Heart are both more savage and feral (animal-like) than those in the world at large, and they exhibit a wider variety of animal and humanoid forms than those in the outside world. The remote wilderness of the Darkest Heart also enables them to form large tribes and establish tribal communities. Living in isolation, it is clear that the Were-Beasts of the Land of the Damned have mi-



cro-evolved a bit from their cousins of the outside world. Were this to continue for many more centuries, these might become two different species, as the Were-Beasts of the Darkest Heart become more *beast* than man and the Were-Beasts of the rest of the world become more *man* than beast.

Were-Beasts are creatures of magic through and through, and deadly predators of the forest.

Alignment: 29% Aberrant, 30% Miscreant, 30% Diabolic, 10% Anarchist, and 1% other.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 3D6+6, P.P. 2D6+8, P.E. 3D6+6, P.B. 3D6+3, Spd. 4D6 (+20 in animal form).

Size & Weight: During the day, Were-Beasts resemble a normal humanoid. At night, they transform into a monstrous animal about 30% larger than normal and with human intelligence.

Hit Points: P.E. +20 +1D6 per level of experience. Were-Beasts advance using the Palladin O.C.C. experience table.

S.D.C.: 3D6+20

Natural A.R.: 12 when in beast form.

Horror Factor: 13 when in beast form.

P.P.E.: 6D6+20

Magic: None.

Psionics: Standard.

Average Level of Experience (NPCs): 1D4+2 for most, 1D6+3 for elders and leaders.

O.C.C.s Available to Were-Beasts: Theoretically, any Were-Beast can take any O.C.C., but in the outside world, 50% are Vagabonds or Mercenaries.

In the Land of the Damned 35% are Vagabonds, 25% are Mercenary Fighters, 15% Rangers, 10% Druids, 10% Priests of Darkness or Shamans, and 5% other. Less than 1% study any form of magic.

Metamorphosis: At night, Were-Beasts can transform into their beastly form. This change is not involuntary; the Were-Beast can *choose* to go all night and remain in its humanoid guise if it so desires. (Usually they only do this to keep from blowing their cover.) Each Were-Beast has only *one* beastly form it can metamorph into.

As mentioned before, the animal form of any Were-Beast is about 30% larger than their natural counterpart. Scholars are at a loss to explain why there are so many feline variants of Were-Beasts relative to other kinds.

Werewolf: Bite does 2D6+4 points of damage. Claw strike does 2D4+2 damage. +3 on initiative. +1 to strike and parry. +2 to dodge.

Weretiger: Bite does 3D6+3 points of damage. Claw strike does 2D6+6 points of damage. +3 on initiative. +2 to strike, parry and dodge.

Werepanther: Claw or bite does 2D6+3 points of damage. +5 on initiative. +2 to strike, parry or dodge. +10% to Prowl.

Werejaguar: Claw or bite does 2D6 points of damage. +4 on initiative. +2 to strike, parry and dodge. +10% to Prowl.

Werebear: Claws do 3D6+6 points of damage. Bite does 2D6 points of damage. +2 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, and +1 to dodge.

Wereserpent: Bite does 2D6+2 points of damage. +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, and +2 to dodge; no parry possible. +10% to Prowl, +5% to Climb and Swim.

Werelizard: Bite does 2D6 points of damage. Claws do 2D4 points of damage. +2 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry, +3 to dodge, and +10% to Prowl.

Wererat: Bite does 2D4 points of damage. Claws do 1D6+3 points of damage. +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to dodge, and +20% to Prowl, +5% to Acrobatics.

Werebat: Bite does 1D6 points of damage, claws 2D4

damage. +2 on initiative, +2 to strike and dodge. Winged flight at a speed of 2D6+20.

Other Natural Abilities: The basic abilities of the animal they turn into plus the following.

Limited Invulnerability: When in beast form, Were-Beasts are impervious to normal weapons. Only silver and magic weapons (and all forms of magic from spells to circles) can harm them (they inflict normal damage). Were-Beasts are also resistant to normal fire and cold (half damage), but they take full damage from magic fire and magic cold.

Bio-Regeneration: 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per four melee rounds (one minute).

Nightvision: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Leaping: Up to 15 feet high (4.6 m) and 20 feet long (6.1 m) from a standing start. This distance doubles if the Were-Beast takes off from a running start. The Werebat can fly.

Attacks Per Melee: By hand to hand combat training, plus another two attacks when in animal form!

Damage: By weapon or per animal form.

Bonuses: As per animal form. There are over 200 animal descriptions in the **Palladium Book of Monster & Animals** sourcebook (not to mention 120 monsters). Check it out!

Average Life Span: Were-Beasts age rather slowly, so their life span will be five times that of a normal human – around 300 to 500 years. Were-Beasts in the guise of Elves and Dwarves can explain this longevity away with ease. Were-Beasts in human guise cannot and must stay hidden, keep on the move, or have a really good story to tell their neighbors when they realize that one of their own is apparently not aging. Of course, no such stories or lies are necessary for the open Were-Beast communities in the Land of the Damned.

Value: None per se. May sell their services as spies and assassins or warriors.

Habitat: Anywhere in the world, but typically in an environment where their “animal” form is common. All the varieties listed in this description are found in the Land of the Damned, especially in the Darkest Heart.

Languages: Were-Beasts all can speak 1D4 languages at +20% to their skill ratio. This is in addition to any O.C.C. training they receive.

Enemies: Humans and Elves.

Allies: None per se, but may associate with other Were-Beasts and other beings, usually those with an evil disposition like themselves, and beings more powerful than they.

The Curse of Lycanthropy: Lycanthropes are *not* Were-Beasts. They are simply a person who endures a curse that makes them seem very much like a Were-Beast. Strangely, the curse of Lycanthropy is not among any of the curses inflicted by the Mortification in the Endless Torment, nor is it a particularly common curse (relative to the others out there).

Those under the curse of Lycanthropy are normal folk who are magically altered to take on the form of a Were-Beast (75% of the time they take the form of Werewolves) when the moon is full so they may hunt humanoid prey. Lycanthropes cannot control this transformation at all; when darkness falls on the night of a full moon, they automatically take the shape of a Were-Beast and go on the prowl. Their intelligence and demeanor get a bit more bestial,

and they forget all about their alignment, the laws of the land and who might be their friends and family. They have become a heartless predator bent on filling their stomachs with raw, bloody humanoid flesh, whom ever it may come from. When the sun rises, the victim transforms back into his normal shape, unconscious and naked. Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it), the victim of this curse does not remember his activities from the night before, but he might be puzzled at how and why he woke up the way he did.

Only a Remove Curse can negate Lycanthropy. Any clergy member has an 01-30% chance to remove the curse, and if he is not successful in the attempt, the Lycanthrope will surely seek him out the next time he transforms.

Lycanthropes possess all Were-Beast abilities when transformed. This curse can affect anybody of any race, creed or alignment. It is contracted by magical means (i.e., taking possession of a cursed magic item) or it can be transmitted through the bite of a genuine Were-Beast who is the carrier of Lycanthropy. Were-Beasts with Lycanthropy are a bit like the real-world Typhoid Mary; they carry and spread the disease but they do not suffer from it.

Lycanthropes have the following bonuses when in their transformed beast state: +3 on initiative, +4 to damage, +3 to dodge, leap 15 feet (4.6 m), impervious to normal weapons (only silver and magic weapons affect them), nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), prowl 50%, +2 on all saving throws, and bio-regenerate 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round.

Monsters & Animals

A variety of strange and unusual creatures other than the Beasts of Chaos and Undead populate the Lands of Eternal Torment and the Darkest Heart regions in the Land of the Damned.

Some of these beings, native to the Land of the Damned, are described in detail in both the **Land of the Damned: One** and **Land of the Damned: Three** sourcebooks. Though the creatures in both those sourcebooks tend to stay in their respective sections of the Land of the Damned, there is always the intrepid explorer, straggler or outcast wandering far across the land, a long way from home. Though neither of those books are absolutely necessary for running campaigns in the *Eternal Torment*, they do provide a more complete roster of creeps, monsters and predators to be found in this part of the world.

A very small handful of creatures might also enter the Land of the Damned from the Northern Hinterlands. The beasts of the Hinterlands generally are happy enough there and have no incentive to spread to the Northern Mountains, much less try to cross them, but, there will always be the occasional *Alpine Monitor*, *Threkk*, *Ice Demon* or other creature that ends up in the Darkest Heart or Eternal Torment somewhere, and the G.M. is encouraged to exploit that possibility for all it may be worth in your campaign. To get full descriptions and stats of the exotic creatures living just on the far side of the Northern Mountains, check out the **Northern Hinterlands** sourcebook.

In addition to whatever exotic wildlife the Chaos Lands, the Bleakness, or the Northern Hinterlands have to offer, there are also numerous creatures to be found in the Eternal Torment that are also encountered in other regions of the outside world, if only in small numbers. These monsters and animals are likely to be somewhat more familiar to adventurers than the creatures locked away in the Land of the Damned, and these other known monsters are, oddly enough, a reassuring reminder of the more familiar world that adventurers have left behind. Strange to think that something as foul as a Harpy or a Catoblepa could be comforting in any way, but there it is. It is these monsters that this section now focuses on, giving a brief overview of what they are all about for those unfamiliar with them, and providing additional information on how and why they fit into the Land of the Damned alongside of all the new and unique creatures that also populate the region. Full statistics and descriptions of the various monsters and animals described in this section are found in the **Monsters & Animals** sourcebook. (Again, it is not essential that you own **M&A** to enjoy **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, but trust us, you'll want to pick up a copy.)

Now, without further delay, here is the "supporting" cast for the southern regions of the Land of the Damned. They are:

Bearmen of the North	Minotaurs
Bug Bears	Mummy Immortalus
Catoblepa	Pegasus
Canine Races	Perytons
Dragons	Scarecrows
Dragondactyls	Spectres
Entities	Sphinxes
Faerie Folk	Suckers
Feathered Death	Syvan
Giants	Unicorns
Gryphons	Waternix
Harpies	Worms of Taut
Kappa	Yema
Ki-Lin	Zavor
Melech	

Bearmen of the North

Bearmen of the North are surprisingly common in the Land of the Damned, particularly on the northern side of the Great Rift. In fact there is some debate over whether the Bearmen might be one of the archaic races who fought during the Chaos War or whether they are the one people to have found passages from the east, through the mountains and into the Land of the Damned. Powerful, hulking mounds of muscle and fur, the Bearmen actually enjoy the challenges the Land of the Damned has to offer and thrive in its north lands and especially in the northwestern mountain ranges. Here many Bearman clans have befriended Kobolds, Trolls, Gigantes and Minotaurs who accept them as brethren and respect (even fear) them as great warriors. Unknown to civilized folk on the eastern side of the Northern Mountains, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Bearmen thrive away from humans and other people who fear and hound them. Like Minotaurs, the Bearmen of the Damned loathe Harpies and battle them on a regular basis, but nothing like the widespread wars between Harpies and Minotaurs.

Bearmen are friends and allies of the Kankoran and share some of their secrets regarding passageways through the North-

ern Mountains and information about what lies beyond in the Land of the Damned. However, few Bearmen from the Land of the Damned venture beyond the mountains, so in that regard, Bearmen of the Damned are almost a separate people from those living east of the mountains. All Bearmen tend to avoid the southern half of the Land of the Damned so they are rare in the Darkest Heart.

For more info on Bearmen, see page 23 of **Monsters & Animals**.

Bug Bears

As vicious as they are strong, Bug Bears are indigenous to Ophid's Grasslands, where they are most at home. In the southern reaches of the Northern Mountains, however, increasing numbers of Bug Bears have begun to appear on both sides of the mountains. Many of them are intent on infiltrating or harassing the various valley and ledge settlements in the highlands. Some scholars believe that there is an ongoing Bug Bear "infestation" across both Ophid's Grasslands and the southern length of the Great Northern Mountains. The theory goes that in the last 20 years or so, conditions favorable to Bug Bears have made it so these creatures have had a population explosion. This in turn has pressured them to fan out. The end result is more and more of these troublesome beasts are finding new places to live and are running across settlements and travelers region-wide. Cruel and aggressive, they find the Land of the Damned as agreeable as anywhere else.

On the western side of the Northern Mountains, Bug Bears have infiltrated the forests of the Darkest Heart, and have established sizeable clans there. In the Darkest Heart, Bug Bears are just a small part of the wide variety of monsters that rule that woodland and lay constant siege to the *Fallen Palace of Therendil*, the only real bastion of civilization within the forests. However, Bug Bears stick to themselves, and the few adventurers who have reported on the Darkest Heart think that Bug Bears and the many Were-Beasts of the region are openly warring against each other. The cause of this conflict might be nothing more than two aggressive races trying to establish dominance over each other. If that is the case, then the Bug Bears have their work cut out for them, since they are vastly outnumbered by the thousands of Were-Beasts running amok throughout the Darkest Heart.

For more information on Bug Bears, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 27, or **Northern Hinterlands**, page 96.

Catoblepa

Catoblepa are buffalo-type creatures with thick, scaly skin and a temper so bad that it is said the creatures would gnaw through their own forelegs if they were angry enough. On their own, a Catoblepa is mean and dangerous enough, but they tend to travel in herds, which means they should be avoided by all living creatures smaller than they. Unless one possesses some kind of power to even the odds, getting in the way of a Catoblepa herd is not the best route towards a long and happy life.

These fearsome plains beasts have all but died out in the Darkest Heart and the Eternal Torment. They still roam the Bleakness and the Broken Horn in the north of the Land of the Damned, as well as in the eastern foothills of the Northern

Mountains, the Northern Hinterlands, and Ophid's Grasslands (where they dominate). Catoblepa were indigenous to this area long, long ago. Some say they even predate the Land of the Damned, which would explain how these creatures could be found on both sides of the Northern Mountains, for they surely lack the intelligence and ability to cross this treacherous range.

Though they are formidable creatures, Catoblepa have proven no match for many of the Beasts of Chaos and are preyed upon by many of them, Beasts of Kathos, Hygorathes, Galters, Slithering Terrors, Udoks and Were-Beasts among them.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 34.

Canine Races

Coyles completely avoid the Land of the Damned and are seldom found even in the Northern Mountains.

The Wolfen have no misguided notions about the End of the World and generally avoid it, though small hunting and scouting parties, adventuring groups and practitioners of magic in search of ancient secrets of magic *may* be enticed to brave the mountains and venture into the Land of the Damned. Such groups often are drawn to explore the Darkest Heart, since the woodlands seem, at first blush, to be more like the forests of home than any other part of the cursed lands. Very quickly, however, the differences between the two woodlands become apparent as the Darkest Heart is many times more hostile and savage than the Great Northern Wilderness. Elsewhere in the region, Wolfen are regarded as unwanted invaders, noble warriors on whom one can test their mettle, and potential slaves to just another animal to prey upon.

Kankoran are sometimes called the "Forest Lords of the North" and as such, know more about the Northern Hinterlands, Northern Mountains and the Land of the Damned than most other folk combined. They are some of the few who have no fear of the Northern Mountains and periodically scale them to explore the inner Land of the Damned, especially the forested Darkest Heart. It was Kankoran explorers who first learned of the *Fallen Palace of Therendil* as well as warnings about the cursed Land of Eternal Torment and the legions of undead that dwell within its confines. In fact, the Land of the Damned and the Darkest Heart are among the secret places a Kankoran warrior may travel to earn his "stripes" as a warrior of considerable merit. The Kankoran themselves have no interest in getting involved in the growing conflict between the people of Therendil and the Were-Beasts of the Darkest Heart, but they have no qualms about challenging either in combat to earn "stripes" or to protect an innocent.

There are more Kankoran in the southern portion of the Land of the Damned, particularly in the Darkest Heart and western side of the Northern Mountains, than anyone suspects, for these quiet and stern woodland scouts and rangers keep a low profile and keep their secrets to themselves. Those who befriend the Kankoran will have gained a valuable ally, for the Kankoran are not only the most skilled of scouts, but one of the few "good guys" one can expect to find among the Damned. With a Kankoran guide leading them, parties stand a considerably higher chance of successfully traversing the mountain range and surviving the many hazards of the Land of the Damned. Kankoran are sometimes found in the company of one or more Bearmen and vice versa.

For more information on these three races, see **Monsters & Animals**, pages 28-33.

Dragons

Dragons of all kinds played a pivotal role in the Chaos War and the defeat of the Old Ones. It was they who first rebelled against the Old Ones, just as it was they who originally formed the Alliance of Light and commanded it through its first victories. Most adult Dragons will not return to the Land of the Damned for any reason, as it is a place of bitter memories for them, both from the slavery of the Age of Chaos and the disappointment over the destruction of the Alliance of Light. They also have a keen idea of what evil and dangers lurk in the Land of the Damned and have no desire to participate in the madness that springs from it.

Younger Dragons, however, are not so embittered or wise. Those born after the Chaos War (and that's the majority) are as fascinated by the promise of great treasure, secrets of magic and exciting adventure as any human. More so, because of the role their ancestors played in the War of Chaos. Good Dragons are dismayed at the wild state of the Land of the Damned, while selfish Dragons see great possibilities. Evil Dragons are tempted to go to the Land of the Damned so they might take control of portions of it or discover some great new magic or magical artifact, or powerful ally that could win them tremendous power and wealth or help them conquer the world. Whatever their reason, hatchling and adolescent Dragons regularly investigate the Land of the Damned. Others come seeking knowledge and/or more about the history of the Land, the Chaos War and the role Dragon-kind played in it.

For more information on all Dragons, see the **Dragons & Gods** sourcebook, pages 8-51.

Dragondactyls

Like demonic versions of the Pegasus, the Dragondactyl is a flying horse, but with dark skin, large leather wings, a serpent's tail, and clawed feet. According to legend, the Nine Elven Lords of old, as well as human mages of incredible power, tamed and rode these powerful beasts as mighty war horses. While reputed to have once roamed the plains of the Old Kingdom in vast herds, Dragondactyls now are extremely rare and found almost exclusively in three areas. The first two are the lower regions of the Old Kingdom mountain range and the Baalgor Mountains. The third is the *Northern Mountains*, where they are found in their greatest numbers. However, there is a fourth locale where a tiny number of these creatures might also be found, and that is the mountain range known as *Galdrum's Teeth*, a small series of peaks in the Eternal Torment. Any Dragondactyls found here probably migrated in from the Northern Mountains, and, finding the environment agreeable, have decided to stay and roost.

These creatures are coveted by the Necromantic lords of the Cities of the Dead to use as war steeds, as they can easily fly around the mountaintops and they have a viciousness that comes in handy during battle. Trying to capture a Dragondactyl, however, is a harrowing experience. These fierce predators have the strength of a tiger, the speed of a horse and the grace of an eagle. They value their freedom and fight anybody who tries to take it away from them. There are, however, a few settlements in the Northern Mountains that have pioneered ingenious meth-

ods of capturing, training, and even breeding these strange creatures. Though they can never be fully domesticated, those who can tame these beasts to any degree would have a valuable cottage industry on their hands. Alive and untrained: 2,000 to 16,000 gold (possibly more), trained: 60,000 to 80,000 gold, though one has not been sold on the open market in over two hundred years. Those who actively breed, raise and train Dragonductyls generally do so for military/defense purposes, or to trade to select parties. They are not merely an expensive and exotic commodity to be purchased or sold for a sackful of gold.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 39.

Entities

Entities are supernatural energy beings beyond human comprehension. Some are misguided and mischievous, others outright evil. Most folk consider them demonic forces or menacing spirits, and many Entities are all too willing to play the part. Typically found in ancient ruins, on old battlefields, or in the service of a Summoner, Demon or other dark force, Entities have ample reasons to be found roaming the *Land of the Damned* in general and the Endless Torment in particular. The vast amounts of blood shed in this part of the world for over the last 50,000+ years, coupled with strange magicks and dark powers, have made the entire region an optimal environment for Entities of every kind. In fact, one is more likely to encounter an Entity in the Land of the Damned, especially in the Eternal Torment, than anywhere else in the Palladium world.

Poltergeists are mischievous spirits with minuscule intelligence. These odd little energy beings fly about, looking for a good source of potential psychic energy to feed upon. Consequently, they are most frequently found along ley lines and nexus points and in the lairs of Summoners, powerful sorcerers and creatures of magic (all three of which can be found in abundance throughout the Land of the Damned). Once such a place is found, the Poltergeist settles in for the long haul. This is now its home, regardless of what other creatures might be living there. Its only interest in other living (or undead) beings is to use them as a source of food (they can painlessly absorb 1D4 P.P.E. from a living creature each day if no ley lines are to be found) and play.

Syphon Entities are evil energy beings that inhabit inanimate objects. Immediately upon inhabiting an object, the Entity traps itself, forever imprisoned until that object is destroyed. The Entity cannot move or animate the object it inhabits except by levitation. Thus, it most frequently inhabits small hand-held items and things of value to most humanoids, such as weapons, jewelry, etc. The Syphon Entity lies dormant until a creature with sufficient P.P.E. awakens it by disturbing or picking up the object containing the Entity. The Syphon immediately consumes 20 P.P.E. from the person that took possession of it, and it will consume another 10 P.P.E. each day thereafter. Furthermore, once awake, the Entity uses its psionic powers to influence whatever intelligent being might possess the object it inhabits. Through trickery, deception, and subtle manipulation, the Syphon will try to control whoever owns the object, getting him to conduct all manner of evil acts. In the Eternal Torment, Syphon Entities are all over the place, mostly inhabiting the huge numbers of discarded weapons, shields, bits of armor, discarded jewelry and all the other bits of detritus from war. As many as one

tenth of all magic items or other items of value or considerable antiquities found in the Eternal Torment are inhabited by a Syphon Entity and are, therefore, effectively cursed or haunted depending on one's point of view.

Haunting Entities are the "classic ghost." They are a sort of misguided and confused creature drawn to investigate places where unusually strong psychic impressions have been left. The Land of the Damned, with its legacy of pain, warfare, death and destruction, is probably the region with the deepest psychic imprint on the Palladium World and as such, is the adopted home for countless Haunting Entities who find the place irresistible. The Land of Eternal Torment is of special interest to Haunting Entities, in large part because of the massive undead suffering there. So are battlefields and other places of torture and torment, past and present.

Though Haunting Entities can be of any alignment, those who visit the Eternal Torment are pretty much all transformed into bleak-hearted, bitter creatures convinced that the world of the living serves only one purpose: to cause pain and unhappiness. As such, they will not be friendly to living creatures. Evil Haunting Entities attack and harass the living outright, while selfish Haunting Entities harass or steal things, and good Haunting Entities moan and speak of lost dreams, despair and warnings of evil and danger. Some good or selfish Haunting Entities may also present adventurers with a verbal tongue lashing and minor harassment born from self-righteous indignation. For Haunting Entities, the massive suffering throughout the Land of the Damned, but especially the Eternal Torment, is like a black hole that sucks them in and refuses to let them go. This turns Haunting Entities into angry, pained creatures who wish to lash out at the perceived culprits for all of this anguish – the living.

Tectonic Entities are dangerous creatures that can build a solid body for themselves out of junk and debris. Though they could exist just by harmlessly drawing P.P.E. off of living creatures, Tectonic Entities enjoy hurting and killing things, so they roam the Land of the Damned in an eternal search for new playthings and victims to destroy. In the Eternal Torment, Tectonic Entities are particularly prevalent as a predator upon the Endless Dead. These entities do not seem to appreciate the difference between living creatures and the Endless Dead (or perhaps they do and revel in the unusual opportunity and challenge). Thus, they take great pleasure in slaughtering Festulents, Aberrations and Vampires they encounter. The destruction of the undead is never as satisfying as extinguishing a living thing, though, so whenever adventurers from the outside world show up, Tectonic Entities gleefully rush to engage them.

Possessing Entities are perhaps the most foul and dangerous sort of Entity. Their specialty is to possess a living body, to take control of it and use that body to commit every kind of crime and atrocity imaginable. Any act of murder or mayhem is fair game to the Possessing Entity, which only wants to leave as large a swath of destruction behind itself as possible. The Land of Eternal Torment is no good for Possessing Entities since they have no desire to possess the *undead*, only the living.

For more information on all types of Entities, see **Monsters & Animals**, pages 48-56.



Faerie Folk

The Faerie Folk of the outside world know better than to visit the Land of the Damned for any reason. Even evil Faerie Folk give the place a wide berth, figuring the region promises way more trouble than any adventure there might be worth. This is a rare show of good judgement from the Faeries, especially the evil ones.

However, there is a substantial Faerie population, both good and evil, in the Land of the Damned, concentrated mostly in the forests of the *Darkest Heart*. Almost all of them are descended from the **Kingdom of Therendil**, a noble Elven society that relocated to the Land of the Damned so they might police it as part of the fabled (and fallen) Garrison. Along with the Elves came a huge population of allied Faerie Folk, many of whom have since abandoned the Therendil Elves and sought to live under their own terms. Many of these Faerie people have not fared well in the *Darkest Heart*, however, falling prey to all manner of predators, evil and dark magicks, as well as their own kind turned evil and murderous over the eons of life trapped in this infernal Land of the Damned. For once they arrived, they have found it impossible to leave, though they know not why, exactly.

The conditions and corruption in the *Darkest Heart* has forced traditional "good" Faerie Folk (Good Faeries include *Bogies*, *Brownies*, *Common Faeries*, *Night Elves*, *Silver-Bell Faeries*, *Leprechauns*, *Merrows*, *Nymphs*, *Common Pixies*, *Frost Pixies*, *Spriggans*, *Tree Sprites*, *Water Sprites*, and *Wind Puff Sprites*) into one of three distinct camps.

First are those who have turned angry, bitter, vengeful and evil. So full of anger, spite and self-loathing are they, that these once good beings harass, trick, hurt, torture or kill all outsiders

they encounter as well as Faerie Folk who strive to be good, and any being who is beautiful (inside or out) or obviously good and/or heroic. These sad denizens of Faerie are lost to evil and have basically declared war on all things good, noble or beautiful. This means they also associate and conspire with *evil* Faerie Folk (*Pucks*, *Toad Stools*, *Hairy Jacks*, *Kelpies*, *Kinnie Ger*, etc.) and other wicked creatures, to hurt, enslave and destroy others.

Second, there are those who are lost to fear and despair. They hide from the world and refrain from helping others in need, even their own kind, for fear they will be injured or destroyed. These Faerie Folk have lost their spirit and cringe in the shadows, afraid to take a stand on the side of good or evil. When push comes to shove, they will betray or abandon any being, Faerie or mortal, who is not part of their demoralized clan. These disheartened Faerie Folk seek to reconcile with the Fallen Palace of Therendil in the hopes that they might be given admittance to the Palace stronghold and find sanctuary there. This is not likely, as the Therendil Elves are still angry about their Faerie allies deserting them. But who knows? The Therendil themselves are in need of friends, and they might just take back any Faeries who left simply because they have no other choice. However, both the Elves and fallen Faerie Folk will do nothing to fight evil or help others unless their spirits and hope can be rekindled – probably from an outside force who will lead by example and inspire the fallen and disheartened to rise like the Phoenix and strike down evil even if it means their own destruction.

Lastly, are those Faerie Folk who remain hopeful and true to themselves, for not all Faerie people have given in to evil or despair. There are still a few mounds of good Faeries and other *good* Faerie Folk here and there, but most are doing all they can

to survive and keep hold of their scruples and morals. This has made "good" Faerie Folk in the Land of the Damned less spiteful and mischievous and more tolerant, kindhearted and helpful than their cousins in the outside world. (Typical alignments are 30% Anarchist, 30% Unprincipled, 30% Scrupulous and 10% Principled!) These Faerie Folk tend to embrace adventurers and explorers as potential allies and warn outsiders of the dangers that await them. Such Faeries will ingratiate themselves to visitors, refraining from playing their characteristic tricks on them, not getting them to eat Faerie Food, and instead lavishing them with genuine gifts of kindness (healing, help and information) and sometimes bestowing them with weapons or items of magic. They also try to point them out of harm's way and help them stay alive. Those outsiders who know about Faerie Folk will immediately notice something different – kinder, gentler and sadder – about these good Faeries.

Evil Faerie Folk are the most likely to wander around the Darkest Heart on their own, looking for somebody to eat or just to victimize. These creatures are inherent troublemakers, and regardless of the grave threats facing them, they are going to have some fun at somebody else's expense, even if it kills them. Evil Faeries include *Bogies*, *Dead Moon Hags*, *Grogach*, *Hairy Jacks*, *Kelpies*, *Kinnie Ger*, *Mermaids*, *Pucks*, *Satyr*s, *Toad Stools*, and occasional *Will-o'-the-Wisps*. Note: Bogies and Will-o'-the-Wisps fall into both the good and evil camps.

Technically, Goblins, Hob-Goblins and Orcs are Faerie Folk, but they do not keep their company in the Darkest Heart and are not common in the Land of the Damned. Thought to be the servants of the original Kingdom of Therendil, these foul folk have fled to the inner woods of the Darkest Heart, where they have formed large and powerful clans of their own. Today, they stand between the Therendil Elves and the Were-Beast hordes. On one hand, these so-called "Servant Clans" would like to see somebody overrun the Fallen Palace. On the other hand, there is every chance that the Were-Beasts will simply roll over *them*, too. Faced with that, the Servant Clans might also try to seek protection with the Therendil, or they might just make a heroic suicide stand before the Were-Beast menace. Other, unallied clans attack all beings good and beautiful.

Note: Most of these Faerie Folk are encountered in pairs or small groups of 2D4+2.

For more information on all types of Faerie Folk (there are plenty of them), see **Monsters & Animals**, pages 58-78. Goblins, Hob-Goblins and Orcs are detailed fully in the back of **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**.

Feathered Death

Also known as *Falcon Men*, Feathered Death are as wicked and cruel as they are ugly. They are nasty-looking bird-like creatures with bat-type clawed hands and ugly human-ish faces. Despite their small size, Feathered Death are incredibly strong and quick, using those attributes to abduct small humanoids and children, who they later torture and subject to all manner of perverse pleasures. Although found in small flocks in the northeastern corner of the Land of the Damned (especially around the *Citadel*) and coastal areas of the Northern Hinterlands, they are mostly found in the forests of the Great Northern Wilderness, on the other side of the Northern Mountains. Small numbers of Feathered Death are also found in the Darkest Heart or flying

high above the Eternal Torment. Those who stray this far south in the Land of the Damned usually do so because they are on a scouting mission for their flock (they hate Harpies, are at war with them, and are always looking for some kind of new secret weapon that will help them level the playing field against their numerically superior enemy). Sometimes, Feathered Death will also hire themselves out as mercenaries in the Minion War of the Great Rift, only to realize later that they made a mistake, and go AWOL. At that point, the only place to go is south, into the relative safety of the Darkest Heart.

Feathered Death are utterly evil creatures who seek to further no cause except their own. However, they are delighted to see that most adventurers in the Land of the Damned do not seem to know about them. Thus, when they see a band of adventurers, they will often approach them and try to play themselves off as kindred spirits who are in need of some allies. To prove their "trustworthiness," the Feathered Death will travel and work the with group, but as soon as the moment presents itself, they will stab the group in the back, preferably by killing one of its members or by stealing an item of great importance to the group. With hideous laughter, the Feathered Death then takes to the sky, glad in having done evil once more. The best course of action for any adventurer, when encountering these creatures, is to attack first and ask questions later. There can be no good out of a meeting with a Feathered Death.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 79.



Giants

Except for Gigantes who are encountered throughout the Northern Mountains and parts of the southern lowlands, few True Giants venture into the Northern Mountains or the Land of

the Damned. Thus, True Giants are uncommonly rare in this part of the world. Most are pragmatists who take the position that the Gods of Light must have had good reason to seal this part of the world off from the rest of it, and who are they to challenge the wisdom of the gods?

There are small numbers of True Giants living in the Northern Mountains, mostly a few miserable bands of *Algor Frost Giants*, and the occasional *Cyclops* or *Titan* adventurer. Titans who once played a substantial role in the Chaos War appreciate full well what the Land of the Damned is and avoid it.

Gigantes are the only True Giant found in appreciable numbers and thrive in the mountains and parts of the southern lowlands, including the Darkest Heart and even the Land of Eternal Torment.

Gigantes are brutish, savage mutants, monstrous in appearance, who possess exceptional and unusual powers and abilities that help them to survive in an equally savage land. Many want little more than to hunt, fight, kill and eat those who fall victim to them. In this regard, Gigantes are as savage and ruthless as any Beast of Chaos, and the equal of most. Finding the Northern Mountains too boring a place for warriors, many make frequent raids into the foothills on the western side of the mountains, and go adventuring into the Land of the Damned, where the constant struggle to stay alive makes life rather entertaining for the Gigantes. Some of these misanthropes have joined in the Minion War at the Great Rift for the sheer fun of it, with Gigantes fighting on both sides of the conflict. More commonly they have entered the Darkest Heart, where they rampage through the woodlands and find great sport hunting the many intelligent and giant monsters in the region. Gigantes are especially fond of challenging *Thanes*, *Udoks*, *Lassacre*, *Hygorathes* and *Beasts of Kathos*, as well as rival bands of Gigantes and demons. Some have even managed to befriend and use *Udoks* as riding animals and traveling companions.

Up in the western side of the Northern Mountains and in parts of the southern forests, adventurers will come upon the largest clans and tribes of Gigantes anywhere in the world. A typical clan can range from as small as 2D4+1 to 6D6, while large tribes (large by Gigante standards) may have as many as 3D6x10 individuals, depending on how much food is in their vicinity. Their numbers could be considerably larger if they were not constantly looking for trouble and fighting with most everything they encounter. Small humanoids like humans, Elves, Dwarves and even Minotaurs are regarded as a mixed bag – potential enemies, slaves, playthings, and livestock to be eaten.

The Gigantes in the Darkest Heart are not part of the larger conflict between the Were-Beasts and the Fallen Palace of Therendil. They are just in the Darkest Heart to have some fun, spill some blood, and eat like a pig for as long as they can. The harshness of the Darkest Heart has hardened the Gigantes, though, and they fight like demons whenever encountered.

For more information on all types of Giants, see **Monsters & Animals**, pages 82-91.

Gryphons

These are highly intelligent animals that have the forequarters of a giant eagle and the hindquarters of a giant lion. They can be found on the cliffs of remote mountain ranges, particu-

larly those along the Northern Mountains and along the *Galdrum's Teeth* range in the Endless Torment.

Though it is not easy, Gryphons can be domesticated as steeds and attack animals. This practice was once commonplace throughout the world, but now is practiced only by the Isle of the Cyclops. Scholars believe, and with plenty of evidence to back it up, that Gryphons were bred by either the Old Ones or the Alliance of Light and used extensively as a form of war mount and aerial cavalry throughout the Chaos War. Which side first bred the creature seems irrelevant, for it took no time at all for the other side to catch on and begin breeding Gryphons of their own.

The Gryphons of the Land of the Damned are believed to have descended from those few left in the region when the Chaos War ended. They mostly roost in the mountains, though a few can be found perching in the dense treetop canopy of the Darkest Heart. Though Gryphons are fairly picky about where to make their homes, they range all over the Land of the Damned, flying in long hunting circuits in search of prey. They are one of the few creatures one can expect to see *anywhere* in the Land of the Damned.

Though the Gryphons of the Land of the Damned could easily fly out of the region, say to the Island Kingdom of Bizantium or over to the Western Empire, they seldom do. The conventional wisdom is they are fond of their homes and have gotten used to the hunting grounds there, which gives them no incentive to leave.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 99.

Harpies

Creatures of the wind and fury, Harpies consider humans and all "landlocked" beings (creatures stuck on the ground) as their inferiors. Part hag, part vulture, all monster, these vile creatures love to cause trouble, torment, harass and hurt humans and other mortals. Apparently several huge tribes once served the Old Ones because the northwestern peninsula of the Land of the Damned is infested with them, and tens of thousands are also found along the northern coast. Harpies also inhabit the Lowlands of the Northern Mountains, especially on the western side, and actively participate in the Minion Wars on the side of the Deevils, often serving as scouts and shock troops under the command of Dyval's Dire Harpies. In the Darkest Heart, the wicked creatures raid the woodlands, taking up residence in the treetops and routinely raiding the ground, killing whomever they come across. In some areas, the Harpy colonies are so large that one can easily hear their cackling from far away. And, since these creatures are so foul, they tend to leave large fields of excreta below their roosts, making it quite easy for any land traveler to know when they are in Harpy country.

Mischievous and vindictive, Harpies take great joy in tormenting trappers by springing their traps, taking or eating the animals caught in the traps (this happens all the time near the Shadow Coast), ripping up the trapped animal with their claws to destroy the value of the fur, and frightening away game. Harpies also like dive bombing campsites at night, making a ruckus, screeching and screaming, grabbing blankets, clawing at people, and dropping excrement on the campers before flying away. The entire ordeal usually lasts less than a minute (4 melee rounds), just enough to wake up and terrorize everybody – but it is the



Harpies' ideas of a fun night out. They do the same to adventurers, buzzing travelers and making horrible noises (especially at night) to frighten people, horses and livestock and prevent them from getting a good night's sleep. Harpies frequently sneak into a camp, farm or homestead to steal booze, eat food, plunder supplies, kill pets and engage in vandalism.

Those in the Land of the Damned are more aggressive and murderous than anywhere else in the world. This is due in large part to their vast numbers and frequent association with the Dire Harpies of Dyval. Medium groups of 12 to 36 (roll 6D6) and large flocks numbering into the hundreds do not hesitate to attack a group of adventurers, even powerful ones, and fight with genuine conviction, fleeing only when half of them have been slain or severely injured. Those under the stewardship of one or more *Dire Harpies* or other Greater Deevil, fight with uncharacteristic resolve and will battle to the death if so ordered by their supernatural leader. However, they revert to their cowardly form as soon as their Deevil leader(s) is slain. Furthermore, if they are winning, Harpies get drunk with power and show no mercy, slaughtering even those who surrender. They may choose to leave one or two people alive to tell the tale of their victory, and may also take a few prisoners. Captives, however, are used as downtrodden slaves, ransomed back to their family or communities, or tortured and eventually (days or weeks later) killed and eaten. Likewise, Harpies like to cause as much property damage as possible.

The Minotaur nation of the *Broken Horn* have undertaken a sustained campaign to wipe these filthy monsters out in that part of the region, but it is not working. The Minotaurs are simply too distracted by internal strife to mount a sustained offense. The ongoing conflicts with the soldiers of the Citadel, various

monsters, and simply surviving on the bleak landscape that is their home all prevent them from conducting any one truly effective offensive. Still, Minotaurs and Harpies engage in bloody skirmishes that can amount to hundreds, even thousands dead on both sides. Minotaurs and Harpies have been battling one another for thousands of years, but in the last two centuries, that animosity has increased dramatically. Exactly why, is unknown.

For more information on Harpies, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 100.

Kappa

These malicious little creatures actually predate the Age of Chaos, and are among the oldest living creatures on the Palladium world. For all of that time, however, they have never amounted to much. Certainly, they are no great race, and they did not even play a substantive role in the Chaos War. As a whole, they were content to sit things out on the ocean bottom, resurfacing only when the smoke began to clear. Perhaps because these creatures were so pathetic the Alliance never decided to punish them under the Mortification, as they did to so many other peoples. Maybe to the Alliance, simply being a Kappa is punishment enough.

Kappas can be found in both fresh and salt water but are most common in large lakes, rivers and seas. In the Land of the Damned, large colonies of them have formed off the northern and western coasts of the region. There are large villages in the Sea of Despair, but the recent encroachment of the *Zaranceti* (detailed in **Land of the Damned One**) challenged the Kappa's domination in the Sea of Despair. Many Kappa live just off the coast of the Eternal Torment, but they tend to be loners or function as small raiding parties that occasionally go ashore to plunder the vast piles of discarded weapons and equipment and rubble that dot the landscape. Kappa who live as salvage experts usually keep at least one Clergy among them for curse removal.

Kappa villages typically range from 20 to 80 members, but off the western coast of the Land of the Damned, Bizantium sailors have reported villages containing at least 200 to 300 members! Given the Kappa's propensity to vandalize passing ships for the sheer fun of it, this might explain why so few voyagers make it through those northwestern waters at all.

Ki-Lin

The Ki-Lin are dragon-like creatures that resemble a horse. They are extremely rare throughout the world, and are renowned for their great intellect, their kind nature, and their propensity in the mystic arts. They are also renowned Demon and Deevil slayers and champions of the good and downtrodden. Their origin remains a mystery, even to them, but they are definitely known to *not* have played a part in the Chaos War. The remote Northern Mountains and neighboring Northern Hinterlands are two of the world's primary Ki-Lin habitats, with up to three hundred of them inhabiting the entire mountain chain. Here in this savage and desolate domain, they can be found frolicking in mountain valleys and dancing along the many peaks and ledges. Always concerned with the welfare of others, Ki-Lin frequently come to the aid of adventurers in need of help in the mountains, but always lead them back to the east into the relative safety of the Hinterlands and human colonies of the Shadow Coast. However, they only come to the aid of travelers for brief interludes, putt-

ing them on the right path and then disappears. Only those on a quest or battling some terrible evil will ally themselves with humanoid for any length of time, and then only if the group is mostly compatible with its good alignment and goals.

Unlike many humanoid scholars and adventurers, the noble and honorable Ki-Lin see *no* impending or mounting danger from the Land of the Damned or any of its inhabitants. They feel quite confident that the Northern Mountains and other safe-guards that imprison the ancient denizens of the evil Old Ones will continue to imprison them for many thousands of years to come. In fact, the Ki-Lin believe the mounting number of rumors and fears to the contrary are deliberately concocted by evil forces in the Land of the Damned (probably those at the Citadel or the Land of Eternal Torment) in the hope of luring some unsuspecting outworlder to inadvertently break the bonds that hold them so the evil might at last escape.

For more information on the Ki-Lin, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 106.

Melech

These vicious predators are equal parts centaur, dinosaur and demon, possessing a hideous quadruped body with the torso of a man and the head of a monster. They are perverse, black-hearted villains that delight in the destruction and mutilation of anything more beautiful than they (which is pretty much everything), making them the special enemies of Elves, Faeries, Sprites, Humans, Gnomes, Unicorns, Ki-Lin, and notable champions of light.

Melech love to capture people rather than kill them outright, keeping them alive for days as playthings to torture and eventually kill. Their exact origin is unknown, but it's clear that their roots lie somewhere in the steaming Yin-Sloth Jungles. How they came to be a major denizen of the Land of the Damned remains a burning question to most scholars, but within the Summoner community, the answer is clear: Somebody or something summoned a horde of the creatures there for some bloody conquest. Who these Summoners might be (or have been) is unknown, but conventional wisdom says it was a past evil overlord of the *Citadel*, that nefarious fortress of evil that is considered the de facto capital of the Land of the Damned.

In the Land of the Damned, Melech are found most commonly in and around the Great Rift and throughout the north lands of the Damned, seldom in the south. Along the Great Rift, they are used by the hell-spawned warriors and minions on both sides of the conflict as powerful steeds, torturers, scouts and front-line troops. It is even said that along the western coastline just north of the Great Rift, entire herds of Melech roam freely, preying upon anything (including demons and Deevils) they encounter. Frequent skirmishes between Melech and Harpy hordes erupt whenever one creature transgresses on the other's territory. Only a few Melech have strayed south and have tried to find a place for themselves in the Darkest Heart.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 119.

Minotaurs

For many eons, Minotaurs were one of the most numerous and powerful humanoid races in the world. They served the Old Ones with distinction throughout the Age of Chaos, carrying out the Chaos Lords' evil missions without question or fail. Their

strength was legendary as soldiers and guardsmen, and it was their might that kept the Old Ones' other slave races from mounting any kind of rebellion for a great many years. It took the introduction of the Dragons to the scene to change all of that. Possessing power, guile, and nearly endless life spans, the Dragons were willing to wait for the right opportunity to strike. They knew that one day the Minotaurs would get soft and sloppy, and when they did, the time for rebellion would be at hand.

Indeed, that day did come, and when the Minotaurs had lost much of the edge that made them the Old Ones' favored enforc-



ers, the Alliance of Light broke out and launched what would become known as the Chaos War. Enraged, the Old Ones exterminated vast numbers of their own Minotaurs to make an example of them. They sent the rest into battle demanding retribution. Thus, Minotaurs led the armies of Chaos in nearly every major battle for the majority of the war. Though the Minotaurs served and fought well, they also died in incredible numbers. By the war's end, there were still millions of them left over, but that was a mere fraction of what had existed before.

Unfortunately for the Minotaurs, few of them stopped worshipping the Old Ones after the war, and many sought a way to revive and restore the Old Ones to power. As punishment, many were struck down and the rest banished to the Land of the Damned where large numbers worship the Old Ones to this day. Those with darkness in their hearts wait to serve their dread masters of Chaos again one day, striking from the shadows when the time presents itself, much like what the early Dragons did to them so many thousands of years ago at the onset of the Chaos War.

The Minotaurs in the world at large are a scattered and dying breed. They are located in a mere handful of places – the Old Kingdom Mountains, the Yin-Sloth Jungles, the Baalgor Wastelands, the Northern Mountains – and many have forsaken the worship of the Old Ones. But nowhere are they in such great numbers as in the Land of the Damned. The northwestern peninsula, the *Broken Horn*, is home to eight great Minotaur Nations, each numbering well over 100,000 people, but even these are tiny numbers compared to the Minotaurs' former strength.

Most Minotaurs are ashamed of this history and seek to live in isolation as a means of coping with it. Others have just put the past behind them and look to the future for themselves and their people. And a few are still just as evil as their ancestors, looking for a way to return their dark lords of Chaos back to the throne of the world, where their followers feel they belong. Maybe such a day is coming for the Minotaurs. Or maybe the champions among them, especially in the Land of the Damned, will make their assault upon the forces of evil, touching off a great crusade for the nations of the world to unite and scatter the darkness once and for all.

The Darkest Heart is home to only a few bands of Minotaurs, mostly renegades and adventurers who have left the Broken Horn for some reason and retreated far into the woodlands where they might find some safety. The Minotaurs of these woodlands try hard not to get involved in the troubles of the Fallen Palace of Therendil, but some simply cannot help themselves. They see the Were-Beast horde as an evil plague that threatens them all and attack the forest beasts whenever encountered. It is this rare display of nobility that is the true hope for the Minotaur people, that if more of them can discover the inner champion they all possess, then perhaps their race will rise from the ashes of its past and forge a brighter future for themselves not only in the Land of the Damned, but elsewhere across the world.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 120, and/or the **Old Ones** sourcebook, page 11+ for more history and unique O.C.C.s.

Mummy Immortalus

The Mummy Immortalus is not the ordinary mummy slave created through common wizardry. It is the product of a Necromantic *Spell of Legend*, usually only performed by Necromancers and gods of death. It is a demented way of achieving quasi-immortality, for this powerful magic allows the subject of the Mummy Immortalus to retain most of his mental faculties, memory, knowledge, skills, and magic abilities, as well as his personality and independence, provided he is willing to join the ranks of the monstrous "undead."

Unlike the common mummy spell that transforms a corpse into an undead slave, the Mummy Immortalus requires a living and willing subject to become the mummy! Careful preparation is required before the proper transition from life to mummified "unlife" can be made. Those who become a Mummy Immortalus are usually Necromancers, sorcerers, or powerful (and vengeful) nobles that command men of magic who have the favor of a dark god. As such, the Mummies Immortalus are often powerful, experienced men and women who, for whatever reason (typically for revenge or power), agree to give up their humanity to become corpse-like monsters that can live as undead for centuries. In some cases, a king or a knight will turn to such magic when mortally wounded, but unwilling to give up his rule or a chance for revenge.

Perhaps then, it is no surprise that there are more Mummies Immortalus in the Land of the Damned than anyplace in the world, though even here they number only a few hundred. One such case is a small force of Mummies Immortalus in the Land of Eternal Torment who have come to the region from *outside*, having already transformed themselves into these hideous creatures. The rumors tell that these Mummies are in fact the undead transformation of an ancient and powerful Western family that lost its bid to take over the Empire of Sin long ago and decided to seek power from beyond the grave. Transforming their every last member into a Mummy Immortalus, these corrupt Westerners then turned their soulless eyes to the Land of the Damned where they hoped to marshal dread powers that would give them power to conquer their homeland as the undead, if not in life. That was well over a thousand years ago. Since then, the Cities of the Dead purported to rule the Eternal Torment are said to have been built and ruled by these sinister Mummies, most of whom command incredible powers of magic, psionics or both. Some hold the favor of dark gods, while others command great and terrible rune weapons thought to be lost eons ago. Together, they present a greater danger to the world than anyone knows.

For more information on the Mummy Immortalus, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 121. For more information on those who rule the Cities of the Dead, see the *Endless Torment* section of this sourcebook.

Pegasus

The fabled Pegasus is a beautiful winged steed that can fly through the air as easily as a horse can run through the grass. They are found exclusively in the north and inhabit the Northern Mountains and the Broken Horn portion of the Land of the Damned. Actually, they can be found, here and there, throughout the Land of the Damned, including the woods of the Darkest Heart. The high flying Pegasus are animals who find safety in

the remote wilderness of the massive and sprawling Northern Mountains and come down to play in the lowlands.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 123.

Peryton

These mystical animals appear to be winged deer, but they are really murderous hunters that prey on animals and humanoids alike. They are also known as the "Demon Deer," because of their aggressive, bloodthirsty nature and the fact that these bizarre creatures cast the shadow of a man rather than that of a deer! Much about the Peryton remains a mystery. One legend suggests they are monsters from another dimension, another that they are demons or witches who defied their demonic masters and were turned into a supernatural animal as either a punishment or a reward (both seem plausible). Others swear they are the creation of magic. Some even say they are the living nightmares from the dreams of the slumbering Old Ones — a little payback gift from the Old Ones to the world that has striven so hard to rid itself of the Age of Chaos. Given their proliferation in the Northern Mountains and elsewhere in the Land of the Damned, this second theory seems like it *might* have more than a grain of truth to it. Whatever their origin, Perytons are infamous throughout the region for swooping down on travelers when they least expect it.

Though Perytons prefer to dine on humanoids, they also will eat huge quantities of animals and livestock.

For more information on the Peryton, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 124.

Scarecrows

These creatures are animated straw effigies of humanoids. They look like a normal scarecrow with button-like eyes, a floppy hat, sewn lips/mouth, tattered clothing, gloves and boots stuffed with straw, and straw-filled bag for a head. Only they are *alive*, and they mean to do harm to everybody they encounter.

These supernatural beings were created by an insane Summoner/Diabolist who was slain many years ago while in the process of creating an entire army of these things. The secret of Scarecrow summoning or creation (nobody is sure which process is responsible for these beings) was lost with its keeper. Since then, as far as anyone can tell, no more Scarecrows have been created/summoned, though several hundred continue to plague the earth. They have spread out over the entire reach of the known world, having been encountered in every nation and region.

Scarecrows are effectively immortal, so many of them acquire extensive skills, knowledge, and even spell casting abilities! In spite of their mass persecution (they are universally feared and hated by the living, and thus are hounded and destroyed whenever possible), Scarecrows have a powerful knack for survival. Many of them have moved to wastelands and wildernesses where they can exist without worrying about fire-brandishing mobs or champions of justice looking to put another notch on their sword belt.

Because of their unique nature, Scarecrows can come in and out of the Land of the Damned and even the Eternal Torment (no curses afflict them) as they please with no ill effect. Their powers and their intellect give them an edge over most undead

who would wish to start trouble with them, but because these are animated beings, not creatures of flesh and blood, they tend to have an easy time getting along with the various "inmates" (as they like to call them) of that region.

For more information on Scarecrows, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 129.

Spectres

Primitive people often believe the Spectre to be a horrific ghost, but it is really a supernatural being of pure energy, not a spirit or entity at all. Spectres assume a humanoid shape and glow with crackling energy that gives them an eerie illumination and ghostly appearance. They are a malignant alien force that is the embodiment of evil; content to wander the world inflicting pain and misery upon intelligent life forms.

These energy beings are known to many worlds, but rarely do they gather in large numbers because they simply can not work well together in large groups. They are solitary in nature, and when forced to cooperate, end up fighting amongst themselves and getting nothing at all accomplished.

According to legend, the Masters of the *Citadel* who rule the Bleakness can summon and command up to a dozen of these strange and powerful creatures at a time. When they do so, they usually send the Spectres out alone or in teams of two to carry out specific missions. Most often, these creatures scout out new areas for the soldiers of the Citadel to raid and plunder. Other times, they search for pockets of resistance where enemy soldiers might be gathering their strength. Once the Spectres learn of these places, they communicate that back to their lords, who in turn know where next to send their soldiers.

Anywhere in the Land of the Damned, the appearance of a Spectre can be assumed to be a direct action from the Citadel. To date, no "free" Spectre has appeared anywhere in the region, not even in the Eternal Torment, where one might think these creatures would feel right at home. (The theory is that any Spectres visiting the Land of the Damned either do so to give allegiance to the Citadel or are shanghaied by the Citadel.) Now, that is not to say that Spectres do not appear in the Eternal Torment — they do, just always as the agents of the Citadel. Usually, they are searching the land for a particular item that their masters feel is important, such as a particular weapon, scrap of information, piece of jewelry, etc. When the Spectres find what they are looking for, they often will stand guard over it until other Spectres or other minions of the Citadel show up to take possession of the item. This behavior is all very strange to those unfamiliar with it, and it leads the casual observer to think that the lords of the Citadel are up to something, but what? Are they merely treasure-hunting from afar, or is there something in the vast wreckage of the Eternal Torment that is of great value and the Citadel Lords want it for themselves? It has long been rumored that one or more pieces of the legendary rune sword *Castlerake* can be found in the Land of the Damned. Were that sword fully assembled, it could destroy any building — even the vaunted Citadel — in one strike. Maybe the Citadel Lords are investigating the rumors for themselves just to be sure. After all, if they have just one piece of *Castlerake*, then the sword will become next to impossible to put together without entering the Citadel and confronting its builders and leaders face to face.

For more information on Spectres, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 138.

Sphinxes

These mysterious creatures are part lion, part eagle and part human. Like dragons they are intelligent, study magic, and command keen intellects. Though they are rare, they can be found throughout the world, usually "holding court" someplace where the locals defer to it in all things, so it may enjoy a life of leisure and authority without having to work too terribly hard for it. They are especially well known for setting themselves up as the object of a church's adoration and therefore gaining great power, prestige and wealth.

Very little is known about what truly motivates Sphinxes. Sure, they have a taste for the good life, but money and cushy living is never all that interests them. They have a tendency to show up wherever ancient artifacts or books have been unearthed, seeming at the same time to be honestly curious about it yet too lazy to do any real work to learn more or to actually attain the item in question. It would appear that for all of their intellect and ability, for most Sphinxes, the chase is more enjoyable than the kill, so to speak, which is why they are so notorious for leaving many projects only half-finished.

Even selfish and evil Sphinxes have a natural hostility toward Demons, Deevils, vampires and vampiric supernatural creatures, which might account for their interest in the Land of Eternal Torment. Other parts of the Land of the Damned, Northern Mountains and Northern Hinterlands simply offer the promise of adventure, challenge, treasure and magic, all of which are attractive to these creatures of magic. Furthermore, the Northern Mountains and Hinterlands offer the Sphinxes a place where they can gather, plot and live away from the prying eyes of civilized humanoids.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 139.

Suckers

Suckers are large, bat-like creatures with adhesive suction cups on their fingers and toes as well as grasping claws. Their mouths are similar structures, with both a big suction cup for hanging on to something, and a mouth filled with sharp teeth for sucking blood. The typical Sucker strategy is to fly up to its prey, wrap itself around it, thus preventing the prey from escaping, and then sucking it dry of all blood. There are just a few little problems with this.

First and foremost, Suckers are just plain *stupid*, so they will attack any moving thing, no matter if it is really alive or not. This has gotten these creatures into a ton of trouble in the Eternal Torment, where there are plenty of moving things, but very few of them have any blood worth going after. Suckers will attack anyway, often wrapping themselves around some poor Festulent or Gravedigger, not knowing that they can never gain a meal out of their target. Meanwhile, what usually happens is some other Endless Dead senses a living thing and comes over to kill the Sucker while it is helplessly trying to feed. It is a sad state of affairs, but one that continues anyway, much to the Suckers' detriment. These creatures fare better in the Darkest Heart and other parts of the region where they can swoop down from the trees onto unsuspecting humanoids and large animals.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 140.

Syvan

A Syvan is a supernatural being that appears as a decaying, animated corpse. Technically, it could be considered *undead*, but it still has all of its independence, personality and intelligence. The left side of a Syvan's body is always far more ugly than the right. They are generally evil beings who hate beauty and are terribly jealous of prettier creatures. This jealousy is vented by acts of manipulation, cruelty and harm toward other living things, with Elves as a primary target. Syvan are intelligent, cunning beings whose main weapons are deception and trickery. They are mere shadows of the living and must conceal their deformity in full body armor, hooded robe, mask, or other means of concealment or disguise.

Syvan are unquestionably extremely powerful beings yet most are content to be the secret powers behind a puppet who *appears* to be the leader or ruler. This is *not* the case with those Syvan in the Land of the Damned, however. In this region, their deformities are more of a badge of honor than something to hide, and as a result, the few Syvan known to operate in the region are much more brazen about what they want, how they intend to get it and their public appearance overall. The Syvan of the Land of the Damned are no strangers to more brutish and crude ways of getting what they want, no matter how much derision their methods might gain from other Syvan who detest such a lack of subtlety.

The origin of the Syvan is unknown. If they were once among the living, they apparently lost all memory of it when they became what they are now. Many scholars and men of magic suspect that their origin is somehow linked to the Western Empire. Fortunately for the rest of the world, Syvan are very rare, with only about 200 in existence. Of those 200, at least 20 — 10% — are known to live in or near the Land of the Damned.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 144.

Unicorn

Unicorns are a classic beast of myth, with beautiful (P.B. 24) horse-like features, a billy goat beard, a long silvery horn in the center of its forehead and cloven hooves. These are creatures of magic that can sense the presence of both good and evil and are skittish about contact with humanoids in general.

Unicorns can be found in the Old Kingdom, the Eastern Territory, the Great Northern Wilderness, and to a much lesser extent, in the *Land of the Damned*. Even in the so-called "End of the World," Unicorns are largely confined to two locales — the northern coastal areas, where they must survive amid an increasingly hostile Harpy population, and in the depths of the *Darkest Heart*, where they must endure the wrath of the Were-Beasts, evil Faerie Folk who have come to detest beauty, and other monsters and predators.

Unicorns did not originate in the Chaos War. Actually, they exist on numerous other worlds besides Palladium, and several of the Heroic Realms are also home to these magnificent creatures. Alas, Unicorns are scarce in the Palladium World, even in remote regions of the Great Northern Wilderness and Land of the Damned. Unicorns are thought to have been introduced near the end of the Chaos War by the Elves, and it was the Kingdom of Therendil that brought large numbers of Unicorns with them when they took over the Garrison duties in what is now the

Darkest Heart, but as their position crumbled, many of their servants and allies were made to suffer for it. Many of the Unicorns they brought suffered such a fate, compelling them to abandon the Elven kingdom long ago.

Despite their reluctance to trust other creatures, Unicorns are beings of pure goodness and are drawn to people of the same nobility and purity. Unicorns automatically help or protect creatures of a very good alignment (Scrupulous and Principled) and will often play with children and those with an innocent nature, to the point of even allowing them to ride on their backs! Likewise, Unicorns may assist or protect good beings and innocent children of any race. This makes them a welcomed sight in a place such as the Land of the Damned, but even these noble and elegant creatures can only do so much in a land filled with hate, envy and evil.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 150.

Waternix

The mischievous and sinister Waternix is a creature of magic that looks like a winged dog or fox that walks on its hind legs. Though these silver-tongued charmers might seem friendly and sincere at first, they should not be trusted under any circumstance. They are consummate liars, tricksters and con artists whose sole goal is self-gratification at the cost of others. Most times, they will approach a group, win their trust, then proceed to rob them blind before stabbing them in the back.

In the Land of the Damned, Waternix are fairly common in the north, in the Bleakness and in the foothills of the Broken Horn. In both places, these creatures cannot gather in numbers because the powers that be will confront them in force. Rather, these creatures live solitary lives as grifters and thieves, laying low, avoiding big trouble, and preying on the weak and gullible whenever possible.

Over the years, a few dozen of these creatures have crossed the Great Rift and filtered their way through the killing fields of the Minion War and into the Darkest Heart (they know better than to test the dangers of the Eternal Torment). Within the lush forests they enjoy lives of plunder, skullduggery and good sport, pitting the Were-Beasts against the Therendil Elves and heroic adventurers. They also trick and taunt the Faerie Folk and other inhabitants of the forest.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 153.

Worms of Taut

The Worms of Taut are considered to be demons from the deepest pits of Hell, but in actuality, they are supernatural monsters from another dimension. The belief that they are demons is given credibility in that they can be summoned with a circle of Summon Lesser Beings (or Demons) by sacrificing a poisonous snake and writing the name of a specific type of Worm in the snake's blood. The Worms of Taut can also be summoned with a Circle of Summon Serpents but only if the circle is drawn in the blood of a dead Worm of Taut (any kind). On most worlds, the Worms of Taut must be within the surrounding geographic area to be summoned by the Circle of Summon Serpents, but in the Palladium World, such a summoning will draw a Worm of Taut directly from their home dimension! However, because these creatures are not magical nor are they real demons, they cannot be sent back to their home world. Once they are in the

Palladium World, they are there to stay. The best the Summoner who brought them in can do is to control the beasts for as long as possible.

Blow Worms are the largest and least common of the Worms of Taut. Their massive size (120 to 200 feet/36.6 m to 61 m long) and easygoing demeanor make them a much less subtle agent of death and destruction than other Worms of Taut. Summoners rarely call upon these creatures unless they desire to use them as tools of wholesale destruction and slaughter. In that regard, it is easy to see why the Old Ones might have employed these creatures during the Chaos War as a kind of weapon of mass destruction, especially when summoned en masse. In the Land of the Damned they are found primarily in grasslands and dead zones devoid of vegetation.

Tri-Fangs are aggressive and deadly beasts with a single serpentine body but three heads, each of which can spit a potent acid that can blind a person if they are hit in the eyes. Scholars believe that these creatures were used in the Chaos War as a kind of assassin, meant to creep into the chambers of sleeping generals and heroes of Light and murder them while they slept. Today in the Land of the Damned, Tri-Fangs can be found mostly in the Eternal Torment. The Mortification has had no discernible effect on these creatures. These worms love to hide out in rubble and ruins, of which the Eternal Torment has plenty, and attack by surprise. A few serve or are enslaved by some of the Mummies Immortalus and other intelligent undead.

Tomb Worms are the smallest of the Worms of Taut, yet they are still vicious and dangerous, possessing a nasty bite and a temperament to match. These creatures, as their name might suggest, live in tombs, crypts, mausoleums, graveyards and any other places for the dead, where they feed on the corpses. Small wonder, then, why they find the Endless Torment and Great Rift such wonderful places to live, but they are found throughout the Land of the Damned.

Nippers and the rare **Serpent Beast** are also occasionally encountered in the lowlands of the Land of the Damned.

For more information about all "Demon Worms of Taut," see **Monsters & Animals**, pages 156-162.

Yema

Horri-fying undead reptilians from a past age, the Yema are one of the more distinctive creatures of the Land of the Damned. Their occasional incursions into Ophid's Grasslands have made them known to outside adventurers and scholars, which is why they have a place in every major bestiary published to date. Yema are believed to be most numerous in the *Land of Eternal Torment*, though according to scholastic record, they somehow predate the Mortification. Some believe that maybe the horri-fying visage of these creatures is what gave the Alliance of Light the idea for the Mortification in the first place, and thus decided to transform the entire region into the likeness of the Yema — undead misery.

Today in the Land of the Damned, Yema are found throughout the Land of Eternal Torment. They have no will of their own and are commanded by the most powerful and intelligent of the undead, Mummies Immortalus, and other powerful practitioners of magic. The Lords of the Dead each command a Yema as their personal steed. Unlike their undead brethren in the Eternal Torment, Yema *can* leave that land of undeath and are found here

and there in tiny numbers throughout the Land of the Damned, including a platoon of 50 deployed by the Citadel.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 162.

Zavor

Though these creatures are found worldwide and in tiny quantities, scholars have long suspected that there might be potentially large populations of these magic creatures hidden in the Northern Mountains. Indeed, explorers have begun to confirm these suspicions as they discover sealed crypts built into the Northern Mountains containing 1D6 of the vile beings. Exactly who built these crypts remains a mystery, but clearly some are the handiwork of the Garrison and other heroes, while others are secret places where the Zavor may serve as monstrous guardians or a curse waiting to be unleashed. Since Zavor are impossible to kill by magic (actually, magic only causes them to instantly duplicate), destroying a horde of the monsters could prove to be disastrous. Fortunately, no such multitude has ever been discovered, not even in the Land of the Damned. The best way to stop this menace is to contain them – sealing them off from the world at large.

For more information, see **Monsters & Animals**, page 165.

Additional Creeps and Creatures

All manner of diabolic beings, outcasts, fugitives and evil sorcerers find the Land of the Damned to be an alluring retreat and sanctuary from the civilized world and heroes who may be pursuing them, despite how difficult it may be to enter or leave. Thus, the exotic, disenfranchised and the worst of the worst may be found here and there. This includes the occasional Za, demons of all kinds, Lizard Mages, dragons, and the like.

Notable Animals

The Darkest Heart and other parts of the Land of the Damned are wilderness areas where one can expect to find numerous “ordinary” animals such as birds, rabbits, deer, foxes, wolves, bears, and so on. For information on any number of normal animal species (over 200), check out the latter section of the dynamite **Monsters & Animals** sourcebook.

Aside from a few crows, buzzards, rats, snakes, spiders and scorpions, there really is no ordinary wildlife to speak of in the *Land of Eternal Torment*. All of it has long since been devoured, destroyed or driven out by the angry and murderous Endless Dead.

The Endless Dead

By Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin

The Land of Eternal Torment, as anybody familiar with that region will know, is a place of endless tragedy and misery. During the Chaos War, this southernmost region of what is now the Land of the Damned saw the heaviest fighting in the conflict's final days. Here did the Old Ones make their final stand, throwing all of their minions before them in a vain attempt to forestall the inevitable defeat at the hands of the Alliance of Light. By the time the war ended, this region was the scene of almost unimaginable carnage. Huge pits had to be dug to contain the dead and dying bodies, and in many cases they filled up to the top and kept piling up. In some places, the mounds of the dead loomed like small hills, the sort of thing that from a distance, one might mistake to be part of the natural landscape. Not even the devouring carrion-eaters could keep up with the mounting dead. It is said that the stench of death from those final bloodlettings has never left the region, and that it has cast a lingering pallor over the southern reaches of this doomed land.

When the Old Ones fell to slumber and their forces were defeated, the Chaos War finally came to an end. The angry and vengeful Alliance of Light sought to punish those who dared serve the Old Ones or who lacked the strength to resist them when enslaved. Ultimately, the Alliance would create the Land of the Damned, but also *cursed* and condemned the worst of the defeated survivors to an eternity of *undeath*. A cruel mockery of life itself marked only by never-ending pain, hunger, and wretchedness. There was no better place to lock them away in, they decided, than the final killing fields in the south. A place

that would, from that day forward, be known as the *Land of Eternal Torment*. The Gods of Light then worked great magic – a curse upon the very land – making it impossible for its undead denizens to leave its confines, and then cast upon it the *Mortification* to curse upon any intelligent living beings who dared to enter this place of Endless Dead and Eternal Torment.

In the wake of the Alliance's cruel punishment, there emerged fourteen varieties of *undead* common to the Eternal Torment, as well as the traditional vampire. These creatures became known to outsiders as the “Endless Dead,” the shadows of those who trucked with evil. Their misery and punishment was meant to serve as a warning to others never to walk in the ways of darkness inspired by the Old Ones. Unfortunately, since the history of the Chaos War has become so faded and forgotten, most people in the world today neither know of the Eternal Torment or of its message. Of those who do, many have forgotten the unspeakable horrors of the Old Ones, and mistakenly believe that in their harshness, the Alliance of Light stooped to the level of their vanquished enemies. This was not the case, but the Endless Dead who have been suffering the Alliance's wrath since the end of the War, might tell one otherwise. They tell such tales in hopes that some foolish mortal might work to free them or bring witless victims to them to torture, kill and feast upon. For the undead in the Land of the Eternal Torment are the antithesis of life itself, and have always been. That is why their fate is a just one. Where there can be happiness, the Endless Dead know only sorrow. Where there can be satisfaction, the undead know only longing. Where there can be safety, the undead know only

struggle. Where there can be love, the undead know only hatred. And where there can be hope, the undead know only despair.

This is the way it has been since the end of the Chaos War, and most of the creatures currently inhabiting the Eternal Torment are in fact veterans of that conflict. As with most undead, the Endless Dead are all immortal in that they do not age, so unless they are physically destroyed somehow, they will go on forever in their hideous state. They are supposed to carry out a meaningless existence in which salvation can only come when the prisoners are destroyed by their fellow undead, a wandering hero, or when and if the Alliance of Light decides to revoke the curse it has laid down. The only alternative is to have the Old Ones awaken, return to power, and cancel the magic that binds the undead to their prison.

Destruction at the hands of other undead is the most common release. After all, most of the Endless Dead are little more than mindless savages that are in an endless quest to assuage whatever is hurting them. For the most of them, an endless, insatiable hunger defines their existence, so they roam all over the Endless Torment in a largely fruitless effort to find some living being to eat. Rarely finding the living flesh they crave, the undead will, in desperation, turn on each other knowing that it will not satisfy their hunger, but does allow them to vent their pent up anger, frustration and hatred for the world. For many, it is an endless search to vent their wrath, or to find somebody to hurt as much as they themselves hurt. Whatever the motive, there is no shortage of opportunity for infighting and victimization among their own loathsome kind. Not to mention, the Endless Torment is crowded. All of those dead bodies that fell in the Chaos War were re-animated by the Mortification and all of the living prisoners were at the same time turned into undead, too. The Endless Torment is not a particularly big area, and it must accommodate many millions of inhabitants. This means that most of the Endless Dead do not have to go far before encountering another one of their kind, which brings up even further potential for confrontation. Despite how likely these creatures are to battle each other or simply start a fight for fighting's sake, the chance of destruction at the hands of another "inmate" is surprisingly rare. Remember, these are wicked and depraved monsters, so they are unwilling to grant to another the "release" they themselves crave and yet are denied. For others, murder and suicide only means the Gods of Light have succeeded in destroying them and the Endless Dead are not willing to give these most hated of deities the satisfaction. Thus, the undead rarely fight to the death when pitted against one another, and so the eternal suffering continues without end.

The chances of the Alliance of Light revoking its curse are just about minimal. First and foremost, the vast majority of these cursed undead fiends were always evil incarnate bent on tormenting and destroying all that is good, beautiful, and for many, life itself. Thus, there is not one shred of redeeming value in a single one. Second, the Gods and Dragons involved in the Mortification do not think they did anything wrong or undeservedly cruel, despite what other members of the Alliance might have said at the time. They feel that the punishment they inflicted was the very least that the most wretched of the Old Ones' minions deserved, and they should be thankful they were not subjected to worse treatment. Aside from that mentality, the Alliance had to pool its strength to lay down the magic and

Mortification at work in the Land of Eternal Torment, and in so doing, many Gods and Dragons lost a little of that strength forever. To reverse the curse, the Alliance would have to regroup and sacrifice more of their power/strength. Neither of those things are ever likely to happen. It took a war against the Old Ones to unite the Alliance the first time, and it will take nothing less to unite them a second time. Until then, the old Alliance of Light remains scattered and fractured. Even half its members would be unable to revoke the curses and magic they wrought in the past.

On top of all of that, suppose for a moment that the Mortification was lifted, and all of the undead of the Eternal Torment were restored to full vitality. Where would all of these villains go? Out into world to reap new chaos, evil and sorrow. They were only allowed to live, trapped in the Land of Eternal Torment, as an alternative to destroying them outright. No, these eternally damned should never hope for release from the old gods of the Alliance. Only the return of the Old Ones or some unknown magic or secret failsafe (if such a thing even exists) can undo the magic at work and free them. According to legend there is an ancient prophecy (or warning) that goes like this:

"Whosoever shall break the chains of the endless death shall in turn inflict that fate upon the rest of the world, a world that the endless dead shall govern with all the power they were once denied."

This (supposed) prophecy gives many of the undead hope that there "is" some way to break their imprisonment and go forth into the world as the conquering masters of mere mortals. Then again, over the last 50,000+ years there have been a number of escapades and plots that seemed promising, but all have failed as might all in the future. Truth be told, the ancient prophecy may have no bearing in reality and may have been created by some ancient undead prisoner to give himself and others hope for freedom and terrible vengeance.

And with that, we bring you the Lords of the Grave, the Walking Doom, the infamous Endless Dead. As mentioned before, there are fourteen new varieties of Endless Dead in the Eternal Torment, but there is also the traditional vampire and other creatures allured to death, such as Banshees, Grave Ghouls, Tomb Worms, Entities and similar supernatural beings. (There might very well be additional types or sub-types of undead of the Game Master's own design.)

The members of the Endless Dead inhabiting the Endless Torment include:

Aberrations, bizarre entities that look like two small humanoids mashed into a single body, always looking to explain why they shouldn't be here.

Blighters, a miserable breed of creature that spreads death, disease and entropy.

Blood Wraiths, vile things that seem composed of coagulated blood formed into a rough humanoid frame. These creatures can switch between solid and liquid form, and are especially difficult to kill or capture.

Bone Fiends, super-skeletons who can repair themselves with the bones of others.

Eviscerals, a kind of grisly zombie that has lost the whole of its inner organs, and spends eternity on a sad and disgusting quest to rob the living of their internal organs.

Festulents, super-zombies lost to sorrow and hunger.

Gravediggers, foul beasts who feed on the dead and wait for the dying.

Harbingers, orange-eyed animals (rat, cat, dog, snake, frog, scorpion, etc.) who talk, cast magic, and signal the coming of impending catastrophe.

Jaliquettes, a kind of flesh-eating monster that appears like an ordinary humanoid, but whose head detaches after sundown and flies about in search of prey.

Mortoi, also known as "zombie vampires," as rotting corpses that feed on the blood of the living to restore themselves to full health. A well-fed *Mortoi* is indistinguishable from a normal living person, except that their breath always smells faintly of death.

Rawheads, also known as *Boo Hags*, are roaming spirits of awful, pure evil that lives only to plague the living.

Revenants, composite beings composed of dead parts. Monsters with free will and power who masquerade as real people.

Sladka, vicious and dangerous sinister steeds of the undead, ready to serve, yet forever resentful of their duties as beasts of burden.

Sleepwalkers, the roaming spirits who haunt the world on an endless and often fruitless search for its body.

Vampires, the classic walking dead who also exist beyond the confines of the Land of the Damned and world at large, though thankfully in fairly small numbers.

About the Undead

All undead are supernatural creatures who have, in some way, already died, but are cursed to roam the earth as an infernal walking dead. This makes them immune to *ordinary weapons* (no damage). Thus, like the traditional *vampire*, only **weapons made of wood, silver or magic** will harm them (full damage), Holy Weapons included. Sometimes a specific undead in the Land of Eternal Torment will have a specific, special or additional vulnerability, but unless it says otherwise in the description, the usual wood, silver and magic vulnerability applies.

Weapons that have been blessed by a mid- to high-level Priest of Light (6th level or higher) will turn an ordinary weapon into one that hurts most undead, but it only does one third its usual damage. Blessing silver or magic weapons has no additional effect.

Water damage. Blessing water turns the liquid into the equivalent of acid or molten lead, a vial worth doing 3D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points to *vampire*, and 2D4 to most other forms of undead. Against *vampires*, rain does 4D6 damage per minute and holding a vampire under running water does 6D6 damage per minute. When a vampire has lost 21 points of damage *below zero*, it melts away into slime and the vampire is slain. **Note:** Unless stated so, ordinary water has NO ill effect on the other types of undead in the Eternal Torment.

Holy symbols can be used to hold *all* undead at bay, forcing them back 1D6+6 feet (2.1 to 3.6 m). Being touched by a holy symbol causes burning pain and 1D6 points of damage. Magic circles of protection will also usually work to hold any undead outside the circle.

Sunlight destroys *vampires* at a rate of 1D6x10 damage per melee round! However, sunlight does NOT hurt/damage all

undead. Only those who are exclusively *nocturnal predators* who sleep during the day suffer damage like a vampire, the other undead of the Eternal Torment can function just fine in the daylight – well, mostly. Since all are creatures of death and darkness, they are most powerful at *night*. The stats and bonuses under each description are for the creature at its *full strength*, which is at night. During the daytime, reduce the undead's physical attributes, S.D.C., bonuses and the range, duration and damage of any psionic, magic, or special powers by half!

Psionics. Not all undead possess psychic abilities. Those who do have psionics often use them to seek out the living before their undead brethren can. If they possess the ability to communicate empathically or telepathically, they will have a much easier time making contact and influencing or manipulating the living. See the individual descriptions for details.

Special Abilities. Each type of undead in the Land of Eternal Torment is unique and will have different powers, abilities, afflictions and goals. These will be presented in each description.

Impervious to most normal weapons, disease, poison, gases, alcohol, fire, heat, cold (although magic fire and cold do full damage), drowning, and possession.

Feeding Habits. Though vampires drink human and humanoid blood, other undead may consume humanoid flesh, internal organs and other things instead of or in addition to blood. The eating habits for each type of undead will be listed in their description.

Killing the undead. Again, the different types of undead will have different vulnerabilities and ways they can be killed. In most cases, the head must be severed and the head and body burnt separately until they are reduced to ash or close to it. Otherwise, an undead may seem dead (S.D.C. & Hit Points reduced to zero or below), but if the body remains intact, the creature will regenerate to unlife with the coming of the next night. Likewise, just decapitating the monster is not enough, for if the head and body are reunited, the creature will return to life with the next nightfall. Driving a wooden stake into a *vampire's* heart immobilizes the fiend and puts it into a coma as long as the stake remains in place. Remove it, and the creature returns to life within a melee round. Staking other undead often has no such effect, and will make the monster extremely angry. If there is some special way to hurt, contain or destroy a specific type of undead, it will be presented in the description.

Read on and be afraid.



Aberrations

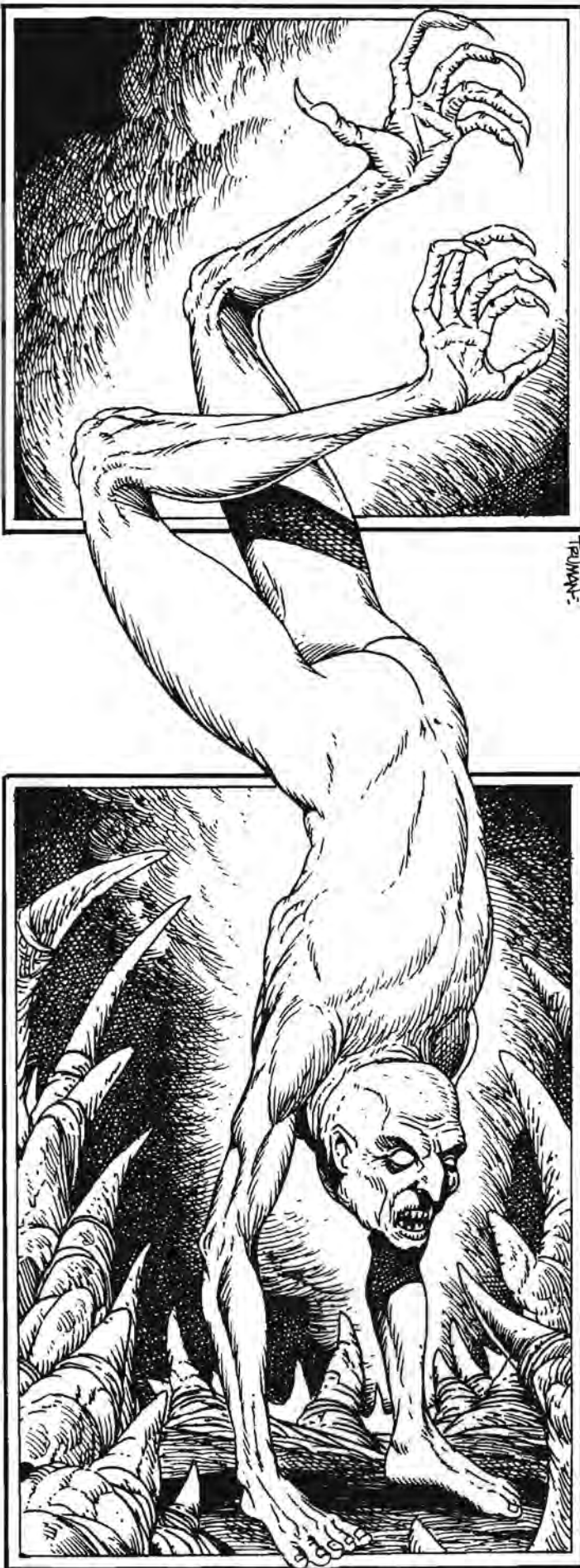
Aberrations resemble thin, sexless humanoids about as tall as a human. Their skin is a pasty white, and they have no body hair whatsoever. Their heads look as if some unseen hand reached down and screwed them 180 degrees so they are facing backwards. The flesh on their necks is wrinkled and stretched, showing that indeed, these creatures did not develop with their heads on backward, they were really twisted into place somehow. An Aberration's clawed hands are where his feet should be and his feet are where his hands should be. Both the Aberration's hands and feet are also twisted around 180 degrees, so the creature's hands, feet and head are all facing one direction while the rest of its body is facing the other direction.

To walk around, the Aberration does a handstand so it can move upright and still rest on its feet. Like a limber acrobat, the Aberration bends back and lets its legs hang over its head so it can bring its hands to bear on things. To see one of these creatures in motion is a little disorienting, both because they look so weird, and because their body parts are all mixed up, and most folk automatically try to rearrange them in their minds.

Aberrations have a very long tongue and they drool excessively. Unfortunately, many of them have a lot to say, so they spend much of their time seeking out somebody who will listen to them try to explain how and why they did what they did during the Chaos War, and how their punishment is unjust. These onetime mouthpieces, spies, instigators, interrogators and torturers for the Old Ones are in complete denial of their evil ways and are bent on explaining themselves. Any creatures who dismiss them, disagree with them or shun them even in fear are attacked, and, if possible, incapacitated, captured and tortured for (1D6+3) days before the Aberration finally kills them and drinks their blood and eats their organs.

Aberrations can use weapons and tools quite well with their hands, but they rarely do. They are among the least overtly aggressive of the undead and, if one can stomach 1D4 hours of listening to the horrid thing and convincingly feign sympathy, the Aberration will let them go unscathed, and may even warn them about more bloodthirsty undead in the area. Aberrations frequently gather in small sullen groups of 1D4+1 individuals who all commiserate in a mass discussion about their unfair punishment, terrible lives and dismal future. When not meeting with their fellows, Aberrations are content to watch the world go by, always watching with their dark, unblinking eyes. The moment they spot somebody who looks like he is from outside the Eternal Torment, however, they race over to begin chatting at top volume, so excited will they be to relate their story of woe and misery to the newcomer. Of course, to the uninitiated, this *may* look like an unprovoked attack. People who respond by running away or attacking the Aberration earn the monster's ire and murderous vengeance.

Where an Aberration causes real trouble for adventurers is when one adopts an individual or group of living characters and tags along with them while they are in the Land of Eternal Torment. There is a 01-33% chance that an Aberration will stay with any living visitor(s) who showed it kindness by taking the time to listen to the horror and pretended to be sympathetic. The creature talks relentlessly to him/them about its eons of suffering, wallowing in self-pity and telling tale of woe after woe.



Anything the creature has to say is either self-involved or incredibly negative ("You'll never make it." "It's hopeless." "Why try?" "You're all doomed, I'm afraid." and so on). Remember, ignoring or telling the Aberration to shut up only provokes the creature and may turn him against that individual or the entire group. The constant prattle also makes prowling and quiet travel impossible as long as the jabbering undead is in tow.

The only ways to get rid of one of these dangerous pests are to sneak off when it's not looking, kill it or outrun it. Killing them is usually the easier solution, but the Aberrations really have done nothing wrong to the adventurers, and good characters *might* have a hard time justifying the slaughter of even an evil undead who has not wronged them. Aberrations who have been with the group for awhile will get a hurt look on their face once they are attacked ("But what did I do wrong?") and then defend themselves, fighting unusually well for creatures with such distorted body structures. Should the Aberration win the fight, it will extract a terrible revenge and cannot be fooled again by pretense of friendship or companionship. Likewise, those who encounter an Aberration they snuck away from in the past will face an angry and vengeful enemy when they meet again.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic evil only.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 3D6+6, P.P. 3D6+2, P.E. 2D6, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 3D6

Size: Six feet tall (1.8 m) on average. Regardless of what the creature's race was before the Mortification, all Aberrations look alike now.

Weight: Around 150 to 170 lbs (67.5.1 to 76.5 kg).

Hit Points: P.E.+3D6

S.D.C. 1D4x10

Natural A.R. 5

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E. 3D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Keen vision and senses, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per hour. Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only four hours in the early morning hours after dawn, always up by noon. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, but is illiterate. Can also perform Mime 80%, Sign Language 75%, Swim 40%, Climb 60%/50%, and Basic Math 60%. No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten how to do it.

Special: Sense the Living: Aberrations can instinctively sense the location of a living (i.e. non-Mortified) mortal being within two miles (3.2 km). Can also sense Banshees.

Special: Scream of Despair: When an Aberration fears it is not getting its story through to a living visitor, it can scream what it has to say at a volume equal to a megaphone. This booming, rather high-pitched scream can be heard up to three miles (4.8 km) away. All who hear it know the wail is bad – a portent of danger. Indeed, if the Aberration continues to be ignored or shunned it will attack in a murderous fury, usually battling until it is slain or at least incapacitated (Hit Points reduced to zero or less). Additionally, other predators, blackguards, monsters and undead will have heard the scream and *may* come to investigate.

Attacks Per Melee: Three. Aberrations are the wimps of the undead.

Damage: Punch or kick for 2D6 +P.S. damage bonuses, bite does 2D4 damage, or it can also pick up and use weapons. In the Eternal Torment, Aberrations are fond of pitching rocks and bones and throwing them at opponents (1D6+3 damage up to 200 feet/61 m away) and using large bones for clubs (2D4 damage +P.S. damage bonus if any).

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: -3 to save vs psionics and illusions.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None, except maybe as an interpreter.

Habitat: In the Palladium World, currently exclusive to the Land of Eternal Torment, but they *may* exist in other worlds and Hellish dimensions.

Languages: Understands and speak all at 98% proficiency.

Enemies: Hates all other undead, mainly because they can't stand these blabbermouth complainers either, and regularly beat them into silence and subject them to other indignities and brutality.

Allies: Loners who avoid all but the company of fellow Aberrations and the companionship of the living. In fact, their desire to hang with the living is one of the things that other undead loathe about these simpering freaks. On the other hand, while an Aberration may offer the living warnings of doom and danger, they *never* lift a finger to fight in their defense.

Blighters

Blighters, sometimes known as *Fodder Wretches*, were non-combatants in the Chaos War but the willing and loyal administrators and servants of the Old Ones. The Mortification has turned them into ugly, scabrous humanoids. They are forever plagued by scaly diseased flesh that exudes a hideous stench and itching all over their carcass. Driven mad by these conditions, the Blighters are all savage, animal-like humanoids who spend much of their time huddled under some rock scratching their flesh until it bleeds and grumbling incoherently to themselves. In short, they look like scarred, scabbed and boil covered walking corpses with long, clawed fingers.

Like most of the Endless Dead, Blighters have no real society to speak of. They do sometimes congregate in groups of 6D6, but only when there is something there that satisfies everybody's mutual interest, like a huge cave where many Blighters can hide, a sand pit where they can abrade their skin, a mud pool where they can soak and alleviate their itching, or humanoid or animal prey to torture, kill and devour. Fortunately, Blighters are so obsessed with their own pus-filled and itching bodies that they tend to be oblivious to things around them until someone else draws their attention. This means careful and quiet adventurers can walk within 10 feet (3 m) of a Blighter or an entire group of these misanthropes without causing alarm or provoking them to attack. However, once a living being, be it animal or humanoid, is noticed, the foul monsters will attack with the inten-



tion of killing and devouring every last morsel except for the bones. Because they are so hideous themselves, Blighters loathe all attractive creatures and delight in beating them into submission, tying them up and torturing them (typically for 2D6 hours) before killing and eating them, and then smashing their bones in small pieces. The more beautiful, the more terrible the torture. Sometimes, when the Blighter is well fed, the monster will disfigure and/or maim the attractive being and let it go to suffer from the new deformities as Blighters suffer.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic evil only.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+4, M.E. 1D6+1, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2D6+14, P.P. 2D6+9, P.E. 2D6+9, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 2D6+9

Size: 6-7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m).

Weight: 150 to 220 lbs (67.5 to 99 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x3.

S.D.C. P.E. attribute number +30.

Natural A.R. 10

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E. 2D4

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per hour. Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only five hours from noon till five p.m. when the sun is hottest; always up by five. Magically understands and speaks all languages at 90%, but is illiterate. Can also Swim 60%, Climb 80%/70%, Camouflage (themselves) 75%, and Land Navigation 75%. No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten.

Special: Stench of Putrifaction: The Blighters reek of decaying human flesh and any mortal who comes within 10 feet (3 m) chokes, gags and his eyes water. This reaction imposes the following penalties (mainly applicable in close-combat situations): -3 on initiative, -1 to strike and parry, -20% to perform a skill, and will desperately want to avoid any types of wrestling holds or pinning moves against this horrid smelling monstrosity. Plus the character must roll under his P.E. attribute number once every minute to avoid vomiting from the stench (even characters with a P.E. of 18 or higher must roll a 17 or lower to save, despite their high endurance).

Bite Causing Sickness: The bite of the Blighter inflicts the *Sickness* identical in effect to the spell of the same name (see **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, page 205). The only difference is the duration, which is six hours per *each* bite that draws blood (i.e. does S.D.C. or Hit Point damage).

Special: Pox Curse: Once a day, Blighters can throw a *pox curse* identical in effect to the Priest of Darkness ability of the same name (see **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, page 69).

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Claw Strike: Blighters all have sharp talons for rending and scratching their own flesh. A single strike with these claws inflicts 2D6 points of damage +P.S. damage bonus.

Bite: 1D6 damage plus sickness as noted under Natural Abilities.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to pull punch, and +8 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: When confronted with opponents who have a P.B. of 18 or higher, the monster becomes so obsessed with "getting it" that the Blighter ignores other potential opponents and dangers, making it vulnerable to surprise attacks.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbols and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, currently exclusive to the Land of Eternal Torment, but they *may* exist in other worlds and Hellish dimensions, and rumor has it Blighters exist, albeit in tiny numbers, in some of the slums of the Land of the South Winds and ancient ruins in the Yin-Sloth Jungles.

Languages: Blighters magically understand and speak all languages.

Enemies: The living and especially the beautiful. ("Argh...must keep...sc-scratch-ching...scr-scr..huh? Wha? What do you want? WHAT DO YOU WANT?!? Pretty man must die!!")

Allies: None, except their own kind, and they loathe Aberrations. ("GGEEAAUGHhHHhhh! You leave me no ch-choice b-but to . . . k-kill...YOU!")

Blood Wraiths

Not everybody who committed evil during the Chaos War fought for the Old Ones. In fact, some of the worst criminals and killers in the conflict were among the Alliance of Light's best and bravest champions. Whether these figures were some-

how corrupted by the evil of the Old Ones (entirely possible), or whether they simply became victims of their own fanatical desire to defeat the Old Ones (equally possible), there were certain factions within the Alliance that felt any means were fair play in fighting the Old Ones, including resorting to evil measures themselves. This includes things like massacres, campaigns of genocide, and slaughtering women, children, slaves and other noncombatants on the side of the Old Ones whether they were known to be guilty of anything or not. These were also zealots within the Alliance of Light who sacrificed innocent lives for victory on the battlefield, callously sent their own troops to the slaughter in battles that could not be won, or to their deaths for personal revenge or to enhance their own reputation, as well as those who outright murdered fellow Alliance soldiers and rivals out of envy, anger or spite (such as killing those who got in their way, were not fanatical enough in their drive to win the war, or dared to criticize the zealots' actions). When the Mortification came down, these overzealous rogues and killers of Light were transformed into *Blood Wraiths*, hideous, life-sucking creatures that are on a constant search for living victims.

The Blood Wraith has a vaguely humanoid shape, only it appears as a bloated, hairless being that is composed entirely of blood, no muscle or bone. It can stand up and walk around like a biped, but if one were to punch or kick it, the blow would feel as if one is striking a soft bag of liquid, like a giant walking water bottle. Likewise, Blood Wraiths have a hard time grabbing or holding anything because their bodies are completely smooth and glistening with a slime that may very well be a coating of blood. Of course, they are blood red in color.



Blood Wraiths feed on the blood of the living; by touching a living creature and concentrating for one melee round, they can suck their blood out as if by some high-powered form of osmosis. Given enough contact with a Blood Wraith, a victim will lose his entire blood supply to it in a matter of minutes. The Blood Wraith's favored method of attack is to envelop someone in a wrestling-style hold and draw the blood (and life) out of its victim an ounce at a time. Not only do Blood Wraiths love to feed on intelligent life forms, but they also have a special hatred for any person who is obviously a Priest, Paladin or Champion of Light. Other "heroes" – whether self-proclaimed or the genuine article – are next on the monsters' list.

Blood Wraiths detest a fair fight, and at the first sign of being overpowered or ganged up on, the monster releases its prey, abandons the fight and seeks to escape. Nocturnal hunters but may be found awake and alert during the day in underground chambers.

Alignment: Miscreant and Diabolic evil only.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 4D6, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6

Size: When all drawn together, the Blood Wraith can fill a humanoid form standing between six and seven feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) tall. However, since these creatures are made of liquid, they often assume forms that are a lot more spread out than that, and as such, can cover a much larger area if they spread out thinly enough.

Weight: Around 200 lbs (90 kg).

Hit Points: P.E.x2

S.D.C. 2D4x10

Natural A.R. 8, also see *Limited Invulnerability* under Natural Abilities.

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E. 4D4

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round! Blood Wraiths are nocturnal hunters who shun sunlight (sunlight does the same damage to them as vampires, only it turns them into a boiling puddle of goo). Magically understands and speaks all languages at 90%, but is illiterate. Can also Swim 70%, Climb/Scale Walls 50%/40% (too slippery), Land Navigation 60%, and use Wrestling holds. No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten.

Special: Liquid Form Metamorphosis: Six times an hour, a Blood Wraith can transform into a formless glob of blood-like ooze which form it can squeeze through a crack in the wall, down a drainpipe, through openings the size of the crack under a door, and holes no smaller than the size of an orange, as well as to slip out of any bonds, slosh through prison bars or those of a gate or fence, and similar. Thus, these undead are almost impossible to contain or imprison.

Limited Invulnerability: Any kind of physical attack – punch, kick, stomp, fall, blunt weapon strike, etc. – that strikes the Blood Wraith is like hitting a spongy bag of liquid that gives with the force of the blow, causing the monster little harm (10% of normal damage). Projectile weapons also do one tenth their normal damage.

Blade weapons that "stab" and "cut," including spears, pole arms, swords, knives, axes and even biting and claw attacks, do half damage and cause blood to ooze or spurt from the wound. Those who bite a Blood Wraith get a mouthful of vile tasting blood that is not human or any kind of blood they have ever tasted. Those locked in close combat will become covered in the creature's blood.

Energy attacks, such as heat/fire, electricity, magical energy and psionic energy bolts, etc. do full damage. So do magic weapons and weapons made of *bone* or *stone*. Blood Wraiths are NOT vulnerable to wood or silver. Impervious to the usual things for undead.

In addition, it is impossible to grab onto and hold a Blood Wraith even with a bear hug or multiple tentacles or lassoes (can ooze through a net or cage). The damned thing is just too soft and slippery to get a grip, and those who think they have a hold on the monster are *allowed* to hold it only so the evil fiend can draw their blood out through touch.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Blood Punch: 2D4 points of damage +P.S. damage bonus (if any), and leaves a large fist- or grapefruit-sized blood splat/print on its opponent's body/clothing/armor or shield or whatever it struck.

Blood Drain: Touching or pressing against an opponent or victim for one melee round enables the Blood Wraith to begin sucking the character's blood dry. Each draining action counts as one of the creature's melee attacks and does 1D6 damage *direct to Hit Points!* **Note:** Blood Wraiths love to use this power to intimidate captives under interrogation. They may also have one or more prisoners who they keep as a renewable food source, draining one third to half of the prisoners blood and leaving them alone for a day or two before feeding again. If the monster has two or three prisoners, it can feed upon one a day in rotation. Theoretically, a Blood Wraith could keep such prisoners indefinitely, but they are too lazy and food supplies too scarce in the Land of Eternal Torment for them to make any prolonged effort of feeding captives to keep them alive (though water is usually provided). Thus, most perish within 1D4+2 weeks in captivity.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +3 to strike, +1 to dodge, +4 to entangle, +8 to save Horror Factor and pin/hold/incapacitates on a natural roll of 18, 19, or 20 (one melee round later it starts to drain blood!).

Penalties: -2 to save vs magic.

Vulnerabilities: Energy attacks, such as heat/fire, electricity, magical energy and psionic energy bolts, etc., do full damage. So do magic weapons and weapons made of *bone* or *stone*.

When stabbed by a Holy Weapon, the creature takes 50% more damage and its blood around the wound boils! Likewise, being touched by a holy symbol does 2D6 damage and causes the blood under the spot where touched to boil.

Blood Wraiths are NOT vulnerable to wood or silver. Impervious to the usual things for undead.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, currently exclusive to the Land of Eternal Torment.

Languages: Magically understand and speak all languages.

Enemies: Any living creature, no matter how big or strong.

Allies: Typically solitary hunters, but may work or join forces with other cooperative undead as well as other powerful beings, including Mummies Immortalus, Necromancers, Priests of Darkness (especially if they worship the Old Ones), and dragons, among others.

Bone Fiends

Among the hordes of the Endless Dead are wicked soldiers of the Old Ones turned into skeletal monstrosities known as *Bone Fiends*.

Bone Fiends, at first, resemble the animated skeletons summoned by lesser spells and those with the power to animate and control the dead. However, that is where the similarity ends, for Bone Fiends are stronger, faster, and more intelligent than mere puppet-like animated dead. They think and plot, formulate plans and adapt to battlefield conditions. They are warriors with knowledge of combat strategies and tactics, work in groups and with others, laying cunning traps and ambushes and actively look for battles to fight. While Bone Fiends have no society to speak of, they do follow a military structure, congregate with their own kind and live to serve other undead, responding to the commands of the most intelligent and powerful undead, as well as Necromancers, Priests of Darkness, Greater Demons, and dark gods, as if these individuals were their military commanders. Otherwise, they congregate with other lesser undead acting as their protectors or wandering around alone, in pairs or small groups of 2D4 as if they were soldiers on patrol. As "soldiers on patrol," the Bone Fiends instinctively attack and try to destroy anything that does not belong in the Land of Eternal Torment — namely the living, especially intelligent life forms. Bone Fiends are found in greater numbers only when some powerful force of evil goes about collecting them and organizing them into an army company (160 troops).

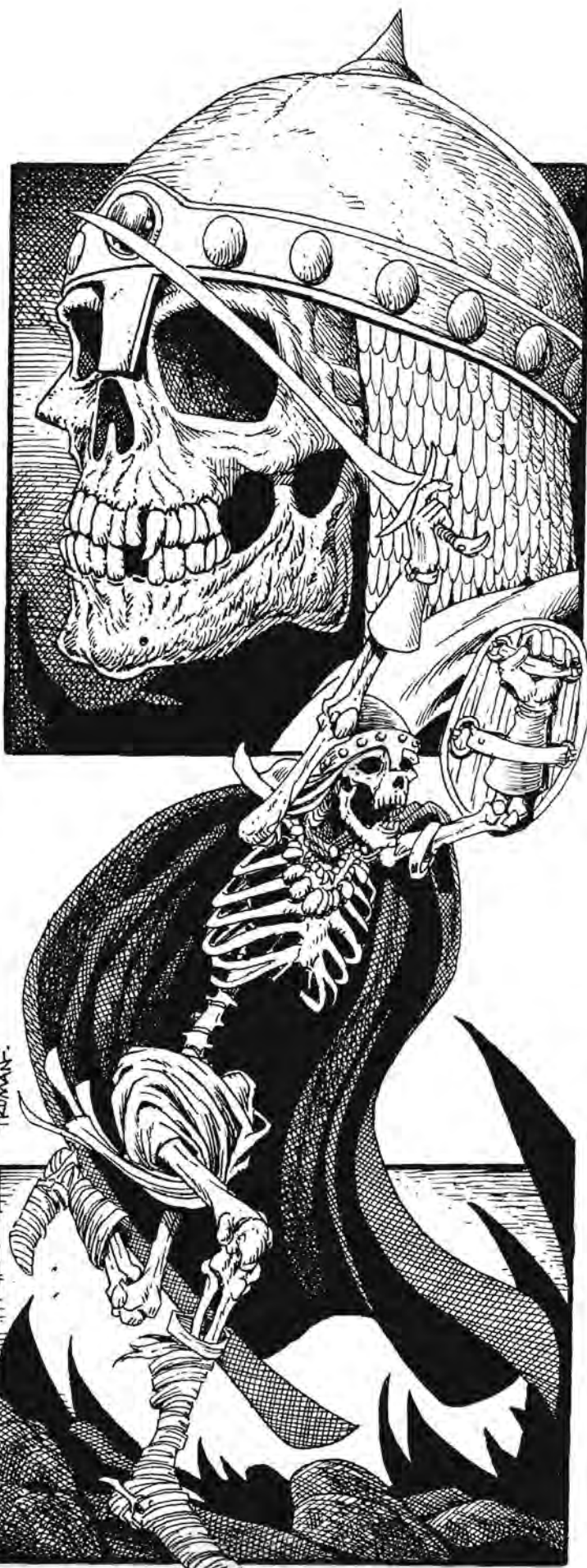
Bone Fiends jump to action whenever they are attacked or spot a living creature (humanoids in particular, but animals too). They may move in to attack immediately and without mercy or wait and set up an ambush. Bone Fiends merely hate the living, and as soldiers, it is their eternal "duty" to keep the Eternal Torment free of invaders (any being who is not an undead or linked to death and the undead), which is why they attack them without provocation. They will also rush to the defense of *any undead* under attack. In these two regards, Bone Fiends serve both the denizens of the Eternal Torment and the Alliance of Light, for they chase away interfering adventurers and help to keep the undead prisoners alive and suffering their penance.

Alignment: Aberrant evil in the broadest sense of the word, unswervingly devoted to keeping the living out of the Land of the Eternal Torment and protecting those who inhabit it.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+5 (cunning and tactical decision making), M.E. 1D6+6 (loyal and unswerving from their duty), M.A. 1D4, P.S. 1D6+17 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 3D6+6

Size: 6-7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) tall with a human skeletal appearance.

Weight: 50 to 75 lbs (22.5 to 33.75 kg).



Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +20.

S.D.C. 2D4x10+13

Natural A.R. 12, plus most use a simple shield (something they find or take from their defeated opponents) and a helmet. Many also wear tattered gloves, gauntlets, capes and cloaks, but they are for show not protection.

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E. 1D4

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round! Bone Fiends never need to sleep, although they do rest, usually in the wee hours of the morning before it gets light (2-5:00 a.m.). Magically understands and speaks all languages at 95%, but is illiterate. Can also Swim 90%, Climb/Scale Walls 90%/80%, Land Navigation 75%, and Recognize Weapon Quality 75%. Also see Bonuses. No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten.

Special: Bone Grafting: If a Bone Fiend loses an appendage, he can pick up a loose bone from a skeleton and graft it onto himself as a replacement. Within a few minutes the limb/bone magically alters its shape to conform with the rest of the body and the creature is instantly restored and healed back to full strength. If the entire skeleton is knocked apart, the cursed thing will reform by the end of the next night. **Note:** The only way to *kill* a Bone Fiend is to smash its skull into a dozen pieces and either burn it all or bury each and every skull fragment separately. If even one skull fragment is left unburied, the Bone Fiend will reform and walk again within 48 hours.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: P.S. under 21: Restrained Punch: 1D4, Full Strength Punch: 2D6, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 4D6.

P.S. 21 and up: Restrained Punch: 1D6, Full Strength Punch: 3D6, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 6D6.

Or by weapons. Most use swords and maces, with a small to medium shield.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 to disarm, and +8 to save vs Horror Factor, plus W.P. Sword (+3 to strike & and parry), W.P. Blunt (+2 to strike and parry) and W.P. Shield (+4 to parry). They are fighting and killing machines.

Penalty: Tends to be fearless and fights to the death (or at least till zero Hit Points), refusing to surrender or show mercy.

Vulnerabilities: Magic fire and magically flaming weapons inflict 50% more damage, otherwise, silver, magic and holy weapons do normal damage. A holy symbol will hold it at bay but does no physical damage, and holy water does no damage to the Bone Fiend.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, currently exclusive to the Land of Eternal Torment, but they *may* exist in other worlds and Hellish dimensions, and rumor suggests Bone Fiends may exist, albeit in tiny numbers, in some of the ancient ruins in the Old Kingdom and Baalgor Wastelands.

Languages: Magically understand and speak all languages.

Enemies: All mortal life forms.

Allies: Will come to the defense of any undead in the Land of the Eternal Torment and may serve as soldiers to powerful undead lords, Necromancers and other powerful, evil beings.

Eviscerals

Another category of Soldiers of Light punished by the Mortification were those who showed cowardice, betrayal or shirked their duties to the detriment of others. They were transformed into *Eviscerals*, grotesque humanoids who have wide-open body cavities that hold not a single organ. It is as if somebody scraped out their heart, lungs, stomach, liver, kidneys, intestines, all of it. All that is left from navel to chops is a naked rib cage and a clear view of the top of the creature's pelvis and the length of his spine. In addition, the head usually resembles a skull with withered flesh, a crooked jaw and widely spaced, sharp, pointed teeth. The limbs of the body are lean but muscular, and the hands armed with long, sharp claws for cutting and digging out organs.

Some would say that the Eviscerals were punished for "not having the guts" to fight or do what was expected of them, and as such, were denied having any for the rest of eternity. This is a really crude metaphor, however, and one that does not seem likely from the Alliance of Light. Whatever the reason for making the Eviscerals they way that they are, the bottom line is these creatures have no internal organs to speak of, and consequently they eat the organs of the living they slay. This entails killing the victim (naturally), opening them up, removing their insides, and eating them on the spot. Of course, since the Eviscerals have no way to contain these organs, they just slide on out into a big mess on the ground, much to the monster's dismay, but they taste great while chewing them and the monster has the satisfaction of depriving another being of their innards (and life). This macabre routine is perpetuated over and over whenever a humanoid or large animal can be found.

Unlike many of the undead, Eviscerals have a full recollection of the events of the Chaos War, the Mortification, and whatever has happened to them since. These creatures are living storehouses of historical knowledge going back to the Age of Chaos, and if one were able to interview them at length, they could learn an unprecedented amount of information (excluding secrets of magic, the locations of treasure troves, etc.). However, getting this info out of the creature is immensely difficult, even if one is offering fresh guts and organs for trade. Since these undead are cunning and smart, they make up stories and lies about ancient heroes and Gods of Light to confuse, torture, sadden and frustrate the living. Thus, one can never be certain if what the creature says is true or lies.

Alignment: Miscreant and Diabolic evil only.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+10, M.E. 1D6+11, M.A. 1D6+12, P.S. 2D6+13 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 1D6

Size: 6-7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m).

Weight: 150 to 200 lbs (67.5 to 90 kg).

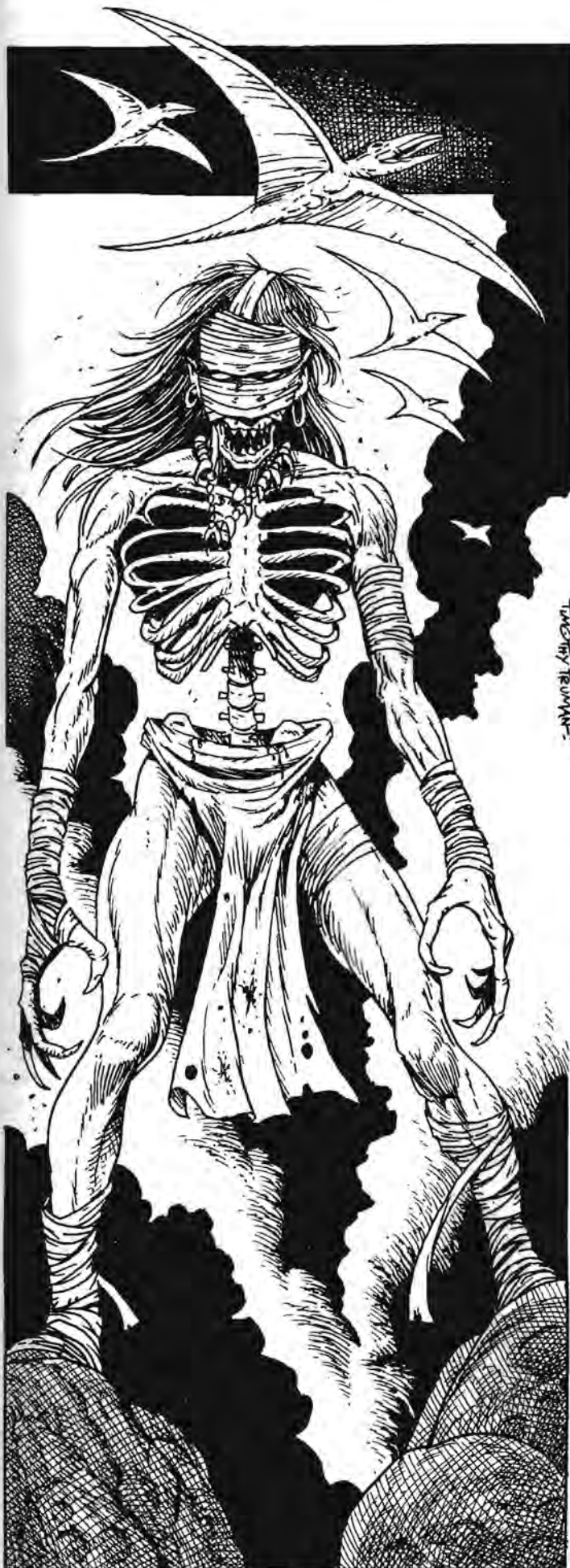
Hit Points: P.E.x2.

S.D.C. 1D4x10+20

Natural A.R. 9

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E. 3D6 (more if a Wizard).



Magic: 01-05% were Wizards in their previous life (1D6 level) and retain that knowledge in their undeath. However, whatever P.P.E. they once had is reduced by half (i.e. half normal for that O.C.C. and level of experience). For some reason, they cannot learn new spells since becoming undead.

All others, none.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per minute. Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only four hours between noon and five p.m. when the sun is hottest; always up by five or six. Magically understands and speaks all languages at 95%.

Skills: Swim 75%, Climb 80%/70%, Land Navigation 75%, plus 1D4 from Communication or Domestic skills, 1D4 Scholar/Technical or Science skills and 1D4 from Rogue or Weapon Proficiency skills. No other skills of note.

Attacks Per Melee: Three physical (or one by magic if a Wizard).

Damage: P.S. under 21: Restrained Punch: 1D4, Full Strength Punch: 2D6, Claw Strike: 3D6+2, Bite: 1D4, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 4D6.

P.S. 21 and up: Restrained Punch: 1D6, Full Strength Punch: 3D6, Claw Strike: 4D6+4, Bite: 1D6, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 6D6.

Or by weapon, but most tend to rely on their claws.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge, +1 to disarm, and +8 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: None.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

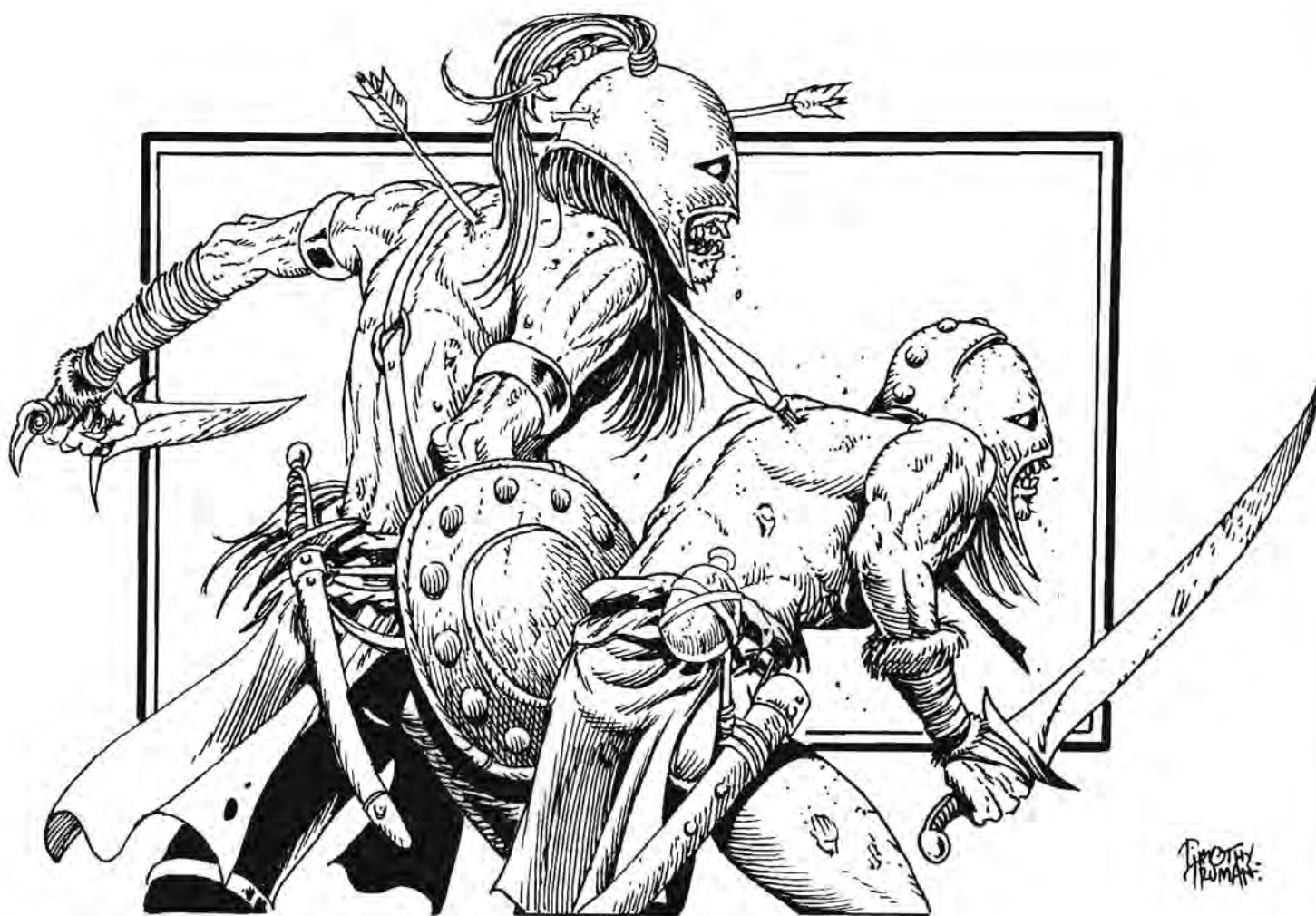
Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, currently exclusive to the Land of Eternal Torment, but they *may* exist in other worlds and Hellish dimensions.

Languages: Magically understand and speak all languages, 95%.

Enemies: All mortal life forms.

Allies: May associate with other undead and powerful evil beings, but will be compelled to attack and gut mortal associates and even leaders if the opportunity arises.



Festulents

Like the Bone Fiend, the Festulent is a form of re-animated dead that roams the Eternal Torment in force. These were willing warriors who cheerfully participated in the Chaos War, never showed the enemy mercy and engaged in acts of cruelty and torture.

Festulents appear as especially putrid zombies. Half are emaciated, others are bloated, and most have some degree of rotting flesh, and may even be missing a limb, an eye, or have an enemy's weapon protruding from their body. The latter is a lasting reminder of the many enemies they have slain in battle. This weapon or large weapon fragment cannot be removed regardless of one's P.S. nor through the use of magic.

Festulents are perhaps the only form of Endless Dead that means no harm to anybody or anything, not even to the living. These creatures go about a weird sort of daily life, as if they do not really understand that they are either dead or re-animated. They also seem to have forgotten that there was ever a war on, and the majority of them come together to form small communities. Entire villages of Festulents can be found throughout the Endless Torment, as can large populations of them in the assorted Cities of the Dead, where they work tirelessly for their masters.

If anything, the Festulents seem universally ambivalent to everything. They do not mind the company of any other creature, living or undead, and make no violent move toward anything unless it has been provoked, or unless it is being commanded to

do so by a Necromancer or being of great power (like the rulers of the Cities of the Dead, Mummies Immortalus, Demon Lords, Priests of Darkness, and similar). Festulents will also fight to defend themselves.

Though Festulents retain a basic sort of intelligence, they are all pretty dim-witted and will have little or no knowledge of their former lives. Nor do they any longer crave or enjoy war. They will fight if necessary or commanded to do so, but they do not enjoy it and the sight of death and slaughter makes them sad. Consequently, these undead don't mind doing any sort of labor or chore, fulfilling their duty the best they can even if they are treated like slaves. Festulents will toil without end and without complaint. Those willing to enslave large numbers of these creatures can build huge structures in no time at all (as the lords of the Cities of the Dead have done), just as they can form huge armies of the dead all willing to carry out their orders to the letter. Curiously, though, when commanded in a military capacity, Festulents get very literal with their commands, and follow the strict letter of their commands.

However, being undead, Festulents must feed on the living, an act that brings them no joy, only sorrow. They feed by draining their victim of blood, usually by slitting their throat with a blade weapon of some kind. When hungry, there is nothing to stop them from their grim task and, as they did in the past, they strike without mercy or pause, relentlessly pursuing any who might manage to escape. A Festulent should feed once every

two or three days, and will become driven to attack the first flesh and blood creature they see if they have not feasted on blood for more than three weeks (which is often).

While Festulents are unique among the Endless Dead in that they show a full range of emotions, they are not kind or generous, just dull, sorrowful and hungry. As a result, Festulent emotions come off as exaggerated, fake, and mildly creepy. The most genuine Festulent emotion is sorrow, for they are sorry they live in such an unhappy place under such miserable conditions. Oddly enough, the Festulents never feel sorry for themselves, nor do they express displeasure over their own condition. They just endure the best they can.

Alignment: Miscreant only.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+3, M.E. 1D6+2, M.A. 1D6+6, P.S. 1D4+20 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+2, P.E. 2D6+6, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 2D6+5

Size: Six to seven feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) tall.

Weight: 150 to 200 lbs (67.5 to 90 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +50.

S.D.C. 1D6x10+20

Natural A.R. 13 and wear a particular face covering helmet.

May also use a small to medium shield.

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E. 2D4

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural strength and endurance, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 3D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per minute. Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only five hours in the late morning hours after dawn, always up by noon or 1 p.m. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, but is illiterate. Also has the skills of General Repair 70%, Masonry 70%, Rope Works 70%, Climb 70%/60%, and Basic Math 80%. No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten how to do it.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Restrained Punch: 1D6, Full Strength Punch: 3D6, Claw Strike: 4D6+4, Bite: 1D6, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 6D6, or by weapon, typically sword or knife.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry and dodge. +3 to pull punch, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor, plus W.P. Sword (+2 to strike & and parry), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike and parry) and W.P. Shield (+3 to parry).

Penalties: Lack personal initiative, look to others to direct them.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, currently exclusive to the Land of Eternal Torment, but they *may* exist in other worlds and Hellish dimensions.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages, 98%.

Enemies: None per se, but must feed on the living.

Allies: All other undead and the occasional other evil being.

Gravediggers

The *Gravedigger* is a weird undead beast-man who, during the Chaos War, helped the Old Ones create and mutate monsters and other living beings. Consequently, the Mortification has turned them into bestial monsters with a craving for dead bodies. They are gaunt gorilla-like creatures with big, bony, hooked shovels for hands. Their task in the Endless Torment is to find or dig up the dead (mainly the recently slain) and eat them, bones and all. For the most part, Gravediggers are not all that put out by their condition. They are dim-witted and function on a primordial level. They just go about their business in a straightforward, methodical way.

Gravediggers have learned to follow the behavior of other undead to find fresh corpses to eat. This can be disconcerting for adventurers who are sick, injured or taken captive by other undead, because Gravediggers gather to watch and wait for their death like vultures. Furthermore, these undead seem to have a sixth sense about the dead and seem to be able to know when and where they might find the remains of the deceased. To help them with their chore, they can home in on the dead with extraordinary accuracy by scent alone. When they "catch a scent of death," Gravediggers do whatever they have to – swim long distances, climb sheer walls, endure any obstacle – to find the dead and devour them. Gravediggers are not suicidal, however, and although they always try to take the most direct route to their next meal, they use whatever methods necessary to ensure they get there in one piece. Likewise, while the creature will fight any who try to take a carcass (or bones) away from it, the monster will give up if its opponents are too tough or too persistent (i.e. after 1D4+1 melee rounds), but wait in the wings and follow wherever the corpse may be taken, watching and waiting until it is buried and the living leave, so it may dig up the dead and feast. If a body is to be cremated, the Gravedigger is likely to make a mad dash through the flames, snatch up the corpse and flee with it. Any other Gravediggers participating in the theft will try to engage the body's protectors long enough for their comrade to make a clean getaway and then follow the scent of the dead to share in the meal.

Note: Since the mortality rate is so high in the Land of Eternal Torment, one or more (1D4+2) Gravediggers may follow a living person, group or animal from a safe distance, waiting for them to die. While the creature(s) do not attack, they may try to help matters along by calling the attention of a predator or monster to the group in the hopes it will kill them, as well as drag away the wounded so they cannot get medical attention, cut a rope to make a character fall, and so forth, but never a direct attack. If attacked, a Gravedigger only fights in self-defense long enough to make good its escape. If captured, the creature cannot communicate for it speaks in grunts, whimpers and growls and only understands half of everything anybody is saying. They are more animal than intelligent.

Alignment: Miscreant evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+1, M.E. 1D6+1, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6+18 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+8, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 2D6+18

Size: 7-8 feet (2.1 to 2.4 m) tall, though they spend much of their time hunched over, so they might seem smaller than they are.



Weight: 700 to 800 lbs (315 to 360 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +30.

S.D.C. 1D6x10+20

Natural A.R. 8

Horror Factor: 11

P.P.E. 2D6

I.S.P. 2D4x10

Magic: None.

Psionics: All Gravediggers possess the psionic abilities of Psychic Diagnosis (4), Presence Sense (4) and Death Trance (1).

Natural Abilities: Never fatigue and never sleep (though more powerful at night). Digs three times faster than a stout, strong man. Supernatural strength and endurance, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per hour. Awake day and night, but sleeps whenever there is no food (dead bodies) or potential food (living beings) around. Understands and speaks all languages but only at 50%, and is illiterate. Also has the skills of Climb 80%/70%, Swim 80%, and Land Navigation 80%. No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten how to do it.

Special: Track Dead by Scent: Like a cadaver dog trained to sniff out dead bodies, Gravediggers can smell even one body within a 10 mile (16 km) radius of itself and track it to its precise location at a 90% proficiency. As soon as it catches the scent, the creature runs after it at full tilt.

Attacks Per Melee: Three.

Damage: Bite: 2D6, Spade Slap (blunt side punch): 2D6+6 damage. Spade Slash: 3D6+P.S. attribute bonus in damage, but mainly used to dig. Claw strike with feet (must kick or leap up and use feet in a clawing motion): 3D6+P.S. attribute bonus; can also dig with its feet, scratching at the earth like an angry chicken.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +1 to strike and parry, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: Not aggressive. Though it eats the dead, the monster will not directly attack, fight and kill the living.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, they are found in the Land of Eternal Torment, but the Gravediggers are also known to exist in small numbers in other parts of the Land of the Damned, including the Citadel, and the under-city of the Western Empire and parts of the Old Kingdom.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages but only at 50% skill proficiency.

Enemies: None per se.

Allies: None per se, tend to stick to their fellow Gravediggers, but kowtow to other, stronger undead to do their bidding.

Harbinger

Those within the Alliance of Light who secretly served the Old Ones as spies, informers and backstabbers were turned into Harbingers and cast into the Land of Eternal Torment, where they continue to engage in acts of sabotage, subterfuge and betrayal.

Harbingers look like an average-sized cat, dog, raven or rat, or a large snake, lizard, toad or spider. The animals are always jet black with alert, sparkling eyes that belie their intelligence. In humanoid form – for Harbingers are shape changers – the hair, lips and fingernails are black set against chalk-white skin and the eyes glow with an eerie orange light.

Harbingers lurk in the shadows, watching, remembering and reporting what they see and hear to a superior, for they are the spies of the undead. Foul beings who find and follow the living, sizing up their strengths and weaknesses, determining their value or usefulness, and determining which of the living are most vulnerable or easiest to turn against their brethren. Harbingers may also work to manipulate events by luring the unsuspecting into traps or the clutches of their masters, or trick them to do their master's bidding or work some terrible evil. When so commanded, these undead may also engage in acts of sabotage, terrorism and treachery, framing the innocent for a crime they did not commit, encouraging rivalry and discord, stealing or destroying food or items of value, and even performing assassination, which they enjoy most of all. And always, the Harbinger works for a powerful master and some insidious purpose. Their very presence is a *portent* of coming danger, treachery or doom, for a Harbinger undead always walks in shadows and leads the way for evil, suffering and death. Part of their curse is they can never act on their own accord and desires, but must forever serve as the henchman of a greater power.

In animal form the Harbinger is at its most stealthy and mysterious, watching, learning and waiting. In human guise, they are beguilers, seducers, manipulators, thieves and assassins. However, their acts of treachery and cruelty have cost them their humanity, thus they cannot maintain human form for more than 30 minutes at a time, never under the light of day, and never for more than three hours, in total, in a single night. Even in animal form, however, the creature is the walking dead, strongest at night, and more vulnerable in the day when it catches a few hours respite.

Alignment: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+10, M.E. 1D6+12, M.A. 1D6+14, P.S. 1D4+16 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+18, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 1D6+20 in both human and animal form, Spd. 1D6+14 in human form, double in animal guise.

Size & Weight: Usually tall and slender in human form.

Hit Points: 1D6x10 +P.E. attribute number.

S.D.C. 1D6x10

Natural A.R. 10 as both human and animal.

Horror Factor: None, strangely attractive and alluring even in animal form.

P.P.E. 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute number.

I.S.P. M.E.x2

Magic: All Harbingers possess the following spell abilities: Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (4), See Wards (8), Sense Traps (7), Charismatic Aura (10), Fool's Gold (10), Multiple Image

(7), Chameleon (6), Shadow Meld (10), Charm (12), Escape (8) and Control the Beasts (18).

Psionics: Harbingers instinctively have the following psionic powers: Astral Projection (8), Commune with Spirits (8), Dispel Spirits (10), Empathy (4), Mind Block (4), Object Read (6), See Aura (6), Sense Dimensional Anomaly (6), and Telepathy (4).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1600 feet (488 m), see the invisible, and bio-regenerates at a rate of 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per minute and completely regenerates a lost limb overnight, in addition to the abilities of its animal form (i.e. a raven can fly, a rat can leap and dig, etc.). The Harbinger can come out during the day or night, but is by nature a nocturnal predator and can NOT assume human form in the light of day. Is awake and alert all night, but will try to find 4-6 hours to sleep during the day. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, and is literate in Dragonese/Elven and Dwarven. Also has the skill equivalents of Prowl 70%, Surveillance 85%, Track Humanoids 80%, Intelligence 90%, Pick Locks 70%, Pick Pockets 60%, Land Navigation 90%, Dance 90%, Climb 90%/80%, Horsemanship: General 80%, and Basic Math 98%. No other skills of note. These are the main skills known in life, the rest are forgotten.

Special: Animal Form: The Harbinger is trapped in animal form during the day and for most of the night. That's okay, because this undead creature has learned to cherish its animal form. All Harbingers have a primary animal form (its favorite shape and the one that best suits the creature's disposition)



Breaux

and a secondary animal it can turn into at will for an indefinite period of time. Select two from the following: cat, dog, raven, rat, or a large snake, lizard, toad or spider. All are completely jet black.

Special: Metamorphosis Human: The Harbinger can turn into an attractive human (half are female, half male) at will, but only for 30 minute intervals, only at night, and only for a total of three hours. Is trapped in its animal form the rest of the time and during the day.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Damage: Restrained Punch: 1D6 S.D.C., Full Strength Punch: 2D6+P.S. damage bonus (+2 to +5), Kick Attack: 3D6 +P.S. damage bonus, Bite: 2D4 damage or by weapon (typically use a knife or blunt weapon).

Bonuses (does not include likely attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, and +7 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: The limitations of its animal form, the fact that it cannot metamorphosize into human form during the day, is at half strength during the day and must always do the bidding of an evil master; no free will.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, they are found in the Land of Eternal Torment, but there are other Harbingers not trapped in the Land of Eternal Torment. These individuals are said to sometimes serve certain Necromancers, Death Cult leaders, Priests of Darkness and Witches (as a demon familiar) in other parts of the Land of the Damned, as well as the Land of the South Winds and the Western Empire. All in all, these are rare demonic beings outside the Eternal Torment.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages at 98% skill proficiency.

Enemies: Harbingers universally hate Aberrations and the Chaos Beast known as the Instigator, the latter being seen as a treacherous rival. Otherwise, all intelligent life forms are seen as their playthings and fodder for their masters.

Allies: Evil and duplicitous beings more powerful than they, including Necromancers, Priests of Darkness, Summoners and Death Cults (whose leader is typically a Priest of Darkness), as well as vampires and other intelligent undead and other powerful evil beings like the Mummies Immortalus.

Note: Harbingers are vampires who feed on the sweet nectar of fear, sorrow and hate.

Jaliquettes

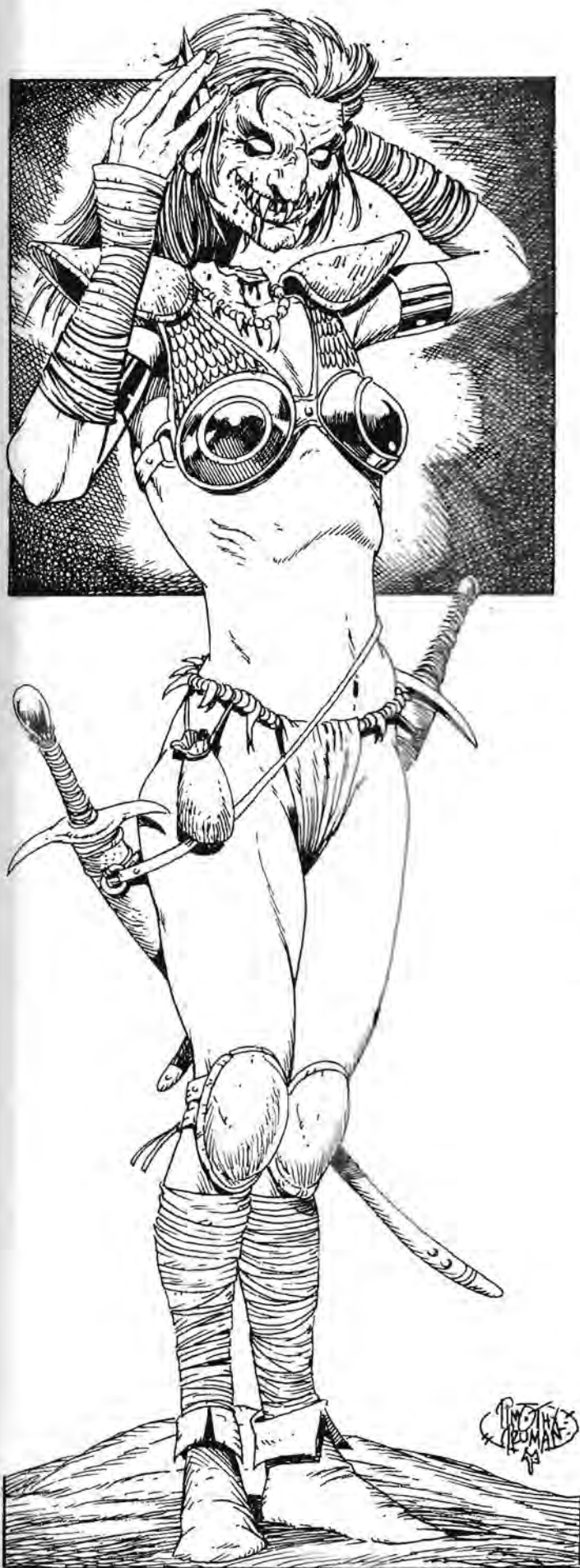
The *Jaliquettes* look just as they did in their former lives, but with a few grave distinctions (no pun intended). The most dramatic of these is that the *Jaliquettes*' bodies died within 24 hours after the Mortification. After another 24 hours, the *Jaliquette*'s bodies all turned to dust, leaving only the heads behind. Which, by this time, has itself transformed into a monstrous version of their former selves. The creatures' eyes glow a fiery red, and their teeth are distended into terrible fangs. Their hair turned into a wild, coarse mane, and the ears stretched out and came to a point. Though they have no body, *Jaliquettes* get around just

fine; they can fly about with noteworthy speed and maneuverability.

As a flying grotesque head, the *Jaliquette* has four goals: 1) find a living creature – it can be anything, from a medium to large *animal* to a *humanoid*, but it must be *alive*, not one of the Endless Dead. 2) Kill it without wrecking the body too much. 3) Decapitate it, and 4), attach itself to the headless stump. Once this is done, the *Jaliquette* can control the decapitated body as if it were its own, enjoying all of the powers the body once had when it was alive. That means if a *Jaliquette* manages to decapitate a Bearman of the North and replaces the Bearman's head with its own, then the *Jaliquette* now has the strength and physical abilities of that Bearman (its natural A.R., P.S., P.P., P.E., Spd, claws, etc., but not the victim's skills or memories). Only creatures of magic, like the sphinx, dragons and Faerie Folk and supernatural beings (including other undead), are off limits and cannot be used in this fashion. Mortal beings, however, are all fair game, provided they are large enough to accommodate the head.

Without having arms and legs of its own, decapitating a victim can be a bit problematic. So, most *Jaliquettes* will hunt their victims until nightfall. Then, they will attack, going for their victim's throat with their fangs, and hopefully killing him before any serious struggle ensues. In the alternative, it may select a new body before the old one is used up, or command some henchman to do the deed for it. Once the victim is dead, the *Jaliquette* basically gnaws the head from the neck, leaving a ragged, bloody stump. This can be done in 1D4 minutes, which is important because to use the body, it can never be dead for more than seven minutes or it cannot be used. Once the original head has been removed, the *Jaliquette* can animate the body to stand up, float into position, and use the hands and arms to pull it into place and magically connect itself with the decapitated body. And voila! The *Jaliquette* and its new body are now one, though the line where the head and body connect remains apparent as a horrible looking gash all the way around. In many cases, like when a desperate *Jaliquette* kills an animal or an inhuman looking victim, the *Jaliquette* will look absolutely ridiculous and horrifying at the same time. The *Jaliquette* does not care how glaringly freakish it looks, though, because its sole drive is to find a body for its head and most anything will do. However, any *Jaliquette* who finds a body will not have long to enjoy it.

First, the body itself is still dead, and it will begin to slowly rot. The magic of the *Jaliquette* slows this process, but cannot stop it. Thus, for the first 14 days the body looks reasonably (all things considered) healthy and attractive, but over the next two weeks it takes on the pallor of a corpse. For two weeks after that it begins to shrivel and rot like any corpse would so the body now looks emaciated, and is infested with maggots and other insects that eat corpses. 2D4 Gravediggers now follow the *Jaliquette* everywhere, waiting to feed on the carcass when it is abandoned, which is soon. The next two weeks are the body's last, as it now reeks as badly as the Blighters, since open wounds and large patches of rot are everywhere and bits of skin, hair and flesh drop off (eaten by the Gravediggers), revealing the skeleton underneath. At the end of this two week period (8 weeks total) the body must be abandoned and the *Jaliquette* must find a new mortal vessel to carry its head. Though it happens time and time again, the loss a body of any kind is the



worst agony possible for a Jaliquette, and it causes these creatures great distress when it happens.

Once a Jaliquette claims a body, it can be usurped by other Jaliquettes. Since the living are so rare in the Eternal Torment, competition for one is great, and Jaliquettes frequently fight one another to have one, for the creatures only feel whole when connected to a corpse. Naturally, the first Jaliquette is loath to relinquish its body, and a fierce battle ensues as the bodiless Jaliquette attacks its fellow in a desperate bid to gain a body for itself. It is a battle of biting and psionic energy with the loser being rendered temporarily helpless, numb or unconscious (remember the undead regenerate and return to life even after Hit Points are reduced to zero or below).

Once a Jaliquette has gained a body, it usually pretends that it is whatever person or creature whose body it has stolen. However, Jaliquettes are terrible role-players and even worse actors, so they will always come off as a freakish monstrosity. ("But why do you not think that I am a cat, good sir? See? I have a nice fluffy tail, do I not? Listen: Meow, meow. Still not convinced? Observe, as I give myself a bath.")

Alignment: Miscreant evil.

Attributes (for the head only): I.Q. 2D6+6, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 2D6, and Spd.: 2D6+10 when flying as a decapitated head. The physical attributes are those of the usurped body for the duration that it is possessed by the Jaliquette even while rotting away. Once connected to a body, Speed becomes that of the body. Note that the Jaliquette can detach itself from the body at any time, but it cannot be gone for more than seven minutes or the body becomes useless to it. Furthermore, another Jaliquette hiding in the shadows could steal the body if it connects before the seven minutes elapses or the first one returns. A strange monstrosity indeed.

Size: The size of a human head.

Weight: About ten to fourteen pounds (4.5 to 6.3 kg).

Hit Points: The head has 6D6+12 Hit Points. The dead body has no Hit Points (it's dead), see S.D.C. for how much damage the body can withstand.

S.D.C. The S.D.C. of the original body is restored +1D4x10+20 regardless of what type of creature it once was. (The head gets no S.D.C.). May wear body armor for additional protection. If all S.D.C. are reduced to zero, the body is destroyed and the Jaliquette is enraged. It may attack and kill all those responsible, taking one of their bodies for its own, or it may fly away, probably to plot some terrible vengeance or wait until the right moment to attack one of them and make that character's body its own. **Note:** A Jaliquette will never forget anybody who destroyed one of its bodies. Should they ever meet again, the horrid thing will seek revenge in one form or another.

Natural A.R. (Head): 10, otherwise that of the stolen body.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E. 5D6. **I.S.P.** 6D6+12.

Magic: None, other than the ability to take a decapitated body as described above.

Psionics: Telekinetic Punch (6), Telekinesis (varies), Mind Bolt (varies), Catatonic Strike (40) and Empathic Transmission (6). Cannot block psionic attacks.

Natural Abilities: In addition to those of the stolen body, the head can fly, has nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), can see the

invisible, and the head bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points per melee round. Jaliquettes are active day or night are among the only undead whose powers and abilities are NOT diminished in any way in the daylight (stays constant). Doesn't need to sleep. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, but is illiterate. Also has the skills of Basic Math 90%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 75%, Streetwise 60%, Surveillance 70%, and Prowl 50% (+25% as a silent, flying, dismembered head). No other skills of note. Whatever it knew in life, this undead has forgotten.

Attacks Per Melee: Three.

Damage: Bite: 3D6 damage or Head Butt: 1D6 in close combat. 2D6 from a flying head butt (counts as two attacks). Otherwise inflicts whatever damage the body it possesses is capable of doing.

Bonuses (head only): +2 on initiative, +2 to strike, +5 to automatic dodge (roll to dodge but the act of dodging does not use up a melee attack), +1 to save vs mind control and +7 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: The obvious disadvantages of being a flying head or walking corpse.

Vulnerabilities: The body can be hurt and destroyed by conventional means, but the immortal head has all the usual vulnerabilities of an undead (wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water) except for sunlight. Sunlight does not hurt nor diminish the Jaliquette. **Note:** Driving a stake or shooting an arrow into its forehead between the eyes will immobilize it the same way as a stake in the heart immobilizes a vampire. However, this can be difficult because the head can fly from the body at any time and always gets to make a dodge at +5. To kill it, the head must be wrapped in chains and weighted down and either sunken to the bottom of a lake or the sea (where it dissolves) or burnt to ash.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, they are found exclusively in the Land of Eternal Torment, but they *may* exist in other worlds and Hellish dimensions.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages at 98% skill proficiency.

Enemies: Mortals who are seen as "food" and "vessels" for the head, and those who oppose its other little adventures and exploits. Jaliquettes like to harass and toy with other beings, and may also serve a greater power, typically some other undead or powerful creature of magic. They also kill to feed on the P.P.E. energy that is doubled when any living creature dies.

Allies: Sometimes their own kind when there are enough people to kill and bodies to take for everyone. May serve an evil and duplicitous being more powerful than they, including Necromancers, Priests of Darkness, Summoners and Death Cults (whose leader is typically a Priest of Darkness), as well as vampires and other intelligent undead and other powerful evil beings like the Mummies Immortalus. Sometimes takes prisoners to keep as their next body to usurp, but it is difficult to keep the living from being discovered and killed by others. May follow an Aberration in hopes that it will lead them to the living. (See the Aberration description for its power to *sense the living*).

Note: Jaliquettes are P.P.E. vampires who feed on the energy released by the living at the moment of death, leaving the rest of body untouched. Consequently, they are sometimes followed by Aberrations, and especially Blighters, Gravediggers, fellow Jaliquette (looking for a fresh body) and other carrion-feeders who eat what the Jaliquettes leaves behind.

Mortoi

The *Mortoi* are "Zombie Vampires" – undead who look like bloated and putrefied walking corpses. As vampires they drink the blood of living humanoids for sustenance and then eat their hands and arms. This compulsion about hands comes from the fact that the *Mortoi* were once master craftsmen, artisans, forgers, thieves and pickpockets who served the Old Ones by immortalizing them in craven images in sculpture, paintings, tapestry, relief work, jewelry and the blades of rune weapons and suits of armor, as well as adorning them and their minions in jewelry and works of art that glorified evil and chaos. Others were spies and thieves who used their skilled hands and cunning to steal secrets and undermine the Alliance of Light in every way possible. Thus, when the gods worked the Mortification, those who would glorify the evil of the Old Ones or plundered the good so that evil would triumph, were turned into blood draining zombies with fingers and hands like deadwood incapable of creating art or delicate work. Thus, the *Mortoi* feed on hands just out of contempt, to destroy what they themselves envy.

Mortoi know what they were, still love art, and remember painful bits of their past. They know they were once something special, creative and vibrant, and, thus, see their current state of ugliness and graceless hands as an unholy mockery of their past lives. To make their cold existence more bearable, most *Mortoi* collect what bits of art and beauty they can in the way of jewelry, designs in fabrics and other works of artistry taken from those they kill. Many cover their cave dwellings with them or build little shrines with things of beauty. Others carry them around with them so they can pull them out and look at them whenever they want. Keeping them on their person (usually in a pouch or sack) also prevents them from being stolen or smashed by the many cruel and loutish undead who despise all things of beauty. Furthermore, the sight of somebody dancing, using sign language, picking a pocket, making a work of art or even just whittling, as well as the sight of somebody making or eating normal food or displaying normal eating habits, will drive the *Mortoi* into a killing frenzy. Amid shouts of "Stop it! Stop it! You bloody savages!" and similar talk, the *Mortoi* will leap upon those who (inadvertently) dared remind it of what it was once like out from under their curse and attack without mercy until the individual is dead or the *Mortoi* is driven off.

With each victim a *Mortoi* claims and whose hands it devours, the monster momentarily regains a bit of its old dexterity and feeling in its own hands. Regrettably for the *Mortoi*, the sensation is a fleeting one and one hour after feasting it is gone. During that time, however, it can perform skills that are otherwise impossible (see Natural Abilities for details), though the short time is scarcely enough to do much of any significance with the restored skills. Despite this, the *Mortoi* love the short moment of joyous manual dexterity, and would, if they could,



slaughter thousands without hesitation to maintain their cherished abilities. Such is the craven existence of the Mortoi.

Alignment: Diabolic evil only.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+5, M.E. 1D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D4+20 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 1D6

Size: Five to seven feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) tall.

Weight: 200-300 lbs (90 to 135 kg).

Hit Points: P.E.+24

S.D.C. 1D6x10+13

Natural A.R. 10

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E. 2D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural strength, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per minute. Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only five hours in the afternoon, always up by dusk. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, and most (01-75%) are literate in Dragonese/Elven.

Special: Regain Skills and Dexterity: For one hour after eating a single hand and forearm, the Mortoi's P.P. attribute increases to 19 and the monster can perform the following old skills. Roll percentile to determine whether the monster was an artist or thief/spy. The skill proficiency fades to a mere 5% after the hour elapses unless there is another limb to eat, which is why these horrid undead are always looking for new victims to mutilate.

01-60% Artisan/performer: Art 95%, Forgery 90%, Sculpting & Whittling 95%, Sew 95%, Masonry 90%, General Repair 80%, Dance 75%, and Play Musical Instrument (one of choice) 95%.

61-00% Thief or Spy: Prowl 75%, Pick Locks 95%, Pick Pockets 90%, Palming 85%, Concealment 75%, Rope Works 80%, Climb 95%/85%, and Basic Math 85%. No other skills of note.

Whatever other skills it knew in life, this undead has forgotten them.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Restrained Punch: 2D4 damage, Full Strength Punch: 3D6, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 4D6 damage, and Bite: 2D6 damage. Rarely uses a weapon of any kind.

Bonuses (does not include possible attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative when there is a hand to be gotten! +3 to strike, otherwise +1 to strike, +1 to dodge, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: The obvious poor dexterity and addiction to eating hands – will do almost anything to get one.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: In the Palladium World, they are found in the Land of Eternal Torment, but there are a few other Mortoi not trapped in the Land of Eternal Torment (though they will become trapped there if they ever visited the place). These undead are sometimes found wandering the Land of the Damned and the western mountain lowlands, and the lords of

the Citadel are said to have a Mortoi chained in the dungeon. A wicked fiend let loose to torture select prisoners or extract a terrible vengeance on select enemies whose hands are taken but they are kept alive. According to rumor, one or two stalk Ophid's Grasslands and another is said to live somewhere in the Northern Hinterlands. Meanwhile, one of the oldest cities in the Western Empire reports there is said to be a madman on the loose – one who steals the hands of his victims and lives underground among the Ratlings who revere him as a great visionary and artist. Despite these isolated incidents, Mortoi are extremely rare in the world of mortals.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages at 98% skill proficiency.

Enemies: Tend to be loners but may gather with other undead.

Allies: Necromancers, Priests of Darkness, intelligent undead and other wicked and powerful evil beings like the Mummies Immortalus who promise them hands and let them create works of art or ply their skills as thieves and spies.

Note: Mortoi feed on blood, they eat hands only to restore their own, regardless of how pitifully short that restoration may be.

Rawheads

For those who do not know the details of the Chaos War, it would be easy to believe that the Alliance of Light was composed of nothing but valiant, pure, true warriors who never failed or did the wrong thing. Truth is, there were those among

them who gave up on the cause and sold out their side in favor of the Old Ones. These turncoats joined the forces of evil and chaos as the most notorious henchmen, military leaders and warriors to fight on behalf of the Old Ones. They pledged their very souls to the Old Ones and fought the Alliance of Light with a frightening conviction. Most were vindictive and sadistic in the extreme, using their knowledge about their old allies' strengths and weaknesses to deal the Alliance one terrible blow after another. Thousands, sometimes millions of people suffered or died because of them, and it was their traitorous actions that, at one point, nearly broke the Alliance of Light. Such turncoats within the Alliance who were not slain by the war's end but were captured, were made to stand for their crimes and subjected to the Mortification. To be transformed into one of the most loathsome forms of undead found anywhere in the universe. A breed of Endless Dead that is a horrifying visage of evil, a corpse stripped of its skin, forced to wear the skin of those they slay in order to appear in the guise of a mortal. They are the *Rawheads*.

By the light of day, a Rawhead appears as a normal, living humanoid (they retain the looks they had before the Mortification). Even though they are *not* of the living, the other undead sense their true nature and do not molest them. In fact the other Endless Dead fear the Rawheads who are among the most intelligent, organized and willfully malicious of the undead trapped in the Land of Eternal torment. Thus, the Rawheads are among those who gather up the "lesser" undead to make them do their bidding and rule over clans and tribes of them like a despot tyrant with no place or real people to conquer.



Once night falls, unless the repulsive creature has the skin of a victim to wear, its skin peels off in layers to reveal a walking body of muscle, bone and cartilage glistening with blood. Somehow, a skinless body is more horrifying than an animated skeleton or even a festering corpse. For it somehow possesses a vitality yet an abhorrent appearance that is truly grotesque. As deceivers and traitors, Rawheads can wear the skin of other humanoids, other than true giants. The Rawhead must personally skin its victim and remove the covering of skin in one piece, something the monsters are uncannily adept at doing. Then, it can don the skin as a mortal might a suit of clothing, with the skin magically fitting over the Rawhead as if it were tailor made for it. As many as three different skin "costumes" or disguises may be kept in storage, though only one can be worn at a time. The horrible guise can be kept indefinitely as long as it is never worn during the day, for the first stream of sunlight to strike the macabre guise will turn it to powder. However, at night, the Rawhead can wear the hide of other humanoids without worry, putting it on and off at will, and to feed. Rawheads are vampires who drink the blood of mortals, but to do so it must strip off any disguise. All pretense disappears when these creatures actually shed their outer skin and go hunting. In this state, their naked muscles are bright red and glisten, and there is a strong smell of both burned flesh and fresh blood about them.

Though they possess no special weapons during combat, Rawheads are strong and swift fighters, more than capable of killing most victims with their bare hands. Most Rawheads prefer to strangle or break an opponent's neck or beat the stuffing out of a victim until unconsciousness. This way, the skin of the victim is preserved with minimal damage. Besides, like true vampires, the Rawhead often keeps victims imprisoned for multiple feedings before killing them once and for all. It must be said, however, that Rawheads have a terrible tendency to get carried away once they have the upper hand in any given battle, so once their victim has been vanquished, a Rawhead must roll a 16-20 on a D20 or it will not be able to stop itself before beating its victim to death. Once their victims are dead, Rawheads can no longer feed on them, but their skin might still be of use.

Rawheads need to feed nightly, but the acute shortage of living creatures in the Eternal Torment means that these creatures spend most of their time hunting and starving. Even when they do enjoy a meal, they have been so hungry for so long, that they only enjoy it for a few minutes before returning to the all-too-familiar pangs of abject hunger.

Alignment: Evil! 25% are Aberrant; 25% are Miscreant and 50% are Diabolic. This type of vampire is supremely arrogant, cruel and aggressive, sometimes killing for fun or the dramatic effect. The Rawhead dreams of someday ruling over the living.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+7, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 2D6 (+6 when in human guise of one kind or another), P.S. 2D4+26, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D4 in natural undead guise, +10 in human guise (daytime or when wearing someone else's skin), Spd. 3D6+3

Size: Six to seven feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) tall.

Weight: 180 to 240 lbs (81 to 108 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x3.

S.D.C. 2D4x10+11

Natural A.R. 9

Horror Factor: 15 when revealed in its true form, none in humanoid disguise.

P.P.E. 3D6

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural strength, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m) and bio-regenerates at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round (15 seconds). Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only two or three hours in the afternoon, always up by dusk. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, and many (01-60%) are literate in Dragonese/Elven. Also have the skill equivalents of Wrestling, Horsemanship: General 80%, Skin & Prepare Animal Hides 90%, Land Navigation 90%, Surveillance 80%, Prowl 80%, Detect Ambush 80%, and Detect Concealment & Traps 80%. Whatever other skills it knew in life, this undead has forgotten them.

Special: Great Leaping Ability: Rawheads can leap 20 feet (6.1 m) in any direction from a standing start. With a running start, that distance can *double* to 40 feet (12.2 m) high or across.

Special Climbing: Rawheads can cling to walls and ceilings like a bug, climbing at 95% proficiency at full Speed attribute.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Damage: P.S. 28-30: Restrained Punch: 2D6, Full Strength Punch: 4D6, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 6D6, or bite: 2D4.

P.S. 31-35: Restrained Punch: 2D6, Full Strength Punch: 5D6+P.S. damage bonus, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 1D6x10+P.S. damage bonus, or bite 2D6.

Or by weapon, but the vast majority of Rawheads rely on their brute strength and bare hands, they prefer things that way.

Special: Stranglehold: The Rawheads are skilled at pinning and strangling the life out of their victims. Those pinned in a stranglehold only get half their normal attacks (round *down*) and take 4D6 damage direct to Hit Points per each melee round (15 seconds) they are strangled! While being strangled the victim cannot speak, call for help nor cast spells, and all attacks directed at his undead opponent are 20% weaker than normal. **Note:** The victim, however, can try to use his attacks to escape rather than fight. Expending one attack, the victim must roll a "natural" 18-20 to break free (no bonuses apply). Combining two attacks into one big effort the character must roll a "natural" 15-20 to break free. And if the victim has six or more attacks normally, he can use the three he has while being strangled in one effort to break free, requiring an unmodified roll of 10-20 to be successful. If the character can break free he takes only 1D6 damage for that round of strangulation and both the Rawhead vampire and his intended victim start a new combat round. Roll initiative.

Special: Breakneck Attack: This is a special attack in which the Rawhead focuses the energy of all its attacks for one melee round into its first and only attack that round. If successful the monster snaps the neck of his victim in one potentially fatal blow, reducing Hit Points to zero and placing the character in a coma. (**Note:** If allies of the victim act quickly, they can set and brace the neck and restore the individual with three psionic or magic healings. However, the victim of this near death experience only gets back 2D6 Hit Points and no additional psychic or magic healing can be

used on him for 24 hours. A Restoration spell will completely heal the individual. Of course, the Rawhead usually scoops up his victim and walks off with him to feed and skin, so allies need to act quickly to save their friend, first by chasing away or killing the Rawhead.)

Using the breakneck attack has its risks. The creature must expend *all* of its attacks at once, meanwhile the victim gets a saving throw (16 or higher, only P.E. attribute bonuses apply). If the intended victim survives, the character only takes 1D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points, and has all of his or her attacks remaining as well as the initiative. This means the character can attack the Rawhead at will for the rest of that melee round! All the Rawhead can do is try to parry or dodge. However, most Rawheads are so supremely confident and mean that they will take that risk at some point in most every battle, often making it their first attack. And if it is successful the first time, they will try it again, probably against their very next opponent. On the other hand, any character who survives two breakneck attacks from the same Rawhead is impervious to that method of attack from *any* Rawhead, from that day forward!

Create other Rawhead: Just as the traditional vampire can create others like itself, the Rawhead can also create more of its kind, which makes them a plague in the outside world. To do this, the monster kills and skins its victim like usual, lays them out under the light of a full moon, cuts itself, covers the body in its own blood and blows a breath into the mouth of the deceased. A moment later, the corpse shudders to life as a Rawhead. However, this Rawhead has no "skin" of its own, and looks the same day or night, at least until it can steal the hide from one of its next victims. This Rawhead has 20% less Hit Points, S.D.C. and attributes than its creator until 10 years have passed or until its creator dies, whichever comes first. Additionally, it is completely loyal and obedient to its creator, serving as the monster's chief lieutenant. Otherwise, the new undead forgets most of its past, and instinctively gets the skills and abilities noted in the stats that follow. All other skills are forgotten. **Note:** Only one new Rawhead may be created per a year, and the creation process leaves the creator in a diminished capacity (reduce S.D.C. and bonuses by half) for six months. The creator may release its unholy progeny from its service to him at any time, but must keep them for years.

Bonuses (does not include probable attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative when hungry or angry, otherwise +1. +2 to strike and parry, +1 to automatic dodge (the character must roll to dodge, but the act of dodging does not use up a melee attack), +2 to entangle, +3 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, and +10 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: See Vulnerabilities.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water, but not sunlight. Rawhead vampires can come out during the day, their only penalty being their reduced physical attributes, H.P./S.D.C. and abilities, as noted in the opening of this section. Also, they appear as humanoids (typically human or Elf) during the day, turning into their true form only when attacking to feed or when extremely angry. **Note:** Holy weapons, holy water and the touch of a holy symbol do *double damage* to Rawheads.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: Exceedingly rare in the Palladium World, they are found in any substantial numbers only in the Land of Eternal Torment, but there are a few other Rawheads elsewhere in the Land of the Damned, usually the leader of some motley band of lowlifes or lord of some two-bit town of monsters. They are occasionally found in the Western Empire, Old Kingdom and Timiro Kingdom. In fact, a few hundred years ago, the Kingdom of Timiro had a terrifying outbreak of Rawhead vampires until things were brought under control. It is believed the vampires were summoned by a death cult the kingdom's authorities had all but wiped out.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages at 98% skill proficiency.

Enemies: All who dare to stand in their way or challenge their supremacy. They also despise the living and desire to rule over others. Rawheads even dominate the lesser undead, ruling small clans (4D4) and tribes (1D4x10+10) of undead. Sometimes they are willing to serve as the lord and master of living humanoids and monsters, protecting them from other undead, provided they worship the Rawhead, do everything the undead horror demands and the group willingly lets their vampire lord feed on them! In the Land of Eternal Torment, allegiance to a Rawhead may mean the difference between life and death – at least for a little while, because even a Rawhead can't protect humanoids for long in the Land of Eternal Torment.

Allies: All who are willing to call them master. Smart, cruel and vindictive in the extreme, Rawheads like to be leaders with lesser beings serving them, including other undead. Sometimes ally themselves to other extremely powerful beings, but only if the Rawhead holds an important position, ideally the second-in-command or leader of a special team with a considerable amount of autonomy.

Revenant

By the time the Old Ones were put to sleep, the Alliance had virtually exterminated the Armies of Chaos. Most of the troops who had not perished on the battlefield took their own lives rather than face a world in which Chaos no longer reigned supreme. As the Alliance of Light debated the fate of the worst of the prisoners, one particular group of villains rose up and tried to rekindle rebellion, strike the Champions of Light down and rescue the dreaded Old Ones. In the end, these rebels struck down one of the gods and a number of heroes. Their last minute insurrection sealed their fate, for it ended the debate about the Mortification and earned them the worst of the punishments. So it was that these worst of the worst were transformed into *Revenant*, a kind of undead patchwork person consisting of multiple different and mismatched parts representing the many who had perished at their hands. A living abomination that reeks of the chaos and hatred they so lovingly served to the bitter end.

True to their vile nature, the Revenant have taken their deformity as a badge of honor, distinguishing those who never surrendered and who had to be beaten into defiant submission. The average Revenant body is covered in scars and stitches helping to show it consists of multiple body parts taken from 1D4+2 different victims. Moreover, the right arm is always a wicked, indestructible blade made from the monster's own bone. Among



the more gruesome features are the partial limbs and features of their victims jutting from places one could never imagine, as well as having an eye concealed in the (main) mouth, forcing the Revenant to speak from one of his other mouths (which could be on the cheek, in or above an eye socket, the belly, hand, anywhere).

Without a doubt, the Revenant is the most repugnant of all the Endless Dead, and the most vicious. They hate all living things, usually attacking them without provocation to either destroy or to enslave and torment. Revenant also loathe and torment the other undead in the Eternal Torment, for unlike themselves, all the others at one point or another, "surrendered" to the forces of Light. To the Revenant, it is a betrayal that can never be forgiven, so they spend their time torturing and enslaving their fellow undead. Only the Rawhead is a match for them, and even they sometimes succumb to the more powerful Revenant. Likewise, the eternally defiant Revenant refuse to "serve" any being, but may join forces, as equals, with fellow beings who worship chaos and the Old Ones, and who seek a way to break the Mortification and escape, and/or to find a way to awaken the Old Ones. In the meanwhile, they search for a way to escape and make the Gods of Light suffer.

Alignment: 50% Diabolic and 50% Aberrant evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+2, M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 1D4+35 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 1D6+18, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 2D6+12

Size: Five to seven feet (1.5 to 2.1 m).

Weight: 180 to 250 lbs (81 to 112.5 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x3.

S.D.C. 3D4x10

Natural A.R. 10

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E. 2D4x10

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural strength, Nightvision 1600 feet (488 m), see the invisible, and bio-regenerates at a rate of 3D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round (15 seconds). Is awake and alert all night and most of the day, sleeping only two or three hours in the afternoon, always up by dusk. Understands and speaks all languages at 98%, and many (01-60%) are literate in Dragonese/Elven. Also have the skill equivalents of Boxing (taken into account in the number of attacks), Horsemanship: Knight 90%, Land Navigation 90%, Track Humanoids 75%, Prowl 50%, Recognize Weapon Quality 90%, Detect Ambush 90%, Military Etiquette 90%, Intelligence 80%, Escape Artist 60%, Palming 60%, and Basic Math 95%. Whatever other skills it knew in life, this undead has forgotten them.

Special: Eyes in the Back of the Head: All Revenant have one eye in their main mouth plus 1D6+3 additional eyes, with at least one pair in the back of their head, which means they can NOT be caught by surprise or from behind, and can try to dodge or parry *all* attacks. They also have 1D4+1 mouths of different varieties on various parts of their bodies, not to mention 1D4 additional limbs, though usually small like that of a child, and two different kinds of ears, one round, one pointed. The body is covered in stitches, of course.

Special: Great Leaping Ability: The Revenant can leap 20 feet (6.1 m) in any direction from a standing start. With a running start, that distance *doubles* to 40 feet (12.2 m) high or across.

Impervious to the light of day: Revenant vampires can come out during the day **WITHOUT** penalty! They are at full strength day and night!

Attacks Per Melee: Six.

Damage: Blade Arm: 1D4x10 damage +P.S. damage bonus (typically +21 to +25). Restrained Punch: 2D6 damage, Full Strength Punch: 6D6 damage +P.S. damage bonus, Power Punch (counts as two attacks): 2D4x10 +P.S. damage bonus, or Bite: 1D4 damage. Revenant almost always rely entirely on their great strength and bone sword.

Bonuses (does not include probable attribute bonuses): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to automatic dodge (still needs to roll to dodge, but the act of dodging does not use up a melee attack/action), +5 to pull punch, +3 to disarm, and impervious to Horror Factor and possession.

Penalties: Terrible disfigurement and insanities.

Insanities: All Revenant are obsessed with escape, revenge upon the Alliance of Light and awakening the Old Ones. Most are also sociopaths who hate people and enjoy causing pain, suffering and death. If the G.M. likes, he can pick or roll for a random insanity as well.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water, but not sunlight. Rune weapons, holy weapons, and the touch of a holy symbol inflict *double damage* to Revenant. Holy water does normal damage.

Special: Salt Aversion: A Revenant absolutely will not cross over a line of salt. Thus, one can protect himself by standing in a circle of salt, though the vampire can hurl objects at the character from a safe distance. Moreover, since the Revenant typically command other creatures, the undead can have one of its slaves or minions wipe the salt away. Eating salt will cause the monster to gag, and lose one melee action, but nothing else (other than make it mad). Having salt thrown on it has no adverse effect.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: Exceedingly rare in the Palladium World, they are rare even in the Land of Eternal Torment, with perhaps as few as two hundred. According to rumor, one or two Revenant have found a way out of the Land of Eternal Torment and have left the Land of the Damned in search for a way to unleash their undead brethren and awaken the Old Ones. Nobody knows if there is any truth to this rumor or not, but if true, that Revenant (or two) are surely long gone into the world of humans.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages at 98% skill proficiency.

Enemies: All who dare to stand in their way or challenge their supremacy. They also despise the living and desire to rule over others. Revenant even dominate the lesser undead, ruling small clans (4D4) and tribes (1D4x10+10) of undead. Sometimes they are willing to serve as the lord and master of living humanoids and monsters, protecting them from other undead, provided they worship the Revenant, do everything the undead horror demands and the group willingly lets their vampire lord feed on them! In the Land of Eternal Torment,

allegiance to a Revenant may mean the difference between life and death – at least for a little while, because even a Revenant can't protect humanoids for long in the Land of Eternal Torment.

Allies: All who are willing to call them master. No Revenant will serve another living being unless it is to awaken the Old Ones, but any creature may be allowed to serve a Revenant. However, the Revenant frequently command and enslave the lesser undead and other monsters. Humans, Elves, Dwarves and most of the handsome mortals are usually slaughtered whenever they are encountered, for they are the hated inheritors of the planet and the progeny of Order. And even Priests of Darkness and evil people are viewed as flawed, lesser beings to be distrusted and watched carefully. Summoners are the most hated of all, for they try to contain and control beings such as they.

Sladka

According to legend, this monster bore a rough resemblance to a large war horse, but possessed a demonic nature akin to a Melech. The semi-intelligent war steed was used in great numbers throughout the war. The name of this creature has been lost forever, for not even those who fought in the Chaos War can recall what these beasts were called. They only know that they were reserved for the officers and horsemen who fought on behalf of the Old Ones. The demon steeds themselves were great weapons, capable of killing many soldiers on their own. And kill they did, in numbers too frightening to imagine. The Alliance clearly despised these foul creatures so much that a good number of them were included in the Mortification and locked away to suffer forever.

The *Sladka* is a vicious and wild undead steed whose strength and ferocity are only matched by its blind anger and general unsuitability for use as a riding animal for any but the most powerful undead, such as the Rawhead and Revenant. All *Sladka* appear as coal-black war horses with smoky green eyes. As they breathe, a heavy fog-like vapor rolls out of their mouths.

These creatures are as big and strong as ever, and make fine steeds for undead riders with a knowledge of riding, and all are fitted with a harness, bit and saddle. This gear is magical in nature, indestructible, and cannot be removed, for the *Sladka* are condemned to forever serve the legions of the Endless Dead. However, there are only a handful of the undead who know how to ride the great black steeds, all others ignore the demon steeds which frustrates the animals to no end. *Sladka* love carrying warriors to war, and long for the days of action and bloodshed. Thus, their punishment is impotent inaction and eternal boredom broken only by scant moments of activity.

Like all undead, the *Sladka* have no use for mortal humanoids and will not allow them to ride on their backs. Should a mortal dare mount the demon steed, the animal will buck and run like a hurricane, snorting out a great field of fog that makes visibility impossible. Then, if the rider continues to hang on (needs to roll under his Horsemanship skill for racing with an additional -25% penalty every 1D4 minutes), the *Sladka* will race through the pea-soup fog in a forest of branches or through canyons with overhanging rock or other obstacles in an effort to slam the rider into them and knock the rider off. This always



works as the Sladka can see through fog and smoke as clear as day, while the ride is completely blind (-10 to dodge) until the object is only a few yards/meters away. Only if a mortal rider can hang on for an hour or more will the demon steed allow itself to be ridden, but only for that day. With the beginning of each new night, the ritual begins again with the undead animal more determined than ever to knock the rider off its back. The Sladka has an alternative means of removing a rider in the Land of Eternal Torment. Most outsiders have never seen a Sladka, undead demon steed, so they don't realize two things, one, that the animal is smarter than any normal horse, and two, as an undead, the animal feeds on the blood and gore of mortal prey. Thus, if the animal doesn't kill and eat the rider itself, it can calmly ride into the camp of any number of different undead in the region, stand there unmoving despite the amount of prodding by the rider, and let the witless mortal be torn from its saddle, ravaged and eaten. All good for a night of laughs and a little break in the monotony of its life.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic. These undead horses are just mean and have a taste for human blood.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+6, M.E. 2D6+6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 1D4+31 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+6, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 2D6+12, Spd. 1D6x10+34 (30-52 mph/48 to 83 km).

Size: Seven feet (2.1 m) tall at the shoulder.

Weight: 2,000 to 2,500 lbs (900 to 1,125 kg).

Hit Points: P.E.x3

S.D.C. 1D6x10+22

Natural A.R. 8

Horror Factor: 10

P.P.E. 6D6

I.S.P. 2D4x10 +M.E. attribute number.

Magic: None.

Psionics: All Sladka have the following psionic abilities:

Sensitive: Commune with Animals (6), Empathy (4), Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), See the Invisible (4), Sense Dimensional Anomaly (6), Sixth Sense (2), and Telepathy (4).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1600 feet (488), see the invisible, Supernatural P.S., bio-regenerates at a rate of 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round (15 seconds). The Sladka is a *nocturnal beast*, but can venture forth in the daytime, only its Spd. and other attributes, Hit Points, S.D.C., leaping ability and bonuses are half in the light of day, and it can NOT create fog. Typically sleeps most of the day away. Understands all languages at 95%, but cannot speak (may use Telepathy and Empathy to communicate). The undead animal also has the skill equivalents of Land Navigation 98%, Track Humanoids 65%, Track Animals 60%, Prowl 60%, Detect Ambush 90%, and Basic Math 65%.

Special: Create Fog: The Sladka can create fog with its steamy breath. It does so by running and encircling a particular area, breathing fog the entire time. When it has run an entire circular pattern (up to two miles/3.2 km in diameter) the fog breathed out along the edge of the circle quickly fills the area within the completed circle. The fog is pea-soup thick, meaning one can barely see the tip of his sword the fog is so heavy. The fog remains as long as the Sladka remains inside

its perimeter, but fades away within 1D6 minutes after the demon steed leaves. Able to see in the fog, one of the Sladka's tactics in hunting prey is to envelop them in fog and then attack under its cover. All mortals trapped in the fog fight almost as if partially blind; no initiative, -5 to strike, parry and dodge, and Land Navigation and tracking skills are impossible in the fog.

Special: See through Fog and Smoke: The demon steed sees through fog and smoke as if it were not there.

Special: Sound of Thunder or Silent Running: The Sladka can choose to run heavily, in which can its hooves hammer the ground with the sound of approaching thunder (+2 to the animal's Horror Factor). The noise causes most animals such as normal horses, ponies, cattle, livestock and even cats to run away (dogs whine and bark nervously but will usually stay with their master). Likewise, children will begin to cry and even warriors and adventurers will feel nervous and a bit scared (-1 on initiative).

In the alternative, the Sladka can adjust its stride to run an inch or two above the ground and run as silent as a gentle blowing wind with just the slightest rustle of leaves (nothing for anyone to notice or fear).

Special: Phenomenal Leaping: The Sladka can leap 30 feet (9.1 m) high and 40 feet (12.2 m) lengthwise in just a few strong steps and can leap 100 feet (30.5 m) high and 200 feet across (61 m) when running at full speed or close to it (at least 90%).

Attacks Per Melee: Three.

Damage: Bite: 2D4, Front Hoof Kick: 4D6 damage +P.S. damage bonus (typically +17 to +20), Rear Hoof Kick: 6D6 +P.S. damage bonus. Slamming riders into trees and outcroppings 3D6 damage (double when running at full speed).

Bonuses (does not include probable attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to automatic dodge (must roll to dodge, but the dodge does not use up a melee attack/action), +2 to save vs charms and mind control, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor.

Penalties: None other than the limits of being an undead monster.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water, but not sunlight. Magic flaming weapons inflict 50% more damage to the Sladka.

Value: Out in the real world, evil beings will cheerfully pay 500,000 to one million gold for a Sladka that will let them ride it. (Sladka not trapped in the Land of Eternal Torment will usually let an evil mortal or monstrous being ride it, provided the rider treats the creature with respect and gives the beast opportunities to fight and victims to eat.

Habitat: The greatest number of Sladka exist trapped in the Land of Eternal Torment, but there are easily a thousand scattered throughout the Land of the Damned and perhaps as many as one hundred loose in the Domain of Man, world-wide.

Languages: None. Sladka whinny and snort like horses, though many insist they can also laugh, but they may communicate through Telepathy.

Enemies: Hate mortals and see them as prey and natural enemies to be avoided or slain.

Allies: In the Land of Eternal Torment, they only associate with and allow fellow undead to ride them. Elsewhere, they prefer

to be ridden and directed by fellow undead but may allow Necromancers, Summoners and other evil beings to ride them as well.

Sleepwalkers

The *Sleepwalkers* are, presumably, soldiers of Chaos, but if they know what crime it is they committed to win the animosity of the Gods of Light, these undead are not saying what it is. Some adventurers and scholars don't believe these beings were ever human or mortal, but were some type of undead or demon imported from some other world to serve the Old Ones during the War. When the Chaos War ended, they were put in the Land of Eternal Torment with the rest of the tortured undead.

The Sleepwalkers are among the most ordinary looking of the Endless Dead. To casual observers, they appear to be ordinary Elves though painfully thin and gaunt. Their arms are especially willowy, and their gaunt hands end in end in wicked claws – retractable like a cat. The skin is a pale white with a creamy green pallor. Their hair is long and silvery grey or stark white. Unlike the many feral and bestial undead, Sleepwalkers are quiet, slow and calm, moving and behaving as if they were sleepwalking through the world without a care. It is said that unless provoked, Sleepwalkers will ignore humans and other mortal adventurers unless it is to stop to discuss philosophy before moving on and drifting off. The Sleepwalkers' passive exterior, however, conceals an evil that is like a seething cauldron ready to boil over and burn all it touches.

The reason Sleepwalkers *seem* so passive is that their minds straddle two or three different dimensions simultaneously, the real world, the dreamworld and the Astral Plane. Their realm of existence is only partly in the physical realm, the rest of them is detached, lost in thought, plotting as their Astral essence floats among the clouds and mist, dreaming up treachery and evil. Evil they visit upon others in dreams and visions that inspire selfishness and acts of cruelty and evil. In this regard, the Sleepwalker is the most insidious of the undead, for they often touch and influence (corrupt) the living without the victim ever realizing it. This laconic demon feeds on dreams and emotions, stealing thoughts, memories and ideas, making them its own and losing itself in the dreams of others – hence the creature's constant dazed, sleepwalking appearance. Unlike normal psychics, the Sleepwalker can pick up numerous snippets of random thought from dozens of different minds and zoom in on the one or two that seem most interesting. Using a combination of Telepathy, Empathy and Astral Travel, the Sleepwalker can quietly enter a person's thoughts. Like a ghostly voyeur, the Sleepwalker does nothing to hurt or influence the mind it is sharing, bobbing along on the thoughts and emotions like a leaf cast adrift on the waves. Mortals are only vulnerable to the Sleepwalker when they themselves fall asleep. Here in the misty dreamworld, the parasitic Sleepwalker is much more powerful and can influence the sleeper's dreams, creating nightmares and implanting thoughts, ideas and visions.

In the physical world, the Sleepwalker can also communicate with people verbally or psionically, however, when enjoying the thoughts or dreams of others, day or night, the demonic being is often oblivious to the people and events around it. They can take that casual attitude because they are undead and little can do se-



rous damage to them. However, being shaken out of their euphoric dream state or being accosted by outsiders or outright attacked *does* wake the undead dreamer, quickly pulling it out of its delirium. Sometimes, the creature doesn't mind, especially if the source of the disturbance is interesting or amusing to it in some way, but most of the time the Sleepwalker is madder than hell and strikes out with a vengeance, both physically and with psionics. It is a strange sight to see: one minute the Sleepwalker seems practically lobotomized, the next the creature is a raging demon lashing out with tooth and claw.

When the battle is done (i.e. everyone is dead or has run off) the Sleepwalker resumes its dreaming and idle musing.

Alignment: Evil, 33% Aberrant, 33% Miscreant, 34% Diabolic. Loves to instigate people to take selfish and evil action against others as well as frighten and inspire them through dreams and inspiring dream-visions.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+9, M.E. 2D6+7, M.A. 2D6+5, P.S. 2D6+13 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+8, P.E. 2D6+6, P.B. 2D6+8, Spd. 2D6

Size: Six to seven feet (1.8 to 2.1 m) tall.

Weight: 140 to 180 lbs (63 to 81 kg).

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number x4.

S.D.C. 2D4x10+18

Natural A.R. 12

Horror Factor: 9

P.P.E. 6D6

I.S.P. 2D6x10 + M.E. attribute number.

Magic: None.

Psionics: A Master Psychic with the following abilities: Astral Projection (8), Commune with Spirits (8), Empathy (4, but at six times the normal range), Telepathy (4, but at ten times the normal range), Meditation (0), Presence Sense (4), Float (8), Advanced Trance State (10), Empathic Transmission (6), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Induce Nightmare (15), and Insert Memory (25).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1600 feet (488), see the invisible, Supernatural P.S., bio-regenerates at a rate of 3D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round (15 seconds). The Sleepwalker is half awake and half asleep all the time, becoming fully cognizant only when forced into combat and in other people's dreams. May venture forth in the daytime or night without penalty; at full strength at all times. Understands and speaks all languages at 98% as well as speaks through dreams, Telepathy and Empathy, but cannot read. The undead Sleepwalker also has the skill equivalents of Land Navigation 98%, Lore: Faerie Folk 90%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, and Basic Math 90%.

Attacks Per Melee: Five.

Damage: Bite: 2D4 damage, Full Strength Punch: 2D6 + P.S. damage bonus (+1 to +10), Power Punch: 4D6 + P.S. damage bonus, Claw Strike: 4D6 + P.S. damage bonus.

Bonuses: +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to dodge, +3 to disarm, +5 to pull punch, impervious to mind control, possession and Horror Factor.

Penalties: Barely aware of the physical world and people around it, which sometimes causes the Sleepwalker to stumble into dangerous situations.

Vulnerabilities: Standard, wood, silver, magic, holy symbol and holy water, but not sunlight.

Average Life Span: Immortal until slain, decapitated and burned to ashes.

Value: None!

Habitat: Exceedingly rare in the Palladium World, they are rare even in the Land of Eternal Torment, with perhaps as few as four hundred. Adding credence to the notion that they are from another dimension, Sleepwalkers who know nothing about the Chaos War or Old Ones are sometimes encountered in other parts of the world outside the Land of the Damned.

Languages: Magically know and speak all languages at 98% skill proficiency.

Enemies: All who interrupt their dreams, plots, and machinations as well as those who challenge and threaten them.

Allies: Tend to be loners with their own agenda. Note, while Sleepwalkers may seem to be calm and nonthreatening, that facade is an illusion. These beings are evil through and through, delighting in causing nightmares, terror and manipulating and encouraging mortals to do evil. Sleepwalkers love interfering in the affairs of mortals and creating chaos, depravity, betrayal and suffering.

Notes: Sleepwalkers can and do kill, as well as drink blood and eat gore, but usually do so in anger or revenge. They feed upon emotion and bits of unprotected P.P.E. while people sleep. In fact, because the Sleepwalker steals P.P.E. while their victims slumber, the energy is usually replenished before they wake up and they never know the difference. Sometimes the P.P.E. is diminished when the victim awakens, but only by 10% and often goes unnoticed.

Some people fear the very nature of the Sleepwalker enables the creatures to find and communicate with the slumbering Old Ones in their dreams. Some believe this makes the Sleepwalker an active "secret agent" of the Old Ones and the one being who could possibly re-awaken them, and/or break the magic that binds the undead of the Land of Eternal Torment. Others believe the dreams of the Old Ones only help to inspire evil and cruelty in the Sleepwalkers who, in turn, plant the seeds of chaos and inspire evil in the dreams of others. Still others are confident that even the Sleepwalkers cannot reach the Old Ones, not even in their dreams, and are so intoxicated by the dreams and emotions of mortals that they are lost to delirium and don't even think about trying to contact the Old Ones. Certainly the Sleepwalkers are an enigma wrapped in evil.

True Vampires

The traditional vampire has been a plague on many worlds throughout the Megaverse, and have walked the earth of the Palladium World since the beginning of time. Many a vampire freely served the Old Ones if for no other reason than to maintain the lovely chaos of the era. Others were slaves. All are a pestilence.

True vampires are found in the Land of the Damned and other parts of the Palladium World. In all cases they are comparatively rare and reviled creatures actively hunted and destroyed by humans, Elves, Wolfen and most mortal races. From time to time, vampires have been a particularly disturbing problem in the Western Empire (where they are said to flourish in the oldest cities), the Old Kingdom and Kingdom of Timiro.

Vampires in the Land of the Damned. Vampires trapped in the Land of Eternal Torment are all believed to be *Secondary Vampires* who once served the Old Ones or who were scooped up at the end of the Chaos War and dumped in the Land of Eternal Torment with the rest of these evil beings to suffer for their crimes. Consequently, we only present the basic stats for Secondary Vampires in this book. For complete details on Master, Secondary and Wild Vampires, as well as expansive information on their purpose, goals, powers and vulnerabilities, see Kevin Siembieda's detailed description on pages 206-216 of the *Western Empire* adventure sourcebook.

Vampires are nocturnal supernatural predators. Their prey, humans and humanoids. As predators, they tend to be savage hunters and run in packs. The king of all packs is the Master. When a Master is not present the elder and/or most powerful Secondary Vampire leads the pack. Like many predators, vampires are territorial, often selecting a town, city or land area that they claim as their own. The Master Vampire is the king or "lord" of such domains, and the lesser vampires are his henchmen and most loyal subjects. The mortals they terrorize or enslave are their pitiful slaves, playthings and food supply.

Vampires see humans and other mortal humanoids as primitive animals to be corralled, controlled, fattened and eaten like livestock. Most (Master and) Secondary Vampires are arrogant and manipulative of all living beings, and frequently partake in games and tests of cunning and power against humanoid challengers. The perceived end to such enjoyable diversions is to prove the superiority of the undead in general, and that particular vampire specifically. As one might suspect, (Master and) Secondary Vampires are poor losers. Defeat and/or humiliation at the hands of a lesser being such as humans, Elves and Wolfen, are unforgivable and unforgettable blows to the ego.



that always demand retribution. Thus, a vampire's lust for revenge is as legendary as his lust for blood. One does not begin a conflict against a vampire, especially a Master or ancient Secondary, unless one intends to see it all the way through to the destruction of the vampire and his legion of undead and other maleficent beings (human and inhuman) attracted to this evil power.

In the Land of the Damned, ALL the traditional vampires are *ancient Secondary Vampires*. Beings of great experience and cunning, seething with anger and frustration. The most aggressive and powerful of these ancient vampires are among those who organize, control and lead the other, less intelligent undead of the Eternal Torment. Thus, when a large clan, tribe or other community of undead is encountered, one or more Secondary Vampires will be the leader or among the ruling elite.

Ancient Vampires of the Eternal Torment

Alignments: 25% Aberrant, 40% Miscreant, 34% Diabolic and 1% Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6+2, M.E. 3D6+6, M.A. 3D6+6, P.S. 3D6+14, P.P. 3D6+8, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 2D6+4, Spd. 3D6+10

Size and Weight: Varies, generally human.

Hit Points: 3D4x10 plus 1D6 per level of experience as a vampire. See Natural Abilities and limited invulnerability.

S.D.C. 3D6 +1D6 per level of experience.

Typical Level of Experience: For those in the Land of Eternal Torment, 1D6+7 level is common. In the world at large, 1D4+1 is more likely.

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E. 1D4x10

I.S.P. 3D6x10

Psionic Powers: Includes mind control over other vampires it has created, and Lesser/Wild Vampires created by others, including most of the lesser undead found in the Land of Eternal Torment. The use of this vampire mind control does not require the expenditure of I.S.P. and those influenced by it are more like loyal (or grudging) servants rather than zombie-like thralls. Only the Jaliquette, Rawheads, Revenant and Sleepwalkers are impervious to the mind controlling influence of a Secondary Vampire. Though they may *willingly* choose to ally themselves to a vampire, they too see themselves as lords and rulers of the undead or as independent beings beyond the control of others.

Considered Major Psychics and need only to roll a 12 or higher to save vs psionic attacks.

Magic: If the vampire knew magic before being reborn into a vampire he retains that knowledge, but those magic abilities are frozen and can NEVER increase in experience or power. Nor can the vampire learn new magic or increase his personal level of P.P.E. points.

Natural abilities: Nightvision: 1600 feet (488 m), smells blood like a shark, up to a mile away (1.6 km), and has a 50% +5% per level chance of recognizing whether it's human blood, Prowl 50% in humanoid form, does not breathe (can survive in a vacuum or in a toxic gas cloud with no detriment to their other senses or powers. Vampires do not bleed, except when impaled through the heart. Vampires do not radiate heat. They are cool to the touch and invisible to modern day heat sensors. Can eat food for a taste sensation or to trick humans, but do not need to eat. Nor do vampires have the desire to

eat. Likewise, a vampire can consume an unlimited amount of alcohol without the slightest degree of intoxication. Poisoned and spoiled food will have no effect either. Accidental consumption of garlic or wolfbay causes immediate vomiting and 1D6 damage direct to the vampire's Hit Points.

Skills: The average Secondary Vampire will *retain* a total of ten skills forever frozen at whatever level the person was before becoming a vampire. Two additional skills can be selected at levels 3, 6, 9, 11, and 15, but all *new* skills start and stay at first level proficiency.

Limited Invulnerability: See description at the beginning of the undead section. Impervious to normal weapons, heat, cold, poisons, and disease. Impervious to knockout/stun attacks. Martial arts throws, flips and holds (locks) are still effective in knocking the monster off balance or holding him in place, but cause no pain or damage.

Bio-Regenerates at a rate of 2D6 points per melee round and a vampire can survive and keep functioning normally up to 20 points below zero! At minus 21 the creature drops to the ground and appears to be dead. Chopping off its head will further enhance the illusion of death, but in reality, merely prolongs the time needed to regenerate. A vampire can regenerate physical damage at a pace that no other known creature can equal. Entire limbs, eyes, hair, and skin, grow back in a matter of minutes. The entire body can re-form overnight (8 hours), an arm 45 minutes, a leg 60 minutes, lower body 4 hrs, upper body 6 hrs, head 4 hrs. A decapitated head left laying nearby can merge back with the body by slowly dissolving into a mist and re-forming with the body, about 20 minutes.

Special: Summon Vermin: The vampire can summon select forces of nature. In this case, vermin, including rats, mice, flies, gnats and cockroaches. Up to 100 rats or mice per each level of experience can be summoned, with a Horror Factor of 9, and can bite, inflicting one S.D.C./H.P. point of damage on unprotected victims as they swarm under and around people (**G.M. Note:** Roll 1D6+1 per melee round for rodent damage). They also create a surprising amount of noise and are quite distracting.

Up to 500 flies, gnats, or cockroaches can be summoned per level of the vampire's experience. Flies and gnats create an annoying and icky cloud of insects (Horror Factor 6). They inflict no damage but impair normal vision and hearing.

Cockroaches (Horror Factor 9) are just disgusting, tickle when they crawl against bare flesh, crunch when stepped on, and crawl on everything and everybody in their path. Like the flies, the roaches will cause disorientation and impair vision.

Duration of control: 20 minutes per level of experience. Penalties from a horde of vermin: Victims plagued by the vermin lose one melee attack, are -4 on initiative, -1 to strike, -2 to parry and dodge.

Special: Summon Canines: The vampire can summon up to six (6) wolves or dogs per each level of experience. The pack of angry looking canines has a Horror Factor of 8. Generally, each canine has two or three attacks per melee and inflicts 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Points of damage on unprotected victims. They can be vicious and deadly opponents and make fine watchdogs. Duration of control: 20 minutes per level of experience.

Special: Summon Fog: Old and experienced vampires (level 7 and higher) can create a thick and unnatural fog similar to the Summon Fog spell. However, unlike the spell, the vampire can direct the fog to move and roll along exactly where he desires it to go. A fog is often summoned forth to cover a vampire's activities or to create fear and confusion. The fog can cover an area of one mile (1.6 km) and is so thick that an individual cannot see clearly beyond four feet (1.2 m). Blurred shapes and shadowy figures are all that can be seen for an additional 10 feet (3 m) and beyond that, only a grey wall of mist. Within the misty curtain lurks the vampire(s), waiting to strike. Details for traveling in the fog are identical to the spell found on page 212 of the **Palladium RPG, 2nd Ed.**® Duration: 20 minutes per level of experience (7th level means 140 minutes or two hours, 20 minutes).

Special: Metamorphosis: A true vampire of any variety can instantly transform into a large bat, wolf, or mist. The transformation takes about seven seconds to complete, or the equivalent of two melee attacks/actions. While in *nonhuman form*, the vampire retains its intelligence, identity and basic supernatural powers, but cannot speak or perform skills.

One of the most bizarre abilities of the metamorphosis is that the vampire's clothing and other small *personal* articles, such as jewelry, money in pockets and light weapons (knife, light sword, handgun), all disappear, but when the humanoid shape is resumed, the clothes and personal articles all reappear. Body armor of any kind, crossbows, magic items and other large weapons and materials, as well as any items that do not belong to the vampire, drop to the ground — they can't be taken along as part of the metamorphosis.

Metamorphosis: Bat:

- Fly: Speed of 50 (35 mph/56 kph).
- Sonar/echolocation: Enables the vampire to see/maneuver/fly in total darkness at full speed and see the invisible.
- Ultrasonic hearing: Hears high and low frequencies; very acute. Can hear a moth's wings beating but cannot understand the spoken word (too slow).
- Thermo-imaging and infrared optics: Close range, 10 feet/3 m; for sensing and seeing the heat emanations of warm blood coursing through the veins. But cannot see infrared light.
- Combat: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +8 to dodge in flight, +5% on prowl ability.
- Attacks per melee: Half normal, bite inflicts 2D6 damage, claws 1D6 plus P.S. damage bonus. Can inflict vampire slow kill bite and drink blood while in bat form.

Metamorphosis: Wolf:

- Run: Speed of 58 (40 mph/64 km)
- Other Natural Abilities: Track by scent 70% and leap 20 feet across (6 m) and about 6 feet (1.8 m) high.
- Combat: +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +4 to dodge, +1 on initiative, +15% on prowl ability.
- Attacks per melee: Add one to the normal humanoid number of attacks. Bite 5D6 damage (no P.S. bonus).

Metamorphosis: Mist:

- Speed: 11 (7.5 mph/12 km).
- Other Natural Abilities: Impervious to all physical attacks, including wood, silver, fire, and most magic. Still vulnerable to water and elemental magic. Can slide under doors, through cracks and crevices, keyholes, etc. and re-materialize on the other side.
- Combat: None. Cannot attack in mist form. Can perform movement melee actions only. +10% on prowl ability (although silent, the mist is very large and obvious).

Note: Cannot use psionic powers in mist form, but can use them in animal form.

Vulnerabilities: Standard: Weapons made of wood, silver, and magic, as well as holy water, holy symbols, holy weapons and sunlight. Vampires are strictly nocturnal predators. The light of day is painful and destroys them if exposed to it for any length of time. Vampires also have a very unique and distinctive aura. Any psychic who has seen a vampire's aura will recognize other vampires by their aura. The aura prevents the vampire from having a reflection in mirrors or other reflective surfaces. The aura even makes the clothing and other items held by the vampire invisible in a mirror. This also means that still cameras that utilize mirrors in the photographic process cannot photograph a vampire, but video cameras can.

Attacks per Melee Round: Three hand to hand +1 per every four levels of experience. Or can combine psionic attacks (as many as two per melee); the use of each psionic attack or vampire power (turn into mist) counts as one melee action/attack.

Combat Damage: Damage from punches and kicks are as per the undead's supernatural P.S. plus P.S. bonuses for P.S. over 15. See the Supernatural P.S. table on page 17 of the **Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd Edition**. Vampire versus Vampire; damage direct to Hit Points: All vampires, by their strange nature, inflict damage direct to Hit Points whenever they fight other Undead Vampires. This means that one vampire can kill another, although their mutual regenerative powers make this difficult.

Bonuses (does not include probable attribute bonuses): +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +5 to save vs Horror Factor (normally +3, but the vampires of the Eternal Torment have gotten used to many horrors), and impervious to all forms of psionic and magic sleeps and paralysis.

Habitat: Most are found in the Land of Eternal Torment, but vampires are also found, here and there, elsewhere in the Land of the Damned and the world at large.

Languages: Those in the Land of Eternal Torment can understand and speak any language, most others can speak 2-4 languages.

Enemies: The living in general and any who oppose them.

Allies: May ally themselves to other dark powers, but prefer to be the leading power themselves.

Note: Feed on the blood of the living.



The Darkest Heart

By Bill Coffin & Kevin Siembieda

The Darkest Heart is a primordial forest region that has existed since the Palladium world was young. During the Age of Chaos, it was the playground of the Old Ones, where they created hundreds of twisted and freakish creatures to satisfy their perverse curiosity. When the dragons rebelled against their masters and helped to form the Alliance of Light, they did it here, in the safety of the dense undergrowth, where guerrilla tactics and a firm knowledge of the land gave them the edge they needed to get their war effort started. Of course, the edge would not last for long. The Old Ones used their terrible magic powers to raze the forest on several occasions, and each time they made it regrow larger and denser than before. After the final razing, the Old Ones transformed the entire forest into a living weapon by animating each and every tree and commanding them to destroy any humanoid or dragon within their grasp. The forest stayed that way until the War's end, when it was returned to normal in the wake of the Old Ones' defeat. Using magicks of their own, the Gods of Light promoted the normal growth of trees, the re-introduction of other plants and animals and a general cleansing of the evil aura the Old Ones' continued presence seemed to leave behind, almost like a mystic residue or psychic impression of evil.

Alas, the Alliance was never 100% successful in their goal to the remove the evil that stains the forest. The woodlands did regrow, and life did return to the Darkest Heart, but it would never be a normal forest region like the Great Northern Wilderness or the magnificent woodlands in the Western Empire, Eastern Territory, and certain sections of the Old Kingdom. Though there are beautiful portions, much of it is a twisted woodland, dense with vegetation, dark and foreboding. Locked away as part of the Land of the Damned, it has become home to the monstrous Beasts of Chaos and other dark forces, including the menace of the Were-Beast hordes. It is also the foundation for one of the Alliance's greatest failures – the ill-fated *Garrison* – the champions whose task it was to keep a watchful eye on the Land of the Damned, and to make sure that evil never reared its ugly head beyond its borders.

Indeed, the Darkest Heart is as foul and as deadly a place as any in the Land of the Damned, but because it *appears* to be nothing more than a big, dense forest, adventurers often choose to explore it first, reminding them of home and offering a sense of familiarity and peace when they visit the region. It is often a tragic mistake, for comparing the Darkest Heart to any normal forest is like comparing a crocodile to a dragon.

Physical Description

On any map, the Darkest Heart is a relatively small region, only about 400 miles (640 km) long and 200 miles (320 km) deep. It stretches from the Northern Mountains in the east to the Sea of Despair in the west. To the north is the *Great Rift* and the battlegrounds of the *Minion War* (both described in *Land of the*

Damned™ One: Chaos Lands). To the south is the Eternal Torment, land of the undead.

The Darkest Heart is actually many times larger than it might appear. Though no comprehensive survey has ever been done of the region (or of any other part of the Land of the Damned, for that matter), by all accounts the Darkest Heart seems to be many times larger in reality than what is depicted on any map. Not that the current maps of the world are wrong – the Palladium World has an unusually excellent cartographic record – but there seems to be some kind of dimensional warping throughout the region making it far larger on the inside than it appears on the outside. One Ranger who tried to chart the region (and sadly disappeared in the attempt, but not before sending his findings home via magic pigeon) noted that he entered the Darkest Heart from the north on a direct southern route and after covering over 1,000 miles (1600 km), he still saw no end in sight! Now, it could be that the Ranger (whose name is lost to history) got lost and wandered in circles, but similar accounts from other adventurers who survived to tell the tale suggests that indeed the Darkest Heart is three or four times larger an area than anybody had previously imagined.

The entire Darkest Heart is covered in some kind of woodland. The westernmost section, the **Outer Weald**, is the least densely covered, consisting of copses of light forest and vast expanses of scrub land, tall grasses and the occasional dense thicket of trees. The middle section of the Darkest Heart, the **Middle Weald**, is a heavy deciduous forest, much like what one finds in the southern reaches of the Great Northern Wilderness or in the Eastern Territory. The entire area is dominated by tree growth of some kind, mostly medium- to large-sized trees with the occasional giant and supergiants. A mild canopy stretches over the area as the tree growth's upper branches weave together. In most places, this canopy is only tight enough to break up the sunlight, but in a few places the branches are woven together like a basket, and creatures can move across it like it is another level to the forest. The easternmost section is the **Inner Weald**, and is the densest forest in the Palladium World. The closest thing to the Inner Weald's density and undergrowth is the Yin-Sloth Jungles. Both regions are filled with heavy tree and vine growth, and the ground is covered by additional plant life that makes any kind of movement a difficult task at best. Here the forest canopy is nearly solid everywhere, locking the ground level in perpetual shade and providing second and even third layers of the forest for creatures to live, work and hunt in. The Inner Weald is dominated by large, giant and supergiant trees, the kind that lumberjacks in the Northern Wilderness spend their whole lives dreaming about but seldom find. In the Inner Weald, they are the norm.

The weather of the region has been fixed by ancient magicks, perhaps by the Old Ones, perhaps by the Alliance of Light. All year long, it is a comfortable 60 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (15 to 21 degrees C). There is never more than a light rain,

but somehow the numerous streams, ponds and the underground water table throughout the Darkest Heart never run dry. By all accounts, this area is optimal for supporting all kinds of life, and indeed, it does. The only problem is, so much of it is unfriendly.



The Powers That Be

There is no central authority within the Darkest Heart whatsoever. The entire region has been left to its own devices, and most of the creatures living here have gone completely wild. Over the years, certain power blocs have emerged, however, setting the stage for the region's current balance of power. To understand the Darkest Heart, one must understand its occupants.

The Beasts of Chaos. During the Chaos War, the Old Ones bred a vast number of monstrous creatures for use as beasts of burden, attack animals, troops and minions. Most were destroyed in the conflict, but those that survived were sent to the Land of the Damned. Many have made their home in the forest of the Darkest Heart. Most of these great and powerful animals have no collective society any more than the animals of any wilderness might. However, some of the more intelligent ones do gather in small groups and packs, and even the ones who don't are so powerful and impressive that they dominate the landscape with their presence. As one might expect, the Beasts of Chaos prey upon one another and all lesser beings, with humanoids counted among the "lesser." Thus, in the Heart of Darkness, adventurers are the hunted in the forests.

The Beasts also help to prevent the Demon and Deevil armies of the Minion War from progressing deep into the Darkest Heart and beyond. Of course, the *Demons* and *Deevils* of the Great Rift are not interested in colonization or exploration of any forest, they are too busy with war and fighting each other to bother trying to take over new territory. Then again, there are those occasions when Demons, Deevils or their henchmen come to the forest in small raiding parties invariably seeking to capture, or enlist the support of, some Chaos Beasts, search for some other forest resource or seek fugitives on the run. There are also individuals and occasional bands of deserters from the demonic Minion War who try to escape the endless war by hiding in the Darkest Heart, living off the land, competing with the Beasts of Chaos, and plundering anybody else they happen upon. These demonic visitors and renegades seldom travel more than a hundred miles (160 km) into the interior and are not significant enough to constitute a "faction" within the forest, but they are worth mentioning, especially since they come to kidnap, enslave, or recruit the Beasts of Chaos and prey on adventurers from the outside world too.

Were-Beasts. Half man, half beast, and all trouble, these vile creatures have exploded in numbers and now run riot over large tracts of the Darkest Heart. While not exactly a standing army or even a cohesive society, the Were-Beasts are a growing force of chaos and power in certain parts of the forest. For now, the many clans war amongst themselves and other Beasts of Chaos, but should a general or king rise from the ranks and unite the many independent clans, the already formidable Were-Beast legions could become a true force to be feared. They are already united in two regards, one, their hate for the people of Therendil, and two, the fact that they consider the Darkest Heart to be the domain of Were-Beasts. These intelligent, but savage humanoids have no interest in battling Beasts of Chaos, many of whom they regard (and rightly so) as little more than dumb animals at home in the Darkest Heart, but they are intent on killing or subjugating all intelligent life forms who dare to enter their forest domain or dare to threaten or oppose them.

The Savage Clans. In the Middle and Inner Wealds, there are numerous clans and tribes of so-called "monstrous" humanoids, namely Orcs, Goblins and Hob-Goblins with a few Ogres and Kobolds thrown into the mix for good measure. The first three races are distantly related to the Faerie Folk, but all five are what were once considered the "servant races" of the Elven nation of Therendil. When the Therendil Elves slid into decline, their servants were the first to go, and they established their own fractious society in the deep forest. Soon the servant races began fighting amongst themselves as tiny squabbling tribes and clans with little more power than to stay alive and make trouble for whoever they come across. Two "superclans" have risen from this mess, *Clan Galbegh* and *Clan Salbekh*, and in them is the promise that one day the servant races might have a unified voice once more. If they don't all kill each other or end up in the bellies of Were-Beasts first, that is.

The Realm of Seven Sovereigns. Along with the Servant Races, Therendil's traditional allies, the Faerie Folk, also left them when it became obvious that Therendil no longer had the strength to fight the encroaching chaos consuming the Darkest Heart. Disgusted by the Elves' abdication of their duties, the Faerie Queen *Seerea the Proud* established her own Faerie Kingdom in the Inner Weald consisting of seven huge Faerie Mounds. The largest, her palace, lies in the middle of a perfect circle formed by the other six mounds. Together, they form a defensive ring that has so far proven effective at repelling any attack. Only trouble lies ahead for the Faeries; the Queen herself recently died at the hands of her most trusted bodyguard, the Satyr knight *Tamerlane*, who was angry with the monarch that she would not name him as heir to her throne or accept his amorous advances. Though Tamerlane has since been exiled from the kingdom (his current whereabouts are unknown), an even greater problem now faces the Faeries: Who will lead them? The Queen had no clearly defined successor, as she had never taken a mate or produced offspring. Now her six siblings, each of whom controls one of the outer Faerie Mounds, feel they have a legitimate claim to the throne. If the Faeries cannot figure out a peaceful way to solve the impasse, civil war will break out among them, and the unified strength that has kept them alive for so long may disappear and leave them all vulnerable to the Were-Beasts and other dangers.

The Fallen Palace of Therendil. In the deepest reaches of the Inner Weald lies the Fallen Palace of Therendil, the core of what used to be the Elven Nation of Therendil, that noble society of warriors and mystics who jointly volunteered their full strength to policing the Land of the Damned after the Chaos War. They were the largest component of **The Garrison**, the armies of Light who took the job of seeing that evil did not rear its ugly head so high again as it did during the Age of Chaos. Alas, the Alliance of Light fell apart soon after it inflicted the Mortification upon the Land of Eternal Torment. With no more Alliance, the Garrison's support dwindled and their strength faded. Finally, the Garrison itself fell to pieces. Before the final defeat, the Kingdom of Therendil pooled its remaining strength and withdrew to the Inner Weald, where it has survived, waiting things out, to re-emerge when the time was right. Only there has never been a "right time" and the people of Therendil have fallen to despair and entropy. Now, they find themselves under siege by the Were-Beasts who see them as an obstacle to their

complete dominance of the great forest, and seek to destroy them. Meanwhile, inside the Fallen Palace, a jaded and cowardly Elven nobility carries on like nothing is wrong, ignoring the stark reality that their Kingdom is in imminent danger of destruction, and that with their departure, the evil in the Darkest Heart will grow stronger than ever.

The Outer Weald

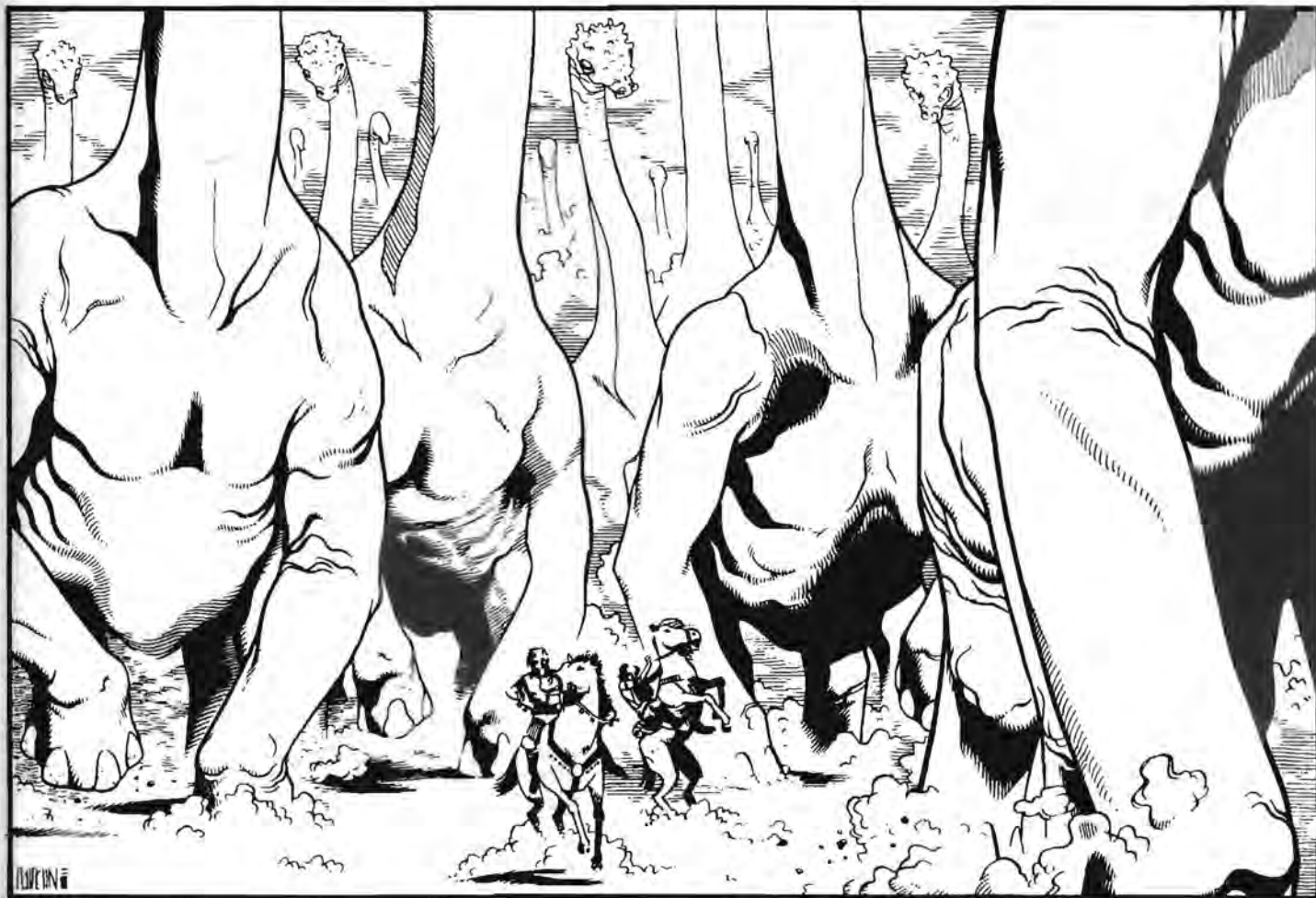
This is the westernmost section of the Darkest Heart. It is the least forested, and covered mostly by tall grass and scrub brush, with intermittent groves and copses of trees and denser growth. It is not a savannah or veldt, for there are too many small trees for that, but it's mostly flat, and a relatively open landscape that reminds outsiders of Ophid's Grasslands broken by patches of light forest.

The relatively open landscape here provides an ideal environment for the largest animals among the Beasts of Chaos. Giants such as the Baltosaur and the Beast of Kathos, as well as the hyena-like Hygorathes, high-flying Slaughterhawk, and bull-like Udoks love this part of the Darkest Heart. More of these Beasts are found here, in the Outer Weald, than anywhere else in the Land of the Damned (or the Darkest Heart, for that matter), making this region especially dangerous for unsuspecting outsiders. First-time visitors might be lulled into a false sense of security when they see how wide open parts of the Outer Weald are, especially when they sight their first Baltosaur or Beast of Kathos from over a mile (1.6 km) away and avoid it easily. They don't realize what Beasts lurk in the neighboring forest, hunt from the sky or prowl the tall grass. In fact, the grasses near the forests are much taller than they appear from a distance, made of up of tall, bamboo-like plants (6-15 feet/1.8 to 4.6 m tall) too dense to see through and perfect for predators to stage ambushes. When moving through these areas of "tall grass," travelers must remain on constant alert, so they don't bump into some hungry predator, hostile Faerie Folk, or other menace at point-blank range.

Though this part of the Darkest Heart has always been mostly wilderness of one kind or another, there have been a few attempts to develop it (or "civilize" it, as arrogant builders might say). The Garrison tried especially hard in this regard, erecting numerous barracks, guard stations and the like throughout the area, but as the strength of that order waned, they had to abandon these places one by one. Left to the tender mercies of the elements, these structures have vanished, and today, there is hardly a trace that the Garrison was here at all, except for a few vine and grass covered ruins. They are the *Westmarch Cliffs*, the *Iron Towers of Kaojin*, the *Ruins of Haelor Forge* and the *Talons*.

The Westmarch Cliffs

The fortress of Westmarch was one of the finest strongholds built after the Chaos War ended. Perched on the westernmost cliffs of the Darkest Heart, it would stand watch over the seas and the land. Its magnificent stone towers stretched skyward, giving watchmen an unprecedented view of the surrounding area. Within a generation, the stone fortresses of Westmarch fell. The towers shuddered and collapsed in a terrible cascade of



stone and dust. The front walls gave in, and the inner keeps all folded in. As the Baltosaurs kept pushing into the area, the majority of the building lifted off its foundation, and the rest toppled to the ground, then half of it slid over the cliffs and fell into the sea.

All that remains of the fortress today is an extensive set of ruins and piles of debris. The base of the fortress and whatever is left of its side walls and the foundations of a few buildings are all that stand, the rest have been turned into mound hills and towers of rubble, most covered in dirt and grass or climbing vines. Over the eons, *Thanes* have routinely visited the ruins to arrange all of the debris into neatly categorized piles, in accordance with those creatures' strange compulsion to put seemingly worthless wreckage into order. For those with the time and inclination to search through these Thane junk piles, there *might* be treasure or artifacts worth salvaging, but these piles and towers weigh tons and tons, and will require magic or assistance from Earth Elementals and still take months (or years) to shift through even half of it. Besides, should any Thane happen to pass by and find somebody "destroying" it or its brethren's handiwork, it/they will attack with a vengeance. Much was lost when the fortress collapsed and fell into the sea, but who knows what might remain for the intrepid scrounger to find?

The half of the fortress that fell into the Sea of Despair has been hammered into pebbles and/or washed away over the last five thousand centuries, leaving no trace of that half of the fortress.

For adventurers, Westmarch is important because though the surface buildings were all destroyed, there were subterranean levels to the facility that remain intact. Some of the deeper levels were never breached and might contain stockpiles of weapons, armor, magic, and other spoils. Rumor also has it that some of the Westmarch defenders sealed themselves into these lower chambers, protecting themselves with powerful wards of all kinds, many of which have since been lost to history. Surely any Diabolist would savor an opportunity to study unknown wards in the hopes of adding that coveted knowledge to their collection! Oh, and the piles of other treasure said to be waiting down there would not hurt, either. Treasure-seekers had better be prepared for whatever else might be sealed in these lower levels, though. The soldiers might have willingly sealed their fates, but if they left behind Guardian Stones or other means of defense, then these levels are by no means "unprotected." Of course, adventurers should question why someone else has not claimed the loot (if it ever existed at all) over the last 50,000+ years. If any kind of treasure or ancient secrets exist inside the bowels of this ancient fortress, they are either recent additions by some denizens of the Land of the Damned or are protected by such powerful magic that even Minotaurs, Ogres, Trolls and perhaps even sphinx, dragons and other inhuman creatures have been unsuccessful in reaching it. Still, those who don't want to hear that the ruins have been plundered insist that the magic may hold at bay "evil" beings, but that heroes of noble heart and good intention may succeed where others have failed. Maybe, maybe not.

At any rate, travelers should be able to find a temporary shelter among the ruins that is more easy to defend than a simple campsite out in the open. However, adventurers should be cautious, because hostile creatures of all kinds keep their eyes on the ruins of Westmarch, and anybody who overstays their welcome is bound to receive a most unpleasant series of guests bent on driving outsiders away or eating them as their next meal. Additionally, the ruins of Westmarch are haunted by a dozen Poltergeists, a half dozen Haunting Entities and at least one (if not two) Tectonic Entities, not to mention being home to a couple of Toad Stools and a Puck.

The Iron Towers of Kaojin

Not everything the Garrison built was strictly for guard duty. Some places, like the Iron Towers of Kaojin, were research facilities. The Iron Towers were the brainchild of sorcerer *Kaojin the Lesser*, son of the legendary *Kaojin the Elder*, a great inventor and master of magic. Kaojin the Lesser always felt he had a legacy to live up to, and the Iron Towers were supposed to be part of that long, glorious tradition.

Kaojin the Lesser decided he would make his mark by understanding the bizarre creatures left behind by the Old Ones, so perhaps the forces of Light could harness such power and put it toward good ends, making new breeds of wondrous animals and controlling the Chaos Beasts left behind. It was a noble plan "on paper," as they say, but the reality of it was quite impossible. Expending his family's entire fortune to build two magnificent and indestructible towers, as well as a large compound to surround them, Kaojin the Lesser established a huge laboratory where the various members of the Chaos Beasts could be examined in detail. At first, the place seemed like a zoo designed to hold the most dangerous of creatures. Even juvenile Baltosaurs and Beasts of Kathos were held here by nervous guards while Kaojin puttered about in his laboratories, working up theories for how the Old Ones could have made these creatures in the way that they did.

Finally Kaojin began his experiments in earnest, and that is when his genius turned to stark madness. He began vivisectioning his test animals. Conducting all manner of cruel experiments on them, and even tried to use magic to mutate them into something else — he was a mortal trying to play the Old Ones' game, and he was failing miserably at it.

As the Iron Towers became a chamber of horrors, Kaojin's servants deserted him, as did the Garrison guards assigned to the facility. Oblivious to this, Kaojin continued on, breeding freakish hybrids and half-breeds of the Chaos Beasts. Many were so malignant and malformed that they could not possibly live for more than a few hours without magic to help them along.

Eventually, Kaojin got careless and his test subjects broke free. The pandemonium they caused in the facility was total, as Kaojin's subjects rose against their master. The wizard put up a terrific struggle, but in the end he was overcome. By the time Garrison soldiers arrived three days later, the entire place was strewn with the dead bodies of Kaojin's test subjects, and every building in the compound was ablaze. Kaojin, himself, was never found and was presumed to have been eaten or perished in the blaze. After the fires died down, all that stood were the indestructible Iron Towers, which remain standing to this day as a symbol of one man's insane pride and the inherent dangers of

trying to repeat what not even the Old Ones should have done in the first place.

The Iron Towers are important to adventurers as a landmark, though little else. Whatever secrets this place may have held have long since perished in the conflagration and the thousands of years of neglect and habitation by various beasts and human-



oids. Over the ages, the Iron Towers have witnessed many clans, tribes, bands and groups of all sizes and make-up inhabit them for a time, before the hardship of the Land of the Damned drives them away or they too perish. In fact, some say the twin Iron Towers are cursed, and that anybody who comes to reside in them for more than a fortnight will suffer a terrible fate. While it is true the Iron Towers have a long history of destruction, murder and suffering attached to them, so does every place that has ever been settled in the Land of the Damned. This is a hostile environment filled with malevolent beings of every stripe and color. The fact that the Iron Towers are magically indestructible simply means that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of different groups have tried to make them a foundation for some civilization or stronghold over the last 50,000 years or so. Thus, the towers have a longer, seemingly more notorious history than most other places in the region. Additionally, despite the extreme odds against it, there is always some group of villains, adventurers or madmen convinced that there is yet some hidden compartment, secret room or passageway inside one (if not both) of the towers where one can find some of Kaojin, notes, scrolls or other priceless treasure.

The Iron Towers do not even provide a great refuge for travelers, because one or both are usually inhabited by one or more dangerous predators or other animals, as well as humanoid misanthropes. Many a sinister Chaos Beast, brigand and evil Faerie Folk come to the Towers for the same purpose, and Were-Beasts and other semi-intelligent predators frequently visit the Iron Towers in search of humanoids who think they are sheltered safely away. Besides, half the time one or the other tower is claimed by bandits, savage Trolls or barbarous Orcs, Goblins or Hob-Goblins looking to make the place their home – or at least a temporary lair while in the area for the next 2D4 weeks. Any small group who clears out a tower can easily defend it against predators and small bands of monsters or adventurers, but there are too many ways in and out to make them completely safe from large or determined groups, or from evil Faerie Folk or Were-Beasts bent on murder.

Another hazard to consider is that the towers are likely to be haunted, though no one has ever reported seeing the ghost of Kaojin. A number of evil and mischievous tricksters add to the stories of ghosts and demons haunting the towers, but the real culprits are a mated pair of Psykolops Hounds who enjoy frightening strangers (they live in one of the upper floors of a Tower) and a host of evil Faerie Folk who live in the other tower (they include a band of 12 Bogies, two Diabolic Silver Bell Faeries, three Toad Stools and a Hairy Jack). **Note:** Remember, the promise of these two standing megalithic structures works as a beacon to attract all manner of men and beasts to investigate them. And control over the towers is constantly shifting for days, weeks and months at a time. Game Masters should milk all of this for all it is worth.

The Ruins of Haelor Forge

Haelor Forge was originally built by the Old Ones, though they never gave it its name, the Alliance of Light did that when they captured it near the end of the war. The Haelor Forge was a huge yet simple facility for creating vast amounts of weapons, armor, tools, and other war gear, including rune weapons. The facility was a simple column dug into the ground and lined with

stone, like a massive chimney leading into the depths of the earth. Only it was a “chimney” nearly a quarter-mile (0.4 km) in diameter, and all along its inner walls were stairwells, scaffolds, and workshops where countless craftsmen did their level best to keep the Old Ones’ war machine running. The bottom of the forge was a huge lava vent created by the Old Ones – this is where the facility got its heat source, which was then piped to many different foundries and casting centers throughout the facility. The main foundry sat several stories above the lava vent and was the pride and joy of the Forge. The primary foundry melted more metal than all other parts of the facility put together.

At its peak, Haelor Forge was manufacturing thousands of items a day – quite a feat for a pre-industrial metalworks. Aided by some of the Old Ones’ trademark magic, the Forge also turned out rune weapons and powerful magic items, including some of the most infamous artifacts of chaos used in the conflict. To stem this tide of equipment and weaponry, the Alliance of Light made destroying or capturing the place a priority. The problem was Haelor Forge was well behind enemy lines. Heck, it was practically on the Old Ones’ doorstep! Even when the Chaos War was in full swing, this territory was firmly in the Old Ones’ grasp, and no simple raiding party from the Alliance of Light could destroy the facility. So, the Alliance did what any army would do in a time of need. They resorted to good old-fashioned dirty tricks.

Using Changeling spies to infiltrate the Forge, the Alliance monitored the activity at Haelor Forge for over two years before putting a plan into motion. Exactly what happened is unclear, since historical records never documented the incident. (Actually it may have been, but since Changelings played a key, heroic role, such documentation has been destroyed over the eons. Not exactly the sort of thing modern scholars want to publicize, lest they get tainted as a “Changeling lover.” So, the true story of the Forge remains obscure for fear of crediting the much-maligned Changeling race for their impressive role to free the world from Chaos when nobody else would.)

It seems Alliance (Changeling) spies either sabotaged the Forge or they executed some kind of suicide attack on it that cracked all of the central casts and utterly destroyed the primary foundry. Most of all, the ingenious engineers and founders who ran the facility were all caught in a torrent of molten metal when the foundry was smashed, incinerating them all. The attack caused a chain reaction that ended in the Forge’s collapse, turning what had been a huge cylindrical shaft into a wide crater over a half-mile (0.8 km) in diameter and just under 1,000 feet (305 m) deep.

The lava vent at the bottom of the Forge is still active and even through the piles of metal and stone rubble, it radiates faint heat to this day. Small tendrils of smoke and steam also issue from the site as a reminder of what it once was.

The Ruins of Haelor Forge are important to adventurers for two reasons. First, it is a place of legend and magic, and while it has been plundered over the eons by many different people, good and evil, the occasional magic item or ancient weapon still turns up now and again, making the Forge a place of interest to adventurers. Whoever can dig up some of these lost treasures can claim them. The trick, of course, is getting through all that debris and hardened lava to find them – chopping through 100



million tons of melted rock and iron ore is nobody's idea of fun or easy work, especially when months of backbreaking work may yield absolutely nothing, and barely put a dent in the place.

The second reason is a more noble and dangerous one. Proof of the Changelings' heroics could still remain in the Forge or elsewhere in the Land of the Damned. There have been no documented cases of Changeling heroism in the entire Chaos War, thus the individuals to prove it would be famous — though probably hated. The hate and fear of Changelings is so strong in the world that anyone who made a claim that the shape changers fought on the side of Light would be laughed at and any evidence from the Land of the Damned discredited as lies and tricks created by the evil beings who live there, maybe even planted by evil Changelings. In addition, anyone brave enough to present evidence that Changelings were at least once heroes, are likely to be branded heretics and Changeling-lovers, and quite possibly killed for it. Of course, the secret Changeling communities will love them for it.

Note that like other ruins and places that attract outsiders, it also attracts the predators who prey on them. Consequently, a number of monsters and small bands of evildoers regularly stop by the Haelor Forge to see if there are any new victims to prey upon.

The Talons

As the Garrison fell back following the Westmarch Uprising, they found themselves besieged on all sides by angry and vicious creatures who had enough of Garrison occupation and were willing to get some payback for years of punishment and humiliation. The Garrison forces in the Outer Weald were cut off and in dire straits. They needed to protect themselves somehow, but their options were few. So, they did their best and built what are now called the *Talons* — four rough-hewn ravines that from above look like a wild animal clawed the earth and left its rake marks forever more.

These ravines were basically super-deep defense trenches that had a network of tunnels at the bottom of them so soldiers could hurry back and forth from ravine to ravine. Inside each, the soldiers built multiple tiers of weapons shops, barracks, planning quarters, and all of the other facilities needed for a military base of operations. The hope was that on the flat land of the Outer Weald, the lack of any kind of profile against the horizon would make the Talons difficult to spot. The Garrison furthered this by building a series of removable camouflaged slats to cover the tops of the ravines, so creatures could even walk right over the facility and not know it was there.

Supposedly, the Garrison troops held out like this for over two years while large mobs of monsters scoured the plains for them. How the Talons were discovered is unknown, but some think it had something to do with a traitor within the ranks who could no longer bear to hide and revealed the Talons' location

just to force the situation into some kind of final resolution. It was final, all right.

Over the years, the Talons have been occupied by various, human and nonhuman, good and evil forces (which is why it has never been buried over the ages), but half the time they are abandoned and available for examination. Dwarves especially will find this underground defensive fortification of particular interest, but most others will find it all rather boring, just a bunch of tunnels and cuts in the ground.

The Middle Weald

The Middle Weald is woodland through and through. Covered by a fair density of trees, this woodland has none of the openness that distinguishes the Outer Weald. Anybody who has traveled through the Great Northern Wilderness or the Northern Hinterlands is likely to have gone through forests similar in size and scope to the Middle Weald. However, there are some differences. First, the trees here are rather larger than what one might find elsewhere in the world. The occasional giant and supergiant trees, which can tower hundreds of feet/meters into the air and be as wide around as a small house, are proof enough of that. As mentioned before, there is a partial canopy which in places can support the weight of large animals and humanoids. And, no other forest in the world is so thoroughly dominated by evil, predatory creatures as this one.

Were-Beasts by the thousands rule this expansive land, taking whatever they like by force like roving gangs. They also try to drive out nearly every other intelligent being in the Middle Weald, for they see it as "their" domain and no one else's. They are not a nation or even one or two massive tribes. They are literally clans, bands and gangs that function independent of one another though they share a common sense of authority, power and superiority over non-Were-Beasts. They are very much an unruly mob without any one leader, and are easily whipped into a killing frenzy when one of their own is threatened, hurt or slain. The Were-Beasts of the Middle Weald, though constantly on the move (they live a nomad's life), remain a scourge to the whole region, and as much as the trees or the history, the "plague of Were-Beasts" are a critical part of this region's landscape.

Dark Home

The rather spectacular ruins known as "Dark Home" (sometimes called "Darkholme") is an ancient edifice that may date back to a time before the Chaos Wars. Nobody living in the region remembers who built it or why. Nor what fate befell it. The place has always been a ruin as long as anyone can remember. It may not have been a fortress at all, but a pyramid or part of a lost city that met with a terrible fate before, during or after the Chaos War. Only the slumbering Old Ones and some of the gods in the Alliance of Light may know its history, but they aren't talking.



Today, it is another haunted ruin of the Land of the Damned, only this one has been *home* to Were-Beasts for over 200 years. However, it was known as the "Dark Home" for many thousands of years before the Were-Beasts adopted it, presumably because a number of people and tribes have used these ruins as the foundation for civilization as well as shelter from the elements. Based on its appearance, only roughly one third of the ancient structure remains, yet it is still one of the largest structures in the Land of the Damned and can accommodate thousands of inhabitants.

To a ragtag lot like the Were-Beast mobs, there is more than enough to Dark Home to make it an adequate shelter and meeting place for those accustomed to living outside. Even more than that, the Were-Beasts appreciate Dark Home because it gives them a refuge during the day, when they cannot assume their stronger, more beastly forms. In the daylight, Dark Home is like a guerrilla village, populated by human-looking people who lead a primitive, stone age life. They have virtually no technology and do not even keep fires burning. Given the nice weather and their preference for raw meat and nocturnal activities, the inhabitants have no need for such stuff. Most wear little or no clothing during the day, though a few might wear crude armor made of animal hides (equivalent to soft leather) when they feel Dark Home is under threat. To defend the "lair" and communal gathering place, the humanoids use whatever they can get their hands on as a weapon – large bones or tree branches for clubs, sharpened sticks for spears, rocks to throw or to bash with and a handful of tempered weapons kept as mementoes from some of their victims. More than anything, their strength in numbers keeps animal predators away, and those with some measure of intelligence know they are Were-Beasts and come night, the creatures will seek retribution for any crimes committed against them during the daylight hours. At night, when they all turn into their beast-forms, the survivors of any attack *will* come looking for payback, and they will get it. Oh, will they get it. That is why most local inhabitants have learned to avoid this dreaded place.

Dark Home is important to adventurers because it is the nominal "headquarters" of the Were-Beast mob so active in the Darkest Heart and as such, should be given a wide berth. At any given time, 2D4x1000 Were-Beasts are present, most sleeping or enjoying the company of other friendly bands. Presumably, the "leaders" of the many factions within the mob can be found living in the ruins of the fortress, itself, but nobody knows who exactly they are.

A daylight raid on Dark Home is not necessarily the worst idea in the world, provided that the raiders know what they are doing and can be 100% sure that they will at least kill some of the "leaders" of the mob, if not a huge portion of the mob itself. Even at night, Dark Home is inhabited by several *hundred* Were-Beasts. At night, to assault the place is pure insanity, but during the day, if one has the right kind of weapons, talent and plan, they could seriously disrupt things and snatch prisoners being held hostage, supplies, etc., get in and get out (and keep going, if they know what's good for them). In the day, the sluggish and sleepy were-humanoids will be slow to react with no more than 2D6 responding to an obvious threat at any time. The mob will be cast into further confusion and disarray if any of its leaders ("alphas") are slain. The Faerie Realm of the Seven Sov-

ereigns and the fallen palace of Therendil have both pulled off such operations and periodically target "leaders" and exterminate bands of Were-Beasts to cull their numbers and to prevent any one group from getting too bold or powerful. Besides, who said danger was a bad thing? Any adventurer who comes to the Land of the Damned had better have a king-sized appetite for hazardous duty or else he is in the wrong line of work and the absolutely worst place in the world to discover it. Taking the Were-Beasts down a few pegs is a quest worthy of any adventurer or champion, and at least scouting out Dark Home is an important part of any such endeavor.



Slaughter Rock

Slaughter Rock has been permanently blood stained from the obscene amounts of carnage that have taken place on and around this gigantic granite outcropping. The rock itself is around 30 feet (9.1 m) high and about the same in diameter. It is oblong in shape, and very little of it extends below the earth. It is most likely a massive boulder from the Northern Mountains that some force, either magic or geological disturbance, transported to the depths of the Middle Weald.

This site is important to adventurers interested in taking the war to the Were-Beasts. To this day, the rock is occupied at all times by dozens of Were-Beasts, many of whom have come to regard this place with a nearly religious intensity. Here visitors may come, unmolested, to speak to the greatest of the Were-Beast champions. More than that, if any character challenges one of these "champions" to one-on-one combat under

the light of the moon, and wins, he and his fellow travelers are given the "right of safe passage" through the Heart of Darkness without threat or challenge by any Beast of the Moon. So is the unwritten law, and ALL Were-Beasts honor it. However, this is a reciprocal arrangement and those bearing the Right of Passage can NOT attack or challenge a Were-Beast without breaking the Right. Once the Right is broken the Were-Beasts can attack without provocation, but until then, the Beasts silently let the travelers pass without words, threatening actions or hostility, fading into the shadows of the forest as if they were never there. Furthermore, the Right is revoked for all even if only one member of the group violates the trust. **Notes:** 1) The Right of Passage is only good until the next cycle of the moon (roughly 30 days), after which all deals are off. 2) "The Right" is indicated by a claw mark and design placed on the armor or clothing of each member of the party made from the blood of the defeated. 3) If a combatant is caught cheating during the Right, all members in the cheater's group are attacked and slain. If they escape they will be hunted. 4) It is the prerogative of the triumphant combatant as to whether or not the defeated is killed. Most Were-Beast champions insist on a fight to the death and kill their opponent even if he or she fought valiantly. On the other hand, the Were-Beasts appreciate it if their champion is spared. However, if the fallen champion "begs for death" (01-21% chance) it should be granted. Denying the request makes the Were-Beast and the one who defeated him mortal enemies, and the creature will stalk and kill him at the next opportunity. If the visitor seeking passage is slain, the rest of the group is allowed to leave without safe passage, being warned that when the night of the next day falls, they *will* be hunted, or they can select a new champion to pit against another Were-Beast. The choice is theirs.

Destroying Slaughter Rock would be a hammer blow to Were-Beast morale and throw the entire mob of them into a funk that would last for 4D6 months, but legend says the rock cannot be destroyed. That it is protected by the gods and that it has fallen from the moon itself. Of course, destroying an ordinary rock of this size is no mean feat, even by an Earth Warlock or some other kind of spell caster. If it is somehow indestructible, then any attempt is a fool's errand that will earn those involved the eternal enmity of all Were-Beasts in the Middle Weald.

Slaine's Gate

Today, Slaine's Gate is just two toppled pillars, but according to legend it was once a doorway to a dimensional portal that led to the outside world. Exactly who "Slaine" might have been or when the "gate" was built and shattered, are lost to antiquity. Many dismiss the story as an old wives' tale or fanciful legend with no bearing in fact. However, is it coincidence that the shattered pillars are carved with mystic symbols and rest at the center of a ley line nexus? Was this a dimensional door in and out of the Land of the Damned? Can it be repaired or rebuilt? Probably not, since portions of the stone megaliths are missing so if the mystic symbols create an incantation required to open the gate, it is impossible to replicate. Still the idea is intriguing and this is a place of magic. That explains why Emerald, a 9th level, Miscreant Thunder Lizard and her buddies Sheel, Karla and Bruul the Hygorathes (all Miscreant), consider this location to be "her" domain and will slay any who linger for more than a

short time or try to do anything with the pillars. **Note:** Emerald is an outcast from the Citadel for challenging (and losing to) one of the rulers of that bleak realm. Thus, she is always looking for *pawns* she can trick into opposing, killing or stealing from any of the Council of Nine. To that end, Emerald cheerfully tells "hero-types" all the terrible things the Council is responsible for as well as tales of treasure or anything else she can whip up (lie about) to get champions to cause trouble at the Citadel.

The Inner Weald

The Inner Weald is the densest part of the Darkest Heart. These woodlands are like dense jungles, with huge trees everywhere and a thick bed of undergrowth to make any kind of ground travel arduous at best. The treetops come together to form a multi-layered canopy with the highest level blocking out the sunlight entirely, and the middle and lower levels used by all sorts of monsters and animals as a kind of secret world where they can live without the constant dangers of the various creatures one finds on the ground. That animal menagerie up in the trees includes, among other creatures, the nefarious *Instigators*, *Psykolops*, *Slaughterhawks*, *Ravager Beetles*, *Werejaguars*, *Werepanthers*, *Gryphons*, *Faerie Folk* (good and evil) and the occasional *Harpy*, from lone hunters and outcasts to small flocks of 1D4+2.

On the ground are the larger predators, including the semi-intelligent *Drolodon* woolly giants, the turtle-like *Beasts of Kathos*, the giant reptilian *Galters*, the vicious *Hygorathes*, *Pit-Worms*, and *Slithering Terrors*, among others, as well as conventional creatures.

This eastern half of the Darkest Heart is also where the Were-Beasts have made the least progress. In part due to the forbidding landscape, and also in part to the numerous forces who oppose them. Though there is no coalition or alliance between these forces, they collectively provide more trouble than the Were-Beast mobs care to deal with . . . for now at any rate. After a few more generations, the Were-Beasts might grow to such an extent that they will feel more comfortable taking on the hazards of the Inner Weald. Should they adopt any kind of magic or technology, then their conquest of the Inner Weald might be that much more likely. Until then, however, the Were-Beasts are held at bay, coming in from the Middle Weald and settling for raids, guerilla attacks and ambushes. The Beasts also take out their frustration on the numerous small clans of "servant races" – the Orcs, Goblins, Hob-Goblins, Ogres and Kobolds who once served the Elven Kingdom of *Therendil*, but now live on their own.

Clan Galbegh

Most groups of old "servant races" are measly rabble that would hardly qualify as a clan or a tribe. They are just loose groups of individuals who band together briefly until some petty argument or disagreement gets them to kill each other or to disband. This phenomenon is why, though there are thousands of Ogres, Orcs, Goblins, Hob-Goblins and Kobolds in the Inner Weald (and to a lesser degree, the Middle Weald), they collectively amount to darn near nothing.



There are two exceptions to this, the noteworthy Clan Galbegh and Clan Salbekh.

Clan Galbegh is the older and larger of the two, founded by a brotherhood of warrior Orcs who resented their Therendil masters but hated the Were-Beasts even more, and so they struck off with grand plans of taking over a large chunk of the Inner Weald for themselves. Those dreams of conquest never really came true, but it did provide the foundation for Clan Galbegh. Over the years, the Clan has attracted members from all five of the servant races, and today its total population of around 3,000-3,500 individuals is almost evenly divided amongst them.

Clan Galbegh lives in a crude village of huts and long houses that stand on 20 foot (6.1 m) high stilts, or pilings. These stilt houses are the Clan's first line of defense against Were-Beast attack, though history has shown it to be a questionable countermeasure. With their supernatural strength, it does not take much effort for most Were-Beasts to leap the 20 feet (6.1 m) onto the porch or to smash through even thick hardwood these pilings with a few good whacks to send the houses they support crashing to the ground. Moreover, the Were-Beasts are usually adept at climbing, and have no problem scaling the pilings to get inside their huts and long houses. Over the years, it has been the valor of Galbegh warriors and blind luck that has granted the clan a number of big victories over the Were-Beasts and has even won them a little respect from the Beasts. However, these successes have only helped to convince the Galbegh clan that their stilt strategy must play a key role in their victories, and so they stick with it. It would take a string of total disasters for the Galbegh to be convinced that their way of protecting their homes is anything short of brilliant.

The Galbegh are fair hunters and foragers, and they are not above catching, killing and eating any stray humanoids they find. This makes it pretty dangerous for any adventurers in their vicinity, who might find themselves under ambush by Ogre, Orc and Hob-Goblin warriors.

One field in which the Galbegh excel is in metal working. Their Kobold population is especially adept and hard-working, and whenever the Galbegh can score some raw ore (it is hard to find in such dense woodland), then the Kobolds make excellent and invaluable tools and weapons out of it for the clan.

Adventurers who are members of the so-called "monster races" may find the Galbegh village good to visit and a place where they can trade weapons, gear and exotic (outer world) trinkets or clothing for fresh water, food, basic supplies, rope or a safe place to sleep for a night or two. The Galbegh are more than willing to haggle and trade with their own kind, and with excellent metal working facilities at their disposal, they can even provide adventurers with new weapons or repair armor, provided the visitors have something good in trade. ("Hmm...that Gnome of yours looks like good eating. Chuck him in and the knives are yours!") On the other hand, humans, Elves and other handsome folk will be treated with suspicion, hatred and disdain unless they pretend to be the servant to one of their monstrous teammates. Groups without any monster races as part of them are likely to be bullied, challenged, cheated and robbed. However, these clansmen respect physical and magical power, so any appropriate display of that power (especially fighting strength and prowess) is likely to earn some grudging

respect, though they are still likely to pay 2-4 times what a fellow Orc or Goblin would pay.

Clan Salbekh is much less organized or resourceful than Clan Galbegh and have managed to survive as long as they have by some odd bits of luck, and the fact that the Were-Beast are currently obsessed with destroying the Fallen palace of Therendil, the clans of good Faeries and Clan Galbegh.

Clan Salbekh is composed of a motley assortment of Orcs, Goblins and Hob-Goblins, with a few really dumb Ogres, a dozen Toad Stools (evil Faerie Folk) and a pair of extremely aggressive Kelpies to round things out. The Salbekh are a splinter faction from the Galbegh Clan who have somehow managed to stay large enough to grow in strength and numbers. Theirs is a cluster of miserable little villages occupying a muddy pond surrounded by large tree stumps. The trees were cut down to build their huts and a few basic defenses. Naturally, the Salbekh thought the swampy muck hole in the midst of the forest was the perfect place to live, because most other people seemed to avoid the place, the belligerent Kelpies and quarrelsome Toad Stools provided instant protective allies, and the trees they cut down to make homes for the larger folk among them gave the Goblins nice tree trunks to hollow out for their own homes.

The Salbekh live mostly by foraging and hunting, though they sure do enjoy picking off the stray humanoid – even a careless Were-Beast – and chewing on them for a while. Thus, outsiders of any kind are likely to be met with a hostile response from the Salbekh regardless of who or what they are. The Salbekh, in all of their questionable wisdom, have decided that they don't need anybody for anything, period! Anyone who comes sniffing around their homestead must be looking for trouble, they reckon, and so they will be more than happy to give them some.

There are nearly 1,000 Salbekh, but they are a fractious and squabbling lot, so at any given time, their numbers could fluctuate plus or minus 200 people. Adventurers who are Ogres, Orcs, Goblins, Hob-Goblins or Kobolds (or if they just look like them) could infiltrate this group with ease. Heck, a few competent individuals could probably take the whole group over, and if they were so inclined, could whip them into something resembling a ragtag army. The Salbekh routinely try to raid Galbegh holdings, livestock and supplies, but these actions are usually fruitless efforts or petty theft. They do manage to get a bunch of people killed on both sides, however, and the Galbegh would love to see the raids stop so they can reserve their manpower for fighting Were-Beasts and other threats.

The Realm of Seven Sovereigns

When the Elven Kingdom of Therendil volunteered to help garrison the Land of the Damned thousands of years ago, they brought with them one of their staunchest allies, the Faerie Queene *Seerea the Proud* and her contingent of warriors, servants, subjects and folk. For a long time Seerea and her forces helped the Therendil Elves keep things quiet in the Darkest Heart, but as time went on and things got more unsteady, the Faerie Queene began to have second thoughts. Not that she was untrustworthy or disloyal. Quite the contrary, Seerea was ready to fight evil from the beginning and would gladly do so until her dying breath. No, what she was having second thoughts about was the Nation of Therendil itself. For years, Seerea had wor-

ried that perhaps the Elves have grown too confident in their own abilities, and that there were dangers afoot in the Darkest Heart as well as in the rest of the Land of the Damned that were beyond their capability to handle. After all, the Alliance of Light was long gone, and the Garrison itself fell in tatters within only a generation or so. Yet to Lord Therendil and his massive contingent, things could not be better. Far from the front-lines, they danced the nights away in an endless pursuit of leisure while they ignored the reality that their world was about to come crashing to an end. Seerea warned her Elven allies time and again, only to be ignored every time. Finally, when the wake-up call came in the form of Westmarch's destruction, Lord Therendil and his Elves did not spring to action. Instead, they retreated further into their fantasy world of courtiers and decadence. They fortified their Palace of Dreams and began calling home all of their troops. Instead of fighting the war and quelling the mounting danger from Were-Beasts and other gathering forces, Lord Therendil ran from them.

Disgusted by the apathy and cowardice, Queene Seerea formally severed her link with the Therendil Elves and moved her own contingent far from their Palace, where she might establish a new home for herself and her fellow Faeries and kinsmen. A place where they could continue holding down the Darkest Heart and keep the land safe from the encroaching darkness. She built seven magnificent Faerie Mounds, with six arranged in a perfect circle surrounding a seventh mound, her throne and home. She assigned each of the six other mounds to one of her most trusted lieutenants, for she had no kin of her own, and thus was born the *Realm of Seven Sovereigns*. And though Faeries were the dominant species, all manner of Faerie Folk were counted among her legions.

The mission of the Realm (as it was called in short) was simple: To keep doing the job the Therendil Elves had abdicated. They would police the Darkest Heart as best they could and stem the Were-Beast tide, even if it cost them their lives. At first, the Faerie Folk did not even believe that they could carry out the mission they'd set for themselves, but they were ready to prove their loyalty to the idea of the Garrison, if nothing else. For them, it would be better to try and die than to stop trying altogether.

Lacking the strength of numbers to confront the Were-Beasts as a standing army, Queene Seerea organized her soldiers into small hunter groups that would conduct raids on Were-Beast strongholds and destroy or chase away small bands with fewer than 20 of the Beasts. This worked to some effect for a while.

Then something happened.

As the centuries passed the Faerie people began to change. Tempers rose, pranks turned into vendettas and frustration into anger. Before long, the Faerie Queene found her own people turning into monsters. Even the traditionally gentle and playful Faeries were turning cruel, and vindictive. Full of hatred and venom. That hate was directed largely at the "traitors of Therendil," as many now called the Elven stronghold, and other large folk. Too late, did Queene Seerea realize her once noble people had somehow been soiled and corrupted by the lingering taint of the Old Ones' evil. Unwilling to abandon any of her people, the Faerie Queene tried as best she could to maintain some measure of peace, unity and nobility. It was an impossible job, as division grew among the ranks and squabbles and differ-



ing opinions turned into harsh rivalries, treachery and murder. Before too long, there were three camps of Faerie Folk: The good, the frightened, and the evil. Each still fought against the Were-Beasts, who all agreed was the greatest evil and danger to the Inner Weald and Faerie kind, but now Faerie Folk had expanded their range of hatred and acts of cruelty to Elves, humans and a host of others. The list why one should hate such beings was long and often reasonable, but reflected a darkness to which most people believe Faeries are immune.

So it was that Queen Seerea held her Realm together for the longest time, before she perished from the blade of a jilted lover.

For the last century or so, Queene Seerea's most trusted bodyguard was the Satyr knight *Tamerlane*. Though the two of them were the topic of much courtly gossip, the truth was that nothing ever happened between them, despite Seerea's ravishing looks and Tamerlane's predictable appetites. Exactly one year ago, Tamerlane apparently got tired of insinuating that he and the Queene should intensify their relationship, and in a moment of weakness, he flat out tried to force himself on her. Seerea fought off his unwelcome advances and stripped him of his position and exiled him from the Realm. Enraged by this, Tamerlane slew the fair Queene on the spot, butchering her body so horribly that little was left besides her blood and bones.

Tamerlane fled the Realm and has never been seen or heard from again, though he is confirmed to still be alive, presumably stalking the forests and trying to hatch some plot to destroy the entire Faerie Realm in the Darkest Heart. In the meantime, the six lieutenants Queene Seerea had appointed rulers of the other Faerie Mounds now must decide which one of *them* should suc-

ceed their fallen Queene. Unfortunately, Queene Seerea never made any firm plans for who should follow her once she was gone. Perhaps she just could not imagine her rule ending some day, but her lack of foresight has thrown the kingdom into a genuine crisis. Without the good Queene, beloved by the good, indifferent and evil alike, to hold the fracturing factions of Faerie Folk together, anarchy reigns, just as it did during the Age of Chaos. Even if there could be a consensus as to who would lead, it seems doubtful that the new Queene could hold the Realm together. With six contenders each with an equal claim, however, it seems doubtful that a genuine consensus is possible.

At this point, the six Faerie Mounds have broken relationships with each other as they feud (in words only) over whose leader is the rightful heir. Nobody wants to go to actual war over this, and in reality, they probably will not. Some believe that any kind of Were-Beast offensive would force the Faeries into at least a temporary unity against the common enemy, and when the danger passes, they would resume their frosty relations. Others feel that if one Faerie Mound were threatened, the others might let it defend itself in the hopes of eliminating one competitor from the race for the crown. Granted, such talk is cynical and very unlikely to happen, but it remains a remote possibility. And while that is the case, then the possibility of the Realm disintegrating before its enemies must also be considered. The days when the Faeries from Therendil could expect to live forever are long gone. As long as the Realm remains divided, it is weak. For should a massive attack hit the Faeries, their divisions will work against them in battle. If they intend to survive, they must reunite and pick a leader. Whether or not that shall ever happen remains to be seen. And even if it did, the three main factions seem too distant to ever truly work together again.

To those experienced with Faeries, the Realm of the Seven Sovereigns is a true anomaly. First, it is unheard of to have truly evil Faeries, Sprites and Pixies. Additionally, their communities being based on a social hierarchy is what one might expect of Elves, but not the Faeries. At the center of this society is the Queene's Mound. This is where Seerea lived and governed. It is an ordinary Faerie Mound in all respects except that it is *huge* by Faerie standards – home to at least 1,000 assorted Faeries, Sprites and Pixies. These residents enjoy supreme social status above all others in the Realm. What they say is not exactly law, but all others are expected to defer to them simply because their home is the Queene's home.

Surrounding the Queene's Mound are the six Ducal Mounds. Each of these is also large by Faerie Standards – holding nearly 500 inhabitants in each. These six form a circle exactly ten miles (16 km) in diameter, a perimeter about the Queene's Mound. A Faerie Duke or Duchess governs each of these six mounds much the way Queene Seerea governed her own mound, with a mixture of deadly earnest and boundless frivolity that only Faeries can truly master. The Faeries of the Ducal Mounds enjoy second-class treatment. They must defer to the Queene's Mound, but among themselves, they are all equal.

Beyond the Ducal Mounds are numerous small Faerie mounds (50 to 100 inhabitants), Faerie rings and temporary encampments, where several thousand other good and evil Faerie Folk of every variety live. Literally "out of the loop," they are third-class citizens who are to pay homage to their Queene, but

enjoy none of the benefits of being her subjects, such as the cushy lives led in the Queene's Mound or the Ducal Mounds. Still, these Faeries are loyal to their Realm and will fight desperately to prevent its ruin. For them, it is all they have ever known.

Beyond that are the many different evil Faerie Folk who are considered by the Queene and the Dukes/Duchesses to be subjects, but in reality are all write-offs. Let's face it, no Kelpie or Kinnie Ger will bow to anybody, much less an overdressed pip-squeak Queene who demands tribute just because she wears a crown. Thus, these "savages" are essentially cast into exile. They are the loose change of this structured society, welcome to rejoin it if and when they decide to play by its curious rules. However, as the once noble and good Faerie Folk succumb to corruption, they begin to welcome the evil ones as misunderstood brethren and allies.

For adventurers, the Realm of the Seven Sovereigns is a bizarre wonderland of Faerie magic, and strangeness, but those who think they know a thing or two about Faerie peoples will be in for a rude awakening, for the people of the Seven Sovereigns are unlike any other in the world, and goofy Faerie pranks turn deadly as the corrupt Faeries and other (normally) nice Faerie Folk turn mad and hateful against the world around them. (Note: Only the loveable Brownie seems to remain completely unaffected by the pervasive aura of evil that corrupts and confuses the others.)

The higher-ups in any good Ducal Mound will treat noble warriors and genuine champions as honored guests. They will treat them to a real meal (not Faerie Food), and will discuss what is going on in the Darkest Heart. If the player characters prove themselves to be trustworthy, they can expect help from the Faeries for as long as they are in the Darkest Heart and as long as they return the favor when asked. Selfish freebooters and thrill seekers are treated by the Faeries with caution and sarcasm. It will take a lot for the good Faeries to accept such folk, but a surefire way to soften their guard is to offer the wee folk gifts of gold, candy or liquor. Another sure crowd pleaser is to perform a silly song or dance for the Faeries, something that will make the character look dumb but tickle the Faerie Folk, especially since they are surrounded by so much trouble and woe. By the same token, being a good sport and accepting Faerie pranks such as eating Faerie Food is another way to get the Faeries to accept the character as a genuine friend.

Evil characters have no hope with the good Faeries, but *may* find an ally (at least temporarily) in the evil Faeries and uglier Faerie Folk. These Faeries have become much more like their intolerant and evil kin and now cheerfully associate with Bogies, Toad Stools, Pucks, Kelpies, Kinnie Ger and other wicked Faerie Folk as they join their crusade in punishing and



hurting "Big Folk" and destroying that which is beautiful. It is disorienting and sad to see the once good Faerie Folk sink to such depths, but such is life in the Seven Sovereigns.

Meanwhile, those Faerie Folk who have given in to fear and despair, tend to shun all people, including their own kind, good or evil.

Characters who do befriend any of the three factions in the Realm are likely to get drawn into politics and skullduggery they are not prepared for.

Note: Also see the write-up on Faerie Folk in the Monster and Animal overview presented earlier in this book, just after the Beasts of Chaos.



The Fallen Palace of Therendil

By Bill Coffin and Kevin Siembieda

The Therendil Elves were one of the first nations of that kind to join the effort to overthrow the Old Ones. Proud of their nature but ashamed of their Heritage (having been so closely linked to the Old Ones), the Therendil as a people collectively vowed not only to wipe out whatever evil influence the Old Ones had on the world, but to stand guard forever more in case such evil were ever to resurface again. Plenty of members in the Alliance of Light gave similar lip service, but throughout the Chaos War and afterwards, it was the Nation of Therendil that delivered. Led by the noble and heroic Lord Therendil (after

whom, at the risk of being obvious, his nation named itself), the Therendil Elves led the charge in many battles of the Chaos War. They were there when the Alliance suffered its greatest defeats as well as its loftiest victories. They were in it for the long haul, and they proved it many times over with the blood they spilled and the people they lost. Theirs was a service no one in the Alliance could fault for any reason.

After the Chaos War, the Alliance needed volunteers to stay behind in the newly created Land of the Damned to *police* the region. Though there were a few voices raised here and there, it

was not until the Therendil Elves collectively stepped up and offered their services that the floodgates of volunteers really opened. Soldiers and mystics from every Alliance state and nation devoted themselves to the newly formed *Garrison*, of which the Therendil Elves were a crucial part.

Feeling a strange connection to the Darkest Heart, the Therendil Elves chose this region to be their charge, and they built a mighty Palace of Dreams as well as numerous outer strongholds to keep watch over the forest, to drive the darkness back into the shadows, and to keep this conquered land as pacified as it had been that fateful day the Old Ones were put to slumber and their minions lost their will to fight.

For untold generations, the Therendil performed their duties with the utmost diligence and valor, but, as their Faerie Folk allies noticed, Lord Therendil grew arrogant and complacent. He seemed to have forgotten the incredible sacrifices made not only by himself but by all of his friends and allies to defeat the Old Ones. Ignoring the warning signs that his grip on the Darkest Heart had faltered, and that the forces of evil – namely a savage mob of Were-Beasts – were gathering their strength. Lord Therendil ignored cries for help from other segments of the Garrison and dismissed increasingly frantic talk that the Garrison was an ill-conceived idea that needed to be abandoned. Rather than rally the troops, the king lost himself further in the many diversions of his Elven court, enjoying endless nights of song, food and dance amid the various heroes and champions who had once fought so valiantly beside him and were now equally complicit in their reckless complacency.

Finally, the fortress in Westmarch was destroyed, and there could be no further doubt that the Garrison was in deep trouble. Lord Therendil was so far gone, however, he could only look away from the unfolding catastrophe with tears in his eyes. As the screams of his dying troops reached his ears, he ordered his musicians to play that much louder. After the Westmarch incident, other Garrison troops also fell, all the while the most powerful force in the cursed land, the Therendil Army, stood silent. The fight had gone from the King, and, truth be told, from the rest of the warriors as well. A deep sorrow and melancholy washed over them, keeping them from doing anything but wring their hands, weep for the dead and fear for themselves. Rendered impotent by forces they could not understand, the people of Therendil hid in their forest palace and tried to pretend the outside world did not matter. So it has been for over 30,000 years.

Disgusted by all of this, the Faerie Queene Seerea the Proud left what she now called the “Fallen Palace of Therendil.” So did the Elves’ once-subservient Servant Races of Goblins, Hob-Goblins and Orcs. Even they knew that the Elves had lost their will to fight, and would do nothing more than object when their former servants and slaves deserted them. Finally, there was only the Fallen Palace, once known as the *Palace of Dreams* for its opulence and its people’s high ideals and selfless sacrifice. Its beauty and splendor remained unchanged, but the mood had soured. No matter how hard the Elves contented themselves with fountains that poured endless quantities of wine, dinnerware that were themselves works of art, magic that generated equally endless amounts of sumptuous food, and other conveniences of every sort, they wallowed in fear, apathy and self-loathing. Wracked with indecision, they have watched the

Garrison fall, the Land of the Damned grow ever more wicked and cruel, and the world slip by them. Each succeeding generation suffered the same melancholy, squashing the emergence of new heroes and ideas. By their inaction, they have let the Were-Beasts grow into a dangerous power that threatens all good people in the forest, but the Therendil Elves no longer have the courage to fully look the world in the eye, and so they deny that they ever had anything to do with the current Were-Beast problem.

Long ago, the descendants of the once noble kingdom convinced themselves that it was never their duty to patrol the Darkest Heart in the first place! When this happened, the Fallen Palace had reached what many consider the point of no return. They had become so apathetic and corrupt as to the point of pure cowardice and complicity. If the Therendil tradition was to be upheld, somebody else would have to do it. This became clear early on, as one by one, the ancient heroes of the Nation of Therendil died of old age, from Lord Therendil on down. Their bodies entombed in the palace crypt, their weapons and armor and other tools of their heroism preserved in the Palace’s *Shrine of Heroes*. And there the weapons remain, for no Elves of the subsequent generations have had the heart to take possession of any of these mighty magic items and use them to defend the Palace. No, instead they put them where nobody would touch them in the vain hope that maybe one day their ancient heroes would miraculously return from the grave to make everything better.

Today, the Fallen Palace is as appalling as it is amazing, as depressing as it is uplifting. It is simultaneously a reminder of how good life can be and terrible it can get, all at the same time in a single package. It is a place where heroes will want to visit for sanctuary and perhaps on a mission to re-energize the Therendil Elves into the heroes they once were, and could be again. Frankly, they might have an easier time converting all the Were-Beasts in the Darkest Heart into vegetarians. Unknown to the inhabitants of the Darkest Heart, there is dark magic at work here. The evil blemish of the slumbering Old Ones still holds sway over the Inner Weald, turning all who live in the dark woods into sullen, desperate people with no courage to face their inner demons or stand for what’s right. Or like many (not all) of the Faerie Folk, warms their anger and frustration to promote intolerance, violence and wickedness. It takes a long while, a hundred years or longer, but the insidious evil weaves its way into the hearts and minds of those who are long-lived like an invisible cancer. Since this is the case, most humans and other creatures with short life spans are not affected, but for beings like Elves who live for hundreds of years, and Faerie Folk who live even longer, the corruption is devastating. Still, not all are affected. Somehow there are those who keep true to themselves – case in point, the third of the Faeries who remain “good” while one third are evil and another third depressed, frightened and lost like the Therendil Elves. Thus, some believe the descendants of the Therendil heroes are not completely lost. That heroes from the outside world could rekindle the spirits of young Elves (i.e. those under 100 years of age), and in so doing, rekindle the spirits of their elders and restore the Therendil people long enough to defeat the Were-Beasts and abandon the Palace of “False” Dreams. For as long as the Therendil remain in the Inner Weald of the Darkest Heart, they are doomed, and for now, none have the will or desire to accept that challenge, rise

up and abandon their home. Ironically, if the Therendil could rise up and fight together, the unorganized Were-Beast rabble would easily fall to them, even though most of the Therendil have only minimal combat experience.

The Fortress Wall

Despite the pampered and carefree way of life within the Fallen Palace, its outermost walls betray none of that retreat from security. The Fortress Wall is the main defense for the whole Therendil compound, and it has certainly been built to withstand both an enemy onslaught and the march of time itself, for it is as strong today as the day its first stones were laid.

The Fortress Wall stands 100 feet (30.5 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) thick. It surrounds the Fallen Palace in a three-mile (4.8 km) radius. At every eighth-mile (.2 km) along the circumference, there is a guard tower built into the wall. These towers stand 250 feet (76.2 m) tall and each has a radius of 50 feet (15.2 m). Though the walls are stone, they have been enchanted to be indestructible – to breach the fortress, enemies must scale the walls and storm the forces manning them. But before one even reaches the walls, he must first cross another three miles (4.8 km) of land utterly cleared of forest (but replaced by a nice lawn which is always neatly trimmed, the obvious effect of an ancient magic). This makes it virtually impossible for anybody to approach the palace grounds without first being spotted before they ever hit the Fortress Wall.

Just inside the Wall, in a thin ring hugging the compound's outermost boundary, are the assorted barracks, houses, taverns and shops that the Soldiers of Therendil frequent. Forbidden to enter the Fallen Palace, this army of Elven defenders live their lives in and around the outer wall, where they keep an endless vigil against the threat of attack. They are allowed to make periodic trips into the Palace Gardens (see description below) for food and recreation, but only the outermost sections of them. The inner gardens are reserved for the Nobles of Therendil and their bodyguards, friends and family only.

There are nearly 100,000 people in the Fallen Palace's military sub-community, almost a quarter of which are actual soldiers, trained for battle and fit for duty, though most lack much in the way of battlefield experience. They are the equal of any fine soldier found in the world today, except they are a thoroughly dejected and demoralized bunch of people who do can little more than *defend* their palace sanctuary. They have virtually no contact with their leaders in the Palace, nor do they have much contact with the *Theredrun*, the elite shock troops of the Palace and bodyguards of the Royal Court. The Soldiers are simply left to their own devices and expected to make sure no enemy ever breaches the Wall.

Strangely, this arrangement works and has kept the Palace safe and free for many thousands of years. Simply put, the Soldiers of Therendil are the carriers of an ancient tradition of honor and duty that runs too deep for them to escape. They know they are living in a fool's paradise. They know one day the Were-Beasts will come and overrun the Fallen Palace. They know these things and have no motivation to take the initiative, always fighting on the defensive. Yet, they continue to serve their people as best they can. They might be doomed, yes, but so long as they have tradition, then they have something to try to live up to. For them, it is better to live under unrealistic condi-

tions and die with some measure of dignity than to simply welcome death with open arms. They are not that far gone, and for many, routine and focus on defense is what keeps them going. If they should die, at least they will die as soldiers and with honor, not as insubordinate deserters or complete cowards. Some might consider this tragic brainwashing, but if there was any brainwashing, the soldiers did it to themselves. They are the ones who created their particular warrior tradition, and they know the cost. Still they pay it because as bad as their situation is, the alternative is unacceptable.

Visitors will notice that there are no gates anywhere along the Wall. That is because the walls themselves have been specially enchanted with magic long since forgotten. Magic that enables the Soldiers of Therendil to decide where and when a gate will appear. When ten or more soldiers command, in unison, for a gate to appear, then a massive iron gate suddenly materializes in one of the wall sections. This process takes a single melee round, and one more melee round to dispel the opening.

There is no protection over the compound, so flying enemies and those with excellent climbing skills can simply go over the wall, but the forces manning the walls do have a considerable array of archers and spell casters who are more than able to shoot down aerial intruders before they get too far. They also have an array of siege engines (see **Adventures on the High Seas** or the **Library of Bletherad** sourcebooks for info on them).

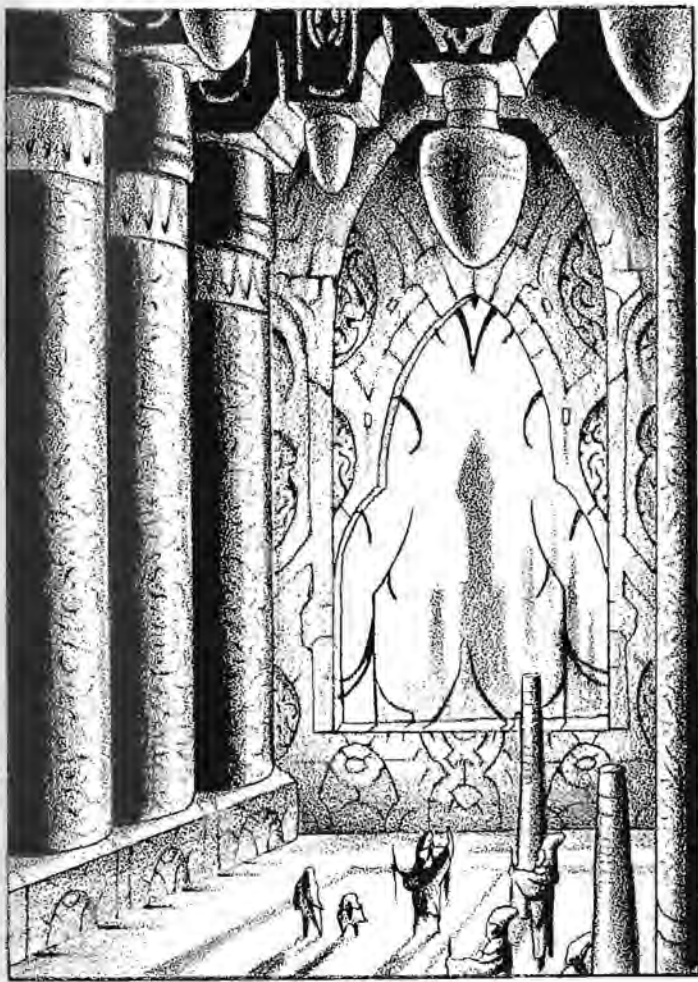
The Gardens

Once one gets past the Fortress Wall, the majority of the land is taken up by the wondrous *Gardens*, a dazzling display of magically replenishing fountains, parks, walking paths, topiaries, hedge mazes and even large magic gardens that produce, every day, enough food to feed the entire population. (Rumor has it that one by one, the gardens are failing, suggesting that maybe the magic that made them has run out. Sadly, the wizards who created the gardens are no longer around, and cannot help that particular situation. Still, if starvation were introduced to the over-privileged Therendil public, then perhaps they would be compelled to do something about it.)

The Gardens are both the Elves' means of self-sufficiency as well as their place for outdoor recreation. From time to time, Harpies or other aerial enemies visit the Gardens, looking to make trouble, but they usually are killed or driven off by the Soldiers from the Wall.

The Gardens have two sections to them. The outermost ring is a thin area where the Soldiers and their families and friends may visit for procuring food and some daily entertainment. But the vast majority of the Gardens (at least 80%) are reserved for the Noble Court, even though all but a few never use it. They just like the thought of knowing it is there if they desire to sample its pleasures and diversions. In the rare case that a Soldier or his family is found in the Inner Garden, the punishment is severe, typically expulsion from the Fallen Palace entirely! *Exile* is actually the going punishment for almost any crime here, which is more than enough to keep the various servants and workers in line. As a result, the "Keep Off the Grass" signs in the Inner Garden are treated as importantly as a mandate to not commit murder.

Legends abound about the Garden and what secret features it might hold. A popular one is that the bushes and hedgerows will automatically animate the moment an evil person steps within range. The plants rattle and thrash violently to announce the presence of evil – and some say a Druid can actually hear their screams of warning. Another is that the plants are enchanted to resist disease and grow big and perfect.



The Palace

In the center of the Therendil compound, miles from the nearest tree line, is the home of the Fallen Court, those Elven nobles who manage to live in a fantasy land of their own design, where they can pretend that the Darkest Heart is not such a dangerous place, that they are not really in the midst of it, and that they do not have to do anything to keep from falling to the menace of Were-Beasts or any other resurgent evils in the Land of the Damned. This place is the true Fallen Palace.

At nearly one mile (1.6 km) in diameter, the size and scope of this place boggles the mind, for it is one of the grandest structures anywhere on the Palladium World. It contains hundreds of rooms, halls, passageways, apartments, gathering chambers, recreational facilities, and every other convenience its Elven builders could think of when they built it. Everywhere is magic present: The halls are lit by eternal flames, fountains burble never-ending streams of water, the ovens bake and produce bread on command, the larders magically restock themselves, the looms spin infinite amounts of thread and fabric, the metal shops have furnaces that are always heated to the perfect tem-

perature and fires that need no stoking, and on and on it goes. If there is a convenience a visitor can think of, chances are there is some kind of magical effect placed on the Palace to make it so. Nowhere other than the Citadel and fabled Palladium of Desires is one so likely to see so much magic devoted to such trivial aspects of life as in the Fallen Palace. Then again, nowhere else is one so likely to see so much effort put into creating a place where the troubles of the outside world can be forgotten.

This is where the Therendil nobility live and make merry 24 hours a day. The noble class consists of some 2,000 individuals and around 10,000 retainers, all of whom live self-contained lives within the Palace. Entire wings are dedicated to living spaces. Naturally, the nobles live in enormous chambers while "the help" get to cram themselves into modest, though lovely apartments. Of course, the help does not mind, for while they work hard, they still are closer to the pampered lives of the nobles than anybody else in the compound, and get to enjoy all the splendor the palace has to offer.

In addition, there are another 5,000 soldiers who also live at the Palace. These are the **Theredrun**, the palace's elite shock troopers and the bodyguards for the noble class. Fifty percent of the Theredrun are *Soldiers*, 30% are *Knights*, and 20% (most of the highest ranking officers) are *Palladins*. One's rank in the organization is determined at birth, as one's position is hereditary, even for the lowliest grunts. This system works because the soldiers still consider it the highest honor to serve their king and kingdom, and all work to maintain the status quo of their own little kingdom, avoiding making waves or defying tradition. Of anybody in the Fallen Palace, the Theredrun are the most eager to fight and carry on their master's ancient traditions of heroism, but they are too bound by tradition and full of doubt to act on their feelings. Even though they know in their hearts that there is a deadly storm brewing beyond the Fortress Wall, they busy themselves with courtly duties and let the nobles while away their time at dinner parties, lawn games and dances. All the while, the Were-Beasts grow in numbers and boldness. So it is that the Theredrun try to ignore the danger in the woods and follow standing orders to man the Palace and maintain internal peace and security. Truth be told, the Theredrun are just as bad as the nobles they serve, for they have the means to battle the growing darkness in the Darkest Heart and other parts of the Land of the Damned, but they choose not to. In part because they are under the ominous aura that makes all Therendilians lethargic and apathetic, but also because they are afraid of the horrors and savage beasts out in the forest, and because they have never tested their mettle and honestly don't know if they can meet the enemy and win. If they defy the King, mount an attack and lose, their foolishness would doom the Kingdom of Therendil, and they are not willing to do that. So they turn to the elders and defer to their wisdom, not realizing that they are under an evil enchantment that saps them of the ability to make decisions or take action against evil.

There is no, one, specific leader of the Therendil Court. Instead, there is a Parliament made up of every noble in the Court. The head of the Parliament is "the King," but ever since the death of Lord Therendil, all Parliamentary Kings have been little more than figureheads. The King and each member of Parliament has a single vote on matters affecting the kingdom. As one might predict, the varying opinions of the nobles are such that

no majority vote can ever be achieved on many issues, and as such, the Elves have pretty much given up on the whole democracy thing and focus instead on the judgement of the King and shutting the world around them out by trying to have a good time. After all, why bother with politics when there is no shortage of food and merriment and when there are soldiers outside to keep the bad things from crashing the party? Besides, in their own way, the nobles are trying to help. They see their people sad and frightened so they try to raise their spirits with festivals, dances and celebrations, though to no avail. For while one might be able to lose oneself in a night or two of merriment, the sad and scary reality is always waiting when the merriment ends.

On Visiting the Fallen Palace

Only on the rarest of occasions are visitors of any kind allowed beyond the Fortress Wall, since the soldiers there have strict orders to keep out pretty much *everybody*. Notable exceptions are any envoys from the Faerie Realm of the Seven Sovereigns, heroes of renown, or any truly noble and worthy champions who come to provide their services, loyalty or gifts of tribute to the Therendil nobility. Should a visitor be admitted, he will be held within a chamber in the Fortress Wall itself (there are numerous hallways and storerooms in the wall where soldiers can stand guard or weapons are stored) until word comes from the Nobles that the visitor is granted permission to stay within the compound.

Most times, visitors who have some word or a gift to deliver to the Fallen Palace will not get the chance to do it personally. Couriers and messengers will do it for them, and after their message or package has been delivered, then the visitors will be unceremoniously escorted out of the compound. The standard rule is no single visitor is allowed more than two visits per year within the Fortress Wall unless they have special permission or invitation from the Nobility.

Should the visitors somehow capture a Noble's fancy, they might be granted special permission to visit the Palace itself and take part in the ongoing festivities there. Once they arrive, royal tailors and make-up artists will make sure to dress the newcomers in the finest Elven formal wear, fix their hair up and apply the right amount of make-up. Once introduced to the court, the visitors will be given the best food and drink, and invited to all of the dances and various social occasions that keep the court going. Private gossip meetings to learn "who is who" and "what is what" in the Court are commonplace, as are cocktail get-togethers, game sessions either inside the gaming parlors or outside on the lawns, falconry sessions, and even a few fox hunts within the Gardens are all a matter of course here. After 1D4+1 days of this, the visitors will lose their novelty, and the nobles will request their dismissal, regardless of whether the visitors have gotten a chance to actually say what they came to say or do what they came to do. Finding a specific person in the noble court is nearly impossible, what with the constant shuffling between parties and social engagements. Nobles rarely visit their apartments, instead spending their nights crashed out in sleeping lounges adjacent to most of the big party halls.

Elven characters will be given the greatest respect and probably will be invited to stay in the Fallen Court for twice as long as characters from any other race. Gnomes and all Faerie Folk are accepted with honors, too. Dwarves are welcome here because the Therendil never experienced the Elf-Dwarf War and have not even heard of it, as incredible as that may seem. Humans are considered a low rural oddity, and are politely *tolerated* as a form of amusement.

All other races are seen as monstrous folk and will be treated as any Servant or Slave Race might be — they never get dolled up and invited to parties or gatherings of high society. They are instead sent to the kitchens where they must work at keeping plates filled with food, glasses filled with drink, floors clean, dishes washed, laundry done, and a hundred other mundane tasks required to keep the nobles from ever slowing their leisurely pace. Without any Servant Races left, common Therendil Elves now fill these positions, and the arrival of any people perceived as "Servant Races" will immediately place them at the bottom of the totem pole. Such unfortunate Ogres, Orcs, Wolfen and other "monster folk" will spend their time in the Palace taking orders from every Elven servant around, mostly because they hate being peons and long for the return of some other people who can take their place at the bottom of the barrel. One advantage to being a Servant here is that they are invisible to Noble eyes. The Therendil keep a close eye on them and any visitors, but if one is clever enough, he can gain free rein within the Palace and can hunt about and snoop wherever he pleases, provided said individual is always polite, apologetic, and exhibits the utmost respect toward the noble Elves (ideally to the point of nauseating). If the pretense is very good, not only will the "servant" be allowed to come and go without concern or supervision, but various nobles may even squabble over who should "get" the servant next so he or she can wait on them. While demeaning, it gives the "servant" unprecedented access to Therendil nobility and the palace itself. Any noble apartment is bound to be replete with riches, and it would require a visiting thief a supreme act of willpower to not pad his pockets with some ill-gotten treasure, especially when those who own it are likely never to notice.

Even the visitors who receive top treatment here are likely to get bored of it after a few days. This cushy life and parties are nice, but most adventurers are heroes and hard cases. They are used to hard lives and see no point in *wasting* so much time and resources simply on having fun all the time, especially when it comes at the cost of one's own future. As a result, visiting heroes may find themselves wandering the Palace halls in search of something approaching "real" excitement or adventure. There really is none, aside from being on the grounds when and if some hostile creatures attack the Fortress Wall. Life is a little saltier among the soldiers of the Wall, but even there, strict rules and regulations are designed at keeping things calm and quiet. There is no rowdiness tolerated in the Palace or anywhere else in the compound. Fighting, excessive rudeness, and smart remarks toward the nobility are all grounds for immediate and permanent expulsion from the Therendil compound. This is all made crystal clear to any visitors.

The Crypt of Heroes

There is one place within the Fallen Palace that might be of great interest to visiting heroes. It is not a dangerous place or one where an adventure might break out. It is a place of reverence, where the heroism of the past has been entombed, and might just be resurrected by the heroes who have the spirit to do so. This is a place most Therendil Elves avoid, for they lack the heart to consider what this place really means. This place is the *Crypt of Heroes*, and any visiting outsiders who enter it will immediately sense that here and nowhere else in the Fallen Palace does the ring of Lord Therendil's past valor still hang in the air.

The Crypt is a mausoleum where Lord Therendil and his greatest champions and friends were all entombed in large stone sarcophagi when they died. It is located in the direct center of the Palace, in a vast domed chamber in which thousands of people could easily fit standing up. Whether it is by magical effect or a trick of acoustics, the sounds of revelry never seem to reach this quiet, solemn place. Arranged in a circle are the stone coffins of Lord Therendil and his fellows, inscribed with their name and epitaph.

At the feet of each coffin, forming an inner circle of their own, are a series of weapons and equipment stands, each sealed from the outside by a large glass bubble. Inside each is a magic item (or in the case of Lord Therendil, a series of magic items). These were the signature devices each of these ancient heroes used in their crusades and adventures. They were saved when their owners died as away of paying tribute to them (the owners, not the items) and saving the items for posterity, so future generations would know why they were so important.

An outsider may ask why, if these various items are so powerful, do the Elves put them under glass rather than give them to a new breed of heroes. The answer is simple. There *is* no new breed of heroes. The Theredrun are too busy making sure that life goes on as it is supposed to *within* the Palace, and the soldiers of the Fortress Wall do not consider themselves to be so great as to command one of their ancestors' legendary magic items. Many actually believe that were they to touch any of these glass-covered items, they would die instantly, or at the very least, that their skin would burn. Neither of those things would happen, of course. These are all powerful magic items, sure, but none are rune items. None have curses and none are intelligent or even programmed to accept certain kinds of users over others. These are simply very old, very powerful magic items that Lord Therendil and his contemporaries used 50,000 years ago, back when they had not yet lost sight of their duties and destinies.

Security on these items is surprisingly lax. There are no guards posted here, no alarms of any kind, not even special glass to protect these items. Anybody could simply walk up, break the glass, and take what they wanted. In a matter of minutes, a single thief could loot the entire Crypt, though leaving the Palace with them before he got caught would be very difficult. In any other place thieves would not even get that far. Why do the Therendil not protect their most valued treasures?

First, only true and good people are granted access to the Hidden Palace (unless they infiltrate, that is), and such good people will not just take what does not belong to them. The likeliest scenario is that a visiting hero will see the Crypt and ask his

hosts about it. With a hushed voice, the Elves explain that it is the final resting place of their ancient lords. If the heroes ask to visit the place, they will be told the history of these heroes and the legend surrounding the weapons. After that, a Therendil Elf might give a brief explanation of each item and who it belonged to, but that is all. The Elves are too spooked by this place and the responsibilities it represents to stay here for long.

Second, for the most part, the items are protected by a cultural restriction. The Elves feel that to take possession of any of these items is to accept the destiny that Lord Therendil and his comrades abandoned – to take back control of the Darkest Heart and to one day purify the Land of the Damned. No Therendil Elf wants that kind of responsibility, and so they stay well away from the Crypt. Meanwhile, it is understood that only an Elf may *lead* the call to take up this mantle of responsibility (even an Elf from the outside world, though non-Elves may fight at his side), and that all who wield a Weapon of Heroes, by so doing can NEVER leave the Land of the Damned – the latter presumably enforced by some ancient magic. This “fact” is presented on a plaque at the foot of each weapon. Local residents, however, have convinced themselves that one day Lord Therendil and his heroes will return from the grave, take their weapons and drive the hosts of evil back into the sea. Others believe that heroic strangers will come one day bringing hope and inspiring the people of Therendil to rise up, claim the Weapons of Heroes, lead the army against the Were-Beasts, and create a new and bright destiny for them all. The long and the short of it is that no thieves or outsiders would EVER help themselves to the treasures of the Crypt unless it was their destiny to save Therendil and remain with them for the rest of their days. That's the legend, and everybody knows it.

Clearly, the Therendil Elves have lost their will to become the champions they should be. Who then will take their place? Who will step forward and carry on the grand tradition of the noble House of Therendil? Who will enter the Vault of Heroes to arm themselves for the coming war? Who will fight for the honor of a fallen race, the duty of a fallen kingdom, and the destiny of a fallen land? As the visiting heroes survey the Crypt one last time, these questions and a hundred others like them may ring in their ears, like a challenge from the ancient days echoing forth. Could an Elf among them be one such hero? Is he (and are his teammates) willing to give birth to a new Therendil and lead them in a war campaign against the Were-Beasts and out of the Heart of Darkness? If so, this is no easy challenge, because it will take much more to rouse the people of the kingdom out of their malaise and harder still to convince them to leave the Palace of Dreams to rebuild a new life elsewhere. Remember, it is legend that such heroes can never leave the Land of the Damned – alive, so any such resolve will forever trap them in this land of eternal conflict.

G.M. Note: Perhaps at no other time will characters have an opportunity to simply take magic items such as the dozen presented below. There is no curse on them, no hidden catch. Those who break the glass containers and seize these items are free to do so, despite the shock and horror of the Therendil Elves, whose surprise at such actions is merely from their inability to process why somebody would want to accept such a grave responsibility as saving the Darkest Heart. To them, taking possession of these items is a clear declaration of intent to pick up

where Lord Therendil left off, and to reverse the Garrison's destruction in the Darkest Heart.

The biggest force at work will be the characters themselves, and G.M.s, this is where true role-playing comes in. These weapons cannot just be taken and used by adventurers, there must be a genuine commitment to rekindling the Therendil spirit (no easy task), waging war against the hordes of Were-Beasts, getting the Therendil Elves to leave their magical home and restoring the Elven Kingdom someplace else in the Land of the Damned. All of the ensuing courtly intrigue, politics, maneuvering, war campaign, other threats and challenges are the stuff of an epic campaign that could last years. Thus, no G.M. should make this setting available unless he or she and the player group are ready to commit their characters to adventures as leaders of a noble but struggling kingdom that is forever locked in the Land of the Damned. This is the opportunity and place where champions who are as pure and noble in their spirit and who always dreamed of being the leaders of a nation are put to an uncommon test. It is a huge responsibility, but it could be the making of their Camelot. If successful, the player characters could just possibly ride forth at the head of a re-energized Elven empire and drive the Were-Beast mobs back under the rocks from which they crawled. They could cast a shaft of light into a very dark place and begin the process that *might*, one day, change the Land of the Damned. Or they may be just one more group lost to war and chaos. The only thing known for certain is that if the characters should die before they can bring about such tantamount changes, they will be placed in the Crypt of Heroes. And, with any luck, their courage and commitment will inspire the right Therendil to pick up where they left off. Think about it.

Even with their new array of firepower, the heroes stand an excellent chance of meeting their doom out there in the wilderness. The future will hold little more than struggle, hardship and the ever-looming promise of death. But for a true hero, this is what life is all about, and perhaps in that, there can be satisfaction and joy in knowing that they have taken the hardest path they could, and that in the years after they perish from the earth, their names will ring forth along that immortal record of those few special souls who gave everything they had so that light might shine a little brighter.

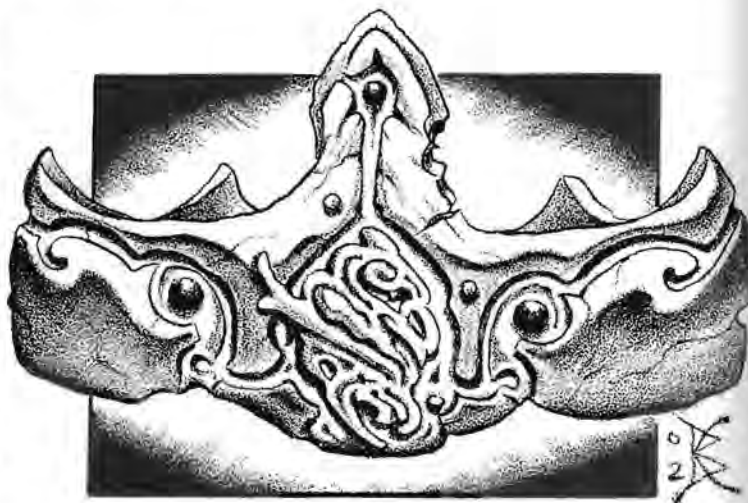
G.M.s, this is the spirit in which the treasures in the Crypt of Heroes (and underlaying scenario) are intended. Don't make it available if it is not something you or your players genuinely want to tackle.

For those players willing to accept the challenge, the Crypt of Heroes and its treasures await. Choose from them wisely, and let destiny be your guide. There are a dozen treasures within the Crypt of Heroes. Only one should be selected by each player character. Any remaining will go to other (NPC) heroes who choose to fight at their side. They are:

The Pauper's Crown
Maureldun, Sword of Therendil
Hamalred, Shield of Therendil
Shuru-Han, Armor of Therendil
The Ring of Ages
The Gauntlets of Mastery
Sagureth's Bridle
The Last Sapling

The Scraver
The Dozen Arrows of Alinaan
The Naked Blade
and The Ring of Yyn

Note: All of the following magic items are indestructible. None of them are rune items, as they were crafted in an age when rune magic was not the only way to make very powerful magic items. None of these items is intelligent nor do any of them have a personality. Any person of any alignment can use any of these items, but remember, G.M.s, the conditions under which these items are likely to enter the players' hands. If they take them from the Crypt of Heroes, the chances of Selfish or Evil characters even learning of these devices, much less gaining access to them and somehow getting away with them are low to the point of ridiculousness. However, if you have Selfish and Evil player characters, feel free to take these items and have them be the property of different enemies and adversaries. Have them be in separate treasure troves, or the gift from a benefactor for some other adventure. Just because these are officially presented as the treasures of Therendil does not mean you can not lift them out of that context and replace them elsewhere in your campaign where you think they might fit better or where you think the player characters might have a better time getting a chance to use them.



The Pauper's Crown

Lord Therendil won this crown during the Chaos War from a general in the Old Ones' Army. It is a simple iron crown that is rather heavy to wear and has a light rusting along all of the edges. It is not a pretty thing to look at, but it radiates an intense aura of magic.

Whoever possesses the crown will be destined to never have more than just a few coins in his pocket. Even if the wearer is heir to a vast fortune or the lord of a kingdom, he will, personally, be poor while he has the Pauper's Crown, somehow unable to access or control any of his wealth. Most likely he will actually lose his personal fortune, but most who accept the Pauper's Crown have no desire for personal wealth and look toward lofty intangibles that make life worth living (having good friends, good health, helping others, being known as brave and honorable, etc.). Should he later relinquish ownership of the Crown, the money he once lost will not come back. It is gone for good.

However, on the upside, the wearer enjoys the following enchantment, which transforms him into a god on the battlefield and a leader among leaders.

1) The wearer's P.S. becomes supernatural; if it already was supernatural, it goes up by +2D6 points.

2) The wearer gains a Natural A.R. of 15. If he already had a natural A.R., then it goes up to 15 or by +1 point, whichever is higher.

3) The Wearer's Hit Points and S.D.C. both double.

4) The wearer heals at a rate of 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per hour, and is +2 to save vs poison, +4 to save vs disease, and +8 to save vs coma & death!

5) The wearer's M.A. increases to 30. If the wearer's M.A. was already that high, there is no additional effect.

6) The wearer gains an additional two attacks per melee round.

Maureldun, Sword of Therendil

Maureldun is a beautiful Elven sword of the highest craftsmanship. It was forged according to the ancient Elven style, which means it is a long sword with a slender, straight blade with a gently pointed tip. The sword has virtually no cross guard, but what little there is, along with the handle and the sword's blood groove, are intricately engraved. The sword feels light as a feather and especially sure in one's hand, which means the user cannot be disarmed while wielding this special sword. As it swings, it makes a faint singing sound as it slices through the air. A fine weapon in every regard, Maureldun possesses the following powers:

1) 3D6 points of damage per strike, +3D6 against shape changers, including Were-Beasts, Changelings, vampires and dragons.

2) The sword gives its owner incredible leaping ability: One foot (0.3 m) up or across for every point of Speed or P.P. (whichever attribute is higher).

3) Impervious to an opponent's attempt to *disarm* and cannot be fumbled or dropped even with a roll of one for an attack or parry.

4) +1 to strike when thrown.

Hamalred, Shield of Therendil

Hamalred is a large, circular steel shield easily distinguished by the intricate spiral rivet pattern on its front side. Like Maureldun, it is light as a feather when held or carried, and it feels especially good in one's hand. Unfortunately, the shield is very loud when struck, so anybody fighting with it who is trying to keep a low profile will have no such luck. People will hear the melee up to a quarter-mile (0.4 km) away.

To make up for these drawbacks, Hamalred offers the following powers:

1) Hamalred will automatically parry, without fail, the first three physical strikes in the first melee round of an attack. For these, the owner need not even try to roll a parry. If the roll hits (even if it would just bounce off the user's armor anyway), the shield magically darts in the way, blocking the blow. This works only one melee round per every new battle, so the user should pick his fights using Hamalred well. This means, after his initial



opponent is defeated, and the "battle" continues with new opponents, the magical parry has been spent. On the other hand, after the battle ends, for the next fight Hamalred's magic is ready to protect again, even if that battle comes only a short time later. After the first melee round it functions pretty much like a normal, albeit superior, *shield*.

2) The lightweight and easy to use shield is +2 to parry, in addition to any P.P. or W.P. bonuses the character may have.

3) Three times a day, Hamalred's user may create an Armor of Ithan (60 S.D.C.) around himself or another within eyeshot.

4) Hamalred may be thrown like a big discus up to 1,000 feet (305 m). If it hits, it inflicts 2D6 damage, and magically returns when thrown, regardless of whether it hits or not.

5) Hamalred is indestructible and its owner is immune to all forms of illness, including magical ones.

Shuru-Han, Armor of Therendil

Shuru-Han was Lord Therendil's suit of plate mail, which he wore into every battle he ever fought. Legend has it that Therendil's own blood was added to the molten metal that crafted the suit, thus giving the now-dead Elven monarch a special link to it. Though nobody has ever proven this, some believe that if one wears the suit long enough, they will hear Therendil speaking to them from beyond the grave. Exactly what the Elven king might have to say is anybody's guess.

Shuru-Han, like Therendil's sword and shield, is virtually weightless. Furthermore, it does not impede one's ability to prowl, and even a non-Man-at-Arms could wear it and fight in it with no penalties. Spell casters are still impeded by the suit's metal content, so any spells they cast while wearing the suit will not work as well as usual. Shuru-Han has the following abilities:

1) It has an A.R. of 17 and 220 S.D.C. It also regenerates lost S.D.C. at the rate of 2D6 per hour.

2) The wearer is immune to fear/Horror Factor.

3) Shuru-Han's wearer will not age while wearing the suit, not will he need to eat, drink or breathe. However, if he wears this suit for more than five days straight without taking it off at least a few hours every couple of days, he will develop the insanity of claustrophobia and among other things, will no longer be able to wear this, or any other heavy suit of armor.



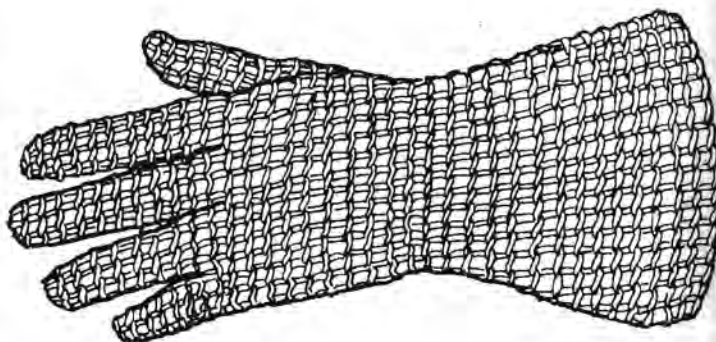
Breaux!

The Ring of Ages

This ring was worn by the sage and mystic *Gaan the Reckless*, so named for his many daring exploits. Unfortunately, Gaan tended to leap before he looked, and got himself seriously hurt or killed on a few different occasions. What kept him going was his most precious possession, his *Ring of Ages*.

This simple ring of silver confers 1D6+1 extra *lives* to its owner. That means whenever the wearer is slain, after one minute (4 melee rounds), the character instantly revives, at full Hit Points and S.D.C. and P.P.E. (and/or I.S.P. if psychic). This effect only works 1D6+1 times; roll when the owner first takes possession of the ring and keep track of it. Should the owner ever lose the ring and regain it, the number of extra lives remains constant, as if he never lost it in the first place. Thus, let's assume Gaan owned the ring, and it had two extra lives left, and he lost it. Gaan's brother Daal takes the ring and wears it for a year, using it on numerous occasions. Gaan later retrieves the ring and puts it back on again. Gaan does not roll 1D6+1 again to see how many extra lives the ring will confer to him. He only has two lives left, period.

Note: The Ring of Ages only revives somebody if they die while wearing it. Placing this ring on the finger of a dead person does no good. After this ring runs out of extra lives, it will no longer serve any purpose to the wearer, but cannot be removed by any means. It must continue to be worn for the rest of the character's natural life, which will be the long end of normal. In fact, characters who are careful and die of old age are said to revive a minute later as a 20 year old! This is repeated until the last life provided by the ring is gone, lost by natural causes or through foul play. Note that those slain come back to life at the same age they were when they died.



The Gauntlets of Mastery

These magical gloves were owned by *Lady Meweyn of Westmarch*, who used them on a more or less constant basis. The gauntlets can take the shape of any kind of hand wear, from heavy falconry gauntlets to dainty lace gloves. All the wearer need do is mentally command the Gauntlets to change and they will. The transformation only takes a melee round. The gloves also automatically grow or shrink to fit anybody's hands from a Gnome to Troll-size. They always feel comfortable when worn, and will always keep the wearer's hands warm and dry.

When wearing the gloves, the wearer suddenly finds himself able to do things he never knew he could, as if unlocking some kind of hidden reserve of knowledge and experience. This effect adds +30% to all of the wearer's skill ratios, even for skills he has no idea how to perform! That's right, even skills the character has absolutely no experience in have a 30% chance of success, provided the skill requires the use of the hands. The gloves do not confer any hand to hand combat skills nor any physical skills aside from Swimming and Climbing.

Sagureth's Bridle

This is a riding harness used by Sir Lyllwynd to command *Sagureth*, his Unicorn steed. *Sagureth*, it is said, was the most magnificent of his kind. When its master died, *Sagureth* shook off the Bridle and left the Fallen Palace without so much as a backward glance. As he did, his brilliant white coat turned jet black.

1) Putting on the magic bridle tames the beast who wears it and allows the rider and animal to become "like brothers." From that moment forward the animal will let its master (the owner of the bridle) to saddle and ride it whenever necessary. Only one animal can be tamed like this at a time, the enchantment lasting until the owner or the animal dies. The animal may be a horse or any number of exotic riding animals (Pegasus, Gryphon, Dragonodactyl, etc.).

2) The steed and its rider instantly gain a telepathic link with each other, making communication very simple and efficient.

3) The steed's Hit Points are doubled, and it now bio-regenerates 4D6 points of damage per hour.

4) The creature's Spd attribute increases by 50%, its leaping abilities are doubled, and it gains +2 on initiative. It also gains incredible stamina and can run, fly or swim (according to whatever abilities it has) for up to three days straight without tiring!

5) The life span of a mortal animal doubles.

The Last Sapling

This staff of spell casting was taken from the wood of the last tree felled to clear the land that the Palace of Therendil was built on. According to legend, the Ranger who felled the tree did so not knowing that an unknown spirit of the woodlands lived inside the sapling. So grief-stricken over this was the Ranger that he immediately sought one of Therendil's best alchemists, who worked nonstop to keep the woodland spirit alive in the staff using all of the powers at his command. The alchemist was partially successful, and transformed this humble tree into a staff of considerable magic power. Though this came as little consolation to the Ranger (whose name has been lost to history), the staff was immediately claimed by Lord Therendil's mistress, *Lady Falsen*, who used it to accompany her lover on many daring and dangerous adventures.

When used as a weapon, the Last Sapling strikes for 3D6 points of damage, and is +2 to strike and parry. However, it is not really meant as a melee weapon. This is, primarily, a spell casting device.

The Last Sapling provides spell casters an extra 70 P.P.E. for the character's magic (spent P.P.E. regenerates every 24 hours). In addition, the Last Sapling may be used to cast any of the spells locked within it, but is limited to six total per day. These spells may be energized by the user's own P.P.E. or by the staff's P.P.E. The owner of the staff automatically knows what spells are available and it is he who determines what spells are cast. The staff contains the following spells:

Level One: Cloud of Smoke (2)

Level Two: Mystic Alarm (5)

Level Three: Negate Poison/Toxin (5)

Level Four: Ley Line Transmission (30)

Level Five: Horrific Illusion (10)

Level Six: Magic Pigeon (20)

Level Seven: Wink-Out (20+)

Level Eight: Oracle (30)

Level Nine: Faeries' Dance (55)

Level Ten: Metamorphosis: Superior (100)

Level Eleven: Anti-Magic Cloud (140)

Level Twelve: Calm Storms (200)

Level Thirteen: Sanctum (390)

Level Fourteen: Impenetrable Wall of Force (600)

Level Fifteen: Dimensional Portal (1,000)

Spell of Legend: Sanctuary (1,500)

The Scraver

This beautiful silver stylus (a pen with no nib) belonged to *Jolaril Sindian*, the official Diabolist of the Therendil court. Though he did not adventure much, when he did, he made sure to bring with him this simple, yet potent device. With it, he could read and write in any language, including runic and magic symbols, and perform mathematics with ease (98%).

Anybody can use the Scraver to write with. It costs no P.P.E. to do so, and will leave beautiful strokes of silvery, permanent ink that will adhere to anything, paper, wood, bark, stone, metal, skin, etc. The lines will stay permanent or until whoever wrote them gives the mental command for them to disappear. Of course, the pen NEVER runs out of ink.

The Dozen Arrows of Alaina

Captain Alaina, Therendil's top archer, fought using a normal bow but had 12 magic arrows, his legendary Dozen Arrows. These magic shafts were the bane of any enemy the bowman fought, and between the twelve of them, there are many Were-Beasts who speak bitterly of the bloodlettings their kind faced when confronted with the so-called "Terrible Twelve."

Each of these arrows is constructed of solid metal yet they are feather-light. They are perfectly balanced and inflict great damage.

1) 3D6 points of damage per strike, double damage to dragons, serpents and worms.

2) Has a range of up to one mile (1.6 km).

3) Any normal shot with these arrows is +3 to strike. Any called shot is +1.

4) After hitting a target, the arrow magically disappears, though its damage remains, and the following melee round it instantly reappears back in the quiver from whence it came.

Note: As magic arrows they still hurt vampires but cannot "stake" them.

The Naked Blade

This was the weapon of *Captain Galorek*, the Therendil's champion and first leader of the *Theredrun*, the House of Therendil's elite shock warriors. He always carried this magic bastard sword with him, called the *Naked Blade* simply because it had no sheath. Galorek never put it in one as a dual statement – that he was always ready for combat and that he intended to die with his weapon drawn. As his weapon was always "out and ready," Galorek never rested in his duty, and was idolized by many Therendil soldiers who strove to emulate his focus and discipline. In combat, the Naked Blade has the following abilities:

1) It inflicts 4D6 points of damage per strike.

2) Against creatures with a *Natural A.R.*, the swordsman only needs to roll half the A.R. to draw blood (inflict damage). Thus, if the Natural A.R. is 12, the wielder of the Naked Blade need only roll a six!!! There is no change when battling against those clad in body armor.

3) The owner of the blade bio-regenerates 1D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee round, and he can fight without fatigue.

The Ring of Yyn

This piece of magical jewelry was the property of *Mistress Yyn*, assassin extraordinaire. She used this ring's powers in her quest to seek out the enemies of Therendil and to eliminate them and all forces of evil that threatened the Kingdom.

The Ring of Yyn grants its wearer these powers:

1) The wearer's footsteps make no sound whatsoever, adding +25% to all Prowl rolls.

2) The wearer leaves no footprints or sign of passage (no dirt smudge or scuff on the floor, no wrinkled carpet, etc.).

3) The wearer may turn invisible at will.

4) Cast any five spells from the following, every 24 hours, with the mystic energy necessary for the casting supplied by the ring: Death Trance (1), See the Invisible (4), Chameleon (6),

Detect Concealment (6), Sense Traps (7), Levitation (5), Turn Dead (6), Weightlessness (6), Breathe Without Air (5), Impervious to Fire (6), Fire Bolt (10), Call Lightning (15), Magic Net (7), Shadow Meld (10), and Escape (8).



The Eternal Torment

By Bill Coffin & Kevin Siembieda

The southernmost region of the Land of the Damned is the infamous *Land of Eternal Torment*. That place where the suffering is (arguably) greater than anywhere else in the Land of the Damned. It is the land of the Endless Dead cursed by the *Mortification* and the home to the suffering *undead*.

The origin, curses, stories and legends about this part of the Land of the Damned have been covered in fair detail in the first section of this book, **Welcome to Oblivion** and the section where the **Endless Dead** are described in gory detail. Rumors, legends and lore about the Land of Eternal Torment are plentiful, though a good amount are completely false. The reason is, very few people from the outside world, and even other parts of the Land of the Damned, have actually witnessed any of the horrors first-hand. Consequently, the imagination runs wild, coming up with all kinds of wild stories based on hearsay, secondhand reports and embellished by imagination. However, the strange nature of the Endless Dead living in the Eternal Tor-

ment causes people to disbelieve even the truth. Flying heads searching for bodies to call their own, undead horses that breathe fog, fiends who eat only hands, patchwork people made from a dozen corpses, walking gelatinous mounds of blood and cities made of bones, all sound like so much balderdash. Impossible stories designed to frighten women. And yet, they are all true.

Only the rarest of adventurers knows any reliable stories about the Land of the Damned, or especially the Endless Torment. For one thing, people just don't like talking about the *Land of Eternal Torment*. It is bad enough to know vampires are real, one does not want to know there are over a dozen different other types of walking dead, each more horrible than the one preceding it. The very idea of the "living dead" is spooky and repulsive. To think that there is an entire place, easily the size of the Island Kingdom of Bizantium, crawling with these gruesome abominations is all the more disturbing. A Hell on earth where

The damned envy and prey upon the living is too much for many people to accept. They neither want to hear or talk about it. They want to forget about the stories and pray that they are not true. Remember that the vast majority of folks living in the Palladium World are a frightened and superstitious lot. Magic, gods and demons are a real part of their life, so they don't care to learn there are more hideous monsters in the world than ever imagined. And they certainly don't want to hear that any of these things might be loose in their part of the world. As far as they are concerned, this is a good reason for everybody to stay out of the Land of the Damned.

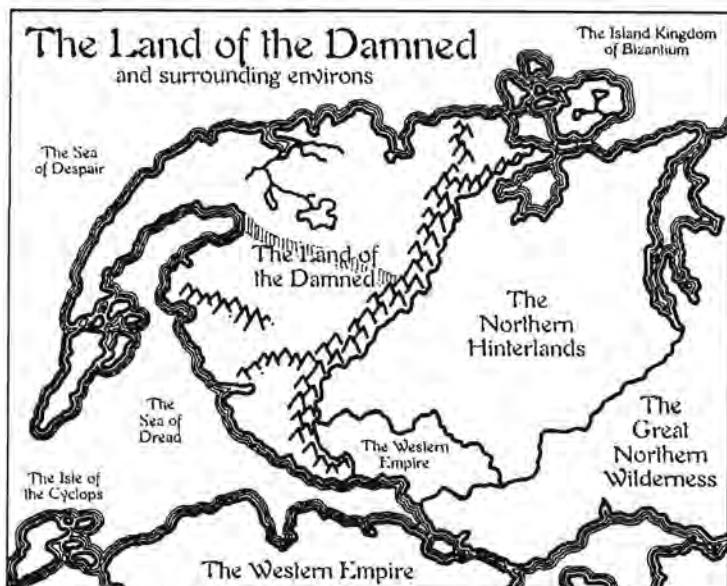
The Eternal Torment is one of the areas of the Land of the Damned that is not really embroiled in any major conflict with other powers in the Land of the Damned. It is generally shunned by all, and its undead inhabitants contained in the region by the magic of the Alliance of Light against their will. Trapped and angry, the Endless Dead are of little use to anyone, and easy to forget or ignore in their isolation. Sure there are a few aspiring despots jockeying against each other within the Eternal Torment, but they, like all others, are contained within the borders of that region, unable to lash out and inflict harm on the greater world. And what these monsters may do to each other is of little concern to rest of the people in the Land of the Damned. Of course, there is always the threat that whatever magic force keeps the Endless Dead in place might one day fail, spilling untold numbers of living dead into an unready and unsuspecting world. But as far as anybody can tell so far, such a thing is only superstitious talk and spurred on by unreasoning fear, not a true eventuality. No, the Land of Eternal Torment is a wasteland, a graveyard, a prison from which there is no escape.

As for conflict within, the Endless Dead are constantly at each others' throats, but as noted earlier, though they may fight, torment and brutalize each other, they rarely fight to the death. Not out of any sense or morality or mercy, quite the contrary, they refuse to let their brethren find peace through death, thus they stop short of killing one another so they may suffer as much as the next guy. Nice. Many of the undead are always railing against the world too, threatening mortals and vowing bloody revenge, but it is their nature, for are they not the antithesis of life? Fortunately, the ancient magicks put in place by the Alliance of Light hold strong, making the words of the Endless Dead ring hollow to those not trapped inside the Eternal Torment with them. The outside world has nothing to fear. Still, stories of secret magicks that can unwork the magic that binds them, or magic and mages who can unleash the Endless Dead, to plots to awaken the Old Ones and other evil machinations within the Land of Eternal Torment, persist with an energy and life all their own. Tales and worries that draw heroes to the region like moths to a flame. So much so in recent years that some locals have begun to wonder if many of these stories are deliberately fabricated by the *undead* themselves, with the very intention of drawing the living into their clutches so they may feed and enjoy new challenges. They might just be correct. It is one way to get a "meal" to come to you, and the undead are just mean enough and cunning enough to find that idea fun and amusing. Not to mention, it would seem, quite effective.

Behold, the Wasteland

The Land of Eternal Torment is one of the most blighted landscapes on the Palladium world. For you readers in the real world, a good parallel might be the front lines of France in WWI. There is scarcely any vegetation anywhere except for the blackened stumps of trees where forests once stood. Here and there is a cluster of green trees or a cheerful meadow, but the rest of the landscape is a rolling mess of rocky plains, slopes, craters, dead grasslands, parched earth, mud, and the occasional grass covered hills. In many places the ground is nothing but thick black soil that seems constantly damp and muddy. In other parts, the ground is baked dry and dusty or covered in boulders, and stranger still, "horns" of rock. Jagged stalagmite style, conical pillars of stone that curl up from the rocky ground like clawed fingers. There is nothing like them anywhere else in the world. (These rock formations are seen in some of the depictions of the Endless Dead in that section, but the best representation is probably found in the illustration of the Sladka on page 139 and Aberration on page 118.) Here and there, small columns of smoke issue from the ground, like mini-volcanos or volcanic vents releasing a constant plume of smoke into the air like a chimney. These vents, large and small, are like perpetual smoke machines slowly adding a little more gloom and soot into the constant haze of an already overcast and perpetually dim atmosphere. Large banks of ground fog appear every morning, making visibility difficult until about an hour before noon. Even when the fog does lift, the sky is often hazy or overcast with the sun barely shining through it all. At night, near total darkness descends upon the land. Somehow the nights seem darker here in the Land of Eternal Torment, and there appear to be fewer stars in the sky, perhaps filtered by the perpetual haze. By midnight, fog covers all the lowland areas and much of the countryside. It is frightening to imagine that the Alliance of Light would hate their vanquished enemies so much that they would punish them like this, but they have. The only other region as desolate in the Palladium World is the Baalgor Wastelands and even it is less forbidding than this. The Baalgor Wastelands has, at least, *some* intelligent life forms, as well as its own flora and fauna, and the sky is a bright, cheerful blue. Here, what few living things that do exist are often destroyed by the roving hordes of the Endless Dead who crowd the land killing most living things.

More than anything, *the undead* are the prominent features of this landscape. The Endless Dead are everywhere, and often in numbers. The less intelligent ones instinctively gather in small groups of 4-16, mingling and shuffling about, too concerned with their own wretched condition to bother anything else. At least until they sense or smell the aroma of life and shamble off to suck it dry or devour it whole. Others are more animal than man, having forgotten their humanity long ago. These monstrosities lash out at the world at large, attacking everybody and anything that captures their attention. Others are locked in a vain search and nightmarish ritual to find some way to ease their pain or snatch a moment's respite from it. This in turn creates more fighting as undead competes against undead in an endless rivalry of blood and savagery. Sometimes things escalate into huge brawls and even campaigns bordering on war. This is especially true when two or more intelligent beings (not always



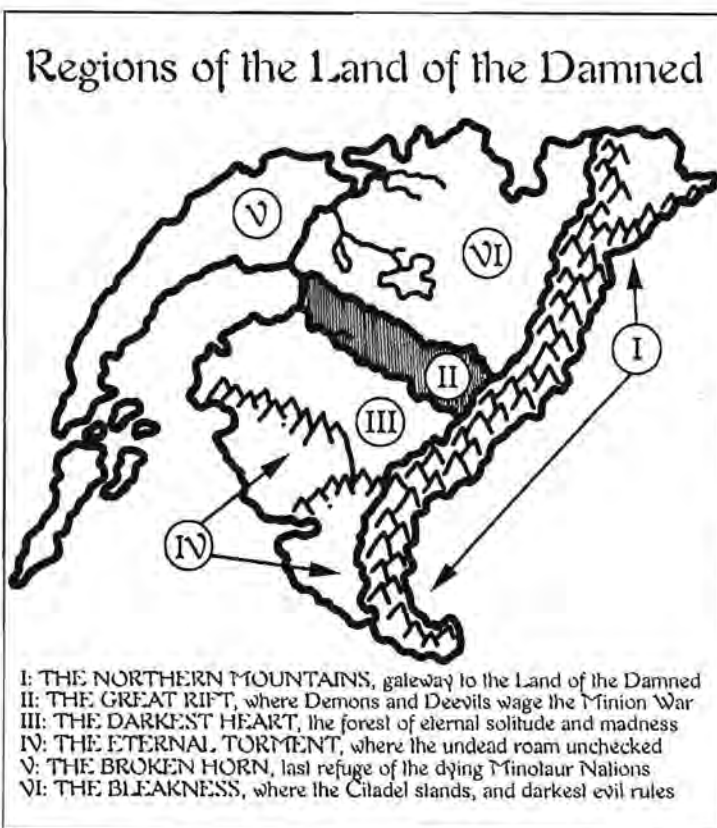
which all involved are guaranteed to face terror, depravity, torture and probably death. Many will find themselves running from one bad situation to another in a vicious circle of conflict in a nightmarish environment. Those who get embroiled in a feud between two factions of the undead are likely to come up with the short end of the stick regardless of which side wins. Remember, in the end, mortals are never so much a true ally or comrade as a means to an end or fresh meat to be devoured.

The above notwithstanding, there *are* people in the Land of Eternal Torment who are *not* the undead or other pitiful monsters. Those with any level of power are, however, probably other blackguards of considerable power. The Mummy Immortalus is perhaps the most obvious and flamboyant, but there are others, such as spell casting dragons, sphinx, Syvan, Scarecrow, demons, Necromancers, Priests of Darkness, Witches and other powerful and evil practitioners of magic, even superstrong Gigantes down from the mountains bent on taming the land or establishing their own tribe among the Endless Death. Of course, all are evil in the extreme, and even the most powerful of these are either driven out or fall prey to the ravaging hunger of the Endless Dead.

Arguably the worst of the lot are those fanatics who worship the undead as the disciples or children of the Old Ones. A distinction that somehow makes them akin to godlings and prophets. These death cultists and/or worshipers of the Old Ones seldom number more than a few dozen, but can sometimes grow as large as 100-200. They usually live to serve the undead in whatever way possible and learn from them. This means many willingly offer their own blood or will sacrifice their own members to the monsters they so revere. Others come to learn from the undead some secret or inner knowledge about themselves or their destiny.

Not all who enter the Land of Eternal Torment are evil or monsters. Some are heroes and opportunists. Bold adventurers who either come to hunt and destroy the undead, or to rescue those captured by them. Sadly, the Endless Dead often prove to be more numerous, savage and deadly than many a hero imagined, sending the would-be champion to an early grave. However, there are those who manage to survive and win the day, and even return to challenge and defeat the undead on more than one occasion. However, these rare individuals are the exception rather than the rule. The feisty little *Kankoran* are among those exceptions, but even they don't press their luck by traveling too deep into the region.

There is a fourth category of intelligent beings who are sometimes found in the Land of Eternal Torment: Slaves and kidnap victims. Unwitting travelers, careless adventurers and explorers, children and fugitives who accidentally wander into or too close to the cursed place are often chased deeper into its interior or captured by the undead. Not all of the Endless Dead pounce in for the kill. Many like to have a plaything for a few days or try to keep victims alive as slaves or feed on them slowly, like cattle, or savor their company – for a while anyway. The days are numbered for these mortal prisoners, with most meeting their end in a matter of 1D4+4 days, some lasting as long as a month, even two, before they are slaughtered or tortured and killed. Their only hope is escape or rescue by heroes.



undead) manage to unite hundreds or even thousands of the Endless Dead to fight for one cause or purpose, but in the end of even the most massive battle, the undead fight, some die, and the rest scatter until the whole cycle starts over again.

Whatever conflict awaits those *mortals* who enter the Darkest Heart, it is nothing like what is found here in the Eternal Torment. For here in the land of the living dead, life in all its forms is the enemy, and the undead are quite adept at sniffing life out wherever it hides and mangling it before they snuff it out. Any living person who fails to conceal his identity, or who simply stays in one spot for too long, is asking for trouble. Heck, just coming to the Land of Eternal Torment is asking for trouble. And not just a difficult situation, but a life and death battle in



Those Who Would Be King

There are three notable regions to the Eternal Torment. They are **Galdrum's Teeth**, a modest mountain chain that forms the northern border of the land; the **Cauldron of Lost Souls**, where the Alliance of Light's worst defeat took place and is commemorated now by the armies of ghosts who live there; and the **Craven Flat Lands**, where the Old Ones were finally defeated, yet their presence is felt stronger there than anywhere else.

The Land of Eternal Torment has no central power or authority, nor even any tyrants who have arisen and taken over vast tracts of land. The very nature of this place made it such that the Garrison never tried establishing a presence here (they figured their outposts in the Darkest Heart could contain any breakouts), so there are not even the remnants of that order in this cursed land. This is a place left entirely to its own devices. And, being populated by the Endless Dead and various animated corpses, there are few creatures that have it in them to even consider trying to conquer and rule any part of such a place. Most of the Endless Torment is total anarchy. There is no hierarchy of order, no law of the land, not even a formal pecking order for who bullies whom. It is a total undead free-for-all harkening back to the days of chaos when the Old Ones reigned supreme. Thus, every-

body in the region is either looking for somebody to victimize or is a victim, with tables turning in a moments notice, making the hunter/bully the hunted and downtrodden.

The closest thing to ruling despots this place has are the so-called **Lords of the Dead**. This is a dubious honorific given to them by outside explorers who have heard stories of a few powerful figures who have established themselves as self-proclaimed "kings" in the Eternal Torment. Powerful, yes Kings? Not quite, for no one, or three beings can claim to truly rule any significant number of undead or have any true power over the Eternal Torment. At best, they have their own tiny pocket kingdom, and many such fiefdoms have come and gone over the ages. These three are just the latest (and as fleeting as sand in an hourglass).

There are three Lords of the Dead: **Crodaltus**, a Syvan Mind Mage with far more brains than brawn; **Lord Ghedda**, a Mummy Immortalus who was once an arrogant Western nobleman and has seemingly lost none of that trait; and **Dalken**, a Fire Dragon Hatchling who double-crossed the wrong people and got turned into a giant, undead, dragon skeleton for it. These three creatures have set up their own bases of operation within the **Galdrum's Teeth Mountains**, and they collectively call these places the **Cities of the Dead**, even though they really are not cities at all. They are more like big hideouts or fortified towns where these villains live and gather their minions periodically. The very use of the term "cities" is fairly odd, really, given where the Lords of the Dead reside. With the rare exception of Festulent villages and small to tiny clans of other undead (typically headed by one of the more intelligent undead, like a vampire, Revenant, Rawhead, or such), there are no sizeable settlements of any kind in the Eternal Torment. The Endless Dead know only to destroy, not to create, and so any building in their presence is doomed to eventual downfall. Likewise, any community, even those under the forceful will of a powerful outsider, cannot be maintained for more than a decade or two before its subjects scatter.

Actually, there is a fourth would-be despot living in the **Cauldron of Lost Souls**. This is the infamous Scarecrow known as the **Straw Man**, a vicious killer wanted in most human nations. He even has bounties placed on his head by King Sunder Blackrock of the Nimro Kingdom. If any one person has the drive and power to take over a sizeable part of the Endless Torment, it is he, and for that he has earned the enmity of the other self-proclaimed Lords of the Dead, who have formed a loose alliance to oppose him.

There may very well be additional despots and major villains hiding out in the Endless Torment – creatures or villains who have set up residence here, far from the prying eyes of the rest of the world, and who are quietly rising to power. As we said, such fiefdoms come and go regularly as the sands of power shift and flow with the passage of time.

Galdrum's Teeth

The forked mountain chain is fairly humble when compared to its titanic neighbor, the **Northern Mountains**, but its reputation alone has as much staying power as the Northern Mountains' dizzying heights and deadly challenges. As anyone

familiar with the Eternal Torment knows, Galdrum's Teeth is the northern boundary of the cursed land and the most likely route of entry to it by outsiders. One could try to go over the southernmost reaches of the Northern Mountains, but few have ever done so successfully. Most just disappear. Since the most commonly traveled paths through the mountains (if one can even call them "commonly traveled") are well to the north, visitors are deposited just on either side of the Great Rift. From there, the only way into the Land of Eternal Torment is over Galdrum's Teeth. Likewise, one could try to land on the southern beaches and bypass both mountain chains, but no ship has ever succeeded in that. The reasons for it are legion, but the most prevalent have something to do with sea serpents and a hyper-aggressive race of aquatic humanoids who claim dominion over the seas and everything that travels on top of it. They are particularly aggressive about the coastal waters of the Land of the Damned and, using great sea serpents as attack animals and perhaps even as steeds, sink any vessel that tries a coastal landing. It is said that even a dreaded Western Demon Black Ship tried making the run just a year ago, but vanished under the sea when it got within a mile of the shoreline. Since then, only fools and suicide sailors even talk of landing on the southern beaches, let alone try to do it.

Galdrum's Teeth are named after an unknown individual who is believed to have figured prominently in the Chaos War. What side he fought for is unknown, but it is a pretty good bet that he ended up as a casualty somewhere along the line. The mountains of the Eternal Torment actually form two chains connected in the middle by a very high, very sheer plateau that caps off the wall of stone separating the Land of Endless Dead from the Darkest Heart. From the air, these twin ridges of rock almost look like somebody's set of teeth biting through the earth. Presumably that somebody must have been the mysterious Galdrum, and hence, *Galdrum's Teeth*.

The mountains themselves are not very high, around 10,000 feet (3,048 m) at their highest point. They are also not very challenging to climb, especially to those who have already crossed the Northern Mountains, to whom ascending Galdrum's Teeth will seem like going up a small flight of stairs in comparison. The mountains are like the rest of the Eternal Torment, but virtually lifeless, with no trees and few plants or even moss on them. They are like this from their lowliest foothills to their highest summits.

The mountaintops are more or less joined by a summit ridge that runs along the entire length of the northern Teeth, runs along the northern edge of the plateau joining the northern and southern Teeth, and then runs along the tops of the southern Teeth. Both ends of the summit ridge run right into the Sea of Dread, as if the mountain chain extended to the sea and was sheared off there. This summit ridge is fairly easy to traverse, and those willing can use it as an "express route" to travel the length of Galdrum's Teeth. However, there exists on the ridge a shimmering wall of magical light, similar to what a ley line might look like, but to any spell caster it is clearly not ley line energy. This is a magical warning sign. It tells visitors that beyond the plane of light lies the Eternal Torment, and those who

enter must endure the curse of the Mortification. This is the one and only warning anybody gets – those who do not have the sense to turn back or who do not know what the wall of light means are responsible for their own fate. (Actually, a number of different people, over the ages, have placed other warning signs including totem poles, poles with skeletons chained or suspended from them and even plaques and warnings chiseled into the stone. However, such symbolic and written warnings are scattered throughout the long, winding length of Galdrum's Teeth along the line of light, so finding more than one or two is unlikely.)

Once across the line of light, one is immediately subjected to the curses that are meant to chase intruders away. As described in the **Cursed Earth** section of this book, page 46, only the most fortunate "save" from the initial magic onslaught. Those less fortunate must press onward under the affliction of one or more curses, with possible others coming to all over the weeks that follow. Any visitor's suffering has only just begun. For the far side of Galdrum's Teeth is thickly populated with all manner of the Endless Dead, any of whom is quick to prey on the living who enter "their domain." These voracious undead all have a reason to harry or harm the living, as those who cross over learn soon enough.

There is little of anything that one might consider important in the mountains, except there are three strongholds on the undead side where villains of terrible power have established themselves. These strongholds are known as the *Cities of the Dead*, for they are places where the Endless Dead gather in alarming numbers and are commanded by sinister forces. Most folks entering the region do not know about these places, but the Cities of the Dead are the only places of "civilization" found within Galdrum's Teeth, and for characters looking for a safe haven (which these three are not) or a place to regroup or resupply, the Cities of the Dead may seem like an oasis in a hostile environment. For those on the run from any number of undead monsters that stalk the mountains, any of the cities may seem like their only chance for survival. Little to they know the city only represents a different sort of nightmare in an odyssey of terror

The Cities of the Dead are *Thretch*, *City of Pain*, ruled by the Syvan, *Crodaltus*, *Entropus*, *City of Decay*, ruled by the Mummy Immortalus, Lord Ghedda, and *Marrow*, *City of Bone*, ruled by the undead fire dragon Dalken. These three monsters have never been on the best of terms, but they avoid open warfare on each other for the fear of being double-teamed. Thus, they live in an uneasy balance of power, each drawing in a growing army of the undead, each knowing that someday conflict between them is inevitable. They are further bound by the emergence of a fourth villain, the *Straw Man*, a sinister Scarecrow in the Land of Eternal Torment who threatens to destroy Crodaltus, Ghedda and Dalken together. So it is that the three villains of the mountains must rely on one another to handle the threat of the Scarecrow interloper. It is a sticky situation that must eventually come to a head. All it needs is a catalyst. The appearance of powerful adventurers from the outside might just be that catalyst.

Thretch, City of Pain

This is the home and headquarters of the Syvan manipulator *Crodaltus*. His stronghold is the partially rebuilt ruin of a fortress that was smashed during the final days of the Chaos War. The Alliance started to put it back together but when the Mortification was decided upon, all building stopped and the place was abandoned. Many years after the Mortification, perhaps a short 5,000 or 6,000 years ago, after the Elf-Dwarf War, *Crodaltus* moved in. Not being a living creature, he was immune to the effects of the land's curses, and his power and personality made it child's play to move into the ruins and begin exerting influence over the many Endless Dead around him. In no time at all, he had them eating out of his hand. *Crodaltus* is an excellent judge of character and knows precisely what to say to somebody to ingratiate them to him and get them to do his bidding. For creatures such as the Endless Dead, whose needs are as singular as they are obvious (the need to eat entrails, the need to assuage their pain, the need to do battle, etc.), turning them into his minions was child's play for *Crodaltus*. Keeping them loyal and motivated has been trickier, but the Syvan has managed that well too, making the City of Pain one of the longest lived in the region.

In the last thousand years or so, his ambition has been stalled. The appearance of his two mountain rivals has made him wary and unsure of what to do. He has literally waited hundreds of years for either Dalken or Lord Ghedda to make a move. Neither of them have, and so the stalemate continues. This really drives *Crodaltus* crazy, since he has a force of several thousand Endless Dead at his command, and would like nothing more than to use them to eliminate at least one, if not both of his rivals. After all, there is also the upstart Straw Man to contend with, and frankly, *Crodaltus* fears that guy. He has heard of him before, and he knows what he can do. *Crodaltus* wants him destroyed, and he wants it now. The stalemate with his rivals is not helping things against the Straw Man.

Should adventurers come to the city of Thretch, Lord *Crodaltus* will take them in as "honored guests," providing them with any convenience they require. Afterwards, he will try to hire, trick, manipulate, cajole, beg, or plead the group into helping his cause against one of his old rivals (or perhaps the Straw Man, if he thinks they might be able to oppose him). *Crodaltus* has no shame, and will first try his most skillful manipulations, then threats of brute force, then pleas of pity to get the characters to help him destroy the Straw Man and/or Lord Ghedda and Dalken. If the player characters are willing to help, then Lord *Crodaltus* promises to reward them richly, though he surely will never do such a thing. Those thick enough to try collecting a reward shall be slain. And those who simply try leaving the City of Pain without taking up Lord *Crodaltus*' job offer will be subjected to an Endless Dead manhunt the likes of which they could never imagine. Lord *Crodaltus* is at best a poor and untrustworthy ally/employer, but he is a ruthless enemy who stops at nothing to extract his revenge on those who defy or displease him.

Lord Crodaltus

Race: Syvan

Alignment: Aberrant evil.

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 24, M.A.: 13, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 15, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 9, Spd: 10

Hit Points: 197

S.D.C.: 70

Natural A.R.: 13

Horror Factor: 13

Height: Six feet (1.8 m).

Weight: 180 lbs (225 kg).

Age: Immortal (unless killed).

P.P.E.: 30

I.S.P.: 240

Disposition: *Crodaltus* is an arrogant, condescending megalomaniac. He seeks nothing short of becoming the absolute ruler of the Eternal Torment, but that is only the beginning of his ambitions. When the Land of Eternal Torment falls under his control, he sees no reason why he could not take over the Darkest Heart as well, and from there the Great Rift, the Broken Horn and ultimately, the Bleakness. *Crodaltus*' final goal is the conquest of the Citadel and the usurpation of whatever dark power resides there. He believes that once he controls the entire Land of the Damned, the world will quake before him and pay him tribute. The magnitude of his dream is not realistic, and he has not accomplished even phase one of his scheme in the last 5,000+ years, but to a delusional mind such as *Crodaltus*', it makes perfect sense.

Lord *Crodaltus* despises his two fellow "Lords of the Dead," writing them both off as despicable and dishonorable barbarians who neither understand the meaning of true power nor possess the right mix of brains, brawn and breeding to obtain it. Being a Syvan, *Crodaltus* believes he can manipu-



late them into giving him what he wants or surrender to him, in the long run. Someday, he will try to get Lord Ghedda and Lord Dalken to destroy each other, making his conquest of the Eternal Torment that much easier.

Of the Lords of the Dead, Crodaltus is the most likely to deal with adventurers, since he can always imagine putting them to use as spies, assassins, scapegoats and pawns against those he opposes.

Experience Level: 10th level Mind Mage.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship: General (98%/95%), Prowl (85%), Play Stringed Instruments (85%), Lore: Religion (98%), Basic Math (98%), Speak Dragonese/Elven (98%), Speak All Human Tongues (98%), Detect Ambush (90%), Detect Concealment & Traps (85%), Imitate Voices & Impersonation (86%/66%), Intelligence (80%), Track Humanoids (85%), Interrogation Techniques (85%), Surveillance (85%), Locate Secret Compartments/Doors (70%), Street-wise (65%), Use & Recognize Poison (69%/61%).

Natural & Special Abilities: See the invisible, nightvision 90 ft (27.4 m) — can see in total darkness, and recognize all illusions (and therefore is not affected by them) with 90% accuracy.

Emotion Sense: Automatically senses the emotions of those around him. Can identify the source of specific emotions at 80% accuracy.

Sense Supernatural Beings: Like a bloodhound smelling a familiar scent, Crodaltus can sense the presence of powerful supernatural beings. This includes gods, godlings, greater elementals, greater demons and Deevils, and even dragons and practitioners of magic who are 10th level and higher. Base skill is 80%, with a +10% bonus when face to face with such a being (even if the creature is disguised). Crodaltus may be able to identify the nature of the being by scent alone at 40% accuracy. Tracking by psychic scent is also done at 40% accuracy.

Psionics: Master Psychic — Mind Mage, the most powerful of all psychic O.C.C.s.

Healing: Attack Disease (12), Bio-Regeneration — Self (6), Deaden Pain (4), Detect Psionics (6), Exorcism (10), Healing Touch (6), Increased Healing (10), Induce Sleep (4), Lust for Life (15), Psychic Diagnosis (4), Psychic Purification (8), Psychic Surgery (14), Resist Fatigue (4), Suppress Fear (8), and Transfer I.S.P. (4+).

Physical: Alter Aura (2), Death Trance (1), Ectoplasm (varies), Float (8), Impervious to Cold (2), Impervious to Fire (4), Impervious to Poison/Toxin (4), Levitation (varies), Mind Block (4), Nightvision (4), Resist Fatigue (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Thirst (6), Summon Inner Strength (4), Spontaneous Combustion (6), Telekinesis (varies), Telekinetic Punch (6), Telekinetic Leap (8), and Teleport Object (10).

Sensitive: Astral Projection (8), Clairvoyance (4), Commune with Animals (6), Commune with Spirit (8), Dispel Spirits (10), Empathy (4), Meditation (0), Mind Block (4), Object Read (6), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Dimensional Anomaly (6), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Speed Reading (2), Telepathy (4), and Total Recall (2).

Super-Psionics: Bio-Manipulation (10), Bio-Regeneration — Super (20), Electrokinetics (varies), Empathic Transmis-

sion (6), Mentally Possess Others (30), Mind Block Auto-Defense (special), Mind Bond (10), Mind Wipe (special), Psi-Shield (30), Psi-Sword (30), Telekinetic Force Field (30), and Telekinesis: Super (10+).

Magic: None.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Bonuses (does not include attribute bonuses): +2 to strike, +4 to parry and dodge, +2 to damage, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to save vs psionics, and +2 to save vs all magic.

Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 2D4, critical strike: 19-20, and body throw/flip.

Weapons of Note:

The Sword of Bone: This unique magic item is a trophy Crodaltus stole from a warlord of the Old Kingdom shortly after the Elf-Dwarf war. When he learned of its ability to command the undead, he immediately saw it as his ticket for ruling the Eternal Torment and from that, the Land of the Damned.

This sword inflicts 4D6 points of damage per strike. It is magically indestructible, and returns when thrown. It is a long sword with a handle and cross guards made of bone. At the end of the handle and cross guards, the bulbous knuckle joints can be seen.

The Sword of Bone's real power is commanding the undead. At any given time, the sword can raise, animate and *command* 200 skeletons or corpses or "turn" an equal number. He can also command 1D4x10 undead, such as Secondary and Wild Vampires and most of the fifteen varieties of the Endless Dead, except for the Sleepwalker and Revenant. Crodaltus does not use this ability as much as one might think, however, for his skill at deceiving and manipulating others has enabled him to con hundreds upon hundreds of Endless Dead that he can deliver to them the one thing that will ease their suffering. All they must do is follow his every command for the moment. When any of his minions object, he has them isolated, tortured and, when necessary, killed. Those that die are always replaced with fresh volunteers who hear of the Syvan and come begging for him, help them find some measure of peace or purpose. Skilled at this, Lord Crodaltus has actually been successful in helping to provide his minions with comfort, food and playthings, for in addition to his undead legions, Crodaltus also has over 500 mortal slaves whom he doles out as food, entertainment and rewards for his undead. This is the largest humanoid population known to exist in the Land of Eternal Torment. Of course, they are kept under lock and key and under his direct protection. Thus, not only does he control the undead with the living but also controls the living with threats of turning them into the hands of the undead. Just the kind of foul subterfuge and intimidation he loves.

Armor: Crodaltus wears no armor, both because he has a high Natural A.R., and because he stays out of direct physical conflict long enough so as to not need additional protection.

Magic Items: **Ring of Bio-Regeneration:** Crodaltus wears a ring of obsidian on his left middle finger that enables him to bio-regenerate 4D6 points of damage per melee round. The ring can also regrow lost appendages within 1D4 days.

Other Equipment: As the "king" of his domain, Crodaltus has access to most common items and a few exotic ones. How-

ever, being isolated in the Land of Eternal Torment, the finer things in life are hard to come by, and what he does have comes at the expense of adventurers and travelers who have fallen to his minions in the land of the undead or to him and his mortal henchmen outside the area. Thus, he is as much brigand and thief as he is king.

Money: Over the years, Lord Crodaltus has come in and out of dozens of fortunes, any one of which would take an ordinary mortal a lifetime to acquire. Currently, his wealth is comparatively minuscule, though he would insist that he sits at the head of a blossoming empire.

Notes: As evil as he is, Lord Crodaltus does have a strong sense of honor and fair play. He only lies to and deceives those unworthy of his trust (such as the Endless Dead), and those who serve him or carry out any kind of job or task for him will be fairly rewarded. Crodaltus considers most heroes and adventurers of mid- to high-level to be worthy of honorable treatment until they prove otherwise. To those he trusts, he always tells the truth, and even to strangers his solemn oath is as good as gold. Make no mistake, however, this guy is evil through and through, and as power-mad as one can get. Crodaltus *will* destroy anybody who gets in his way. He views all people as being part of one of two camps: those who are willing to serve him, and those who oppose him and therefore must be destroyed.

Entropus, City of Decay

This place is a huge temple site that was converted into a mass mortuary by the Alliance of Light sometime after the war ended. Before they could complete the conversion, they abandoned it to the Mortification. Now, it is the perfect place for one such as *Lord Ghedda*, a Western noble who, a thousand years ago, underwent mummification so he might become immortal and powerful enough to realize his dreams of destroying the Imperial Family of the West and establishing himself as the Empire's "immortal ruler." Ghedda has a long way to go on this plan, but until he gets the ball rolling on it, he is content to hold a mock court in Entropus, where his courtiers are the 70+ members of his family who were all mummified along with him. None of them had the intelligence or mental endurance to survive mummification, so they all are at Lord Ghedda's complete command. Since most of them are of low level noble status, they lack any real skills, but on more than a few occasions, their collective strength was enough to keep Ghedda's bony claws in control of the city and they help him rule his share of the Galdrum's Teeth mountains.

As a practicing Necromancer, Lord Ghedda is delighted to be in the Eternal Torment, which might also explain his lack of ambition to recapture the West. Of course, with endless skeletons and undead to play with, he has plenty of entertainment, something he might not have so easily in the land of the living. But all of that is academic, since Lord Ghedda is preoccupied with three more pressing problems – the damnable Straw Man and his two mountain rivals. Though the three Lords of Galdrum's Teeth have supposedly called a truce in order for them to all gang up on the Straw Man, Lord Ghedda does not trust either of them one lick, and would much prefer to destroy either one of them as a preemptive strike. He knows, however, that the Straw Man is probably a greater danger, so he has thrown in with his

long-time enemies to eliminate the creature of magic. In fact, Lord Ghedda knows the Straw Man is watching him from afar, and the moment any one Lord of the Dead makes a move, somebody will become vulnerable, and the Straw Man will strike him (or one of the others) down when they least expect it. There is no way to tell how the conflict with him, Crodaltus and Dalken will turn out, and until that can be determined, Lord Ghedda is content to sit and wait for some dramatic turn of events, so he might counter and get the upper hand.

The arrival of living adventurers in his dreadful court causes Lord Ghedda's noble upbringing to kick into high gear. He receives them politely, offers no refreshments whatsoever, and immediately begins ordering the visitors around as if they were his servants or soldiers. Those who protest are threatened to be silent and obey under pain of death. Those who object or disobey are faced with some of his zombie personal guard or a few of his undead legion. Lord Ghedda also commands a squad of (10) Gigantes who serve as his elite "mortal" enforcers.



Lord Ghedda

Race: Mummy Immortalus, formerly a human.

Alignment: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 10, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 28 (Supernatural; also see armor), P.P.: 12, P.E.: 24, P.B.: 9, Spd: 7

Hit Points: 126

S.D.C.: 130

Natural A.R.: 12 with linen wrappings; 9 without them.

Horror Factor: 14

Height: Seven feet (2.1 m).

Weight: 220 lbs (99 kg).

Age: Immortal unless destroyed by magic or fire.

P.P.E.: 250

Insanities: Obsession: Likes to torture, hurt and kill others. Obsession: Dead Things. Obsession: Hates the Itomas family and talks relentlessly of how he will take his immortal revenge upon the royal court. Obsession: With power (wants it, craves it).

Disposition: Lord Ghedda is the head of an ancient and corrupt family of Western nobles who were expelled from power during one of the Empire of Sin's many civil wars. Ghedda hates the entire Itomas bloodline and has vowed to destroy it someday, but first he intends to conquer the Eternal Torment so he might lead an army of the Endless Dead against the Empire of Sin. To this end, he has established a secret Death Cult that worships and protects vampires.

Apparently, it does not quite dawn on Ghedda that he can not simply lead the undead out of the Eternal Torment, they are here for keeps. Regardless, Ghedda naturally figures that *something* will come up to allow his minions to leave, and he has vowed to them that he will find a way to lead them into the world of men. (Perhaps this is where some of the rumors about the Endless Dead getting out of the Land of the Damned originates.) It is a bizarre mix of relentless optimism and a jaded noble mind set that automatically assumes that he will get whatever he wants.

Experience Level: 12th level Necromancer.

Skills of Note: Speak Western (98%), Speak Dragonese/Elven (98%), Speak Dwarven (98%), Literacy: Western (+98%), Literacy: Dragonese/Elven (+98%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (98%), Lore: Magic (95%/85%/80%), Basic Math (98%), Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (95%), Wilderness Survival (90%), Intelligence (68%), Horsemanship: General (95%/80%), Falconry (90%), Heraldry (75%/80%), Interrogation Techniques (80%), Military Etiquette (95%), Streetwise (56%), Art (95%), Breed Dogs (98%/80%), History (70%), Use & Recognize Poison (40%/32%), Locate Secret Compartments & Doors (20%), W.P.: Sword (+5 to strike, +4 to parry, +3 to throw), and W.P. Knife (+4 to strike, +5 to parry, +5 to throw).

Special Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), resistant to heat and cold (half damage), prowl 40%, does not need to eat, drink or breathe. Bio-regenerates 2D6 points per melee round. Normal weapons do no damage.

Necromancer Abilities: Union with the Dead, Augmentation and Additional Appendages, Animate and Control the Dead, and Impervious to Vampires.

Psionics: None.

Standard Magic: Note that spells in *italics* are Necromantic spells described in the **Adventures on the High Seas™** sourcebook.

Level One: Death Trance (1), Globe of Daylight (2), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (4)

Level Two: Concealment (6), Detect Concealment (6), Fear (5), *Stench of the Dead* (60), Turn Dead (6)

Level Three: Breathe Without Air (5), Fuel Flame (5), Ignite Fire (6), *Object Read the Dead* (8), *Recognize the Undead* (8)

Level Four: *Command Ghouls* (10), *Kill Plants* (10), Ley Line Transmission (30), Magic Net (7), Repel Animals (7), Shadow Meld (10), Trance (10)

Level Five: Circle of Flame (10), *Consume Power & Knowledge* (20), *Death Mask* (12), *Divining: Tombs & Graves* (10 or 35), Horrific Illusion (10), *Maggots* (20)

Level Six: Fire Ball (10), Tongues (12)

Level Seven: Animate & Control Dead (20), Constrain Being (20), Life Drain (25)

Level Eight: Commune with Spirits (25), *Death Strike* (25), Exorcism (25), Luck Curse (40), Minor Curse (35), Sickness (50), Spoil (30)

Level Nine: Protection Circle: Simple (45), *Shadows of Death* (45), *Shadows of Doom* (45)

Level Ten: Banishment (65), Control/Enslave Entity (80), *Strength of the Dead* (60)

Level Eleven: Create Mummy (140), *Summon Vampires* (150), *Transfer Life Force* (150)

Level Twelve: Create Zombie (250), *Summon Worms of Taut* (210)

Level Thirteen: Sanctum (390), *Summon Magot Monster* (320)

Level Fourteen: Restoration (750)

Level Fifteen: Transformation (2,000)

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Bonuses (does not include any attribute bonuses): +2 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +3 to damage, +4 to pull punch, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. Impervious to Horror Factor, impervious to disease and poison/drugs, impervious to possession and mind control, +4 to save vs psionics, and +4 to save vs all magic.

Other Combat Info: Restrained Punch: 2D6, full-strength punch: 4D6, full-strength kick: 5D6, power punch: 6D6 (counts as two attacks), or kick attack: 2D6. Critical Strike: 18-20, paired weapons (all), body throw/flip, +1 to disarm, and knockout/stun on a roll of 18-20.

Vulnerabilities: Without his protective linens, five does quadruple damage to Lord Ghedda; magic holy weapons and magic weapons do double damage if Ghedda is not wrapped in his linens, and they do normal damage if he is. Silver weapons also inflict normal damage on Lord Ghedda.

Weapons of Note: Ghedda carries a sword and dagger (the knife is the official emblem of his Western family, and for that Ghedda especially treasures this knife). However, these are more stations of his noble office and his former history as a dueling expert.

Long Sword: Inflicts 3D6 per strike. Has been enchanted for an extra die of damage (already factored in).

Dagger: Inflicts 2D6 per strike. Has been enchanted for extra die of damage (already factored in).

Armor: Lord Ghedda wears a suit of enchanted plate and chain (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200) that magically regenerates 2D6 S.D.C. per hour, but the armor's most dramatic effect is that it does not impede spell casting ability at all! Any student of magic could wear this armor and cast spells as usual without decrease in spell effect, increase in P.P.E. cost or any other ill effect. This is made possible by the fact that it is made out of plates from the Beast of Kathos as well as unique enchantments.

Magic Items of Note:

Cape of Dimensions: Indestructible. Lord Ghedda always wears this over his armor.

Tome of Images: Ghedda uses this book to chronicle his disturbing and violent fantasies about what he will do to Emperor Itomas and the rest of his family and friends once Ghedda seizes power over the rest.

Other Equipment: As the "king" of his domain, Lord Ghedda has access to most common items and a number of exotic ones. However, being isolated in the Land of Eternal Torment, the finer things in life are hard to come by, and what he does have comes at the expense of adventurers and travelers who have fallen to his minions, as well as a few raids (by his mortal henchmen and giants) on the Fallen Palace of Therendil.

Money: The Ghedda family fortune is easily in the millions of gold pieces, but it has been hidden in a hundred different places in the outside world, scattered when the family fled the Empire. Much of it was squirreled away in Western banks, but a good quarter of it has been buried or otherwise hidden. Ghedda intends to scour the Empire looking for his lost family fortune (it was hidden by well-meaning servants and minions without Ghedda's knowledge), but only after he has taken the Western Empire over.

Notes: Lord Ghedda has been able to get what he wants so far without resorting to the Necromancer abilities of grafting body parts onto his arms and legs. He finds that practice to be distasteful and simply not in good style. (That might sound odd coming from a mummy, but this is a Western noble, and undead or not, the guy is still as image conscious as ever.) Also, one might note that Ghedda is trained as a Necromancer and not as a Noble. That is because Ghedda gave up the noble lifestyle so he could learn Necromancy. Though he lacks the skill and refinement of a noble, he was brought up in a noble environment and has a keen appreciation for the finer things in life, as well as a noble attitude and outlook.

Marrow, City of Bone

This place is more like a weird town than a true city. What sets it apart is that the King's Palace, a big ossuary, a place where they store the bones of the dead, and most buildings in the "city," are made with a combination of stone and bone – lots and lots of bones. In fact, skulls are favored over bricks, and the buildings of Marrow are covered with them. Furthermore, bones, skulls and skeletons of all manner of creatures, from humans to giants, to the monstrous Chaos Beasts are used for decorations and totem poles.

The King's Palace is a fairly simple building with really large entrances (large enough for a dragon to fit through if it squeezed). But inside, the place's true scope is revealed as a massive spherical chamber dug into the ground. Through innovative engineering, the domed walls and ceilings support each other, preventing the whole place from collapsing in on itself. At the bottom of the grand chamber, which must easily be 2,000 feet (610 m) in diameter, lies a huge pile of bones. There have to be a million skeletons here, if not more. The pile is so huge that it is difficult for anybody to look at it and accurately gauge how many bones it contains. Moreover, King Dalken and his undead

minions insist that these are the bones of thousands of warriors who perished in the Chaos War and have been preserved for all of time.

Often sleeping on top of these bones, as if they were his treasure, is the undead Dragon Hatchling, Dalken – or "King Dalken" as he prefers. This shiftless character is evil as they come and would like to cause the world some serious pain, but he can't be bothered to do it all just now. There are only five things that motivate this creature into action. 1) The introduction of live creatures into his pit of horrors. That *always* gets his attention. 2) The promise of treasure of any kind. Dalken has no treasure to speak of. 3) Any direct threat to himself. 4) The promise by anyone that involves the death or destruction of the Straw Man or any of Dalken's other rivals, namely the other two mountain kings. Dalken sees himself destined to be the head honcho of the Eternal Torment, but if he can get somebody else to get rid of the major obstacles for him, then so much the better. 5) A way to escape the Land of Eternal Torment.

King Dalken is something of an aberration himself, an undead dragon. Thus, he looks like a walking skeleton of a dragon with half of his skin and flesh gone and the rest hanging loosely from his bones (mainly the bulk of his body, the wings are completely gone). How he may have gotten this way is unknown to all but Dalken, and he's not saying. Though the dragon denies it, since coming to the Land of Eternal Torment some 875 years ago, he has become trapped by the Mortification and magic that binds all undead who enter from ever leaving the Eternal Torment. With no place to go, Dalken decided to conquer and rule his adopted home. In between his machinations as "king" and "conqueror," the undead dragon seeks a way to escape his prison, so far without any success whatsoever.

Dalken

Race: Fire Dragon Hatchling (undead).

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q.: 19, M.E.: 10, M.A.: 22, P.S.: 36 (supernatural), P.P.: 22, P.E.: 27, P.B.: 18 (he *does* look kind of cool as a skeleton), Spd: 100 running. Dalken's skeletal wings can no longer hold him aloft, so he has lost the ability to fly. That really aggravates him, and any opponent who mentions it is sure to get a very big rise from a very angry dragon.

S.D.C.: 700 (Dalken's Hit Points and S.D.C. merged when he became a living skeleton.)

Natural A.R.: 10

Horror Factor: 16 (12 since he is a Hatchling and +4 for his undead appearance)

Height: 25 feet tall (7.6 m), and 60 feet (18.3 m) long.

Weight: 15 tons

Age: 1249

P.P.E.: 120

I.S.P.: 70

Disposition: Dalken retains most of his abilities, intellect and memories of his life when he was alive, but he now appears as a giant animated skeleton of a dragon rather than as a dragon proper. Also gone is his metamorphosis ability, so he cannot hide his undead nature. Moreover, he can never leave the Eternal Torment, locked forever in a cursed place where he can never know the full range of his abilities. This makes Dalken frustrated, angry and a tyrant. Driven half mad by his captivity (for a dragon, being stuck to even a few hundred



miles of land is a prison), he has vowed revenge on the Gods of Light for making this prison, and he lashes out at all things of beauty and power. When bored or angry, Dalken is given to angry rampages on his rivals and enemies and especially anybody who offends him. Otherwise, the dragon-king engages in a never-ending quest for self-gratification.

Because of his unique undead nature and his sheer power and ability to intimidate, many of the lesser members of the Endless Dead have flocked to Dalken as their leader, protector and savior. This includes throngs of Aberrations, Blighters, Blood Wraiths, Festulants, and Mortoi who combine to make up a full 89% of his kingdom. Dalken personally finds the Endless Dead disgusting (despite his own skeletal body and undead nature), but welcomes any opportunity to grab power. He has no real plans to use his legion of minions, though. For all of his talk of revenge against the gods, escape from the Eternal Torment, and restoration of his body, he has made no effort toward any of these things in over five hundred years. The truth is he is a shiftless slacker who does not work for anything and would rather gripe eternally than actually do something about his wretched condition.

Experience Level: 6th level Fire Dragon Hatchling (frozen since becoming an undead).

Skills of Note: Basic and Advanced Math (98%), Speak/Literacy: Dragonese/Elven (98%), Speak/Literacy: Gobblely (98%), Speak/Literacy Dwarven (98%), Speak/Literacy Chaotica — a secret battle language invented by the Old Ones that is now all but dead (98%), Demon & Monster Lore (80%), Gemology (80%), Streetwise (61%), Detect Ambush (60%), Intelligence (59%), Track Humanoids (60%), Interrogation Techniques (60%), Surveillance (60%), Locate Secret Compartments/Doors (50%), Streetwise (49%), Use & Recognize Poison (53%/45%), History (70%), Lore: Faerie Folk (60%), Lore: Geomancy & Ley Lines (60%), Lore: Magic (60%/50%/45%), Lore: Religion (60%), and Writing (60%).

Special Abilities of Note:

Fire Breath: Range: 200 feet (61 m), 10 feet wide (3 m), inflicts 6D6 S.D.C. and can be used as often as four times per melee. The width of the blast enables Dalken to hit several opponents (3 to 8) simultaneously if they are huddled close together.

Fiery Blood: Ordinarily, fire dragons have caustic, burning blood that will spurt out on whoever dares harm such a beast. Alas, Dalken no longer has any of this, obviously, but that does not stop him from trying to tell people that he really does, it is just all coursing through his bones now. Ooooooookay.

Other (Remaining) Dragon Powers: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, bio-regeneration 1D4x10 S.D.C. per minute (four melees), impervious to fire (does no damage, not even magical fire), teleport self (88%; can not leave the Eternal Torment though).

Psionics:

Sensitive: Clairvoyance (4), Empathy (4), Presence Sense (4), Sense Dimensional Anomaly (6), Sixth Sense (2), Telepathy (4)

Magic:

Level One: Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Death Trance (1), Decipher Magic (4), See Aura (6), Thunderclap (4)

Level Two: Befuddle (6), Concealment (6), Detect Concealment

(6), Extinguish Fire (4), Heavy Breathing (5), Levitation (5)

Level Three: Fingers of the Wind (5), Fuel Flame (5), Impervious to Poison (5), See Wards (8), Sense Traps (7)

Level Four: Blind (8), Charismatic Aura (10), Ley Line Transmission (30), Multiple Image (7), Seal (7)

Level Five: Circle of Flame (10), Domination (10), Energy Disruption (15), Horrific Illusion (10)

Level Six: Call Lightning (15), Compulsion (20), Impervious to Energy (20), Words of Truth (15)

Level Seven: Agony (20), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Invulnerability: Limited (25)

Level Eight: Hallucination (30), Locate (30), Oracle (30)

Level Nine: Age (50), Havoc (50)

Level Ten: Banishment (65), Control & Enslave Entity (80)

Level Eleven: Remove Curse (140)

Level Twelve: Time Hole (210)

Combat Training: Instinctive fighting ability.

Attacks Per Melee: Four physical, or two physical and two fire breath, or two by magic only.

Combat Bonuses (does not include attribute bonuses, except P.S. damage): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry and dodge, +21 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to save vs Horror Factor, and +1 on all other saving throws.

Other Combat Info: Restrained Claw Strike: 2D6, Full-Strength Claw Strike: 6D6, Tail Lash: 8D6, and Power Claw Strike: 2D4x10 (counts as two attacks).

Weapons, Armor, Magic Items & Other Equipment: The mighty Dalken needs no such toys. Well, actually, he'd like any that are worth a great deal.

Money: Only 17,000 in gold and gems, but it's a start. Being isolated in the Land of Eternal Torment (and lazy), the finer things in life are hard to come by, and what he does have comes at the expense of adventurers and travelers who have fallen to his minions.

Notes: The likelihood of Dalken dealing with the living is pretty low. He resents anybody that still has internal organs and skin, which will impede any meeting with outside adventurers. Dalken is an opportunist looking to backstab the other Lords of the Dead, however, and if he can use some adventurers as a hit squad or raiders, then he can at least deny that he had anything to do with one of his rivals' troubles or demise. Dalken would probably botch things up anyway, enabling his enemies to see exactly who was behind the attack. He might be powerful, but for a dragon, Dalken is none too bright. His Mortification has him permanently locked into the impulsive foolishness that gets so many Hatchlings into trouble.





The Cauldron of Lost Souls

This is the southern plain of the Land of Eternal Torment, a natural valley that dips sharply away from the mountains and ends in a huge depression several thousand feet below. The trip down is pretty fast, but the trip back up is a killer.

The Cauldron is so named because it has a long history as a place of turmoil, tremendous battles during and since the Chaos Wars and because it is a place of boiling emotion. Many "shadows of the dead" now roam the area as Entities. Most do not know they are dead (they are Haunting Entities) and reenact the grand and not so grand battles they took part in. Some say that if the living get caught in one of these battles, they will be forced to reenact them as if they were really there. Or else, they will die. Others say living visitors really *will* get sucked back in time and space to the actual battle, and must fight their way to survival if they ever expect to get themselves back to the world from whence they came. However, this seems unlikely.

The Cauldron has recently become notorious as the headquarters of the infamous **Straw Man**, the villain who has gotten the baddies up in Galdrum's Teeth all a-twitter.

Like the rest of the Eternal Torment, the Cauldron of Lost Souls is overrun with the Endless Dead, many of whom lack the strength or drive to try to crawl or climb out of this area. As a

result, the majority of them dwell in very close proximity to each other in the center of the valley, which is right where the Straw Man has set up shop. No wonder he never has any problems finding recruits. The most common undead found in the Cauldron include Blighters, Blood Wraiths, Bone Fiends, Eviscerals, Gravediggers and Sladka demon horses.

There are three main sections to the Cauldron of Lost Souls: the *Reaches*, the *Nameless Place*, and the fortress ruins of *Sindlegard*.

The Reaches

This is the coastal area of the *Cauldron of Lost Souls*, and where many a battle has taken place. The resulting carnage has been extraordinary. So many soldiers were slain that rivers of blood are said to have streamed down the Cauldron slopes and gathered in a small pond at the valley's center on more than one occasion, especially during the Chaos War. To this day, small springs of blood sometimes burble out of the ground here, forming tiny puddles or ponds before re-absorbing into the earth.

The Reaches might be of particular interest to adventurers who are not opposed to contacting ghosts and entities for information. Any such attempt is bound to work here, as there are so many entities about. One can hardly go a day without encountering at least one or two of them. However, most are tormented spirits who died violently in combat or from treachery, so they are angry and hostile in death. Some continue to search for the enemy, others seek their lost teammates, and still others wander aimlessly not sure what happened or where they are. Many ignore all things, including the living, unless they are contacted directly, and few of the Haunting Entities are ever the ones to initiate that contact (less than 2%). An equally small percentage are genuinely friendly, and although the friendly ones are the most likely to help in some way and give up whatever information they may know about this place, it is usually out of date by hundreds and even thousands of years. They *might* know a little about current events, like recent battles, the Straw Man and his three rivals, but that is pretty modern stuff for these ghosts, and most only have the vaguest notion of what is going on in the here and now.

The "last battle" is an eerie phenomenon in which visitors see hundreds, sometimes thousands, of spectral soldiers gathering, preparing for their final battle. When this happens, the ghosts notice the living, but see them as fellow soldiers. These are typically "good guy" Haunting Entities from a specific battle from a specific time in the past. Any living folk who join the spirits will, shortly thereafter, find themselves charging the enemy, a spectral army of "bad guys." When this happens the battle seems completely real and the living participants must fight, flee or die! Any damage they take is real, although their opponents strike *without* benefit of P.S. or any type of attribute or combat bonuses (i.e. the spooks strike with unmodified combat rolls and no bonuses of any kind, only normal P.S., bite, claw and weapon damage). Likewise, spectral magic and psionic attacks do half damage to the living. Thus, the living heroes can turn the tide in this "recreation" battle of some past era, or they can *die* in it as so many others have in the past. If triumphant, 1D4x10% of the ghostly warriors will find contentment and finally win their peace, the rest will reenact this battle again in the next year. Such spectral battles of one kind or another take place ev-

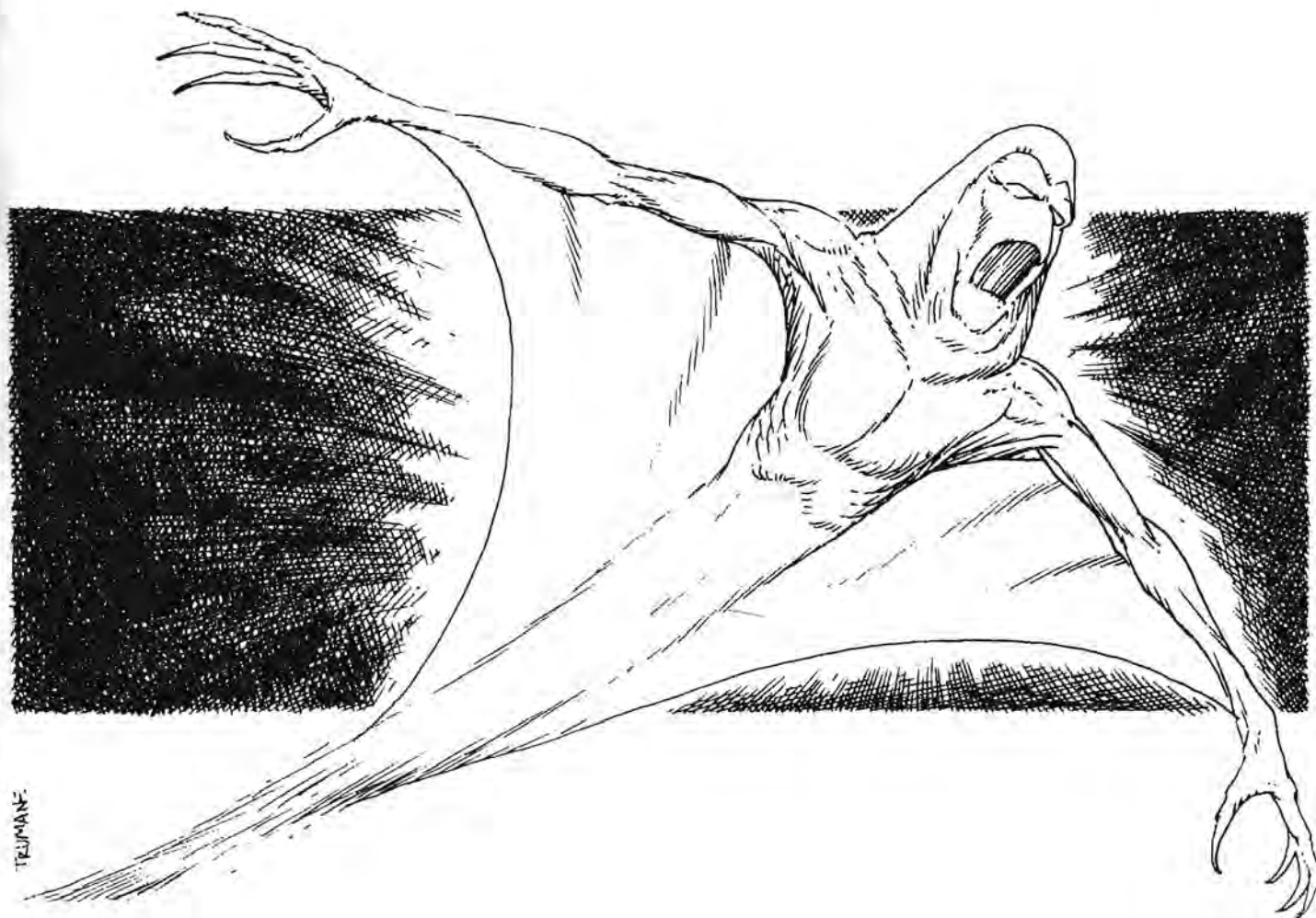
ery 4D6 days in the Cauldron. Living Folk who flee the battle are regarded as cowardly deserters and may be attacked by ghosts on their own side (01-33% chance) or remembered later (01-33%) by some ghosts as "cowards who fled the battle of such and such, I know, I was there." Most "battles" last 2D6 hours, but some can be 10% of that time or 10 times longer.

The Nameless Place

In the northern section of the Cauldron of Lost Souls is a featureless plain about three miles (4.8 km) square known simply as the *Nameless Place*. It was here that the first rebellion against the Old Ones was put down. The Dragons and slaves who dared resist their dark masters were rounded up and brought to the Nameless Place, where they were tortured at length (some say it was 99 days and 99 nights, while others say it was for 660 hours — nearly 28 days). After that, the rebels were publicly and painfully emasculated and slain. The bloodletting alone took another three days, during which time the screams of the dying were supposedly so terrible that they caused a portion of Galdrum's Teeth to collapse. (A few explorers suggest that the high plateau connecting the mountain chains was once a mountain itself, and this might have been what collapsed during the bloodletting, if the stories are to be believed.)

In the years to follow, the Nameless Place became the Old Ones' preferred spot for carrying out their twisted brand of justice, sending millions to their doom here in the name of revenge. The collective psychic imprint they have left on this place is undeniable. Beyond that, when the Alliance of Light took over the region, *this* is where they conducted the Mortification that transformed the living into the undead for the Eternal Torment. The choice of place could not have been coincidental, for many of the Alliance leaders who oversaw the Mortification lost friends and loved ones at the hands of the Old Ones at this very location. But the Mortification was *not* justice for many, and as a result, it only has helped make the Nameless Place a spot of endless pain and torment. A place of punishment but not necessarily of justice. It remains as it always has been, a bad place of ill-will and bad intentions.

Entities of all sorts are drawn to the Nameless Place like insects to light. The reverberating life force and haunting energies can almost be touched, tasted, smelled, and heard. They lend a distinctly unsettling feel to this place, such that not even many of the Endless Dead come here unless they absolutely have to. The only exceptions are *Sleepwalkers* who dream of the past and present, *Aberrations* who continue to plead their case for wrongful persecution and *Bone Fiends* who angrily lash out at any life forms who enter the place. For living adventurers, this



makes the Nameless Place a curious sort of refuge from the legions of the damned, but the tradeoff is dealing with all of the ghosts and entities, including Syphons, Tectonic and Possessing Entities as well as Poltergeists and Haunting Entities. Most of whom are hate-filled and hostile.



Sindlegard

In the dead center of the Cauldron of Lost Souls, right where the worst blood ponds once had collected during the bloodletting of the Nameless Place, is a fortress known as *Sindlegard*.

Whether it was built by the minions of the Old Ones or the Alliance of Light or some unrelated third party, nobody knows. Much of this once mighty and expansive fortification has collapsed, but a good third remains standing. Over the eons, countless living and undead have claimed it as their domain. In recent years, it is the Scarecrow known as the *Straw Man* who has moved in. He has brought with him some Golem lackeys who have rebuilt large portions of the fortress and set up vast barrack areas so he might one day house a giant army there. Already the Straw Man has enlisted over 200 Sladka demon horses and the Revenant to ride them. He also has over a hundred Rawheads and Jaliquettes working as spies, and a legion of a few thousand Bone Fiends, along with some Festulants. Among his living henchmen are two dozen Beasts of Kathos, a company of (140) Hygorathes and 300 Lassacre. He uses his living troops to go out into the Darkest Heart and the mountains to find living, humanoid prey for his undead henchmen as well as to acquire food and basic supplies for themselves. The Were-Beasts and Palace

of Therendil, Faerie Folk and any adventurers found in the Darkest Heart are all fair game for these raiding parties.

The Scarecrow makes no bones about it: He plans to rule Galdrum's Teeth, with an eye on the rest of the Land of Eternal Torment.

The Straw Man

Race: Scarecrow.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 14, M.A. 12, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 7, Spd 9

Hit Points: 150

S.D.C.: 300

Natural A.R.: 6

Horror Factor: 15

Height: Six feet (1.8 m).

Weight: 50 lbs (22.7 kg).

Age: Immortal until destroyed by fire.

P.P.E.: 500

I.S.P.: 150

Disposition: The Straw Man is a dark example of what a Scarecrow can accomplish if given enough time and the right circumstances. Ambitious and malevolent in the extreme, this villain has only two desires: To gain as much power as possible, and to lord that power over as many people as possible. Everything else is either a tool for meeting those ends or is an impediment. If it is a tool, it is to be used, and used ruthlessly. If it is an impediment, it is to be eliminated at once, and in such a way that one gets a little fun out of it.

The Straw Man is a highly developed sadist and has invented a hundred disgusting and perverted ways to inflict injury and death on others in such a way that it entertains him. In this particular arena, he is especially fond of using rusty or serrated blades, branding irons, hungry animals, and acid. His favorite tactic is to hurt or destroy the friends and loved ones of his enemies. Afterward, he likes to capture and imprison his enemy for a year so the poor soul might dwell on the deaths. Ultimately, the Straw Man then resolves to completely break his prisoner until the individual commits suicide or begs for death. In the latter case, the prisoner is usually left to languish in prison for as long as it takes for him to die or take his own life. Even if the Straw Man's tactics have the opposite effect and give his victim a reason to live (either for revenge or to honor his fallen friends and family), the fiend is pleased, because the Scarecrow can appreciate raw emotion and hatred. Besides, it keeps one of his favorite playthings alive for more years of torment.

The Straw Man will never repent for any of his crimes. He is pure evil and the best course of action for anybody who has the mildest appreciation for life, liberty and peace is to destroy him immediately and to show no quarter when doing it. If the Straw Man has even the slightest room to maneuver, or if he is shown the slightest quarter, he will wriggle out of trouble and live on to further plague the living.

In terms of raw power, the Straw Man is easily the better of any one of the Lords of the Dead. His problem is that he has taken them all on at once and therefore risks his own destruction. If he can play the Lords of the Dead off each other, or find some unwitting dupes to destroy one or two of them, he might just survive the conflict and stand poised to take control of the Land of Eternal Torment.

Experience Level: 10th level Wizard and 10th level Summoner.

Skills of Note: Deciphering Circles (60%), Mystic Symbolology (98%/65%), Recognize Enchantment (90%), Recognize Magic (70%/80%), Gemology (85%), History (80%), Speak/Literacy: Dragonese/Elven (98%), Speak/Literacy: Dwarven (98%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (95%), Lore: Religion (95%), Basic and Advanced Math (98%), Preserve Food (95%), Anthropology (80%), Archaeology (80%), Astronomy & Navigation (90%), Biology (85%), Botany (85%), Lore: Faerie Folk (85%), Lore: Geomancy & Ley Lines (85%), Detect Ambush (80%), Detect Concealment & Traps (75%), Escape Artist (75%), Imitate Voices & Impersonation (76%/56%/56%), W.P. Knife (+4 to strike, parry and throw), and W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to throw).

Special Abilities: Impervious to normal cold, heat (but not fire), disease and psionics. Normal weapons do no damage. Likewise, the Straw Man is impervious to magic that only affects the human body or mind, such as spells involving

clouds or gases (such as Cloud of Slumber) or other spells like Paralysis, Blind, Mute, Age, Sickness, and even Life Drain. Only forceful attacks, such as Call Lightning, Fire Ball, Wind Rush, Magic Net, magic walls or barriers, all fire spells, etc. can inflict damage or impair movement.

Regeneration: This is perhaps the Straw Man's most terrifying ability. If smashed, dismembered or even blown to pieces, he will regenerate within 12 hours, if not sooner! This supernatural regeneration restores 1D4x10 S.D.C. or Hit Points every five minutes (20 melee rounds). Even if the Straw Man has been blasted into dust particles, he will completely reform with full memory and S.D.C. within 12 hours. Total dismemberment requires seven hours to heal from while being smashed (losing all S.D.C.) or losing one or two limbs (including the head) will take only about an hour to regenerate.

The Straw Man can fight without a head, but all of his combat bonuses are at half and his initiative is completely lost, and does not need to breathe and can survive just fine underwater, in a toxic cloud, or even in a vacuum.

Psionics: The Straw Man is a Major Psionic with the following powers:

Sensitive: Mind Block (4) and Total Recall (2).

Healing: Deaden Pain (4), Increased Healing (10), Psychic Diagnosis (4), and Psychic Surgery (14). **G.M. Note:** Don't be fooled — the Straw Man does not use these abilities to heal. He uses them to perform all sorts of evil Dr. Mengele-style experiments on living bodies.

Magic: The Straw Man began his arcane studies as a Summoner, then as a Wizard. Though he prefers the spell casting of Wizardry, he is fond of the power his circle knowledge brings him. Due to some serious component shortages, his use of Circle knowledge is pretty rare these days.

Circles of Protection: Protection: Simple (35), Protection: Superior (70), Protection from Angels (90), Protection from Devils (70), Protection from Demons (70), Protection from True Elementals (100), Protection from Elemental Forces (120), Protection from Evil (70), Protection from Faerie Folk (70), Protection from Ghosts, Spirits & Entities (70), Protection from Good (70), Protection from the Jinn (90), Protection from Magic — Simple (50), Protection from Magic — Superior (100), Protection from the Old Ones (120), Protection from the Undead (70), Protection from Witches (70), and Protection from Were-Beasts (70).

Circles of Summoning: Summon Angels (150), Summon Animal (60/100), Summon Lesser Demon or Deevil (100), Summon Greater Demon or Deevil (250), Summon True Elementals (100), Summon Elemental Forces (150), Summon Faerie Folk (100), Summon Gargoyles & Sub-Demons (100), Summon Ghosts & Entities (100), Summon Insects (50), Summon the Jinn (250), Summon Pawn (100/100/50), Summon Serpents (50/100/200), Summon Spirits (200), and Summon the Undead (100).

Circles of Power: All Seeing (400/100), Animate and Control Dead (200), Command (200), Death (300), Dimensional Rift (500), Domination/Control (200), Force (200), Healing (200/75), Invisibility (200), Insanity (300), Knowledge (250/50), Pain (200), Passion (200), Power (400/100), Power Leech (300), Power Matrix (500/100), Teleport (300), and Wonder (300).

Wizard Spells:

Level One: Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Death Trance (1), Decipher Magic (4), Globe of Daylight (2), Increase Weight (4), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (4), Thunderclap (4), and Ventriloquism (3).

Level Two: Befuddle (6), Chameleon (6), Climb (3), Concealment (6), Detect Concealment (6), Extinguish Fire (4), Fear (5), Heavy Breathing (5), Levitation (5), Mystic Alarm (5), Turn Dead (6), and Weightlessness (6).

Level Three: Armor of Ithan (10), Energy Bolt (5), Fingers of the Wind (5), Float in Air (5), Impervious to Fire (6), Invisibility — Simple (6), Paralysis — Lesser (5), See Wards (8), Sense Traps (7), and Telekinesis (8).

Level Four: Astral Projection (10), Blind (8), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Charismatic Aura (10), Energy Field (10), Fool's Gold (10), Ley Line Transmission (30), Multiple Image (7), Shadow Meld (10), and Trance (10).

Level Five: Calling (8), Charm (12), Domination (10), Energy Disruption (15), Horrific Illusion (10), Mend Cloth (12), Size of the Behemoth (12), Sleep (10), Superhuman Speed (10)

Level Six: Animate Object (15), Call Lightning (15), Compulsion (20), Control the Beasts (18), Impervious to Energy (20), Magic Pigeon (20), Memory Bank (12), Teleport — Lesser (15), and Words of Truth (15).

Level Seven: Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Fly as the Eagle (25), Globe of Silence (20), Immobilize (25), Life Drain (25), Second Sight (25), Wind Rush (20), Wink-Out (20+).

Level Eight: Commune with Spirits (25), Eyes of the Wolf (25), Locate (30), Luck Curse (40), Minor Curse (35), Negate Magic (30), Spoil (30), and Wisps of Confusion (40).

Level Nine: Faeries' Dance (55), Havoc (50), Monster Insect (50/100), Speed of the Snail (50), Swords to Snakes (50), Transferral (50), and Water to Wine (40).

Level Ten: Banishment (65), Dimensional Pocket (30/140), Metamorphosis — Superior (100), Mystic Portal (60), Phantom Horse (60), Summon & Control Rodents (70), and Summon Shadow Beast (140).

Level Eleven: Anti-Magic Cloud (140), Create Magic Scroll (100+), Finger of Ictalon (150), Remove Curse (140), Summon & Control Animals (125), and Summon Fog (140).

Level Twelve: Amulet (290+), Calm Storms (200), Create Zombie (250), Metamorphosis — Mist (250), Summon & Control Entity (250), and Time Hole (210).

Level Thirteen: Create Golem (700/1000), Protection Circle — Superior (250), Sanctum (390), Summon & Control Storm (260), and Talisman (500).

Level Fourteen: Close Rift (200+), Id Barrier (600), Impenetrable Wall of Force (600), and Restoration (750).

Level Fifteen: Dimensional Portal (1,000), Resurrection (2,000), Summon Greater Familiar (580), and Teleport: Superior (600).

Spells of Legend: Barrier of Thoth (3,000).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses (does not include attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to disarm, +2 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to spell strength, +1 to circle strength, +8 to save

vs magic, +12 to save vs Horror Factor, +3 to save vs possession and mind control of all kinds.

Other Combat Info: Body Flip/Throw, Snap Kick: 1D6, Karate Kick: 2D4, Foot Sweep. Backward Sweep, Jump Kicks (all), Critical strike: 18-20, Paired Weapons, and Leap Attack (critical strike).

Vulnerabilities: Only fire can truly destroy the Straw Man. All fire, normal and magical, inflicts double damage. Hot coals inflict only one point of damage and have a 01-20% chance of setting the fiend on fire. A flaming torch will inflict 3D6 damage every time it hits him and has an 01-32% chance of setting him on fire. Magic fire and flaming weapons do double damage. Other magic and holy weapons only do *half* their normal damage! Being set entirely ablaze or walking into a blazing inferno or wall of (non-magical) flame causes 1D6x10 damage per melee the Straw man is ablaze. Not surprisingly, the Straw Man, like all Scarecrows, fears fire and if not protected from it can be held at bay by a simple torch, campfire, or circle of flame (normal or magical).

Weapons: The Straw Man fights with a set six of enchanted silver daggers that inflict 3D6 per strike, are indestructible, and return when thrown.

Armor: Having had a few terrifying encounters with fire before, the Straw Man has acquired his most prized possession: a suit of *Leather of Iron* (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200) that also grants him invulnerability to fire. The only way to hurt him with flame now is to either destroy the armor or to figure out a way to negate its magic abilities.

Magic Items:

Ring of Invulnerability to Fire: As a backup the Straw Man also owns a magic ring that grants him invulnerability to fire for 20 minutes at a time, up to twice daily.

P.P.E. Ring: The Straw Man also wears a magic ring that can contain up to 100 P.P.E. The trick is, the ring can only replenish its P.P.E. supply on its own, and it does so at the snail-like pace of one point per day. The Straw Man keeps it for those times when he needs a large amount of P.P.E. in an emergency.

Suit of Leather of Iron: See Armor, above.

Other Equipment: The Straw Man's only other possession of note is a huge and extravagant set of torture devices and tools. Ranging from simple scalpels and meat cutters to elaborate full-body impalers, there is hardly a single torture device invented on the Palladium world that the Straw Man has not found, procured, and transported to the Eternal Torment. His stronghold of Sindlegard has often been called a "chamber of horrors." After seeing the Straw Man's collection of perverse playthings, it is not hard to agree with that label.

Money: None. The Straw Man does not keep money on him and at present has no desire for wealth. In the Endless Torment, money is as good as worthless anyway, he figures, so why bother with it?

Notes: The Straw Man is always surrounded by a coterie of minions and bodyguards. Many of them are mere Endless Dead who have sworn their allegiance to him out of fear. These minions come and go, and in varying numbers too. His constant companions are the four **Iron Golems** he has built (Iron Golem stats are found in *The Palladium Fantasy RPG*®, page 214). The Golems are at his side at all times. Periodically he uses

Summon Greater Familiar or one of his other *summoning circles* to recruit extra manpower, but only for special purposes. The whole battle of wills thing is too much of a hassle for him to deal with all the time. That is why he prefers his robotic (but dependable) Golems.

The Craven Flat Lands

This is the northern section of the Eternal Torment, bordered on either side by Galdrum's Teeth, which come together in the middle at a high plateau that towers over the Darkest Heart to the north. To the east stand the Northern Mountains, which in this area are so sheer on the Craven Flat Lands' side that there can be no access in or out of them.



There are two notable places in the Craven Flat Lands, the *Festulence village district* and the ultimate battleground known as the *Graylands*.

The Festulence District

This area is the "hinge" that connects both sets of Galdrum's Teeth. It is a tall, pancake-flat plateau on which one can see for miles/kilometers on a good day. Today, this flat land has been claimed by large numbers of Festulants, those extremely gross zombies with weapons sticking out of them and who yearn to be treated like the living but are often forced into slavery. The only group of people in the Eternal Torment who just want to leave everybody alone, the Festulants up here have built numerous small, walled villages where they live out their eternal lives in a strange simulation of what they think passes for normal daily life. Though the Festulants do not look for trouble, they will defend themselves vigorously when attacked. In addition, one can encounter virtual any of the undead in this region, usually as lone wanderers or small groups of 1D4+2, but Aberrations, Bone Fiends, Gravediggers, and Eviscerals are the most common after Festulants.

These Festulant villagers, despite being putrid and smelling of decay, are the among the most likely to allow living visitors to stay awhile without attacking and devouring them at the first opportunity. On the downside, most of these villages have a small cadre of (1D6+1) Aberrations who are nothing but mean-spirited pests. Should living visitors make too much of a ruckus, or if they insult or try to enslave the Festulant villagers, the undead residents will rise up to destroy them. Note that even under the best of conditions, Festulants do NOT go out of their way to help or be kind to the living. They are just more tolerant – mostly.

The Graylands

This is the actual place where the Heroes Three – Lokum the Angel, Kym-Nark-Mar the Dragon Lord and Lictalon the Elven Master of Magic – cast the great magic that threw the Old Ones into their eternal slumber. But long before that, both sides of the war fought their hardest on this very place, throwing everything they had into the conflict. They knew that this battleground would be the pivot on which the rest of the war turned. For the Alliance, it was their last push for victory. After this, they had nothing left. For the Old Ones, it was their last chance to repel the invaders, having lost so much ground already. Back and forth the battling and bloodshed went until at some points the ground seemed stacked four and five bodies high, the carnage was so great. Legends speak of days when the Alliance spent considerable energy just disposing of bodies so they could use the battleground again later on. (The Old Ones never made such an effort.)

Ultimately, the Alliance prevailed, but it took a mind-boggling degree of death and destruction on both sides for the fight to finally get to a point where there was a clear winner. Why this place lacks the deep psychic imprint of the Cauldron of Lost Souls (particularly the Nameless Place) is a bit of a mystery. Some think it is because those who died here did so willingly and knowingly and without undue suffering. For most of them, death came quickly and without much pain, unlike the un-

speakable tortures carried out in the Cauldron. As a result, the psychic imprint of any one death here was negligible, and the cumulative effect of them was only marginally greater.

There is magic instability in the region, though. It is believed to be a side effect of whatever secret magic was used to put the Old Ones to sleep. On the spot where the Heroes Three cast their spell, there is a humming or a buzzing in the air, and an electric feeling across one's skin. The air above this spot shimmers and ripples, like the dimensional fabric is on the verge of giving way and letting the contents of some other dimension come spilling in, like so much water. No master of magic has yet been able to determine what the phenomenon may be or how it has lasted all these years. The theories are many. Some believe it could be an inter-dimensional anomaly. Speculation of what it might be includes a portal (provided one can figure out how to open it) to the home dimension of the Old Ones (if indeed they are from beyond, most accounts insist they are not), one of the Heroic Realms (worlds much like that of the Palladium World), an elemental plane of darkness, or some other alien realm too strange to put a finger on.

There is another explanation, a more benign one. Some think that this strange spot was left behind by the Gods of Light both as a way home for true and noble champions stuck in the Land of the Damned, as a place where the truly repentant can come to profess their sorrow and be un-Mortified, or where the faithful may speak with their deities directly (clergy are +10% to commune with their deities here). Nobody knows.

Visitations of Torment

Knowing any of this, one must ask, "Why would anybody, hero or not, want to go into the Land of Eternal Torment for any reason whatsoever?" The answers might surprise you.

On one front, the Old Ones may be asleep, but their distant call can still be heard throughout the Palladium World, and nowhere is that call stronger or more clear than in the Land of Eternal Torment. Here Chaos Priests, Death Cultists, Priests of Darkness and other evil misanthropes who are willing servants of evil have their best chances of getting a direct message from the ultimate lords of evil themselves, the Old Ones. Such fanatical minions are willing to endure any pain or curse for such a chance, and whatever the Old Ones tell them, they will do. Of course, such messages often come in the way of dreams and visions more likely the handiwork of Sleepwalkers than the Old Ones. Other mortals "see signs, omens and portents for the future," all probably the work of a fertile imagination or wishful thinking. But then who can say where inspiration, dreams and desire come from. For these evildoers, a visit to the Land of Eternal Torment may indeed give them wicked purpose and direction.

Likewise, there are those who *worship the undead* or a god of the undead, or even wish to become one of the undead. Thus, a land filled with all manner of them is not Hell, but a haven of delight and promise. A place of dark and evil dreams of power, chaos and destruction. These worshipers of death and undeath are also the ones most likely to seek a way to free the undead fiends trapped in Eternal Torment and unleash them upon the world. They, like the disciples of the dreaded Old Ones, are



likely to take anything the undead tell them as some sort of profound truth or inspiration, and act upon it in some evil and sadistic manner. Those who become cursed and bear "the mark of evil" wear it as a badge of honor and endure the curse as a blessing.

Then there are those who may see the tortured life of the undead as a means to power, vengeance and even immortality. These madmen and misanthropes intentionally seek out the Land of Eternal Torment so they may *become* one of the

undead. Of course, even if they get their wish and become a Vampire or Revenant, they don't realize that receiving such a terrible "gift" in the cursed land means they trapped there until someone can lift the curse that binds them to the land. Of course, that someone has not been found in over 50,000 years and there is no savior in sight.

Then there are those who come to the Land of Eternal Torment to escape justice, thinking they can lose any hero or lawman on their trail and find kindred spirits and a safe haven

among the Endless Dead. The vast majority (90%) only find a gruesome death, and the rest either become the playthings or henchmen of these terrible beings, or barely manage to escape with their lives, probably afflicted by one or more curses and quite likely a bubble off the plum (i.e., a little bit crazy).

Still others go to the Land of Eternal Torment to conquer and control the legions of undead. Most of these would-be conquerors also meet an untimely end. And still others try to deal directly with the more intelligent undead, trading them food (i.e. living people) or other services for information, weapons and the occasional rare item of magic that may come their way.

Lastly, there those villains who deliberately send, chase or trick others (mainly unsuspecting adventurers) into the Land of Eternal Torment as an act of punishment, cruelty, joke, or as a right of passage or test of skills ("Survive three days in the Eternal Torment and you will earn . . .").

Heroes and adventurers, on the other hand, may go to the Land of Eternal Torment with any number of good intentions.

1. To capture a dangerous fugitive who thinks the heroes won't go into the domain of the Endless Dead.

2. To brave the region to rescue a lost fellow adventurer, child or other innocent who many have wandered off or been chased into the undead badlands, or been kidnaped and taken to the Eternal Torment. Other monster races frequently capture and trade innocent people to the undead for favors, information, equipment and treasure. (Some evil beings are said to hide or bury treasure in this terrible place, believing no one would dare to enter the Eternal Torment to find it.)

3. To free slaves, heroes and even angels or gods (said to have been) taken captive by the undead.

4. A hero may have to enter the Land of Eternal Torment as part of a quest, or to question one of the undead, or recover some ancient artifact said to be hidden in the Eternal Torment (but which probably isn't).

5. To stop some terrible magic or the machinations of an evil Necromancer or Death Cultists, or other villain.

6. Some, like the Kankoran, see going into and surviving the Land of Eternal Torment as a right of passage: to brave the cursed land and do battle with a lone undead, and return to tell the tale as a warrior born.

7. Others see the Endless Death as good sport, and make brief raids and incursions into the realm of death and chaos to hunt the undead as one would a big game animal.

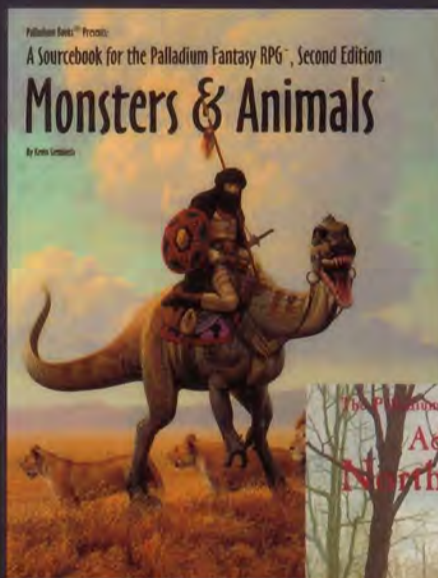
8. Others may merely want to see for themselves what manner of monsters dwell in this forbidding place.

9. Some may actually attempt to exterminate the blight that is the living dead, never expecting there to be so many or the task so impossible.

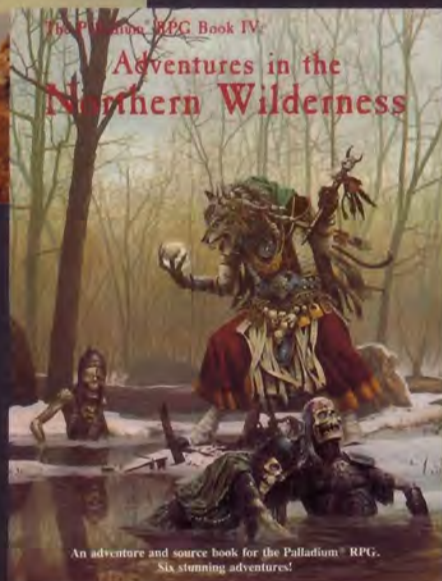
10. Others may simply try to travel through the region to get from one point to another, never realizing what an impossible challenge it is to travel through the Land of Eternal Torment. And, believe it or not, some people no nothing about the evil place and enter it oblivious to the dangers.

11. There always seem to be some rumor or story about some evil force trying to unleash the undead from their prison, and many a hero feels compelled to go and determine if it's true, and stop them if it is. Ironically, such schemes are doomed to failure from the beginning, but champions of light can't take the chance, and go to investigate nonetheless.





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