# The 2017 Gongfarmer's Almanac:
## A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

## Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by
## the DCC RPG G+ Community



## ADVENTURES AND SETTINGS
## VOLUME 7 OF EIGHT BOOKLETS

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*Peta by Matt Sutton*



*Tatterbottom by Matt Sutton*

# GONGFARMER'S ALMANAC

# VOLUME VII

## ADVENTURES AND SETTINGS
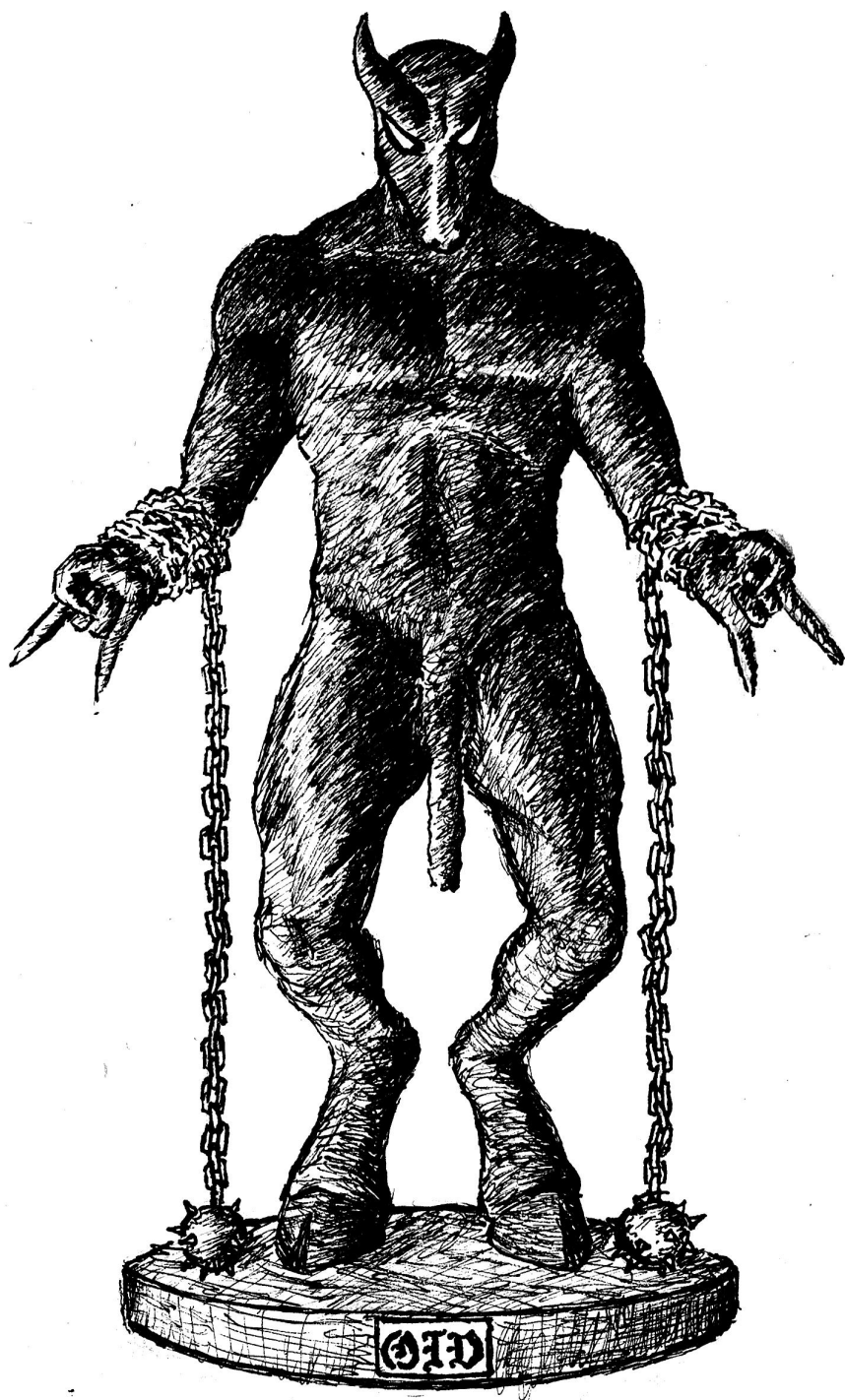
Murray by Christian Kessler

# CRYPT OF THE LOST HYMNS

*by Gabriel Pérez Gallardi*
*Cartography and Symbology by Christian Kessler*

*"In the vast windswept plains North of Ur-Hadad, the First City of Men, a lonely barrow is the only landmark for many miles around."*

Three stone archways can barely be seen on the side of the barrow. The entrances are covered by overgrown vines that, if cleared, reveal, etched but eroded by time, a rune on the keystone of each arch. Web covered corridors gently slope down into the darkness.

All corridors and rooms are 10' wide, 10' tall and in total darkness unless otherwise specified in the description.

Three 20' long downward ramps give access to the barrow. Each ramp descends from South to North and corresponds to each of the alignments: a) Law, b) Neutrality and c) Chaos. If the runes on the keystone are traced with the finger by anyone of the same alignment, the rune briefly glows and that person doesn't suffer any damage while walking down the ramp. Anyone going through the sloping corridors without having traced the rune or having a different alignment suffers 1d10 points of damage every 5' moved. Tracing a rune of a different alignment doesn't deal any damage, but the person feels uneasy about the place.

There is a rusty, riveted metal door on the East wall. The door has no visible handles, locks, hinges, or keyholes and has more runes etched on its surface. Dark brown stains fill the engraved symbols.

Tracing the runes with blood will cause the magical seals to release the door. No amount of damage, physical or magical, will cause the door to budge.

Torchlight reveals a series of 12" golden discs that panel the walls every 10'. The discs, 18 in total, are mounted on crystal frames magically attached to the wall. Each has a hole in the center and is engraved with a pattern of concentric circles. If any of them are removed, a 5" hole can be found behind. After a few seconds, something comes forward from the hole!

**TRAP:** Roll d5 on the table below to see what it is:

1. *Water.* A continuous stream of water flows from the hole and its level rises 1"/round.
2. *Fire.* A burst of fire deals 10d6 damage to anyone in a 10' radius from the hole.
3. *Gas.* A cloud of poisonous gas (DC 16 Fort save or die) starts filling the room at a rate of 10 cubic ft./round for 9 rounds, then dissipates.
4. *Acid.* A gush of acid erupts from the hole, dealing 10d6 damage to anyone in a 10' radius.
5. *Air.* A gust of freezing cold wind blows, dealing 10d6 damage to anyone in a 10' radius.

The secret door on the East wall can be opened if any of the golden discs are placed upon it. Characters crossing its threshold hear the powerful voice of Metal God Robhal[1] screaming from a Magic Mouth on the ceiling:

1 - *Rob Halford (1951) Judas Priest*

*"You have come this far to turn back? Push forward! The Lost Hymns await you. Be worthy of them!"*

**TRICK:** Anyone who fails a DC 18 Will save will fall under the suggestion spell woven into his words.

In the center of this domed circular room facing the secret door is a 5' high obsidian pedestal with a 10' tall metallic statue of a massive muscular horned demon who sports a fanged snout and fiery eyes. The demon has a 5' length of chain wrapped around each wrist, each of which ends in a spiked ball. His clawed hands are making the sign of the horns. Between the statue's hooved feet the word 'OID'[2] is engraved upon a metal plaque (see page 6).

The center of the room stands 20' high and the dome above the statue depicts, all around its circumference, a horde of men and women charging towards the viewer. They are clad in black leather armor, adorned with spikes, chains and studs, and armed with a variety of edged weapons. Their faces show the tortured sneers of screaming and shouting. A ruined city wreathed in animated flames that illuminate the room stands behind the charging horde.

There is a wooden door opposite the secret door.

Passing by the statue without saluting it with the sign of the horns causes it to immediately animate and attack any disrespectful trespasser.

**Demon (type II demon, Murrallsee or Murray):** Init +2; Atk +2 *flail of chaos* +6 melee (1d6+4 plus 1d4 against lawful creatures) or claw +6 melee (1d8+2) or bite +8 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 4d12; hp 36; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP demon traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

After combat, an ooze comes out of the pedestal and cleans the place of blood and body parts. Any dead characters become new faces on the mural. If defeated, the demon dissipates and also appears on the mural.

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*2 - Ronnie James Dio (1942-2010) Rainbow, Black Sabbath, Dio*

Carved on the door are three runes warning of the danger that awaits ahead.

It is a simple door that, if pushed, easily opens into a corridor, the walls of which are covered in green slime and water drips from the ceiling, forming small, murky ponds. The smell of rot, death and decay is so overwhelming that characters have to make a DC 13 Fort save or be helpless for 1d3 rounds due to vomiting, coughing and retching. These sounds alert a gang (2d8+5) of Eddie-looking undead that rushes forward to attack.

**EDDIES:** Init -2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4) or slam +3 (1d6); AC 9; HD 3d6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead; SV Fort +4, Ref -4, Will +2; AL C.

The creatures can be appeased and bypassed by moshing, headbanging and singing any hymn of Miron Aiden, Ore's most lauded troupe of bards.

There is a plain wooden door with rusty hinges, hanging handle and swollen boards on the other side of the room. The door has been left ajar.

A 10' by 10' room with a metal door on the east wall. A 20' deep pit with spikes (Trap: 2d6 falling damage plus 1d4 from spikes) opens below the first character crossing the room and then closes. The trap can be discovered with a DC 20 detect traps check. The metal door only opens if the trap is activated.

Mosaic murals of four Metal Gods adorn each niche: a) Lemm[3], b) Bonscot[4], c) Hanne-Man[5] and d) Mahnob[6]. There is a pentagram drawn on the floor in front of each mural and a scroll case rests in the center of each pentagram. The scroll cases can be retrieved without harm by naming a famous song by the corresponding Metal God. Failure to do so will cause a

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3 - *Lemmy Kilmister (1945-2015) Motörhead.*
4 - *Bon Scott (1946-1980) AC/DC*
5 - *Jeff Hanneman (1964-2013) Slayer*
6 - *John Bonham (1948-1980) Led Zeppelin*

pillar of pink light to strike the heathen, sending him to eternal damnation (J-Pop purgatory or Hip-Hop abyss).

For retrieving the Lost Hymns, the Metal Gods will grant each surviving character one and only one of the following favors: a) 1d4 Luck, b) 1d4 Personality, c) 1d4 Agility or d) 1d4 Stamina. After choosing the reward, the character is teleported outside the barrow.

**TRICK:** All surviving characters are under a geas spell. No save. The hymns must be taken to the secluded Monastery of Wack-en.

Every surviving character gets 20 XP.
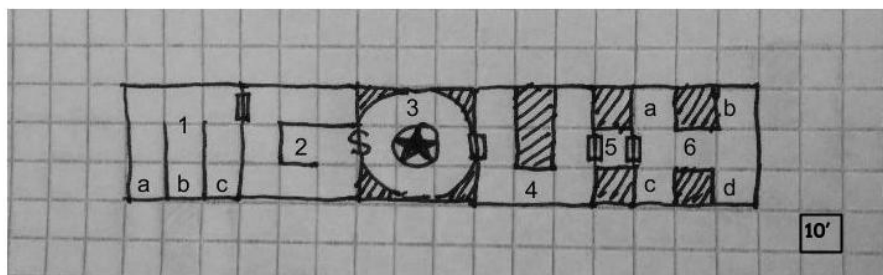
Artwork by Dan Domme

# How to Win Friends and Influence People DCC Style

*By Jarret Crader*

Hiya! Welcome to DCC RPG. You may have heard of it from around the innernets, maybe on some social marketing platform, or just from a random stranger who smells vaguely of alcohol and cruelty but who was kind enough to slap a sticker or a badge into your hand and wish you "MANY CRITS!!!" before disappearing into a puff of smoke. So now you're left there, staring at the space where this fella used to be, and wondering:

### HOW DO I RUN A GREAT GAME OF DCC FOR RANDOM STRANGERS AND NOT SUCK IT UP???!!!

That's where I come in, friend. My name's Uncle Jarrett and I'm here to show you that you have all the tools at your disposal to successfully run DCC RPG like a World Class Road Crew Judge like LaSalle, Curtis, Brinkman and the rest. Tune in, won't you?

So, you've done that thing that you've always wanted to do: you've signed up at your FLGS or a local con or **\*GASP!!!\*** Gen-Con to run some DCC RPG. Now what? Here's what I do, in several easy steps:

1. Decide what you want to run - a funnel or a leveled game.
2. Go to http://purplesorcerer.com/create_party.php and print out a bunch of zeroes or appropriate level pregens, and gather your gear.
3. Read or write the adventure.
4. Run it!
5. **Win DCC!**

Alright, alright, alright, I know it's not always that simple, especially if you're new to DCC and/or RPGS in general. Let's break this down by section, shall we?

## PART THE FIRST:
## TO FUNNEL OR NOT TO FUNNEL?

Zero level funnels are a great way for a new judge to cut their teeth on DCC RPG. In addition to the funnel that is included in the DCC RPG Core Book (the only book, actually, but you know what I mean, right?) there are several free and third party publications that will amply suit your needs. A few highlights for me, personally, include *The Well of Souls* from Stormlord Publishing, which is a short seven room/encounter adventure that can easily fill a 4-hour con slot and is super user friendly, as well as *Beyond the Silver Scream* by Forrest Aguirre, a short little treatise on how to get your characters from everyday, real world life into a Gonzo world of swords, drugs and blood.

The most important thing about a funnel (or any adventure, really) is this: READ IT OUT LOUD - walk around your house and READ IT OUT LOUD so that the words you say don't sound stupid when they come out of your mouth. This goes for any adventure, really, but with a funnel it's especially important to be on your game as this is usually a player's first interaction with the high lethality world of DCC RPG and you don't want them thinking we're a bunch of softies, now, do ya? Also of note are the tournament funnels that are available from the Goodman Games website (all links at the end of this article, I swear, are current as of this writing) but we can address those a bit later.

If, for some crazy reason (like, you just want to, ya know?) **NOT** run a funnel and instead want to run some leveled DCC, I can't urge you strongly enough to consider Marc Bruner's *Twilight of the Solstice* adventure. It features scratch off character sheets and can easily be split into two sections if you need to take a break. Other options of note include *Bride of the Black Manse* by Harley Stroh as well as any of the holiday modules. The important thing to remember here: READ IT OUT LOUD - if it takes you longer

than your allotted time slot to read then you'll definitely need to make some adjustments to content to fit your slot. Remember - roleplaying games are about telling a shared story and every story needs an ending. You want to provide that ending to you players because no one likes to be left hanging, right? Okay, on to the next section.

## PREGENS, or, BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD!!!

I cannot stress enough how much of a treasure we in the DCC RPG community have in Purple Sorcerer Games, a.k.a. Jon Marr. This man tirelessly has built a website that enables you to create pregenerated zeroes as well as leveled character sheets for use in any DCC game. Seriously, go to purplesorcerer.com and print off a bunch of pregens and you are effectively set. I should also mention that he has built an app, The Crawlers Companion, that is one of the best resources for dice rolling and rules looking up that you will find for any game, ever. ALL FOR FREE! Seriously, stop reading this and go spend a few hours there.

Okay, you're back. The reason you want to have pregens for your first game is this: SPEED! You won't find, in most circumstances, that you will have time to walk your players through character generation in a con setting. If you're lucky enough to, then you are, indeed lucky (+1 Luck to your next character in a DCC game) but what about when you get a random straggler who is looking over everyone's shoulders and wants to sit down and play? Well, **INVITE THEM TO PLAY** and hand them a 4-up sheet of zeroes and a pencil and they are good to go!

One more note about pregens: **ALWAYS PRINT MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU'LL NEED!** You can use the leftovers later. Trust me - someone else always wants to try this game.

## READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

I mentioned earlier the need to read the adventure out loud. This goes doubly so for an adventure that you, yourself, write. There's

nothing worse than hitting a spot in a con game or session where you haven't read the text thoroughly and a player asks you to describe what they see and you're just lost. Reading the material out loud lets you have a chance to practice what you are saying before you say it in front of people. This step is so often over-looked and it's a true bummer and a sure fire way to *SLOOOOW DOOOOWN* a game by having to re-read a room description to get it fixed in your mind so that you can pass this info along descriptively to your players. It also lets you see what might and might not work for your intended audience - you don't want to end up cursing and dropping f-bombs if you're running for a bunch of teenagers (or maybe you do, I dunno, but I try to keep it clean some times). This will help with any unfamiliar rules variations that your material might be embracing, as well.

## AND I RAN, I RAN SO FAR AWAY!

So, the big day has arrived: you are at GenCon and you are at your table and you are ready to run! Introduce yourself, hand out some sheets, some pencils, some dice (if needed) and get to it!

Seriously- the only way to do this part is to just do it. I'm going to list some things that I do that make my games go easier - take what you will and leave what you won't.

1. **LUCK!** Award Luck if they make you laugh, if they make the table laugh, if they come up with something cool for a character name/background/location, and especially **IF THEY THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX!** Anyone can say "I hit it with my axe!" but the real fun comes from players who don't simply rely on the printed info on their character sheet but instead choose to embrace the most important tool in RPGs: **IMAGINATION**. Rules are boring, let's do something cool!
2. Keep it fast, keep it light. Explain that everything you ask of them will be a d20+ the appropriate mods *EXCEPT* for Luck checks, which are d20 rolls *UNDER* their Luck score. If you say this before you get going you will save yourself time.

There really isn't that much more to this game than those two things, mechanically speaking, for a funnel, and the same really applies for leveled play most of the time. Keep it moving. If you have a big table then let them know at the outset that you want to set a brisk pace. This will help you avoid getting stuck in the mire of a COMBAT SLOG, which is the worst. More on that in the next section. One last thing here, though: don't be afraid to let them have a few minutes to plan their attack/escapades/what-have-you on the ultimate boss. If you keep it tight then you should have plenty of time to sneak away for a bio break while they make their plans (which you will then rend asunder!!!).

3. Combat. So this is a tricky part - be sure that players know that you want initiative for them, not for each character, and that you want their d20 roll and the HIGHEST INIT MOD FROM THEIR REMAINING CHARACTERS. Also, go left to right, around the table, don't take a bunch of yelled out numbers - you need to keep a sense of order for yourself so that when true Chaos descends it seems that much more deadly. Of note here, as well, is to **BE NARRATIVE**. Nothing is more boring to hear than "you hit, roll damage, okay, it's dead." **BE DESCRIPTIVE**! If you need help there are tons of resources on G+ and other social spots (hell, email me and I'll help you out) to make your combats more fun.

4. Don't let the rules get in the way. If you forget something, allow it and move on. Stick with the ruling until the end of the game and then **EDUCATE THYSELF!** You'll sometimes be lucky enough to have a player who has previous experience with DCC, but



*Bearramlampcobblestone by Matt Sutton*

keep in mind that you are the facilitator and that help is appreciated, rules lawyering is not.

5.  Share the Spotlight. Move non-initiative actions around the table to include everyone. You're going to have some quiet players and some loud players - make sure everyone gets a turn to do something cool. I do this by going clockwise around the table for actions, then anti-clockwise, then start in the middle, etc. Everyone has some cool stuff to share, trust me.

6.  The single most important thing I've ever been told: **IF YOUR ZERO DIES WITH LUCK THEN YOU AREN'T DOING IT RIGHT.** Explain how Luck can be burned and remind the players that they have the option for survival if needed. After the first few deaths, they'll figure it out.

7.  **BE RUTHLESS BUT FAIR.** Don't hold back if they run straight into the dracolich's bedroom. I mean, what would you do if a bunch of smelly murderhoboes wandered into your house and started tearing things up, right? On the same hand, however, don't punish the players for knowledge that they don't possess. This is a classic tenet of modules like S1: there is no reason for anyone to ever die in that place **IF THEY PLAY IT SMART!**

Okay, so that should get you through your first DCC RPG session. How did you do? Ask your players what worked and what didn't. Don't be afraid to take some criticism - we all still have bad games. Mostly you'll get a lot of thank yous and high fives, though, because you've killed a bunch of zeroes (or leveled characters) and had some memorable laughs.

# GUESS WHAT - YOU JUST WON DCC!!!

I hope this article was helpful and that you will go forth and spatter the walls of all of the tombs with the blood of oh so many delicious zeroes. Uncle Jarrett wants you to keep up the tempo and confidence and run as many games as you can in the coming years. We need more blood down here, don't we?

Oh, and because you've been such a good judge, below are some tips for running a DCC tournament funnel, a list of table gear, and some links. Tournaments are the best, most lucrative source of zeroes that you'll find around. Happy hunting!

## TOURNAMENT FUNNEL ADDENDUM

1. **ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS** have plenty of players. You need 8 at the table and at least 5 or more in line waiting to take their places as the killing proceeds. If you don't have enough, consider simply running a regular funnel.
2. Re: an assistant. Nice to have but not necessary if you can't find someone you can rely on. I would, however, delegate the tracking of initiative to a player waiting, as well as administrative stuff. If you have to deal with that while you're running, you're going to lose track.

Uncle Jarrett recommends the following tools for use with DCC RPG:

*https://thenoteboard.com/* is a foldable whiteboard with hexes and grids on one side and nothing on the other. I recommend two - one for the players to map on and one for you to keep track of initiative and monster hp.

*http://www.lulu.com/us/en/shop/jeremy-deram/dcc-rpg-reference-booklet/paperback/product-21753513.html* is the DCC RPG Reference Book compiled by Jeremy Deram with permission from Goodman Games. Yes, there is a free pdf at Jeremy's blog, but for 6 bucks (and Lulu always has coupons) having a couple copies of these at the table is simply the best idea ever.

*http://purplesorcerer.com/create_party.php* is the link to Purple Sorcerer. Again, I can't stress enough how important it is to utilize this site.
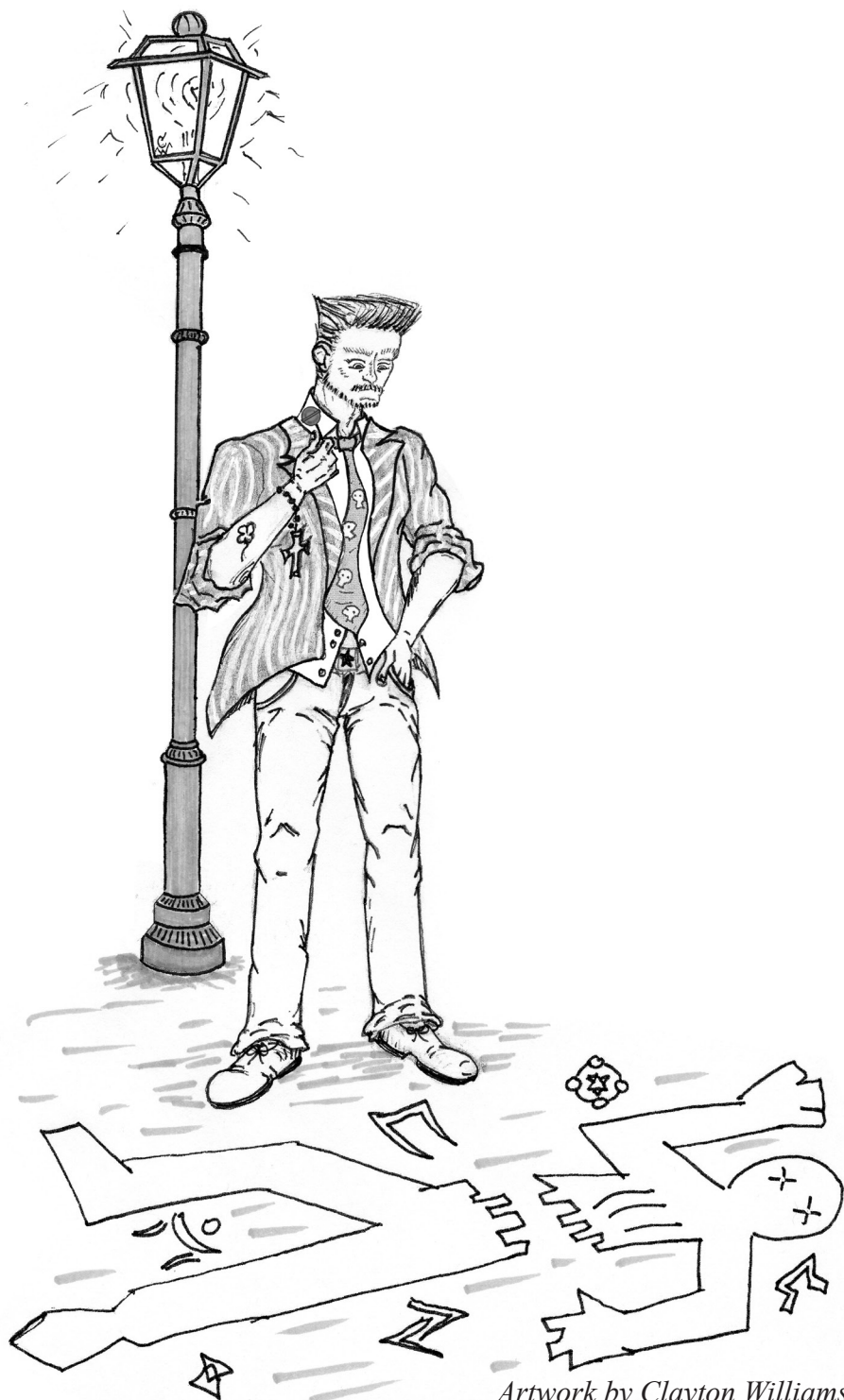
*Artwork by Clayton Williams*

# Bloody Hound

## A New Class for Nowhere City Nights
*by Steven Bean*

You set *out* to be a hero, but just wound up a *dick*.

You started as a beat cop but made detective in record time.
Or you were a "cub" reporter, but by making the front page,
You earned the title: *investigative journalist.*
There was nothing you couldn't get to the bottom of,
No story you couldn't break, no case you couldn't solve.

You only answered to one authority - The Truth.
The Truth was your weapon. You wielded it:
Pure, divine, searing light that burned through all the *bullshit*.
And guys like *you*, you could *handle* it.

Until one day when you pointed that light at the deepest, darkest shadows.
You saw behind the veil of darkness, and, for a split second, you saw something *new*.
As the shadows *swallowed* the light you realized: the shadows, too, are The Truth.

For the first time in your life, you couldn't *quite* handle it.
You wouldn't say you *broke*, but you definitely *bent*… were *warped*, maybe.
Some people say you lost your edge but they're wrong –
since then you're nothing *but* edges.

Now you're The Truth's *fall guy*. A *patsy*. You let The Truth lead you into shadows.
And *it* wields *you* as a blunt instrument; not a torch but a brick.
Once you were a bloodhound, now you're a pitbull –
You're still good at sniffing out a trail,

BUT YOUR REAL KNACK IS NOT LETTING GO.

Even when you *really* should.

The bloody hound is a new class for Julian Bernick's *Nowhere City Nights* modern sorcery-noir setting for the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG. The bloody hound is a contemporary, hard-boiled P.I. in the tradition of *Breaking Bad's* Mike Ehrmentraut, *Blade Runner's* Rick Deckard, or *Sin City's* John Hartigan.

Bloody hounds are P.I.s: private eyes or independent investigators. They look deceptively like free agents - taking cases for money - but that's not their *real* interest, money is just something that pays the bills. Bloody hounds are obsessed with finding The Truth, no matter what the cost. For a bloody hound, experience is gained only by discovering clues, making successful deductions and finding answers.

**Discovering Clues:** For any clue a bloody hound finds, he receives an experience point.

**Deductions:** Bloody hounds gain additional XP for deductions - putting clues and leads together in a way that moves them significantly in the direction of completing a quest/mission, solving a mystery or finding an answer. For example, imagine the goal of an adventure is to stop a plot by a cabal of sorcerers. A bloody hound deduces that the mystic writing found on a scroll in the library of a mansion in Rivercross is written on reused paper from a rare book likely to be found in one of Rivercross's bookshops. The bookshop hides the entrance to the cabal's sanctum, so the bloody hound has moved himself and his allies in the right direction. For each successful deduction, a bloody hound gains 1-3 XP (as determined by the judge).

**Finding Answers:** When a bloody hound finds an answer, i.e. learns a significant truth about Nowhere City, the Shadow Conflict, or the nature of things as they really are, he gains 2-5 XP (as determined by the judge). Note that adventures involving the solving of a mystery or the uncovering of a plot typically provide answers and the successful completion of these adventures are a common way for bloody hounds to gain XP for finding answers.

Bloody hounds are halflings in all ways except the following:

**Full Size**
Bloody hounds are not half-men in terms of physical stature, they are regular joes whose overdeveloped sense of curiosity got the better of them.

It led them into a deep, dark world - the Shadow Conflict - where they learned *just how very small they really are*. This experience embittered them, but bloody hounds remain defiant, possessing a battered-but-tenacious spirit that doesn't know the meaning of the word "quit."

## Multi-Tasker

Bloody hounds have mastered the art of doing two things at once, such as saving a dame while beating back the flames of a tenement fire or mentally chewing on a clue in the middle of a vicious firefight. A bloody hound can choose to use two 1d16 action dice each round whether fighting or not. But a bloody hound is a detective NOT a combat specialist, so he only scores a critical hit when both dice are used for fighting the same opponent AND one die comes up a natural 16 AND the other die roll is high enough to score a hit against the opponent.

## Night Owl

Years of sleuthing through shadows have honed the bloody hound's night vision. A bloody hound can see 30' in *near*-total darkness (e.g. stray light from a window or a crescent moon). This ability conveys no benefit in pitch-black darkness, when the bloody hound is blindfolded, or if an NPC or monster is invisible.

## Detective

A bloody hound is skilled in investigation. Rules for investigation are presented elsewhere in this year's *Gongfarmer's Almanac* as well as in the forthcoming *Nowhere City Nights* adventure *Shade Hunter*. Bloody hounds have four special skills related to investigation:

*Leave it to the Pros, Mack…:* Bloody hounds are expert - usually trained - detectives. As such, they can use all six investigation skills regardless of whether they possess an occupation listed alongside that skill. If they have one of the occupational backgrounds listed with the skill, they receive a bonus to that skill check equal to their class level (in addition to any bonus or penalty from the corresponding ability score modifier).

*…'Cause This Ain't Amateur Night:* Bloody hounds automatically succeed at finding any clue with an "obvious" classification (a DC 8 check for any other class trying to find the same clue using an appropriate investigation skill).

*Dogged:* Bloody hounds can will themselves to exceed the normal limits of

their investigative instincts in order to find a lead. This is called "dogging a case." It is a hybrid of Luck burn and a wizard's spellburn. It works like Luck burn in that the bloody hound may choose to burn AFTER the roll, but it mimics spellburn in that it requires the voluntary reduction of ability scores other than Luck, namely the specific ability score associated with the detective skills being used in the extraordinary effort to discover a clue.

*Follow a Hunch:* Bloody hounds possess a sort of investigative "sixth sense." This manifests in the games as a seventh investigation skill granted only to this class:

| Investigation Skill | Ability Score | Backgrounds That Grant Use of This Skill |
|---|---|---|
| Follow a hunch | Luck | N/A (bloody hound class only) |

A Bloody hound can use *follow a hunch* to generate a lead in an investigation when none of the clues are adding up, the case seems cold, or it is at a dead end. Success at *follow a hunch* gives the bloody hound positive traction on a case, investigation, or in a mystery (in games terms the judge gives the bloody hound a positive lead to follow). The DC for successfully follow a hunch should be determined by the judge and set at an appropriate level of challenge: typically no less than 18, and possibly as high as 25-30, depending on the challenge level of the adventure and the significance of intuiting a lead at that point.

## Hard-Boiled

Bloody Hounds have a habit of getting into serious trouble, but also an uncanny knack for getting out of it - though rarely unscathed. Bloody hounds receive 2 bonus points to add to their die rolls for every point of Luck that they burn. The bloody hound's Luck score is restored each night by a number of points equal to his level. This process cannot take his Luck score past its natural maximum.

Bloody hounds have the unique ability of using Luck burn to reduce the damage they take from opponents' attacks. Every point of Luck they burn in this manner reduces the damage from an attack by one hit point. A bloody hound can only use this ability on himself.

Bloody hounds' tendency to stick their noses where they aren't wanted frequently lands them and their friends/allies in hot water. Not only does a bloody hound NOT act like a halfling good luck charm, but each time a bloody hound burns Luck, he must choose an ally within 120'. That ally

temporarily loses a single point of Luck. Allies who lose Luck in this manner recover it at the same rate as the bloody hound. If the bloody hound has no ally within 120' when he burns Luck then his Luck burn only provides one bonus point for every point of Luck burned.

**Obsessions**
The Truth is out there, but it's big. Really, REALLY BIG. WAYYY too big for a bloody hound to completely wrap his head around. So bloody hounds are forced to focus their burning need to discover The Truth on something small enough to comprehend. This singular focus becomes the object of their truth-seeking and very quickly becomes an obsession - the thing they MUST understand, no matter what the cost to themselves, their friends and loved ones, or the city they call home.

**Obsessions**
Roll 1d14   Obsession

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Understanding the fundamentals of sorcery or collecting sorcerous lore. |
| 2 | Discovering lore about Veiled Ones who have sorcerous servants in Nowhere City. |
| 3 | Uncovering as yet unknown Veiled Ones and their cults. |
| 4 | Mapping Nowhere City's underground (safe houses, cult cells, black markets, etc.). |
| 5 | Learning the secret of Sainted Steel. |
| 6 | Finding a particular ancient relic or uncovering lore about ancient relics on general. |
| 7 | Identifying cultists and sorcerers. |
| 8 | Exposing the influence of the sorcerous cults on city politics. |
| 9 | Exposing the corruption of the city police by dark forces, organized crime and/or corporations. |
| 10 | Keeping tabs on corporate interests and their influence in the city. |
| 11 | Learning the nature, characteristics and weaknesses of monstrous creatures. |
| 12 | Gaining insight into how religion fits into the cosmology of patrons and sorcerous cults. |
| 13 | Identifying and honoring/remembering the unknown or forgotten victims of the Shadow Conflict. |
| 14 | Learning the identities, bases of operation, networks, resources, and vendettas of powerful free agents. |

# Rules and Skills for Detective Work in *Nowhere City Nights*

*by Steven Bean*

Julian Bernick's *Nowhere City Nights* is a modern, sorcery-noir setting for the Dungeon Crawl Classics role-playing game. But what is a noir setting without a hard-boiled detective hell-bent on uncovering the truth no matter who it hurts? And how can you have a detective story without investigation skills? Answer: you can't! What follows are DCC-compatible rules for investigation skills similar to thieving skills. These are designed for the *Nowhere City Nights* setting but with a little work they could be placed into any setting using the DCC rules.

There are six investigation skills: search scene, analyze physical evidence, examine medical evidence, interrogate (charm), interrogate (intimidate), and conduct surveillance.

Bloody hounds, a new class for *Nowhere City Nights* (presented elsewhere in this year's *Gongfarmer's Almanac*) automatically possess all six of these skills. If you don't want to add the bloody hound to your Nowhere City Nights game, or if none of your players opt in to that class, you, as judge, can opt to give other PC classes access to these skills. The character backgrounds listed alongside each skill give a PC with that background access to those skills. The table, below, lists the skills and identifies an ability score that modifies each skill:

# Table of Investigation Skills and Modifiers to Skill Check Rolls

| Investigation Skill | Ability Score | Backgrounds |
|---|---|---|
| Search scene | Intelligence | Police officer (patrol), police officer (detective), bodyguard, criminal (petty crime), professor, journalist |
| Analyze physical evidence | Intelligence | Writer, police officer (detective), artist, criminal (corporate), bureaucrat, tradesman, professor, janitor |
| Examine medical evidence | Intelligence | Artist, homeless, professor, school teacher, athlete, chef/cook |
| Interrogate (charm) | Personality | Musician, police officer (detective), politician, bartender/waiter, stripper, prostitute, entrepreneur/small business, executive, journalist |
| Interrogate (intimidate) | Strength | Police officer (patrol), police officer (detective), bodyguard, criminal (petty), criminal (corporate), bureaucrat, prostitute, pimp, IT worker, executive, journalist, cab driver, janitor |
| Conduct surveillance | Stamina | Delivery guy, writer, police officer (patrol), police officer (detective), bodyguard, criminal (petty crime), criminal (corporate), homeless, IT worker, professor, journalist, cab driver, shopkeeper/retail |

As PCs find themselves in situations where they want to uncover clues, judges should ask players to identify which skill they are using. If the skill is applicable to any of the clues available for discovery in an encounter or setting, the judge should determine the DC for finding any and all such clues. Players using an applicable skill then roll 1d20 and add any ability score modifier that applies to using that skill. Remind players that characters can spend Luck to aid their investigation rolls. Also, award extra bonuses for especially clever deductions or exceptionally good role-playing describing a PC's investigative activity. Finally, reward both innovative and successful investigation with Luck points!

The following table gives guidance on assigning DCs to clues:

## Investigation Difficulty Classes

| Classification | Example | DC |
|---|---|---|
| Clue is out in the open. | Murder weapon carelessly discarded at or near scene. | 8 |
| Clue is subtle-but-observable. | Bloody shoe prints indicate that suspect was limping. | 12 |
| Clue is concealed or obscured. | Suspect in video footage is wearing a disguise. | 15 |
| Effort was made to destroy clue. | Wine glass was wiped down, but one smudged, partial fingerprint remains. | 18 |
| Clue must be deduced from piecing together two or more subtle or obscure clues. | Not applicable. The judge does not need to identify the specific clues that the PC is able to piece together - if the player makes the roll, the deduction yields a clue. | 20 |

Bloody hounds add their class level to investigation skill checks. At the discretion of the judge, other classes using these skills could be allowed to add their class level -1.

# THE LOST PATROL

## A Zero-Level Funnel for Trench Crawl Classics
### By Eric Betts

The Lost Patrol is a 0-level funnel set in the last six months of World War 2. It is designed for 3-6 players each running four 0-level Soviet conscript soldiers. The conscript soldiers can be created with the Trench Crawl Classics (TCC) rules found elsewhere in this year's *Gongfamer's Almanac.* Keep those rules handy for weapon damage and effects.

Judge information: the Soviet command is planning to continue their attack the next day, but they are unsure where the German defensive line is. As a result, they have recently sent out a couple of patrols to scout the German lines – that have disappeared. It is now the PC's turn.

What has happened up to now: the war is going against Hitler and in a desperate move, the Nazis have taken up an offer of Doktor Victor Stein, a disreputable scientist, and Dieter, an occultist, who promise to destroy the Soviet army using hideous scientific and occult means. Stein, Dieter, and a small troop of German soldiers are all that is holding the surrounding area. Dr. Stein has been making zombie soldiers as quickly as he can and Dieter has been summoning creatures from the outer dark. Even with this, the last two patrols have killed many of the German soldiers and monsters – so the player's patrol has a chance.

Running the scenario: this can be run as a pure location-based adventure. If the German soldiers in locations 2 or 3 are not encountered, they will not come to the aid of Stein and Dieter. So if the characters are victorious, the Germans will sneak off to their lines (Stein has used dead German soldiers in their experiments and the Germans just want out). **However**, if desired, play the Germans as an intelligent enemy who try to ambush the characters once the open fighting starts. The German sergeant mobilizes the defenses, ordering the zombies and demons into a formal defense and using the halftrack with the machinegun.

Identify one of the characters as the platoon leader. This is easy if one of the zero level characters created with TCC rules has the role of sergeant or corporal. Sergeants outrank corporals, but if multiple players have sergeants (or if there are only corporals but several of them) have them each roll a d20. The player with highest roll is the platoon leader. If no character has either of those roles, have all players roll a d20 and the highest gets to pick one character who has been placed in charge of the other privates.

## Player Introduction

*Your infantry group, the 1023rd Rifle Regiment, has been attacking into Romania striking toward Hitler's oil fields...or so the rumors say. You are not really sure where you are, just that you arrived by truck less than two weeks ago and have been marching and fighting since. Mostly, fighting consists of running for cover when German artillery starts to blow your fellow soldiers apart. Three days ago, the regiment stopped on this rise and you dug the trench you've been living in since. It is miserable, but at least you have a place to hide from the artillery.*

*You watched the first recon platoon head out two days ago. You know a couple of those guys – veterans all. They went down the hill into the woods that morning. They haven't been seen since. Yesterday, you watched the survivors from 2nd platoon head down the very same hill. They didn't come back either.*

*Now your platoon leader has come back from a meeting with the Commissar. He looks pale...you can guess who is going out next.*

**Mission:** the Commissar has ordered the PC's platoon to leave the trenches and take the farmhouse on the opposite hill, killing or capturing any Germans that are there. If they are successful, they are to send a runner back to the trenches with word of success. If not, they are not to come back alive.

The characters should be nervous about heading out after the last two (and better trained) platoons disappeared. However, they should be more afraid of running afoul of Stalin's political Commissar. Not only can the Commissar have them killed on a word, their surviving family would suffer from their treason as well.

If the players ask if they hear gunfire from ahead, describe that there are echoes of small arms and artillery fire all the time...none could be directly attributed to the two earlier patrols.

Once they leave the trenches, they will have to cross a creek that is surrounded by woods and then climb another hill where the farmhouse is located (they cannot see the farmhouse as it is surrounded by dense forest). The party can walk off of their hill without any trouble...but feel free to play up the tension by describing distant gunfire or artillery. Remember, there is a war on!

## LOCATIONS

**Area 1 - The Creek and the Woods:** At the base of the two hills (one with the Russian trenches on top, the other with the farmhouse) is a shallow creek surrounded by dense woods. Up to this point it has been a nice walk in the park for the players. But once they cross the creek, they will find signs of a fight – rifle and submachine gun brass, burn marks from grenades and blood everywhere. BUT no bodies. Also, if the characters take the time to search they will find fresh claw marks in the trees, usually near a lot of blood (while there is no threat in this encounter area, play up the quiet and dark creepiness of the woods and the mystery of what kind of fight happened here).

The party is now faced with a decision about climbing up the hill to the farmhouse. They can approach the farmhouse directly by climbing the hill in the open, or they can try to approach through one of three sets of woods.

### Ambush!

If the party chooses to walk between the woods marked 2 and 3, the Germans see them and prepare an ambush. The four German soldiers in location 2 and the five in location 3 all open fire from cover when they are midway between the two woods. Have each player make a DC 14 Luck check with their best Luck modifier. A success means that that PCs can roll Initiative with the Germans, otherwise they are surprised. Half of the Germans will throw their grenades on the first round of combat.

### Maybe Ambush?

If the party approaches between the woods marked 2 and 4, the Germans in location 2 have a 25% chance to spot them and will them ambush the players as in **Ambush!**

# SKETCH MAP OF NAZI OCCUPIED FARM

, ROMANIA

BUILDING SPACING
NOT TO SCALE
SEE OVERLAND MAP

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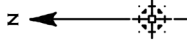
2ND FLOOR

= 5 FEET

## MAP 13

1023RD RIFLE REGIMENT
NO. 200 A          DATE: 15-1-45

AUTHOR: ERIC BETTS
ARTIST: SHYLOH WIDEMAN
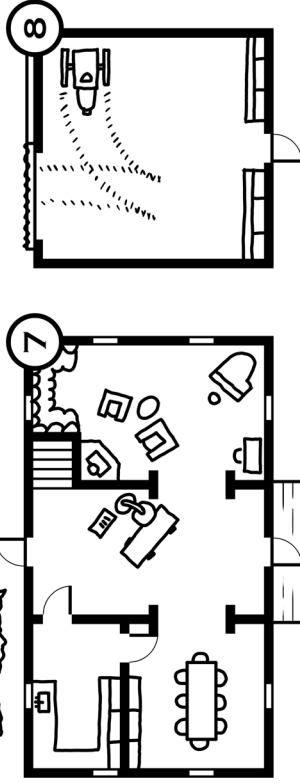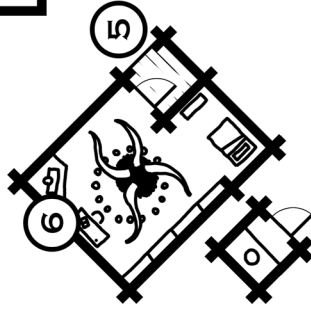
1. CREEK
2. CENTER WOODS
3. WEST WOODS
4. NORTH WOODS
5. DEMON MOUTHTRAP
6. CABIN
7. FARMHOUSE
8. WAREHOUSE
9. HALFTRACK

LONG
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S

**Area 2 - Dark Woods:** This is a large and thick copse of trees. As the characters move inside the light is filtered by the branches and the shadows crowd in. Patrolling through the woods is a squad of German soldiers. Unless the PCs are being very loud, the Germans do not suprise them.

> **German infantryman (4):** Init +0; Atk rifle +1 ranged (1d10, 5 rounds per magazine) or bayonet +1 melee (1d4 off rifle, 1d8 on rifle); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP grenade; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL L.

The Germans wear field grey uniforms, but are otherwise are just regular guys in the wrong place at the wrong time. Each German infantryman carries a single grenade that they will throw upon initiating combat (grenade +0 ranged, 2d6+1d6 for shrapnel, 10' radius, half damage with DC 12 Ref save, range 50').

**Area 3 - Dark Woods:** This is a large and thick copse of trees. As the characters move inside the light is dimmed by the branches and the shadows crowd in. Patrolling through the woods is a squad of German soldiers and their Sergeant. Unless the PCs are being very loud, this will be a straight initiative combat.

> **German Sergeant:** Init +1; Atk MP40 +1 ranged (1d8, fires 3 times, each time after the first -1 adjustment to hit, 30 rounds per magazine) or bayonet +2 melee (1d4+1); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL L.

> **German Infantryman (4):** Init +0; Atk rifle +1 ranged (1d10, 5 rounds per magazine) or bayonet +1 melee (1d4 off rifle, 1d8 on rifle); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP grenade; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL L.

Each German infantryman carries a single grenade that they will throw upon initiating combat (grenade +0 ranged, 2d6+1d6 for shrapnel, 10' radius, half damage with DC 12 Ref save, range 50').

**Area 4 - Woods:** This is a large and thick copse of trees. As the characters move inside the light is dimmed by the branches and the shadows crowd in. Half-way into the woods waits an insect demon summoned by Deiter that is guarding the woods by concealing itself in the earth. A burrowing, armored multipede, it is an intelligent, but lower level demon.

Sensing the characters approach, it bides its time until they are right on top of it. It will burst from the ground in front of the foremost characters. All will need to pass a DC 12 Will save or run away in terror! It immediately attacks the nearest character with its gore attack and on the second round casts darkness.

> **Insect demon:** Init +0; Atk gore +5 melee (1d10); AC 12;
> HD 3d6; hp 12; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision, *darkness*
> (spell check +4), half damage from non-magic weapons;
> SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C.

**Area 5 - Demon Mouthtrap!:** Just before the entrance to the wooden shed-like building and detectable only on a DC 18 Luck check is a demon mouthtrap. The mouthtrap is a living beartrap and will open and try to bite the first person heading for the door. If undetected and it gains a +2 attack bonus and surprises the party.

> **Demon mouthtrap:** Init +0; Atk bite +6 melee (2d6); AC 8;
> HD 2d10; hp 4 (tongue), 12 (mouth); MV none; Act 1d20;
> SP hide; extra vulnerable to grenades and AT rifles;
> SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

When attacking, a tentacle-like tongue whips out to pull a character into its teeth. The mouthtrap takes double damage from grenades and AT rifles.

**Area 6 - The Occultist's Shack:** *A rough wooden log cabin with a single door in front and a stone chimney. It is small, large enough for maybe three rooms.*

Judge's note: under the outside right in front of the front door, the demon mouthtrap waits! See area 5 above. Once the PCs fight past the mouthtrap and open the door, the characters see...

*A bearded man in a hooded red robe, his arms raised, a staff in his right hand and a black grimoire in the left, stands in the center of a room lit by dozens of ceremonial candles. Before the man is a portal that looks as though it opens into darkness. Coming out of the dark portal are four red and pink tentacles waving in an unholy manner. The man turns his gaze from the portal to the door and shouts, "Holen Sie sie meine Haustiere!"*

Any PC that speaks German understands the words "Get them, my pets!". This is Dieter the occultist and his tentacled allies, the exposed part of something MUCH worse located beyond the portal....

> **Dieter the Occultist:** Init +0; Atk staff +1 melee (1d8); AC 10
> HD 3d4+3; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP spellcasting;
> SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Dieter is a mad wizard from another dimension and can cast the following spells with a +4 spell check: *chill touch, choking cloud, sleep, monster summoning, spider climb, tadpole transformation, glorious mire, invoke patron* (Bobugbubilz).

> **Tentacles from the void portal (4):** Init +0; Atk grab +6 melee (1d8+2);
> AC 15; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; MV reach 10'; Act 1d20;
> SP turn to dust when killed; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

**Area 7 - Farmhouse:** You see a two story rustic farm house with entrances in both the front and rear, with windows all around.

Once the PCs enter, read the following:

*Inside the front door you see what looks like an operating room complete with operating table, body, large light, doctor in a white coat and nurse in a sexy white mini dress (covered in blood). In the corner stands a hulking corpse.*

This is Doktor Stein and Nurse Hilda working to create another "monster." Stein is a bedraggled mad scientist, with a penchant for creation. His assistant, Hilda, is a cute blonde in cap and mini-nurse dress. She is a fanatical Nazi and former competitor with Eva Braun for Herr Furher's affections.

The current monster is the hulking corpse in the corner. Stein orders the monster to attack the players as he and Nurse Hilda try to escape through a door opposite where the players entered. If they can get out, they will make for the halftrack in area 9 and attempt to flee.

> **Doktor Stein, Reanimator:** Init +0; Atk Lugar +0 ranged (1d10, 2
> shots/round, no penalty) or scalpel +0 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d4; hp
> 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; AL L.

**Nurse Hilda:** Init +1; Atk Lugar +1 ranged (1d10, 2 shots/round, no penalty); +3 melee scalpel +3 melee (1d4+3); AC 12; HD 1d4+2; hp 6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; AL L.

**Stein's monster:** Init +6; Atk fist +6 melee (1d6+1); AC 13; HD 5d6; hp 20; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

The monster is Doktor Stein's masterpiece. Created from the bodies of at least eight soldiers, it is a hulking 8' monstrosity, with metal plates protecting its vitals and more plates over its massive fists. The creature is powered by an engine strapped to its back, which belches exhaust from a large pipe. The monster fights until destroyed.

**Area 8 - Industrial Warehouse:** This is a rough looking industrial type warehouse, just a brick square with a door each in the front and back. It doesn't even pretend to have any architectural style.

This is where Doktor Stein stores his zombies. There are eight inside and they attack any living thing other than Stein, Hilda, and Deiter.

**Zombie soldiers (8):** Init +0; Atk claws or bite +2 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

The zombie solders are reanimated German and Russian soldiers, with Doktor Stein's 'improvements' like dermal metal plates, hatchet hands, scalpel fingers, and a power drill face.

**Area 9 - Halftrack:** Hidden under a tarp behind the farmhouse is Doktor Stein's getaway plan: a German halftrack. It takes a round to start, and in two rounds can be off down the German side of the hill. It also mounts a MG42 machine gun with effectively unlimited ammunition:

MG42 machine gun, damage 1d12, 5 shots or automatic, range 120/240/360, ammunition 100 rounds, weight 30lb.

Fighting the halftrack: The following weapons can be used when fighting against the halftrack. Each weapons lists a target AC for that weapon to hit along with a results table to determine the damage inflicted.

### Anti-tank Rifle (AC 12)
| Roll | Damage |
|---|---|
| 1 | Engine hit; mobility kill. |
| 2 | Wheel hit; mobility ½. |
| 3 | Track hit; mobility ¼. |
| 4 | Deflected; no damage. |
| 5 | Penetrated, but no damage. |
| 6 | Gas tank/ammo hit; blows up, along with any occupants. |

### Molotov or Frag Grenade (AC 12)
| Roll | Damage |
|---|---|
| 1 | Exterior armor hit; on fire, paint seared, but otherwise no effect. |
| 2 | Exterior tracks and or wheels hit; on fire, but otherwise no effect. |
| 3 | Interior hit; crew on fire, vehicle explodes. |
| 4 | Interior hit; crew on fire, vehicle salvageable. |

### Magnetic Grenade (AC 14)
| Roll | Damage |
|---|---|
| 1 | Grenade does not stick and falls off, explodes harmlessly. |
| 2-4 | Grenade sticks and destroys vehicle. Crew escapes with successful DC 14 Ref save. |

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There is a lots of opportunity for crazy here – soldiers could be pulled into where ever those tentacles are from, the PCs could make off with Deiter's black grimoire, or who knows what else?
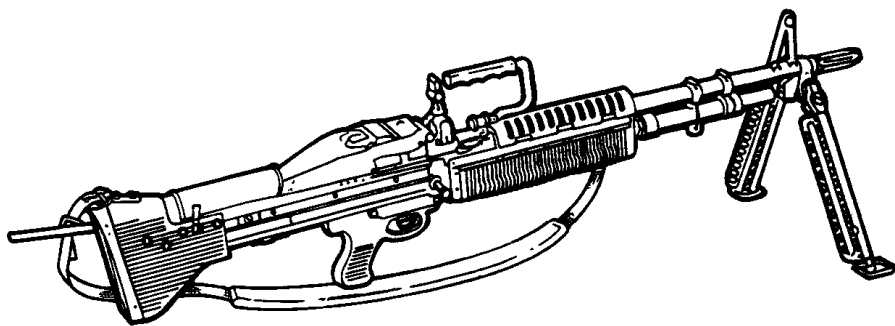
## Inspirations:

*Enemy at the Gates* - There is a scene where the new Soviet soldiers are getting off a barge and being rushed into Stalingrad. A sergeant is standing there handing a rifle to every other man, the next man in line gets handed a clip of ammunition. The whole time the sergeant repeats, *"You are to run forward firing. When the man with the rifle in front of you falls, load the magazine and continue to run forward firing."* A zero-level funnel if ever there was one.

*Frankenstein's Army* - A direct (and cheesy) inspiration. Resurrection of dead soldiers with attached power tools. Good stuff.

# TRENCH CRAWL CLASSICS

*By Eric Betts*

### Introduction to Trench Crawl Classics

This rule hack takes Dungeon Crawl Classics and applies it to World War 2 Red Army conscript soldiers. The rules that follow...

- Contain basic firearms, weapons, and explosive rules needed to play the scenario *The Lost Patrol*, a 0-Level funnel for Trench Crawl Classics.
- Allow for the creation of Soviet conscripts (0-level player characters).
- Cover the structure and weapons of a basic World War 2 Red Army infantry platoon.

These rules are not complete and require the Dungeon Crawl Classics rules from Goodman Games. We also recommend the firearms rules from *CRAWL! Fanzine #8: Firearms*, by Reverend Dak, which would add more details to the limited rules contained herein.

# FIREARMS & FIGHTING RULES

Firearms function as DCC missile weapons (using a character's Agility modifier). On a natural 20, an attack with a firearm is a critical hit. A natural 1 is a fumble according to the standard rules. Firearms have a rate of fire (RoF) rating, reload time, and weapon speed.

Rate of fire: additional shots may be taken, up to the RoF, but each subsequent shot is -1d lower. For example, a 0-level with a 1d20 action die and a SMG may attempt a second shot with a 1d16 and a third shot with a 1d14.

Reload: reloading a firearm takes one round.

Automatic weapons are indicated by an (A). Automatic weapons affect multiple targets in a 10' square area. An automatic fire attack uses 10 rounds of ammunition. The attacker makes a single attack roll that's compared to the AC of each target in the area. A hit causes 3 dice worth of damage, allowing a DC 10 Ref save for half. A critical hit (natural 20) does 6 dice of damage, DC 10 Ref save for half.

| WEAPON | EXAMPLES | DMG | ROF | RANGE | AMMO | WEIGHT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pistol, semi-auto | (Lugar, TT-33) | 1d8 | 2 | 60/120/180 | 10 | |
| Submachine gun | (MP40, PPSh41) | 1d8 | 3 (A) | 60/120/180 | 30 | 10 lb |
| Rifle, bolt | (German K98, M-N) | 1d10 | 1 | 120/240/360 | 5 | 15 lb |
| Machine gun | (DP1929) | 1d12 | 5 (A) | 120/240/360 | 47 | 30 lb |
| Rifle, anti-tank | (PTRD41) | 4d10 | 1 | 120/240/360 | 1 | 25 lbs |
| Bayonet | | 1d4 | | | | |
| Bayonet on rifle | | 1d8 | | | | |
| Hand grenade/bomb: | | | | | | |
| 10' area, 2d6 + fire (Molotov), 2d6+1d6 for shrapnel (grenade), ½ damage with Ref save | | | | | | |

**Mosin-Nagan (M-N):** This rifle was the main weapon of the infantry. The M-N is an unremarkable weapon with no features that stand out. However, it was reliable, and easy to manufacture.

**Tokarev TT-33:** The standard Soviet pistol of WW2 was the Tokarev TT-33 automatic pistol. This was basically a copy of a 9mm Browning pistol, modified for easier mass production. The Tokarev replaced the aging Nagant revolvers but there were still some in service at the end of the war.

**PPSh-41:** The Soviets, like the British with their Sten gun and Germans with their MP40, had to have a design that was easy and quick to produce. The PPSh-41 was quick and simple to produce; even old rifle barrels were cut down and used in its construction. It characterized the Soviet offensive approach well: move quickly and engage at short range en masse, and keep engaging until you have victory.

**DP 1929:** The Soviet light machine gun that saw service throughout the war was the rugged DP 1929 with its distinctive round, flat overhead magazine. It was a typical Soviet weapon: robust and simple to manufacture. Easy to maintain and reliable, it was popular among the troops to which it was issued.

**PTRD-41 ATR:** The Soviet army never equipped its infantry with an effective anti-tank rifle. The only weapon available to the forces was the PTRD-41 ATR, a woefully inadequate weapon. Only useful when employed at close ranges against vulnerable areas of a tank, it required nerve, skill and luck to utilize successfully.
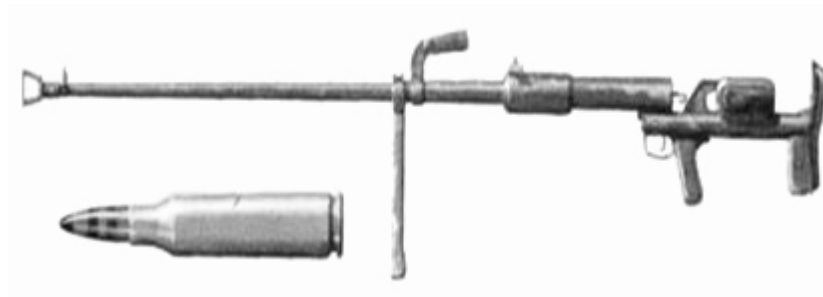


### Red Army Conscript/0-Level Character Creation

All conscripts are proficient with squad weapons (firearms, bayonets, grenades, etc.). If a conscript tries to use another weapon or vehicle, they either cannot use it or incur the standard -1d proficiency penalty UNLESS they have a related occupation and can make the argument to the judge.

**Occupations/role:** Characters are all conscripts in the Red Army. As a result, each has both a civilian occupation from before the conscription and the role in the squad (oft times just the weapon that was shoved in their hands). The two are mutually exclusive: players roll d% for their occupation and then d11 to establish their role. The role determines what weapons and ammunition the conscript starts with. After determining the occupation and role, roll a d24 twice on the personal items table to further personalize the conscript by identifying what gear and personal items the soldier is carrying.

| Roll | Soviet Era Occupation |
|---|---|
| 1 | Accountant |
| 2 | Actor |
| 3 | Animal trainer |
| 4 | Artist |
| 5-12 | Athlete. Roll 1d8: (1) basketball; (2) fencing; (3-4) football (soccer); (5) hockey; (6) swimming; (7) tennis; (8) wrestling. |
| 13 | Baker |
| 14 | Barber |
| 15 | Beekeeper |

| 16 | Brewer |
| 17 | Blacksmith |
| 18 | Bricklayer |
| 19 | Butcher |
| 20 | Bus driver |
| 21 | Carpenter |
| 22-25 | Clerk |
| 26 | Cobbler/shoemaker |
| 27 | Comedian |
| 28-29 | Construction worker |
| 30 | Cooper |
| 31-38 | Criminal. Roll 1d8: (1) conman; (2) pickpocket; (3) gambler; (4) gang member/thug; (5) minister (or other religious type); (6) smuggler; (7) wrecker (capitalist); (8) psycho murderer. |
| 39 | Dentist |
| 40 | Doctor |
| 41 | Ditch digger |
| 42 | Electrician |
| 43-51 | Farmer. Roll 1d8: (1) potato; (2) wheat; (3) turnip; (4) corn; (5) rice; (6) parsnip; (7) gong; (8) dairy. |
| 52 | Gypsy |
| 53 | Garbage collector |
| 54 | Gas station attendant |
| 55 | Communist party wannabe |
| 56 | Healer |
| 57 | Herbalist |
| 58 | Herdsman |
| 59 | Hunter |
| 60 | Industrial machinist |
| 61 | Janitor |
| 62 | Lawyer |
| 63 | Lifeguard |
| 64 | Mailman |
| 65 | Mechanic |
| 66 | Miner |
| 67 | Mortician |
| 68 | Motorcycle courier |
| 69 | Musician (player pick of instrument) |
| 70 | Nurse |
| 71 | Orphan |
| 72 | Ostler |

| 73 | Photographer |
|----|--------------|
| 74 | Plumber |
| 75 | Policeman |
| 76 | Psychologist |
| 77 | Radioman |
| 78 | Rope maker |
| 79-87 | Scientist. Roll 1d8: (1) archeologist; (2) astronomer; (3) biologist; (4) chemist; (5) entomologist; (6) mathematician; (7) geologist; (8) physicist. |
| 88 | Secondary school teacher |
| 89 | Secretary |
| 90-91 | Student |
| 92 | Surveyor |
| 93 | Tailor/seamstress |
| 94 | Taxi driver |
| 95 | Taxidermist |
| 96 | Trapper |
| 97 | Truck driver |
| 98 | Waiter |
| 99 | Welder |
| 100 | Woodcutter |

| Roll | Red Army Role | Trained Weapons |
|------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Squad leader Roll 1d2: (1) sergeant; (2) corporal | Rifle, bayonet, four extra magazines. |
| 2-7 | Rifleman | Roll 1d6: (1-2) one magnetic grenade, rifle, bayonet, four extra magazines; (3) two molotov cocktails, rifle, bayonet, four extra magazines; (4-5) fragmentation grenade, rifle, bayonet, four extra magazines; (6) anti-tank rifle, bayonet (as knife only – cannot attach to the anti-tank rifle), 14 anti-tank rounds. |
| 8-9 | Assault trooper | PPSh-41 SMG, fragmentation grenade, bayonet (as knife only – cannot attach to SMG). |
| 10 | Machine gunner | DP 1929 light machine gun, bayonet (as knife only – cannot attach to LMG). |
| 11 | Assistant machine gunner | Rifle, bayonet, four extra magazines, (aka the pack-mule) box of 200 loose machinegun rounds. |

# Personal Items

| Roll | Item |
|------|------|
| 1-2 | Backpack |
| 3-4 | Bedroll (tied blanket) |
| 5-6 | Satchel |
| 7-8 | Pen and notebook |
| 9-10 | Brass knuckles +1 unarmed damage |
| 11-12 | Comb |
| 13-14 | Flashlight |
| 15-16 | Flask w/vodka |
| 17-18 | Swiss army knife (fights as dagger) |
| 19-20 | Holy symbol |
| 21-22 | Pack of cigarettes and lighter |
| 23 | Paperback novel |
| 24 | Wristwatch |

# Red Army Organization Basics

Soviet infantry platoon = 1 x platoon headquarters + 4 x squads (note: all listed at full strength, which never really happened).

## Platoon Headquarters

     1 Platoon commander armed with a pistol
     1 NCO armed with a SMG
     1 Messenger armed with a rifle
     1 NCO armed with a rifle, commanding the mortar squad
     1 Mortar gunner with a 5cm mortar, also carrying a pistol
     2 Ammunition bearers for the mortar, both armed with rifles

## Basic Squad

     1 Squad leader, an NCO armed with a rifle
     2 Soldiers armed with SMGs
     6 Soldiers armed with rifles
     1 Machine gunner with an LMG, and pistol sidearm
     1 Assistant gunner armed with a rifle

*Artwork by SGT Dave*

# The Vampire, Returned
## By Terra Frank

"The power of the vampire is very great and many-sided, even in his lifetime. He can kill people and even eat them alive; can bring into being, or remove, various sicknesses and epidemics, storms, rain, hail, and such; he casts spells on the cows and their milk, the crops and the husbandry generally; he knows all secrets and the future, etc. Besides this he can make himself invisible or transform himself into various objects, especially into animal forms."

-Juljan Jaworskij (Galacian folklore)

Upon finding an empty grave, the vampire is either (d2):
1. Absent
2. Invisible

The vampire may see into (d4):
1. The Future
2. The Past
3. The Mind
4. The Soul

He may also cast spells of (d4):
1. Charms and enchantments
2. Fear and illusions
3. Shadows and light
4. Death and revival

In his presence, the weather begins to (d4):
1. Rain
2. Thunder
3. Hail
4. Fog

And he may cause (d6):
1. Plague
2. Miasma
3. Locust swarms
4. Fires
5. Madness
6. Floods

His true appearance is (d6):
1. Swollen
2. Bloated
3. Burnt
4. Skeletal
5. Unfathomably beautiful
6. Otherworldly horror

He may appear as a (d8):
1. Nobleman
2. Peasant
3. Maiden
4. Beggar
5. Priest
6. Merchant
7. Pilgrim
8. Identical to a party member (chosen at random)

As an object (d10):

1. Haystack
2. Goatskin filled with oil
3. Door
4. Blood-filled Pod
5. Scarecrow
6. Plow
7. Gravestone
8. Signpost
9. Curtains
10. Cloak

Or an animal (d12):

1. Wolf
2. Horse
3. Donkey
4. Goat
5. Dog
6. Cat
7. Pullet
8. Frog
9. Butterfly
10. Mouse
11. Owl
12. Bat

His favorite meal is the (d20):

1. Liver
2. Heart
3. Flesh
4. Intestines
5. Blood
6. Kidney
7. Bones
8. Eyes
9. Brains
10. Tongue
11. Nose
12. Lips
13. Ears
14. Digits
15. Teeth
16. Hair
17. Full Body
18. Soul
19. Memories
20. Roll twice on this table



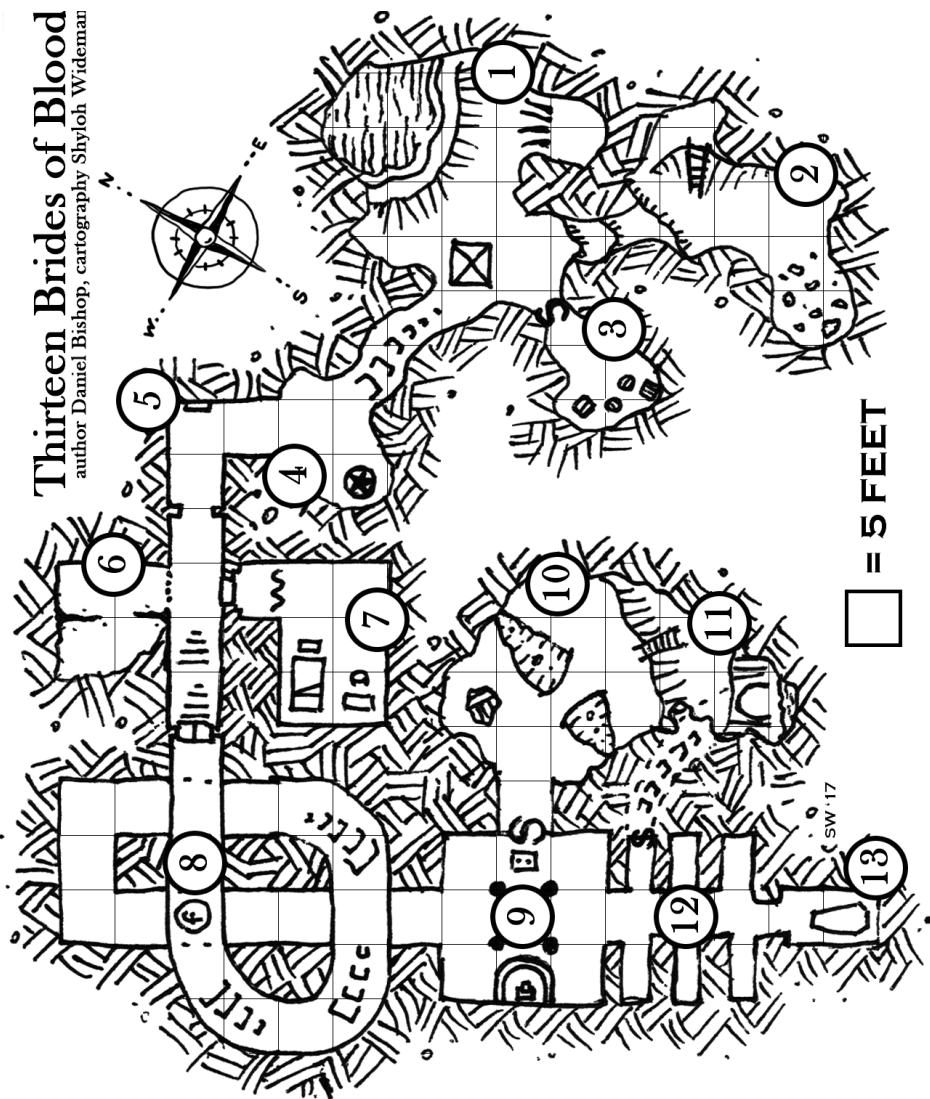*Nakeem by Matt Sutton*

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# Thirteen Brides Of Blood

*A 0-level funnel by Daniel J. Bishop*
*Based off cartography by Shyloh Wideman*
*Artwork by Shawn Brewer*

# Thirteen Brides of Blood
author Daniel Bishop, cartography Shyloh Wideman

☐ = 5 FEET

# Introduction & Adventure Start

*Vampires haunt the land! Erasmus Cordwainer Blood has existed for countless centuries, feeding off the villages closest to his hidden lair almost as a form of sport. Usually, his victims are those who remain out beyond the setting of the sun, lone travellers, or the inhabitants of isolated farmsteads. Once every seven years, though, villagers from number of nearby communities simply disappear. It is said, in hushed whispers, that Blood has taken them to feed his Brides.*

*That time is night once more. But this time it will be different! This time, you will seek him out in his lair, and put an end to him before he can strike!*

Allow the players to plan, purchase equipment (with their meager starting money), etc. As soon as their preparations are ready, read or paraphrase the following:

*Your heads throb. The plans of the night before, to be undertaken in the full light of day, have become a mockery. You are in pitch blackness. You can hear the moaning of others nearby – hopefully these are your would-be comrades, and not some ghouls from the deepest pits of hell. Or should you even be wishing that on your friends? No one has ever returned after they disappeared into the night.*

After centuries of un-dead existence, utter nihilistic boredom have set in, and Erasmus Blood began to court his own true death. To this end, he has bargained with the arch-demon Ahriman to ease his apathy. Once every seven years, Ahriman transports a group of villagers to the vampire's lair, and supplies them with the means to end Blood's existence, if they are brave and clever enough to use them. At the same time, Ahriman wishes to retain Blood's services, and only transports victims from the untested peasantry. This time, those victims are the PCs. Regardless of what gear the PCs had intended to bring, they do not have it. Apart from normal clothes, each PC may make a Luck check to retain *one* item he or she was carrying.

Note that neither Erasmus Blood or his Brides ever enter **Areas 1-5**. Until they pass the arch southwest of **Area 5**, the characters are safe (from the vampires, at least).

**Area 1 - Awakening:** What the PCs can determine about their immediate surroundings is a matter of what senses they have available to them. Non-humans have a significant advantage here. Without sight, the PCs can smell a musty smell like damp stone. The floor is uneven. The air is moist and cool, and there is a regular drip-drip-drip as water falls from stalactites into the pool at the north end of the room.

There are several features in this area that can provide hazards or opportunities for the players:

- **Pit:** There is an open pit in the area, 20' deep that characters may well stumble into in the dark. Falling damage is only 1d6, as the lower 10' are filled with ice-cold water. Characters falling into the pit (and surviving) take 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage each round unless they succeed in a DC 15 Fort save. A DC 5 Strength check is required to tread water, but the DC increases by +2 for each failed Fort save. Failing three Strength checks causes a character to begin drowning, suffering 1d3 temporary Stamina damage per round. Drowning damage is recovered at 1 point per minute if the character is rescued. It requires a DC 15 Strength check to climb the pit's slimy walls if no help comes from above.

- **Pool**: The pool is ice-cold, but relatively shallow (maximum 1½ feet deep).

- **Ledge:** A ledge on the southeastern side of the area is 5' above the floor level, and easily missed by those without the ability to see. On this ledge is a bundle of six torches wrapped in heavy cloth, as well as flint and steel.

- **Secret Door:** The rock face is smoother here, making the secret door easier to find by touch than by sight (DC 10 Intelligence check either way, characters that cannot see roll on 1d24). The secret door can be pushed in and then slid to the left by anyone with a Strength of 10 or better. Unless blocked or wedged, it closes after 1 turn, and cannot be opened from **Area 3**.

- **Drop Off:** The passage leading to **Area 2** has three natural drop offs. These are 5', 3', and 5' respectively. Any character can easily clamber down these, but characters who cannot see may fall for 1d3 damage (Luck check prevents). Getting up is a bit

harder. Non-halfling characters without a penalty to Strength can climb up all of these drops without a check. Halflings without a Strength penalty can climb up the 3' drop without a check. Other characters need help, or may use the ladder in **Area 2**.

Further area descriptions assume that the PCs have gained a light source. The judge should determine what the PCs can discover without sight.

**Area 2 - Old Mineworks:** *This cave forms the bottom of a shaft, whose ceiling is lost in the darkness. An ancient wooden ladder to the northeast leads to a ledge or another passage 12' above the floor – it is uncertain which from here. There are signs of old mine workings here, including splintered fallen beams, and the area to the south contains a great deal of fallen rock or old mine tailings. The air in here is moist, and water glistens on the walls.*

PCs spending at least 1 turn looking through the tailings may make a Luck check on 1d16. On a success, they find 1d3 + Luck modifier small uncut emeralds worth 1d10 gp each. On a failed Luck check, a PC must succeed in a DC 10 Fort save or take 1 point of temporary Stamina damage. Each failure (by any PC) increases the die for the Luck check up the dice chain – from 1d16 to 1d20, then 1d24, then 1d30. If three sequential Luck checks fail, no further emeralds are found on a success, but damage may still be taken on a failure.

Examining the old beams uncovers two mining picks in usable condition (1d6 damage; breaks on a natural "1" or "20" in addition to any other effect). Splinters from the beams may be used as wooden stakes; 3d4 such may be obtained with minimal effort. In addition, three rusty iron spikes can also be recovered, although these are only found if PCs continue searching after noting the picks and the beams. Splinters can be used as makeshift weapons doing 1d3 damage (1d5 vs. vampires).

Climbing the ladder requires no check, and gives access to a small ledge, which is barely 6' high. Herein can be found a dwarf-made hand axe and a small leather bag containing 5 uncut emeralds worth 25 gp each. Cutting these gems increases their value by 3d4 x 10%.

**Area 3 - Secret Storeroom:** *The secret door opens with a clatter of bones and a rush of foul air. There is a 1 in 3 chance that torches are extinguished (1 in 5 for lanterns). Half a dozen skeletons decorate the floor of a small storeroom, their brown bones held together by bits of mummified flesh and ligament. Mining tools – some of them broken – are scattered among them. Four barrels are near the far wall; two of them have been tipped over and whatever they may have once contained has probably been spilled away long ago. The air in here seems bad, causing torches to die back dramatically, offering only the feeblest of light.*

The secret door cannot be opened from this side. These remains belong to past victims of Ahriman's game, who became sealed in here and died when the air ran out. If the judge so desires, the PCs may even recognize one or more of these poor souls. Marks on the door show that these folk tried to break through it before they expired. Sadly, this did little but mark the door and use up the oxygen faster. The door closes automatically, unless blocked, 1 turn after it has been opened.

Four unbroken picks can be found here, but these only do 1d5 damage because they are blunted somewhat from trying to break through the secret door. Two of the barrels are empty. One sealed barrel contains water; the other contains ale which long ago went off.

Searching the bones discovers a sheathed dagger near one and a silver ring with an onyx stone (15 gp value) on another. If this ring is removed, the skeleton animates and attacks. The skeleton **only** attacks the character with the ring, and **only** seeks to claw the ring back if that PC is slain. If a PC is slain while wearing the ring, and it is looted, his body will rise as a zombie-like revenant to recover the ring. This can also be triggered by the skeleton taking the ring from a dead PC. Any character who dies wearing the ring will rise as an un-dead being if the ring is subsequently taken.

**Skeleton:** Init +0; Atk claw +0 melee (1d3 plus 1d3 cold); AC 9; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, chilling touch; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

**Revenant:** Init +0; Atk claw +1 melee (1d3 plus 1d3 cold); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, chilling touch; SV Fort +4, Ref +0; Will +2; AL C.



**Area 4 - Statue of Ahriman:** *Although the passage seems natural, the stairs leading to upward were obviously worked by skilled hands long ago. At the end of the passage is a small chamber, half natural cavern and half worked stone. To your left you can see a nine-foot tall statue of a demon, carved in dark stone, whose black horns sweep another foot over his head. A long bent dagger or sword is carved in one hand, held close to the statue's chest. Ahead of you to the northwest is a worked stone passageway 5' across and 9' high.*

This statue is the image of Ahriman, demonic lord of disease and death. If the PCs make a blood sacrifice to the statue (even 1 hp of blood, or the equivalent of 1 point of spellburn, will do), the statue's head animates and will converse with them: "Mortals, be welcome to the Game of Ahriman! Entertain my servant, Erasmus Blood, and his brides to the best of your abilities, and you may win your lives, though none ever has." This is followed by the demon lord's booming laughter. The wound used to animate the statue never heals naturally; instead, it becomes infected so that the damage is permanent until the character receives 3 HD of magical healing.

The statue will impart any of the background that the judge desires, based upon the PCs' own comments and questions. If asked how to win, Ahriman's idol answers: "A trifling thing for those who would hunt vampires. Merely find the exit while evading those you would hunt. The sun will set in three hours. Find the exit before that time, and the hunters will be unable to follow you. After this, and the hunt will continue until you or they are dead." The statue's final words are: "Once past the arch, there is no turning back." After this, it is once more unmoving stone, and no sacrifice brings it to life again.

If a PC attempts to harm the statue, have him make an attack roll against AC 10. Any damage caused is taken by the offending PC instead of the statue.

**Area 5 - False Door and Arch:** *After 5', the corridor turns to the left. On the right-hand wall, there is a wooden door in the northeast corner. Five feet down the southwest passage is an archway beyond which there is only darkness. The archway is inscribed with numerous mystical symbols and runes.*

The door is a false door. Opening it releases a spring-loaded thrusting spear trap (Atk +1 melee, 1d8 damage). The spear can be taken after the trap is sprung or disabled.

The arch is one-directional. Not only matter, but even light and sound can only pass in one direction (northeast to southwest). Under the best of circumstances, a PC who pushes an arm through the arch cannot withdraw it. These, of course, are not the best of circumstances – two of the Brides of Blood wait on the far side, ready to pull any prey through which is partially extended through the arch. The judge should remember that the Brides can hear and see the PCs, even if the reverse is not true, and will not bother with pulling poles, torches, etc. through the arch.

Because nothing can pass through the arch in the "wrong" direction, this also means that nerve impulses do not travel – a PC who sticks his head through cannot control his body, which instantly goes limp and is pulled through by the Brides. A limb pushed through has no sensation, but the PC realizes that there is something wrong with his circulation almost immediately as the blood pools on the far side (DC 15 Fort save each round or suffer 1 point of temporary Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage; on a natural "1", the damage is permanent).

> **Brides of Blood (2):** Init +1; Atk touch +3 melee (paralysis) or bite -2 melee (1 plus blood drain); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, infravision 60', paralysis (DC 10 Will save negates), blood drain, regenerate unless staked; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

**NOTE:** PCs pressed up against the portcullis bars blocking Area 6 from the corridor may encounter the three Brides located in this area immediately, as they attempt to pull arms or legs through the bars to drain blood.

**Area 6 - Prison Cell:** *To the right, there is a portcullis set into the corridor with a half-collapsed dungeon cell beyond it. As you catch your breath, three women press themselves to the bars – one dusky skinned with almond-shaped eyes, another so pale as to be almost an albino beneath her platinum blonde hair, and the third freckled with wild red-gold hair. They are dressed as brides in torn finery. "Please release us," one says, "before we are made into such as they!" There is a lever near the portcullis, which could presumably open it. Opposite the portcullis is a wooden door.*

These three Brides of Blood have fallen out of favor with their un-dead lord. They do their utmost to convince the PCs to open their cell: "If we were already turned, why would they imprison us here?" A daring PC who sticks an arm into the cell soon discovers their true nature, though, for their desire to feed outweighs their need for release. If attacked, they retreat into the southwest portion of the cell, where they cannot be targeted. A PC with a mirror can also determine that they are not what they seem, for they cast no reflections.

> **Brides of Blood (3):** Init +1; Atk touch +3 melee (paralysis) or bite -2 melee (1 plus blood drain); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, infravision 60', paralysis (DC 10 Will save negates), blood drain, regenerate unless staked; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

**Area 7 - Bedchamber:** A red velvet curtain, stained in places so that it is almost black, hangs beyond the door. PCs must push past it to see into the room.

*This small chamber contains a single well-appointed bed with red satin sheets and a red velvet coverlet. A wooden chest sits at the end of the bed. In the far corner, a chair sits before a woman's vanity. The mirror has been covered with a drapery of black cloth.*

This chamber is shared by Ophelia and Portia (see **Area 5**), as the PCs may be able to deduce by impressions left on the mattress. The chest contains various bits of burial clothing and women's finery that is threadbare almost to the point of dust. One of these dresses has hundreds of tiny pearls sewn into it, and can be sold for 25 gp.

A silver-handled brush (15 gp) and a carved ivory comb (10 gp) are on the vanity. The mirror behind the cloth has been removed; there are still

some tiny shards of silvered glass in the frame (worthless). Drawers in the vanity hold 2d10 pieces of jewelry worth 2d6 gp each.

**Area 8 - Trapped Doors and Trapdoor:** The double doors leading to this area have a built-in trap. Unless a hidden catch is moved, opening the doors starts a reaction that causes the portcullis to **Area 6** to open up within 3 rounds.

There is a hidden trapdoor in the floor (DC 5 to discover, but requires a specific search to do so except for elves). This trapdoor, once uncovered, can be easily pulled up, giving access to the corridor beneath. If the trap in the door is not found (DC 10) and disabled (DC 5), the Brides in **Area 6** will use the trapdoor to attempt to surprise any PCs in the corridor below.

**Area 9 - Temple of Ahriman:** *The corridor enters into a black stone room some 15' square, with a raised dais to the right and an altar to the left. Opposite you is another passage. Another 9' tall statue of the demon-like figure you saw earlier is poised on the dais, its face carved in an expression of malignant humor. Two silver candlesticks bearing lit black candles, a golden bowl, and a chalice of silver and black horn are upon the altar. Four slender black pillars support the center of the room.*

Willow-thin Isadora hides behind the black pillar to the south, seeking to surprise the PCs. She wears the (un)holy symbol of the demon lord around her neck – a black-eyed skull surmounted by two upsweeping black horns.

> **Bride of Blood (1):** Init +1; Atk touch +3 melee (paralysis) or bite -2 melee (1 plus blood drain); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, infravision 60', paralysis (DC 10 Will save negates), blood drain, regenerate unless staked; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

The statue of Ahriman is similar to that found in **Area 4** – characters seeking to harm it only bring harm to themselves. If awakened (as in **Area 4**), the demon immediately demands that the sacrificing mortal become his worshipper and vassal. If the PC agrees, he may immediately level as a cleric of Ahriman (level 1), potentially to the woe of his companions. If he does not wish to become a cleric, roll a *patron bond* spell check using the "when cast on other" column. This

check is made by rolling 1d7+10 plus Personality modifier. If the check fails, Ahriman rejects the would-be vassal.

Vassals of Ahriman are no longer targeted by the Brides of Blood, but if they target either the Brides or Blood himself, non-cleric vassals immediately lose the demon lord's patronage and become targets of choice. Clerics of Ahriman suffer 1d3 points of disapproval each time they target a Bride or Blood, and this disapproval **does not** reset until they perform a suitable quest at the demon lord's bidding.

The items on the altar are:
- Silver candlesticks worth 5 gp each. One is attached to a mechanism which, when pulled, opens the secret door (otherwise DC 15 Intelligence check to locate, and cannot otherwise be opened).
- Gold bowl worth 25 gp (shows signs of dried blood within).
- Silver-and-horn goblet worth 20 gp (shows signs of dried blood within). A wizard or elf who performs a sacrifice to Ahriman may store up to 3 points of spellburn taken from another intelligent creature (willing or not) in the goblet. The caster gains the benefits of this spellburn when the blood spilt into the goblet is consumed. If the goblet is spilt or capped, the potential spellburn is lost.

**Area 10 - Cave and Chasm:** *Five feet beyond the secret door is a natural cavern about 40' in diameter, which shows signs of ancient minework. The cave is bisected by a chasm running north to south. It appears to be no more than 5' wide at the farthest point, and is spanned by a natural stone bridge in the center. The air is somewhat damp, allowing faintly glowing blue-white mushrooms to grow across every available surface, except where patches of leathery red-brown lichen have taken hold.*

Although the vampires are aware that this area exists, they seldom go here. The chasm is fully 15' deep at its deepest point, but the bridge offers easy access over it, and at either end it could be leapt easily by any character without a Strength penalty (such characters falling only on a natural "1-3" on 1d20, equal to their Strength penalty).

On the southern side of the chasm, a fungi-choked squeeze leads into the exit passage (see **Area 12**). This area is difficult for PCs to squirm their way through; a DC 10 Agility check is required (halflings roll

# THE BRIDES OF BLOOD

Erasmus Cordwainer Blood's brides are all statistically identical, but the judge should attempt to differentiate them nonetheless. All wear bridal costumes that have been ripped or torn in the most revealing way, and all appear to be living women until they attack. They cast no reflections.

The touch of a Bride saps the will of male characters (or those of either gender who are attracted to females), paralyzing them so long as contact is made unless a DC 10 Will save is successful. A character who has thrown off this effect is immune to it for 24 hours.

A Bride who bites a target drains blood at the rate of 1d3 temporary Stamina points each round. A struggling victim gains an opposed Strength check (vs. +3) each round to throw the Bride off. A Bride who has drained 9 or more points of Stamina is sated, and goes off to rest. A resting Bride is helpless, and can be easily staked. Being slain by a Bride does not cause a character to rise as a vampire.

A Bride reduced to 0 hp without being staked regenerates 1 hp per turn until restored to full hit points. At this point, even if previously sated, she rejoins the hunt. Barrel staves, spear shafts, etc., can be used to make stakes. A stake must be wooden to be effective. If used as a weapon in combat, it does 1d3 damage.

The Thirteen Brides of Blood are:
- Fair-haired Ophelia and raven-tressed Portia (Area 5).
- Dark Calliope, pale Gretna, and fiery-haired Patricia (Area 6).
- Willow-thin Isadora (Area 9).
- The six sisters in Area 12 (From oldest to youngest: Amara, Bella, Calandra, Damaris, Eldoris, and Faustine). They range in apparent age from 13 to 40, with an average of 2 years between them.
- Beloved Sapphira, who shares Blood's coffin (Area 13).

1d30). Failure indicates that the character is stuck, and it will take either a DC 20 Strength check (made by others, and causing 1d3 damage to the victim unless a DC 10 Fort save succeeds), or a DC 18 Agility check by the character to get free (one attempt only). A character stuck in the passage blocks all forward progress; any behind him in the squeeze must succeed in a DC 10 Agility check to back out.

**Area 11 - Treasure!:** *The cave ends in a drop-off, where an old wooden ladder leads down to a pool of oily water. The lichens and phosphorescent mushrooms of the upper region grow down almost to the water's edge. The drop to the water seems to be about 12'.*

The dark water (not shown on the map) is only 2' deep, and is not enough to ameliorate falling damage (1d6). Hidden under the water are four rusting (and heavy!) iron boxes containing 150 gp each. The ladder is not in good enough condition to take the weight of a PC carrying one of these boxes, and the PC would need to use both hands to climb the ladder anyway. There is a small fortune here if the PCs can come up with a way to carry it.

**Area 12 - The Six Sisters:** *This passage is about 20' long, ending in a darkened archway. Six side passages, each a mere 2½' wide and 5' tall, appear to be burial niches, three to each side. You can just make out what appears to be a large black coffin in the darkness beyond the archway.*

The six sisters (Amara, Bella, Calandra, Damaris, Eldoris, and Faustine) lurk here, one down each of the side passages. If characters are not cautious, they will all emerge once the PCs are more than halfway to Area 13. The sisters, like Isadora in Area 9, feed with relative frequency, and are capable of biding their time until opportunity strikes. Even so, if the PCs flee from them, the sisters will give chase, attacking 1d3 at a time as chance allows. They know that the exit is in the northeastern-most niche, so escapees are going nowhere. They are aware of Area 10, but not the potential passage out.

> **Brides of Blood (6):** Init +1; Atk touch +3 melee (paralysis) or bite -2 melee (1 plus blood drain); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, infravision 60', paralysis (DC 10 Will save negates), blood drain, regenerate unless staked; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

The secret door is partially ajar, and is automatically found by anyone who examines the end of its niche. It can be pried open with a DC 12 Strength check. A pick or crowbar could be used to gain a +4 bonus to this check. Alternatively, a cunningly hidden catch can be found (DC 20 Intelligence check).

The secret door leads downward to a hidden cave entrance – the exit! Along the way, to the northeast, there is a fungus-choked crawl which leads to the bottom of the chasm at **Area 10**. If the judge is kind, a stuck character might even be visible, allowing another chance of rescue.

**Area 13 - Erasmus Cordwainer Blood:** *The passage ends beyond the archway in a dry crypt, about 5' wide and almost 10' long. It is dominated by a large black coffin half-shrouded by heavy cobwebs. The air here seems distinctly cool, and you can see your breaths in the chill.*

This is the resting place of the vampire, Erasmus Cordwainer Blood. Here he rests for ever-longer periods, seldom even taking part in the games devised for him by Ahriman. His most recent Bride, the beloved Sapphira, rests in the coffin with him, and will awake to attack anyone who opens the lid.

> **Bride of Blood (1):** Init +1; Atk touch +3 melee (paralysis) or bite -2 melee (1 plus blood drain); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, infravision 60', paralysis (DC 10 Will save negates), blood drain, regenerate unless staked; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL C.

The vampire lord appears as a classic Nosferatu-style vampire, wearing stiff black clothing that went out of fashion several centuries ago. The PCs have 2d3 rounds from the time the coffin lid is opened to when Blood awakens. If they can manage to defeat Sapphira in this time and stake Blood, they win! The cramped conditions will make it difficult for the PCs to all attack at once, however.

The master vampire is more difficult to face than his Brides. His touch also paralyzes through fear, and he can paralyze any living target (except elves) that fails a DC 13 Will save. A successful save makes that character immune forever after. Blood can use an action die to attempt to charm a single foe with his gaze (treat as *charm person* with a +4 bonus to the spell check). Although it will not occur in this adventure, the vampire can also take the form of a wolf, gaining a bite attack and improved AC and move.

If reduced to 0 hp but not slain, Blood regenerates 3 hp/round, and can act as soon as he has regained half his original hp. If staked, he gives a blood-curdling shriek. Then a look of peace comes over his features – one can almost see the man he was in life – before he collapses into dust.

Note: The PCs do not need to defeat Blood to succeed in this adventure! If a final battle is going badly for the characters, the vampire may let the survivors flee. "At least you have made it interesting, this time." The PCs discover that Blood expects service for his lenience. He may even desire that one or more PCs become (or supply) new Brides for those slain!

If Blood is defeated, he wears a silver chain worth 20 gp, a gold signet ring worth 25 gp, and an iron ring with a hematite gem that allows a living wearer to cast the following spells once per week: *animal summoning* (wolves and dire wolves only), *ward portal*, and *phantasm*. The spells are cast using 1d20+3 for the spell check regardless of caster class or level. In addition, the character gains 60' infravision, and is ignored by un-dead (unless he interacts with them first). A character who dies with this ring on his finger rises as a vampire on the next full moon. The newly risen un-dead's first goal is to recover the ring if it has been taken.

> **Erasmus Cordwainer Blood:** Init +3; Atk touch +5 melee (paralysis) or bite +0 melee (1d3 plus blood drain) or bite +4 melee (1d5) (as wolf); AC 10 (12 as wolf); HD 5d6; hp 19; MV 30' (40' as wolf); Act 1d20; SP un-dead, infravision 60', paralysis (DC 13 Will save negates), blood drain (1d4 temporary Stamina), regenerate unless staked; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; AL C.

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