

CARCASS CRAWLER

The official Old-School Essentials zine

Issue #4

Deities and Cults

Arcane Bard and Halfling Classes

Terrors of the Dark

Strange Brews

**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**

RETRO ADVENTURE GAME

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PHIL LONGMIRE

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to issue 4 of *Carcass Crawler*—the official *Old-School Essentials* zine.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue features articles by visionaries at the forefront of old-school alchemy: Chance Dudinack, Brad Kerr, Gavin Norman, and James Spahn.

Character Classes

Introduce these new classes as NPCs for player characters to encounter or add them to the roster of character types players can choose from.

Halfling hearthsinger: A demihuman class focused on lore, hearth-side rumourmongering, and the fostering of good cheer.

Halfling reeve: A demihuman class inspired by the character Trotter from the early drafts of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Trotter was a halfling ranger who, in the final version of the story, was developed into the human Aragorn.

Arcane bard: An alternative bard class inspired by the jack-of-all-trades bard of *AD&D* 2nd edition. The arcane bard has a selection of useful skills, the ability to wear chainmail, and the ability to cast

arcane spells. The following races may be arcane bards, with level limits as noted: elf (10th), half-elf (12th), human (unlimited).

Deities and Cults

Four example deities favoured by adventurers. Each is described along with details on their cults and the spells and tenets of clerical spell casters in their service.

Terrors of the Dark

Eight new monsters themed around the lightless depths and adventurers' fear of the dark.

The Mage's Grimoire

Ten new spells for magic-users, inspired by classic magicks from *AD&D*, plus a selection of enchanted tomes to tempt arcane spell casters.

Strange Brews

Additional details on brewing, purchasing, sampling, and describing potions.

Noximander's Cave

A short adventure set in the shadow-haunted subterranean lair of an illusionist whose experiments with dark magic went awry.

NEW CHARACTER CLASSES

By JAMES SPAHN AND GAVIN NORMAN

HALFLING HEARTHSINGER

By James
Spahn

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum CHA 9, minimum CON 9, minimum DEX 9

Prime requisite: CHA and CON

Hit Die type: 1d6

Combat aptitude: Martial

Maximum level: 8

Armour: Leather, shields

Weapons: Any appropriate to size

Languages: Alignment, Common, Halfling

Hearthsingers are halflings who specialise in memorising and recalling legends, lore, and local folktales. The desire to learn the truth behind lost legends and forgotten myths often drives them to adventure and they value tomes, journals, and written histories over other treasure.

Prime requisites: A halfling hearthsinger with at least 13 in one prime requisite gains a 5% bonus to experience. If both CHA and CON are 13 or higher, the halfling gets a +10% bonus.

Armour and weapons: Armour must be tailored to halflings' small size. Similarly, they can use any weapon appropriate to their stature (as determined by the referee). They cannot use longbows or two-handed swords.



Defensive Bonus

Due to their small size, halfling hearthsingers gain a +2 bonus to Armour Class when attacked by large opponents (greater than human-sized).

Halfling Hearthsinger Skills

Halfling hearthsingers can use the following skills, with the chance of success shown opposite:

► **Foster friendship (FF):** If the hearthsinger tells a story to a willing audience for at least one turn and the performance ends without interruption, a number of persons (see **Persons** under **Monsters** in *Old-School Essentials*) equal to the hearthsinger's level must **save versus spells** or be placed under a friendship effect. Affected persons regard the hearthsinger as a friend and ally and will come to their defence. The effect lasts for 1 hour per level of the hearthsinger.

► **Lore (L):** A hearthsinger has a chance of knowing lore pertaining to monsters, magic items, or heroes of folk-tale or legend. This ability can be used to identify the nature and powers of magic items.

Halfling Hearthsinger Level Progression

| Level | XP | HD | THAC0 | Saving Throws | | | | |
|-------|---------|----|---------|---------------|---|----|----|----|
| | | | | D | W | P | B | S |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 19 [0] | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 2 | 2,000 | 2 | 19 [0] | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 3 | 4,000 | 3 | 19 [0] | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 4 | 8,000 | 4 | 17 [+2] | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| 5 | 16,000 | 5 | 17 [+2] | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| 6 | 32,000 | 6 | 17 [+2] | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| 7 | 64,000 | 7 | 14 [+5] | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 8 | 120,000 | 8 | 14 [+5] | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in []).

D: Death / poison; W: Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; B: Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

► **Read languages (RL):** A hearthsinger can read non-magical text in any language (including dead) or basic codes. If the roll fails, the hearthsinger may not try the same text again before gaining an experience level. The hearthsinger can use this ability to read scrolls containing arcane spells with a chance of success equal to half the listed percentage. Failure results in the spell scroll backfiring and causing some disastrous or dangerous effect.

Listening at Doors

Halfling hearthsingers have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring in Old-School Essentials*).

Rumour Monger

Whenever there is an opportunity to gain relevant information from local rumours within a community, a halfling hearthsinger can learn twice the normal number of rumours allowed by the circumstances if they spend one hour getting to know the local community.

Tavern

Any time a halfling hearthsinger wishes (and has sufficient money), they may build a tavern or pub, which will draw patrons from across the land and provide revenue to the hearthsinger of $1d4 \times 100$ gold pieces per month. $1d4+1$ 1st level halflings will arrive to serve as staff and one 3rd level fighter will arrive to serve as a bouncer.

Hearthsinger Skills Chance of Success

| Level | FF | L | RL |
|-------|----|----|----|
| 1 | 20 | 30 | 35 |
| 2 | 27 | 35 | 40 |
| 3 | 35 | 40 | 45 |
| 4 | 43 | 45 | 55 |
| 5 | 50 | 55 | 65 |
| 6 | 58 | 65 | 75 |
| 7 | 65 | 75 | 85 |
| 8 | 75 | 85 | 95 |

Rolling Skill Checks

All skills are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

HALFLING REEVE

By James Spahn

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum CON 9, minimum DEX 9, minimum WIS 9

Prime requisite: CON and WIS

Hit Die type: 1d6

Combat aptitude: Martial

Maximum level: 8

Armour: Leather, shields

Weapons: Any appropriate to size

Languages: Alignment, Common, Halfling

Reeves are the sworn protectors of rural halfling communities. They patrol the wilderness surrounding these idyllic villages, forgoing home comforts to ensure that predators and enemies do not endanger their kinsfolk or threaten the simple peace of the little folk.

Prime requisites: A halfling reeve with at least 13 in one prime requisite gains a 5% bonus to experience. If both CON and WIS are 13 or higher, the halfling gets a +10% bonus.

Alignment: As protectors, reeves must be lawful. If a reeve ever changes alignment, they lose all special class abilities and become a halfling of the same level. The character may be able to regain their reeve status by performing a special quest.

Armour and weapons: Armour must be tailored to halflings' small size. Similarly, they can use any weapon appropriate to their stature (as determined by the referee). They cannot use longbows or two-handed swords.

Defensive Bonus

Due to their small size, halfling reeves gain a +2 bonus to Armour Class when attacked by large opponents (greater than human-sized).



Art: Matteson

Divine Magic (4th Level)

See *Magic* in *Old-School Essentials* for full details on divine magic.

Spell casting: From 4th level, due to a deep connection with nature, a reeve gains the ability to cast spells. The power and number of spells available to a reeve are determined by the character's experience level. Reeves have the same spell selection as druids. If not using druid spells, reeves have the same spell selection as clerics, but cannot memorise *cure light wounds* until reaching 6th level.

Foraging and Hunting

A party with a reeve succeeds at foraging with a 2-in-6 chance and finds prey when hunting with a 5-in-6 chance (see *Wilderness Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Halfling Reeve Level Progression

| Level | XP | HD | THAC0 | Saving Throws | | | | | Spells | | |
|-------|---------|----|---------|---------------|---|----|----|----|--------|---|---|
| | | | | D | W | P | B | S | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 19 [0] | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 | - | - | - |
| 2 | 2,500 | 2 | 19 [0] | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 | - | - | - |
| 3 | 5,000 | 3 | 19 [0] | 8 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 | - | - | - |
| 4 | 10,000 | 4 | 17 [+2] | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 1 | - | - |
| 5 | 20,000 | 5 | 17 [+2] | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 2 | - | - |
| 6 | 40,000 | 6 | 17 [+2] | 6 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 1 | - |
| 7 | 80,000 | 7 | 14 [+5] | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 8 | 160,000 | 8 | 14 [+5] | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in []).

D: Death / poison; W: Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; B: Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

Goblin Slayer

Reeves receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made against goblins and related creatures (e.g. bugbears and hobgoblins). In campaigns where goblins do not commonly threaten halfling communities, the referee may specify other types of enemies instead.

Limited Possessions

A reeve may only keep wealth and possessions that can be kept on their person or mount. Excess must be donated to a halfling community (not other PCs!).

Listening at Doors

Halfling reeves have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Stealth

In the wilderness, a reeve has a 5-in-6 chance of hiding and moving silently.



ILLUSTRATION BY
JULIETTE BOYD

Wolf Hunter

Reeves receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made against wolves of all kinds and werewolves.

After Reaching 8th Level

A halfling reeve may build a small cabin or hunting lodge within six miles of a halfling community. They will attract the service of 2d6 1st level halflings and one 3rd level halfling reeve to aid them in patrolling the wilderness and protecting the community.

ARCANE BARD

By Gavin
Norman

Requirements: Minimum INT 9

Prime requisite: CHA and DEX

Hit Die type: 1d6

Combat aptitude: Semi-martial

Maximum level: 14

Armour: Leather, chainmail, no shields

Weapons: Any

Arcane bards are musicians and poets drawn to a life of wandering and adventure. They pick up a wide range of abilities in their travels, becoming jacks-of-all-trades.

Prime requisites: An arcane bard with at least 13 CHA and DEX gains a 5% bonus to experience. An arcane bard with a score of 16 or higher in one prime requisite, and a 13 or higher in the other gains a 10% bonus.

Anti-Charm

While the arcane bard plays music and sings, allies within 30' are immune to song-based magical effects and the beguiling powers of sylvan creatures or fairies. Allies already under the effect of such magic gain another saving throw with a +4 bonus.

Arcane Bard Skills

Arcane bards can use the following skills, with chance of success shown opposite:

► **Climb sheer surfaces (CS):** A roll is required for each 100' to be climbed. If the roll fails, the arcane bard falls at the halfway point, suffering falling damage. This skill cannot be used if the arcane bard is wearing chainmail.

► **Hear noise (HN):** In a quiet environment (e.g. not in combat), an arcane bard can attempt to listen at a door or to hear the sounds of something (e.g. a wandering monster) approaching.



ILLUSTRATION

► **Pick pockets (PP):** If the victim is above 5th level, the arcane bard's roll is penalised by 5% for every level above 5th. There is always at least a 1% chance of failure. A roll of more than twice the percentage required for success means that the attempted theft is noticed. The referee should determine the reaction of the victim (possibly using the *Encounters* reaction table, in *Old-School Essentials*).

► **Read languages (RL):** An arcane bard can read non-magical text in any language (including dead) or basic codes. If the roll fails, the arcane bard may not try the same text again before gaining an experience level.

Arcane Magic

See *Magic* in *Old-School Essentials* for full details on arcane magic.

Spell casting: From 2nd level, arcane bards can cast arcane spells, owning a spell book in which the magical formulae for the spells they know are recorded. The level progression table (opposite) shows both the number of spells in the arcane bard's spell book and the number they can memorise, determined by the character's experience level. An arcane bard's spells are selected by the referee (who may allow the player to choose). Arcane bards have the same spell selection as magic-users or illusionists—as the referee wishes.

Using magic items: As spell casters, bards are able to use magic scrolls of spells on their spell list. They can also use items that may only be used by arcane spell casters (e.g. magic wands).

Arcane Bard Level Progression

| Level | XP | HD | THAC0 | Saving Throws | | | | | Spells | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|---------|---------------|----|----|----|----|--------|---|---|---|
| | | | | D | W | P | B | S | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 19 [0] | 13 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 15 | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 2,000 | 2 | 19 [0] | 13 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 3 | 4,000 | 3 | 19 [0] | 13 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 2 | - | - | - |
| 4 | 8,000 | 4 | 19 [0] | 13 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 3 | - | - | - |
| 5 | 16,000 | 5 | 17 [+2] | 12 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 3 | 1 | - | - |
| 6 | 32,000 | 6 | 17 [+2] | 12 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 3 | 2 | - | - |
| 7 | 64,000 | 7 | 17 [+2] | 12 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| 8 | 120,000 | 8 | 17 [+2] | 12 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - |
| 9 | 240,000 | 9 | 14 [+5] | 10 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 2 | - |
| 10 | 360,000 | 9+2* | 14 [+5] | 10 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | - |
| 11 | 480,000 | 9+4* | 14 [+5] | 10 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 12 | 600,000 | 9+6* | 14 [+5] | 10 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 13 | 720,000 | 9+8* | 12 [+7] | 8 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 14 | 840,000 | 9+10* | 12 [+7] | 8 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |

THAC0: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in []).
*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; W: Wands;
P: Paralysis / petrify; B: Breath attacks;
S: Spells / rods / staves.

Lore (2nd Level)

From 2nd level, an arcane bard has a 2-in-6 chance of knowing lore pertaining to monsters, magic items, or heroes of folktale or legend. This ability can be used to identify the nature and powers of magic items.

After Reaching 11th Level

An arcane bard can establish a manor. 2d6 apprentice arcane bards of 1st level will come to study under the character.

Rolling Skill Checks

Hear noise: Is rolled on 1d6 by the referee. If the roll is within the listed range of numbers, the skill succeeds.

Other skills: Are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

Arcane Bard Skills Chance of Success

| Level | CS | HN | PP | RL |
|-------|----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 77 | 1-2 | 20 | 40 |
| 2 | 78 | 1-2 | 25 | 50 |
| 3 | 79 | 1-3 | 30 | 60 |
| 4 | 80 | 1-3 | 35 | 70 |
| 5 | 81 | 1-3 | 40 | 80 |
| 6 | 82 | 1-3 | 45 | 82 |
| 7 | 83 | 1-4 | 55 | 84 |
| 8 | 84 | 1-4 | 65 | 86 |
| 9 | 85 | 1-4 | 75 | 88 |
| 10 | 86 | 1-4 | 85 | 90 |
| 11 | 87 | 1-5 | 95 | 90 |
| 12 | 88 | 1-5 | 105 | 90 |
| 13 | 90 | 1-5 | 115 | 90 |
| 14 | 91 | 1-5 | 125 | 90 |

DEITIES AND CULTS

By CHANCE DUDINACK AND GAVIN NORMAN

AUSTERUS

The Shining One

Deity of redemption and holy light, formerly the fiendish deity of searing radiance, now turned to Order. Seeks to bring all of humanity under one rule.

Depiction: A tall androgynous figure with bronze skin, golden eyes, and feathered wings of silver. Crowned with a spherical halo of golden light, wields a flaming sword.

Domain: Phandyne, the golden plains of crystalline radiance.

Alignment: Lawful.

Worshippers

Cults of Austerus seek to construct a gold-clad pyramid-temple in every settlement in the known world, offering redemption to the wicked and balm to the wretched. They ultimately aim to destroy all fiends and to absorb other religions by incorporating their myths and presenting their deities as aspects or servitors of Austerus.

Alignment: Lawful or Neutral.

Holy symbol: Rays of light emanating from a pristinely faceted diamond.

Holy garb: Pure white robes and a golden cape (15gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 1st level spells, a worshipper may wear a veil of quartz tears (50gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 3rd level spells, a worshipper may wear a platinum halo that magically hovers above their head (250gp).

Prayer: Worshippers of Austerus can only pray for spells in daylight or within a circle of blessed candles.

Strictures: Worshippers of Austerus must make the sign of the halo and recite holy psalms in the presence of other religions.

Alternative Spells

Order: 2nd level, replaces *speak with animals*.

Halo of protection: 3rd level, replaces *growth of animal*.

Searing radiance: 4th level, replaces *sticks to snakes*.

Redemption: 5th level, replaces *insect plague*.

Marks of Servitude

When a worshipper of Austerus gains the ability to cast spells of a certain level, they also gain an associated trait:

1st level spells: White streak in hair.

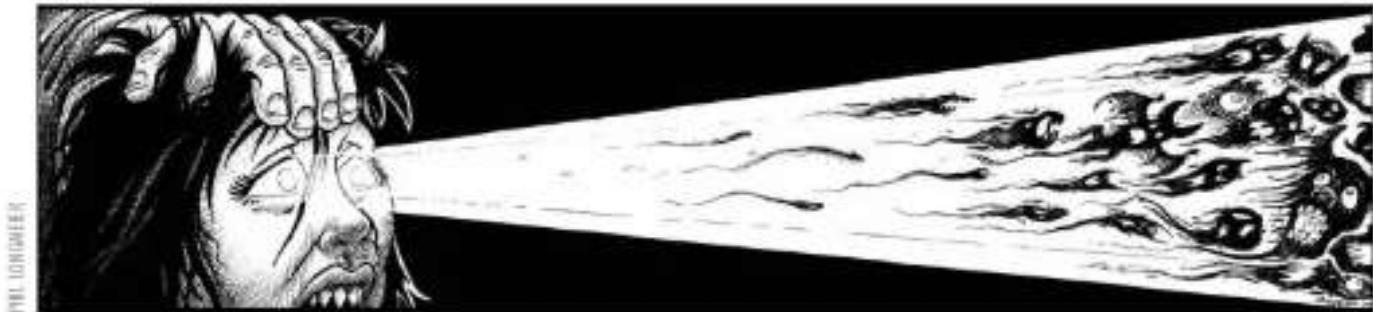
2nd level spells: Clear, unblemished skin.

3rd level spells: Lustrous, silver-white hair.

4th level spells: Gold irises.

5th level spells: Heart emanates a warm, golden glow visible through skin.





SPILLS OF AUSTERUS

Order

2nd level cleric spell

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 20' around the caster

All creatures within a 20' radius area are temporarily calmed.

Effect: Affected creatures' emotions are suppressed for the spell's duration. Hostile creatures are rendered non-hostile (though not necessarily friendly).

Save: Unwilling targets may **save versus spells** to resist being calmed.

Magically-induced emotions: (e.g. fear, confusion). Are also affected.

When the spell ends: Affected creatures return to their previous emotional state.

Halo of Protection

3rd level cleric spell

Duration: 1 turn

Range: 120'

A halo of shimmering white light surrounds a 30' diameter area within range. The light flares to burn creatures that trespass its bounds.

Damage: Enemies inside the halo take 1 damage per round.

Chaotic creatures: Take 2 damage per round.

Chaotic supernatural creatures: Take 1d3+1 damage per round.

Searing Radiance

4th level cleric spell

Duration: Instant

Range: 20'

A momentary flash of blazing golden light emanates from the caster's hand. Chaotic creatures within range that the light touches are burned by its holy radiance.

Chaotic creatures: Suffer 1d6 damage (**save versus spells** to negate).

Chaotic supernatural creatures: (For example undead and fiends.) Suffer 2d6 damage (**save versus spells** for half).

Redemption

5th level cleric spell

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Golden light beams from a touched creature's eyes as the caster purges their soul of evil, permanently changing their alignment to Lawful.

Saving throw: An unwilling subject may **save versus spells** to resist the change.

Chaotic creatures: Save at +4. If the save succeeds, the caster takes 1d4 damage per HD of the target.

Dispelling: This spell can only be undone by powerful magic (e.g. a wish, a *helm of alignment changing*) or at the referee's option by performing a special quest.

Restrictions: Only intelligent living creatures are affected.

THE BLACK ALDERMAN

The Smiling God

Grimacing god of skulls, dentistry, and organ dirges, the Black Alderman drives worshippers to collect and tend to myriad skulls on his behalf.

Depiction: A skeleton in kingly robes of midnight black trimmed with black fur. Wears a black iron crown and a necklace of yellow skulls. The Black Alderman's own skull is pristine white and always smiling.

Domain: Cromlech, an endless half-buried mausoleum.

Alignment: Neutral (favours non-reversed spells).

Worshippers

Cults of the Black Alderman seek out the skulls of rare monsters and influential figures to preserve in their temples. Some cultists are taught the healing arts to better care for the skulls of the living; known as Bonesmiths, these cultists work as travelling dentists and bone-setters.

Alignment: Lawful or Neutral.

Holy symbol: A skull made of silver or ivory.

Holy garb: A mask carved from a human skull (10gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 1st level spells, a worshipper may wear black linen robes with silver trim (35gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 3rd level spells, a worshipper may wear a necklace of ivory prayer beads, each carved into the shape of a skull (200gp).

Prayer: Worshippers of the Black Alderman must play a sacred song on an instrument made of bone to pray for their spells.



THOMAS OLDFIELD

Strictures: Worshippers of the Black Alderman must collect a tooth from defeated foes. For particularly worthy foes, they must collect the whole skull.

Alternative Spells

Skull speech: 1st level, replaces *purify food and water*.

Skull sentry: 2nd level, replaces *speak with animals*.

Danse macabre: 4th level, replaces *speak with plants*.

Control skull: 5th level, replaces *create food*.

Marks of Servitude

When a worshipper of the Black Alderman gains the ability to cast spells of a certain level, they also gain an associated trait:

1st level spells: Pallid complexion.

2nd level spells: Sunken, skull-like facial features.

3rd level spells: All hair on the head falls out.

4th level spells: Withered muscles and taugh skin (does not affect ability scores).

5th level spells: Solid black eyes.

SPELLS OF THE BLACK ALDERMAN

Skull Speech

1st level cleric spell

Duration: 1 turn per level

Range: 60'

The caster can cause a single skull within range to speak in a rasping whisper.

Words: The caster can cause the skull to utter any words desired. It is not possible to cast spells via the skull.

Undead monsters: An undead monster's skull can be caused to speak. Intelligent undead may **save versus paralysis** to resist.

Skull Sentry

2nd level cleric spell

Duration: 8 hours

Range: Touch

Enchants a skull to act as a sentry. For the spell's duration, if a creature of a designated type comes within 30' of the skull, it chatters its teeth (audible up to 120' away).



THOMAS DUNN

Danse Macabre

4th level cleric spell

Duration: Concentration

Range: 60'

The caster plays a magical song on an instrument of bone that causes bones within range to spring to life and dance.

Non-living bones: Are animated by the spell, dancing, bouncing, or rattling along to the tune.

Corporeal undead creatures: Must **save versus spells** or also be compelled. While dancing, attack rolls and saving throws are penalised by -4.

Control Skull

5th level cleric spell

Duration: Concentration (up to 6 rounds)

Range: 120'

By concentrating, the caster is able to manipulate skulls, both living and dead, by the power of thought.

Control: The caster gains full control of a skull, able to make it speak, look in any direction, or hold it in place, but cannot control any other parts of the body.

Save: If a creature is targeted, it may **save versus spells** to resist the spell.

Movement: The skull can be moved up to 20' per round, in any direction the caster wishes, including vertically (lifted into the air). Creatures can be dragged by the skull in this way.

KLATH-KARNATH

The Lady of Troubles

Goddess of insane danger, perils, and risk. Revels in seeing mortals overcome impossible odds, and so endlessly creates them.

Depiction: A four-armed giantess with blood-red skin and twin lion heads that bite at each other. Her upper arms hold a flail and a wavy-bladed sword, the lower arms strangle a writhing serpent.

Domain: Karnath, an ever-changing realm of roiling storms and fiery cataclysms.

Alignment: Chaotic.

Worshippers

Cults of Klath-Karnath seek to strengthen themselves by facing adversity. Their goddess goads them to seek out the most dangerous dungeons and strip them of their treasures, then hoard the wealth in temples founded in perilous locations.

Alignment: Neutral or Chaotic.

Holy symbol: A bronze fist.

Holy garb: A leather snake bracelet (5gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 1st level spells, a worshipper may wear a bejewelled snakeskin choker (100gp or more). Upon gaining the ability to cast 3rd level spells, a worshipper may wear a lion-skin cape (100gp).

Prayer: When praying for their spells, worshippers of Klath-Karnath must declare the dangerous activities they will embark on that day. Failing to uphold this promise could lead to deity disfavour.

Strictures: Worshippers of Klath-Karnath must invoke her name before doing something potentially fatal.

Alternative Spells

Tempt fate: 1st level, replaces *purify food and water*.

Bless the foolhardy: 2nd level, replaces *bless*.

Defy death: 3rd level, replaces *locate object*.

Enrage: 4th level, replaces *speak with plants*.

Marks of Servitude

When a worshipper of Klath-Karnath gains the ability to cast spells of a certain level, they also gain an associated trait:

1st level spells: Always fidgeting.

2nd level spells: Red irises.

3rd level spells: Red, serpentine tattoos appear on limbs.

4th level spells: Claw-mark scars appear on both cheeks.

5th level spells: Bulging veins on the neck and head.





ILLUSTRATION BY

SPELLS OF KLATH-KARNATH

Tempt Fate

1st level cleric spell

Duration: 1 round

Range: The caster or a creature touched

Cast upon a subject about to perform a dangerous deed. They gain a +4 bonus to a single saving throw incurred as a result.

Bless the Foolhardy

2nd level cleric spell

Duration: 6 turns

Range: 60'

Allies within a 20' × 20' area who are not yet in melee gain a +1 bonus to attacks and damage rolls in melee against foes of higher HD. This increases to +2 against foes of 2 or more higher HD, and +3 against foes of 5 or more higher HD.

Defy Death

3rd level cleric spell

Duration: 1 round

Range: 30'

Against all odds, the caster or another creature can miraculously survive damage that should be fatal.

Bonus hit points: The subject gains 1d4 bonus hit points per level of the caster.

Any damage suffered: Is subtracted first from the bonus hit points.

When the duration ends: If any of the bonus hit points remain, they disappear.

Enrage

4th level cleric spell

Duration: Concentration

Range: 40'

Enemies within range must **save versus spells** or fly into a blood rage.

Blood rage: Causes a +1 bonus to attack rolls, +2 bonus to damage rolls, and a -3 AC penalty.

Affected creatures: Immediately attack the closest creature, whether it is friend or foe. If the creature is killed, the affected creature attacks the next nearest.

MOUMB

The Hidden Lord

God of the weird deeps of the Underworld, where the logic of the surface world recedes.

Depiction: A corpulent, purple-skinned man with a single, great, yellow eye and a ring of horns around his crown. Moumb wields a mighty mace of black stone and wears a cloak of burning chains.

Domain: Urbald, vast obsidian fortress carved in the Underworld's fundament.

Alignment: Neutral (favours reversed spells).

Worshippers

Cults of Moumb seek to found subterranean temples and kingdoms honouring Moumb, make contact with obscure Underworld civilisations, and unearth the secrets of the deep places of the world.

Alignment: Any.

Holy symbol: A dodecahedron or icosa-hedron of lead, obsidian, or hematite.

Holy garb: A red cloak interwoven with iron chains (5gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 1st level spells, a worshipper may wear a helm inlaid with a golden eye (50gp). Upon gaining the ability to cast 3rd level spells, a worshipper may wear a crown of ram horns (50gp).

Prayer: Worshippers of Moumb can only pray for spells underground, in pitch darkness, or blindfolded.

Strictures: Worshippers of Moumb may only speak his name underground. In the surface world, they often use the epithet "the Hidden Lord".



FILE PHOTO: GREGORY

Alternative Spells

Deep vision: 1st level, replaces *light*.

Secret room: 3rd level, replaces *continual light*.

Find exit: 4th level, replaces *sticks to snakes*.

Pass-wall: 5th level, replaces *insect plague*.

Marks of Servitude

When a worshipper of Moumb gains the ability to cast spells of a certain level, they also gain an associated trait:

1st level spells: Ragged black fingernails.

2nd level spells: Eyes reflect light in the dark like a cat's.

3rd level spells: Violet-hued skin.

4th level spells: Presence causes light sources to flicker and waver.

5th level spells: Shadow appears larger, monstrous.

SPELLS OF MOUMB



KEL MATTHEWS

Deep Vision

1st level cleric spell

Duration: 6 turns + 1 per level

Range: The caster or a creature touched

The subject gains the ability to see in pitch darkness as if in torchlight (30' radius range).

Restrictions: This spell only functions underground.

Secret Room

3rd level cleric spell

Duration: 1 hour per level

Range: Touch

The caster touches a wall, causing a secret door to appear that leads into a magically created room.

Dimensions: 10' × 10' × 10' and empty, made of the same material as the wall.

Finding: Other creatures on the outside can find the secret door as normal.

When the spell's duration ends: The room collapses into itself and disappears, and the door returns to a solid wall. Anything still inside reappears back outside.

Restrictions: This spell only functions underground. If there is a room already on the other side of the wall on which the spell is cast, the spell fails.

Find Exit

4th level cleric spell

Duration: 1 turn per level

Range: Unlimited

The caster can sense the shortest, most direct route to the nearest point of egress. One of two types can be located. This spell only functions underground.

Exit: Any passage that leads back out onto the surface.

Level transit: Stairs, sliding passages, pits, or other transitions between dungeon levels.

Traps: Magical and mechanical traps along the route are also sensed by the caster when within 30'.



KEL MATTHEWS

Pass-Wall

5th level cleric spell

Duration: 3 turns

Range: 30'

A 5' diameter hole is temporarily opened in solid rock or stone, forming a passageway up to 10' deep.

THE MAGE'S GRIMOIRE

By BRAD KERR AND GAVIN NORMAN

NEW SPELLS

This article presents ten spells to expand the *OSE* magic-user spell list. The new spells are inspired by classic magicks from *AD&D* which are missing from *Old-School Essentials*.

PCs might discover these new spells in scrolls, spell books, or grimoires (see p21), learn them from mentors, or create them by research (see *Magical Research* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Alternatively, the referee might decide to add these new spells to the standard magic-user spell list, expanding the selection of spells available to all casters.

Burning Hands

1st level magic-user spell

Duration: Instant

Range: 5'

A fan of searing flame shoots from the caster's fingertips, targeting creatures and objects in front of the caster.

Damage: Creatures caught in the flames suffer 1 damage per level of the caster.

Flammable materials: Are ignited. This includes flammable materials carried or worn by creatures.

On fire: A creature in contact with burning material (e.g. their clothing) suffers 1 damage per subsequent round, for up to 3 rounds.

Extinguishing: Burning creatures can spend a round to extinguish the fire.

Feather Fall

1st level magic-user spell

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 60'

Creatures and objects selected by the caster are protected from falling damage.

Subjects: Must all be within a 10' cube and weigh at most 2,000 coins per level of the caster. (A typical human weighs around 1,500 coins.)

Rate of falling: While the spell duration lasts, subjects fall at 10' per round and suffer no damage upon landing.

Instant casting: *Feather fall* can be cast as an instant utterance when the caster or another target within range starts falling. In combat, it does not need to be declared and does not count as the caster's action for the round (though it cannot be cast in the same round as another spell).

Shocking Grasp

1st level magic-user spell

Duration: Instant

Range: Creature or object touched

The caster imbues their hands with electricity to transfer a powerful shock to a creature via touch.

Damage: The shocking grasp deals 1d8 damage plus +1 per caster level. In combat, a melee attack roll is required.

Conductors: A caster can alternatively discharge the spell on an electrical conductor. Damage is divided between creatures touching the conductor.

Unseen Servant

1st level magic-user spell

Duration: 6 turns +1 per level

Range: 30'

The caster summons an invisible force to perform mundane tasks such as fetching items, opening unstuck doors, moving chairs, and cleaning up.

Restrictions: The unseen servant cannot carry more than 200 coins of weight. It cannot fight or directly inflict harm to a creature.

Cancelling: The unseen servant is dispelled if it moves outside of the spell's radius.

Damage: The unseen servant cannot be directly attacked, but area effects (e.g. breath weapons) can harm it. It has 6hp.

Pyrotechnics

2nd level magic-user spell

Duration: Special

Range: 160'

This spell manipulates an existing source of fire. It has two usages; using either immediately extinguishes the originating flame. Especially large fires are only partially extinguished by a *pyrotechnics* spell.

Fireworks: Dazzling coloured fireworks erupt from the flame. Onlookers within 120' must **save versus spells** or be blinded for 1d4+1 rounds.

Smoke: A writhing trail of smoke billows from the flame and fills a 30' radius area. This smoke obscures vision beyond 2' and lingers for 1 round per caster level.



Ray of Enfeeblement

2nd level magic-user spell

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 30'

A magical ray leaps from the caster's finger to drain a humanoid target of its physical strength. The target may **save versus spells** to resist. The effect differs on targets with a rated STR score and those without.

STR score: The target's STR is reduced by 5. Targets reduced to 0 STR cannot move or act.

No STR score: The target suffers penalties to their physical attacks: -2 to hit and -1 damage for every damage die rolled (to a minimum of 1 damage per die).

Stinking Cloud

2nd level magic-user spell

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 30'

The caster conjures a noxious 20' diameter cloud of foul-smelling gas. Living creatures within the cloud must **save versus poison** or retch helplessly for 1d4+1 rounds (unable to move or act).



Slow

3rd level magic-user spell

Duration: 3 turns

Range: 240'

Up to 24 creatures in a 30' radius area must **save versus spells** or be enchanted to move and attack half as quickly as normal.

Movement: Subjects' maximum movement rates are halved.

Attacks: Subjects can only attack every other round.

Spells: The number of spells a subject can cast per round is not affected.

Magical devices: The use of devices such as wands is also not affected.

Counteracting haste: *Slow* counteracts the effects of a *haste* spell, and vice versa.

Tongues

3rd level magic-user spell

Duration: 1 turn

Range: 60'

The caster is able to speak and understand any language within the spell's range.

Writing: The caster does not gain the ability to read or write other languages.

Reversed: Babble

Cancels the effect of *tongues*. All spoken language is garbled and unintelligible within the spell's range.



Blink

3rd level magic-user spell

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: The caster

The caster randomly teleports a short distance each round, making it difficult for opponents to attack them.

Teleportation: At the end of their side's initiative each round, the caster teleports 5' in a random direction. Re-roll random directions that would place the caster within solid rock, etc.

Initiative: Creatures acting before the caster's side in a round's initiative sequence can target the caster normally with spells and attacks. Those acting after cannot target the caster.

Area effects: (e.g. dragon breath, *fire ball*) can affect the caster if they encompass both the caster's original location and the random teleport destination this round.

GRIMOIRES

For the adventuring magic-user, few treasures are as coveted as the magic grimoire. These tomes contain magical treatises and a selection of spells around a specific topic. Additionally, grimoires are magical objects in their own right, granting special powers to their possessor.

Usage: An arcane spell caster must spend a week studying a grimoire to unlock its secrets. They can then copy its spells into their own spell book when able to learn new spells (treating the grimoire as a mentor if using the standard spell book rules, or via an INT check if using the advanced spell book rules—see *Spell Books* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Book of the Hideous Frog

Author: Neem, Frogmancer

Language: Deepcommon

Spells: Darkness, infravision, locate object, ray of enfeeblement, stinking cloud, tongues, web

A wide, frog-faced grimoire bound in damp frog flesh that wriggles disconcertingly. 1d6 live frogs spawn in the owner's clothes and belongings every night.

Conjuration of Smoke and Flame

Author: Felecita Wyrm-Slayer

Language: Dragon

Spells: Burning hands, fire ball, fly, magic missile, pyrotechnics, stinking cloud, wall of fire

A burnt cedar cover that stains everything it touches black; a constant unquenchable flame perpetually laps at its pages yet its contents are somehow never consumed. An arcane caster can ignite flammable objects by pressing this tome against them.

The Song of the Hound and Panther

Author: Granston, Monster Zoologist

Language: Common

Spells: Blink, charm monster, dimension door, haste, mirror image, slow

A slim portfolio, its cover artistically bound in swirls of black and tan fur. The owner gains a +2 bonus to reaction rolls with warp beasts and blink dogs; these natural enemies will not combat each other in the book's presence.

Tome of the Careful Crawler

Author: Harfv, famous adventuring wizard. His disciples still preach the virtues of dungeon safety.

Language: Common

Spells: Detect invisible, feather fall, light, protection from evil, shield, tongues, water breathing

A cover of hardwood and brass accents binds a heavily annotated treatise of dungeon safety tips. Light spells cast on the book itself have a doubled spell duration. The book can be wielded as a bludgeon (d4 damage).

Tome of the Puppeteer

Author: Bren, Marionetteer. Royal Advisor and Impresario of the King's Theatre

Language: Elvish

Spells: Charm person, hold person, invisibility, levitate, phantasmal force, pyrotechnics, shocking grasp, unseen servant, ventriloquism

A ragged tome wrapped in wire. When opened, it magically hovers within arms length of the owner as if suspended by strings. Victims of *charm person* spells cast by the owner suffer a -1 penalty to their save.

STRANGE BREWS

By GAVIN NORMAN

Old-School Essentials presents a list of standard potions and their effects, but only provides brief guidelines on how potions can be manufactured and identified. This article adds extra detail around brewing, identifying, and (optionally) buying potions.

CREATING POTIONS

Under the *Magical Research* rules in *Old-School Essentials*, potions are treated as single-use magic items that duplicate the effects of a spell. Brewing a potion thus costs 1 week and 500gp per level of the equivalent spell. The table opposite lists the equivalent spells and creation costs of all standard potions.

Restrictions: Any character able to create magic items (e.g. clerics and magic-users of 9th level or above) can create potions.

Equivalent spells: Not all potions exactly duplicate the effects of a spell described in *Old-School Essentials*. In order to provide a concrete list of costs, this article lists *approximately* equivalent spells. In some cases this includes spells from other editions of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Spell lists / spell books: The character does not need to be able to memorise the equivalent spell in order to create a potion with the equivalent effect. e.g. a magic-user can create a *potion of healing*.

Cursed potions: Potions of delusion and poison are not discussed here, as it is assumed they are only created by accident (for example, due to the 15% chance of research failure).

HIRING AN ALCHEMIST

Characters can hire a specialist alchemist to produce potions. Alchemists can create potions either by recreating a provided sample potion or by researching a potion from scratch.

Recreating potions: Takes half the time and cost listed in the table opposite.

Researching potions: Takes double the time and cost listed in the table opposite.

Wages and upkeep: When hiring an alchemist to create potions, PCs must also pay their wages and upkeep cost: 1,000gp per month.

Example: Working from a sample, an alchemist could create a *potion of healing* in half a week at a cost of 250gp. In a month, they could thus create 8 *potions of healing*, at a total cost of 3,000gp (375gp per potion), including the monthly wage.

Buying Potions (Optional Rule)

In some campaigns, potions may be available for purchase from high-level spell casters. The table opposite lists suggested sale prices for potions. Sale prices are set at twice the cost to create the potion, accounting for the seller's desire for profit.

Specialist Alchemists

Alchemists may also sometimes stock pre-made potions for sale. As alchemists can create potions from a recipe at half the usual cost, the listed sale prices should also be reduced by 50%.

Potion Creation and Sale Prices

| Potion | Equivalent Spell | Level | Creation Weeks | Creation Cost (gp) | Sale Price (gp) |
|------------------|------------------------------|-------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Clairaudience | <i>Clairvoyance</i> | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| Clairvoyance | <i>Clairvoyance</i> | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| Control animal | <i>Animal friendship</i> | 1 | 1 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Control dragon | <i>Charm monster</i> | 4 | 4 | 2,000 | 4,000 |
| Control giant | <i>Charm monster</i> | 4 | 4 | 2,000 | 4,000 |
| Control human | <i>Charm person</i> | 1 | 1 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Control plant | <i>Entangle</i> | 1 | 1 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Control undead | <i>Charm monster</i> | 4 | 4 | 2,000 | 4,000 |
| Diminution | <i>Growth of animal</i> * | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| ESP | <i>ESP</i> | 2 | 2 | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| Fire resistance | <i>Resist fire</i> | 2 | 2 | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| Flying | <i>Fly</i> | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| Gaseous form | <i>Wraithform</i> | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| Giant strength | <i>Growth of animal</i> * | 4 | 4 | 2,000 | 4,000 |
| Growth | <i>Growth of animal</i> | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| Healing | <i>Cure light wounds</i> | 1 | 1 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Heroism | <i>Heroism</i> * | 4 | 4 | 2,000 | 4,000 |
| Invisibility | <i>Invisibility</i> | 2 | 2 | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| Invulnerability | <i>Shield</i> | 1 | 1 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Levitation | <i>Levitate</i> | 2 | 2 | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| Longevity | <i>Accelerate lifeline</i> * | 8 | 8 | 4,000 | 8,000 |
| Polymorph self | <i>Polymorph self</i> | 4 | 4 | 2,000 | 4,000 |
| Speed | <i>Haste</i> | 3 | 3 | 1,500 | 3,000 |
| Treasure finding | <i>Locate object</i> | 2 | 2 | 1,000 | 2,000 |

* Notes on Specific Potions

Potion of Diminution: Essentially the reversed form of a *potion of growth*, which is equivalent to the 3rd level cleric spell *growth of animal*.

Potion of Giant Strength: The same effect as a *potion of growth*, plus the ability to throw boulders. Thus treated as one level higher (4th rather than 3rd level).

Potion of Heroism: A 4th level *heroism* spell, with broadly similar effects, exists in the 2000 3rd edition game.



Potion of Longevity: An 8th level *accelerate lifeline* spell, with broadly similar effects, exists in a supplement to the 1989 2nd edition game.

POTION INGREDIENTS

As noted in *Old-School Essentials*, creating magic items often requires rare components. It can be particularly fun to require PCs to gather components from monsters, as this drives adventure. PCs must follow up rumours hinting at the dwelling place of a monster of the requisite kind, travel to the location, then attempt to acquire the component (e.g. by theft, bribery, or slaying the monster). The table below lists suggested monster ingredients, optionally required to manufacture each type of potion.

Potion Monster Ingredients

| Potion | Ingredient |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Clairaudience | Vampire bat blood |
| Clairvoyance | Cyclops bone |
| Control animal | Cave bear skull |
| Control dragon | Red dragon scale |
| Control giant | Storm giant heart |
| Control human | Harpy tongue |
| Control plant | Treant root |
| Control undead | Mummy dust |
| Diminution | Sprite heart |
| ESP | Devil swine brain |
| Fire resistance | Flame salamander eye |
| Flying | Griffon feather |
| Gaseous form | Djinni hair |
| Giant strength | Frost giant beard |
| Growth | Hill giant bone |
| Healing | Killer bee honey |
| Heroism | Centaur heart |
| Invisibility | Pixie wings |
| Invulnerability | Unicorn horn |
| Levitation | Pegasus feather |
| Longevity | Vampire blood |
| Polymorph self | Doppelgänger brain |
| Speed | Giant shrew tail |
| Treasure finding | Rust monster antenna |

SAMPLING POTIONS

Potions can be identified by sipping a small amount, as the character is briefly affected by the magic. The referee may choose to simply reveal the nature of the potion, naming it directly. Alternatively, the referee might wish to describe a minor magical effect that the sampling character experiences, hinting at the full effects of the potion. The following table lists example hints noticeable when sipping standard potions.

Duration: All hints last for 1 round.

Sampling Potions

| Potion | Hint on Sampling |
|------------------|--|
| Clairaudience | Hear whispers |
| Clairvoyance | See from 1' away |
| Control* | Vision of commanding a creature of the affected type |
| Diminution | Shrink 1" shorter |
| ESP | Hear party's thoughts |
| Fire resistance | Aura of ice |
| Flying | Hover 1" off ground |
| Gaseous form | Vapour from hands |
| Giant strength | Muscles ripple |
| Growth | Grow 1" taller |
| Healing | Wave of refreshment |
| Heroism | Wave of courage |
| Invisibility | Turn transparent |
| Invulnerability | Wave of invincibility |
| Levitation | Feel weightless |
| Longevity | Youthful appearance |
| Polymorph self | Face morphs |
| Speed | Accelerated motion |
| Treasure finding | Vision of gold |

*: Control animal, dragon, giant, human, plant, undead.

DESCRIBING POTIONS

Every potion is unique—even potions of the same type differ in odour, taste,

and appearance. The table below can be used to determine the characteristics of potions found in treasure hoards.

Rolling characteristics: Roll 1d20 once per column in the table.

Potion Characteristics

| d20 Container | Colour | Appearance/ Consistency | Odour / Flavour |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Alchemical beaker, open | Blue | Anti-gravity | Acidic |
| 2 Clay statuette with stopper in head | Brown | Bubbling | Bitter |
| 3 Corked gourd | Clear | Cloudy | Cheese |
| 4 Crystal decanter | Cream | Crystalline | Cream |
| 5 Dented copper tube | Cyan | Flecked | Dung |
| 6 Frosted glass phial | Gold | Frothing | Earth |
| 7 Gelatinous membrane | Green | Fuming | Fish |
| 8 Glass bottle with dropper | Grey | Gritty | Ginger |
| 9 Hollowed out prism | Indigo | Jelly | Honey |
| 10 Labelled phial (3-in-6 correct) | Maroon | Layered | Hot / spicy |
| 11 Miniature green bottle | Orange | Oily | Lavender |
| 12 Pewter hip flask | Pearl | Opalescent | Metallic |
| 13 Phial with heraldic label | Pink | Phosphorescent | Mint |
| 14 Pristine glass phial | Purple | Smoky | None |
| 15 Sealed glass sphere—smash to open | Rainbow | Sparkling | Rancid |
| 16 Sigil-engraved phial | Red | Swirling | Salty |
| 17 Skull-shaped flask | Silver | Syrupy | Spirituously |
| 18 Stoppered unicorn horn | Violet | Translucent | Sweet |
| 19 Tightly corked bottle | White | Vaporous | Vinegar |
| 20 Wax-sealed jar | Yellow | Viscous | Wine |



TERRORS OF THE DARK

By GAVIN NORMAN

This article presents 8 new monsters that may be encountered in the depths of the underworld, preying on adventurers' fear of the dark. Among their number are animals that can stymie infravision, creatures that seek to extinguish light, and monsters of pure darkness.

Grue

Magical, predatory beings of pure darkness that stalk the desolate places of the underworld. Hide in shadowed areas and leap out onto unsuspecting passersby. Grues have an evil sentience, but do not use language. Only characters able to see in magical darkness can perceive a grue's form: a writhing mass of humanoid limbs around a great central mouth.

AC 5 [14], HD 6* (27hp), Att 1 × bite (3d4), THAC0 14 [+5], MV 60' (20'), SV D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (6), ML 9, AL Chaotic, XP 500, NA 1 (1), TT C

- **Surprise:** On a 1–5.
- **Mundane damage immunity:** Only harmed by magic and magic weapons.
- **Spell immunity:** Unaffected by *charm* and *sleep* spells.
- **Darkness:** A grue is surrounded with a 15' radius area of magical darkness. Light spells cannot cancel this darkness (though see below). *Dispel magic* cancels the darkness for 1d4 rounds.
- **Light vulnerability:** A light-based spell (e.g. *light*, *continual light*) cast directly on a grue is negated but inflicts 1d6 damage per spell level.

Infrachameleon

4' long lizards with the natural ability to blend in with the surrounding thermal environment—a form of camouflage against infravision. Eat subterranean mushrooms and algae. Flee from light.

AC 4 [15], HD 3* (22hp), Att 1 × tongue / bite (1d4) or 1 × spit (acid), THAC0 17 [+2], MV 90' (30'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), ML 7, AL Neutral, XP 50, NA 1d3 (1d6), TT None

- **Surprise:** On a 1–5 to characters using infravision, due to thermal camouflage.
- **Sticky tongue:** Can attack targets up to 5' away. If the attack succeeds, the victim is dragged to the mouth and bitten (1d4 damage).
- **Spit:** Used defensively. 10' range. Target treated as AC 9 [10]. The affected character is covered in corrosive spittle and is blinded for 1 turn (**save versus poison**). Unless the goo is washed off within 3 rounds, it corrodes metal armour to rust. Magic armour has a 10% chance per "plus", to be unaffected.
- **Cling:** Climb walls, trees, etc.

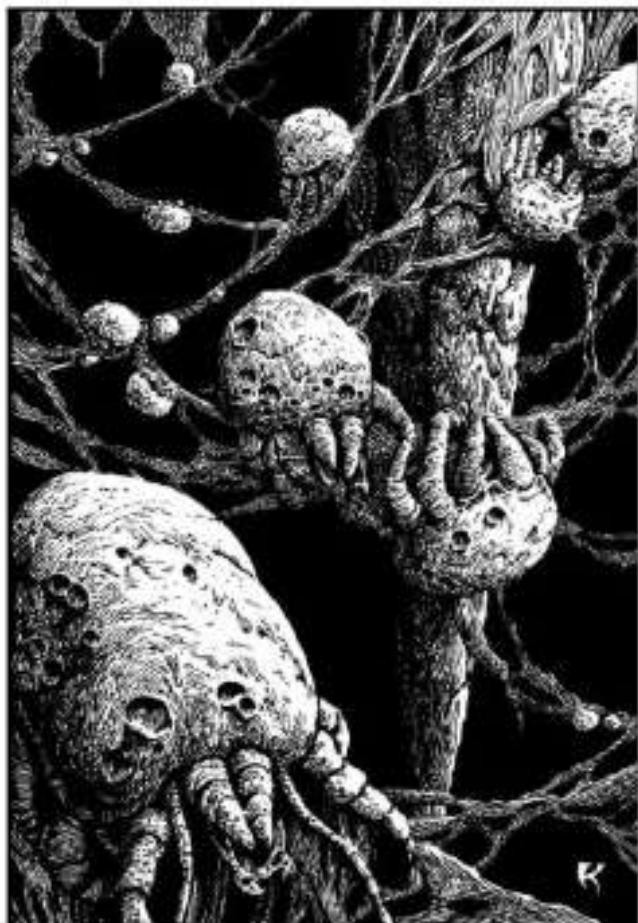


Lantern Moths

Fluttering, carnivorous 2' long moths that nest underground. Attracted to light, which drives them into a feeding frenzy.

AC 7 [12], HD 1 (4hp), Att 1 × bash (knock down) or 1 × bite (1d3), THAC0 19 [0], MV 90' (30') flying, SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), ML 6, AL Neutral, XP 10, NA 1d4 (2d6), TT U

- **Light attraction:** Attack characters carrying light sources (mundane or magical) first. Attack with their bite once the light source has been knocked out of the victim's hand (see below).
- **Knock down:** A successful attack knocks a light source from the victim's hand. Lanterns smash and are extinguished.
- **Flammable:** Suffer double damage from fire.



LUCAS ROST



LUCAS ROST

Oil-Mites

2", rock-like mites that lurk in webbed lairs on dungeon ceilings. Secretly drop onto passing adventurers, consuming their flasks of oil.

AC 9 [10], HD 1hp*, Att None, THAC0 20 [-1], MV 30' (10'), SV D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), ML 7, AL Neutral, XP 6, NA 3d8 (0), TT None

- **Surprise:** On a 1-3, due to rock-like appearance.
- **Drop:** Oil-mites drop onto the backs of passing characters. If PCs are surprised, the mites are unnoticed and wriggle inside their backpacks.
- **Consume oil:** Once inside a backpack, oil-mites seek out oil flasks (including magical oils). Each mite consumes 1 flask of oil in 1 turn, before creeping out of the pack and dropping to the ground.
- **Explosive:** Explode when exposed to flame, inflicting 1d3 damage to any within 10' (**save versus breath** for half).



Strober

Hulking (5' long), eyeless, swine-like carnivores covered in bristly spines. Dwell in lightless regions deep underground. Hunt in darkness by sound and smell alone.

AC 6 [13], HD 4* (18hp), Att 1 × tusk (2d4), THAC0 16 [+3], MV 120' (40'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), ML 7, AL Neutral, XP 125, NA 1d6 (0), TT None

- **Infravision blindness:** A strober emits rapidly oscillating waves of heat and cold from its body surface, blinding creatures within 60' that rely on infravision to see. When more than 60' from the strober, blinded creatures regain their use of infravision.
- **In melee:** Anyone in melee with a strober suffers 1 damage per round, due to its spines.

Pyrolator

7' long, carnivorous, lizard-like monsters made of rock and glowing embers. Emit a grinding sound as they move. Dwell in volcanic regions and dungeons.

AC 5 [14], HD 4+1* (19hp), Att 1 × bite (1d8+1), THAC0 15 [+4], MV 60' (20'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), ML 9, AL Neutral, XP 200, NA 1d4 (2d4), TT C

- **Fire immunity:** Unharmed by fire.
- **Conflagration:** Flames within 30' of a pyrolator burn at a vastly accelerated rate: 1d3 turns of fuel (torch or lantern duration) are consumed per round.
- **Dazzling:** Characters holding an affected flame must save versus paralysis or be blinded for 1d3 rounds.
- **Fire damage increase:** All fire-based attacks (including magic) inflict an additional +1 damage per damage die within 30' of a pyrolator. (e.g. a 5d6 *fire ball* would inflict 5d6+5 damage.)





ILLUS. KIRK

Stygian Sphere

Floating spheres (3' diameter) of absolute blackness that feed on life energy and magical light. Found deep underground or as conjured defences in wizards' lairs. Some hypothesise that stygian spheres are native to a dimension of shadows.

AC 3 [16], HD 5 (22hp), Att 3 × scintillating ray (1d8, range 20') or 1 × flash (blindness), THAC0 15 [+4], MV 60' (20'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), ML 10, AL Neutral, XP 425, NA 1d6 (0), TT None**

- **Absorb magical light:** A stygian sphere absorbs light spells (e.g. *light*, *continual light*) within 30', permanently cancelling the magic. The sphere gains 1d8 hit points per level of the spell absorbed.
- **Flash:** If threatened, a stygian sphere can emit a flash of bluish light once per day. All within 90' must **save versus paralysis** or be blinded for 1d6 turns.

Torch-Bearer's Ghost

Spirits of luckless townsfolk who were hired by an adventuring party and met their doom in the underworld. Appear as incorporeal phantoms carrying a flickering light. Haunt the dungeon in which they perished, seeking revenge on adventurers by leading them into dangerous areas. Cannot speak, but sometimes moan or cackle.

AC 9 [10], HD 1* (4hp), Att 1 × gust of wind (extinguish), THAC0 19 [0], MV 60' (20'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), ML 10, AL Chaotic, XP 13, NA 1d4 (0), TT None

► **Undead:** Usually make no noise. Immune to biological effects (e.g. poison) and mind-affecting / mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).

► **Mundane damage immunity:** Only harmed by silver weapons, magic, and magic weapons.

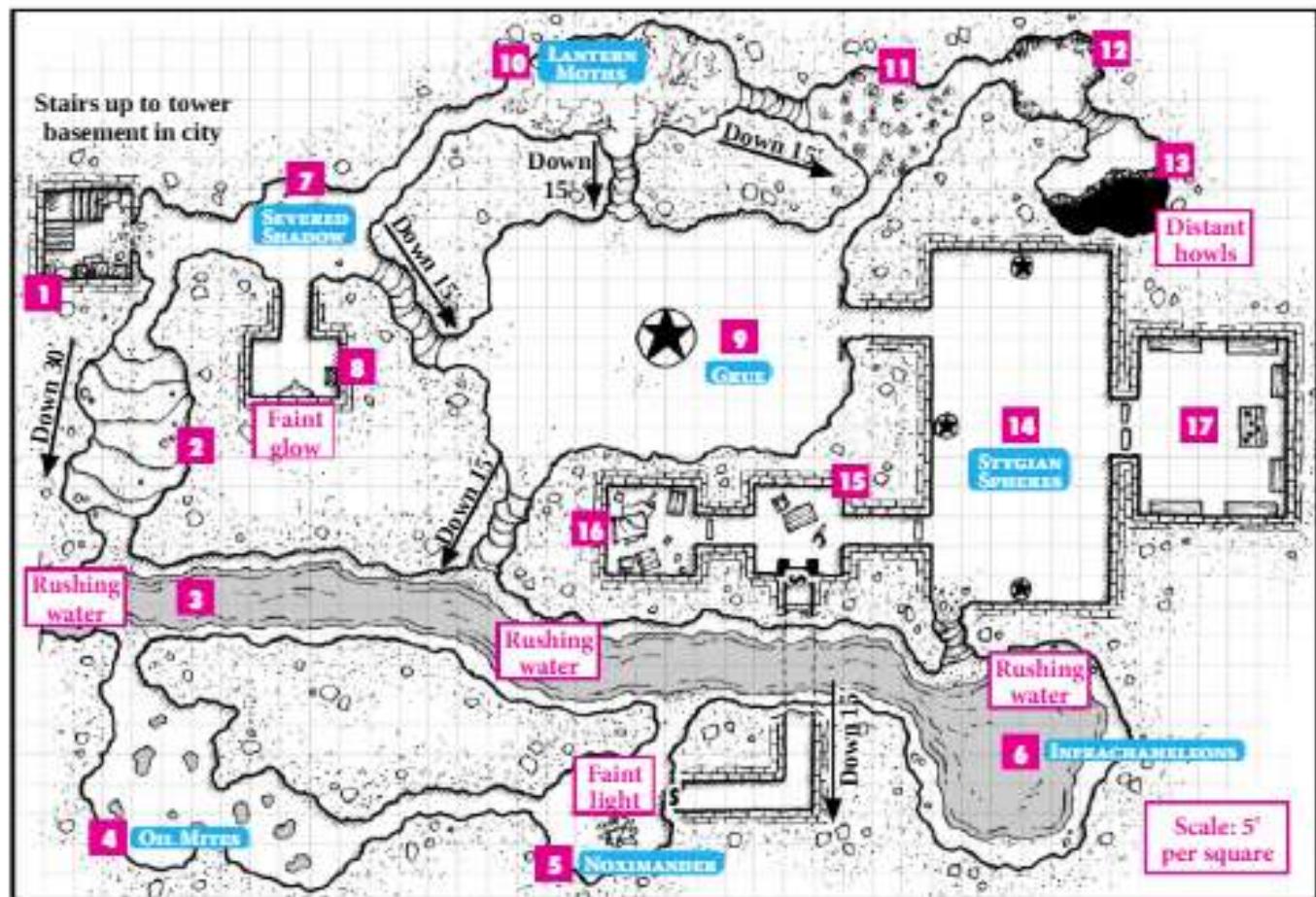
► **Extinguish:** A conjured gust of wind whips around a targeted character, who must **save versus breath**. If the save fails, flames on their person (e.g. torches, lanterns) are extinguished.



ILLUS. KIRK

NOXIMANDER'S CAVE

By CHANCE DUDINACK AND BRAD KERR



Level 4-5 Dungeon Adventure

In a dark cave beneath the city, once used by a cult of Moumb, the illusionist Noximander the Tenebrous communed with creatures from the realm of darkness. He wished to magically sever his own shadow and imbue it with consciousness—his dark mirror to command and control. Noximander successfully snipped away his shadow but the lingering influence of Moumb twisted the ritual's effect: the liberated shadow claimed half of the illusionist's mind, leaving his corporeal form half-feral. For many years the broken illusionist and his skittish shadow dwelt

in darkness with their conjured shadow creatures. Days ago, builders demolished a wall in a crumbling tower's basement and discovered a supernaturally dark cave. Adventurers are called to investigate.

General construction: Gray limestone caverns, 10' high ceilings.

Lighting: All areas unlit, unless noted.

Light dimmed: Radius of all light sources halved.

Monsters: Names underlined. Descriptions in *Terrors of the Dark*, p26, unless noted otherwise.

Random Happenings: 1-in-6 per Turn

1. A prowling **Grue**.
2. **1d6 Stygian Spheres** seek light to devour.
3. **1d4+1 Acolytes of Austerus** (OSE acolyte stats) bent on destroying the caves' dark presence.
4. Noximander's **Severed Shadow** (see below) creeps along a wall, taunting the party before fleeing.
5. Lights waver, as if buffeted by wind.
6. Shadows warp and stretch.

The Illusionist and His Shadow

Noximander: A pale, emaciated human man clad in ragged violet robes. A scatter-brained and quasi-animalistic survivalist who seeks his missing shadow. **Combat stats:** Goblin (OSE). **Emblem:** A hand with an eye in the palm.

Noximander's Severed Shadow: A stately humanoid shadow, intelligent and independent. It fears reunification with its body. **Combat stats:** Shadow (OSE).

Reuniting the two: Bringing Noximander and the Severed Shadow into physical contact reunites them as a single being. The grateful illusionist happily opens up his library (17) and awards his hoarded coin to any who aid in his reunion.

Area Descriptions

1. DISUSED CELLAR: Cobwebbed cellar stacked with empty crates. **Demolished brick wall** leads into inky black caves.

2. SLIPPERY SLOPE: Slanted floor: Slippery rock slopes dramatically towards the south. Anyone moving quickly must make a DEX check or slip helplessly into the stream in 3.

3. STREAM: Cold, dark water (10' deep) rushes eastward into the depths. **Crossing the stream:** STR check to swim against the current. **On a failed check:** the character is swept to 6, bashed against rocks along the way (1d6 damage).

4. OIL MITES: Stalactites crowd the ceiling, dripping into scummy iridescent puddles. **12 Oil Mites** cling along dangling clumps of **greasy webbing**. Mites drop onto characters' backs as they walk through the cave. **Oily puddles** are mildly flammable.

5. WIZARD'S HOVEL: Slivers of sunlight radiate overhead from a narrow, back-alley grate. **Noximander** perches on a **nest of filthy linens** mashing up oil mites for food. **Approaching:** Asks PCs if they have seen his shadow and to help find it. His memory is fuzzy but he knows that he's somehow incomplete. **Secret door:** A section of the cave wall is illusory, letting in a draft that gently blows dust across the floor. Conceals a corridor to the fireplace in 15.

6. POOL: Deep pool of murky water. **Stream** flows in from the west (3). **2 Infrachameleons** cling to the cave walls, grazing on patches of **shaggy fungus**. **Opportunistic hunters:** Use their tongue attacks on characters carried in by the stream. **At the bottom of the pool:** 2 gold medallions (350gp each).

7. SHADOW'S LOUNGE: Noximander's **Severed Shadow** lounging on the shadow of a mossy stone, quietly puffing shadow smoke rings. **Entering:** Changes shape into a grimacing shadow-monster to scare PCs off, fleeing to 14 to lure persistent PCs to the Stygian Spheres.

8. GARGOYLE HEAD: Imposing stone gargoyle head mounted on the wall, its crystalline eyes glow faintly. Noximander's emblem is etched on its forehead. **Items placed in its open, shelf-like mouth** have a *light* spell cast on them. **Oak chest:** Contains 10 polished violet crystals (25gp each).

Area descriptions continued overleaf...

9. CENTRAL CAVERN: 30' cavern ceiling stretches beyond torchlight. 8' basalt **idol** of Moumb, god of the Underworld (p16), with a **yellow chrysolite eye** (2,000gp). **Removing the eye:** Ends the light-dimming effect on the caves, attracts a furious **Grue** from 13. **Eastern passage:** Purple banners flank the tunnel entrance, bearing Noximander's emblem in white. A **Grue** lurks here, waiting to ambush potential meals (surprise 1–5).

10. DARK GARDEN: Piles of **debris** (ceramic shards, dead leaves, dark soil) overgrown with black creeper vines. **6 Lantern Moths** flutter about, drinking nectar from **5 midnight blue flowers** (night glories, 100gp each, shrivel and die in sunlight). Moths attack any light source that enters the cave.

11. STALAGMITES: Clusters of **stalagmites** crowd the floor. **Movement rate** is halved.

12. CRYSTAL CAVE: Tunnel lined with **violet crystals** receptive to magical light. **Bringing magical light here:** Crystals dimly glow. **Touching magical light to a crystal:** It glows as bright and as long as a *light* spell.

13. BOTTOMLESS PIT: Leads deep into the earth. **Distant, monstrous howling** from within the pit. At the referee's option, the pit could lead to further dungeon levels or deep into the Underworld.

14. GARGOYLE GATE: Heavy stone **doors to 17:** Magically locked. 3 gargoyle statues with **outstretched hands** mounted on the walls. **If a magically lit item is placed in each gargoyle's hands:** Their eyes faintly glow, the heavy stone doors open to 17. **3 Stygian Spheres** float around the room, attack anyone with a light source.

15. SITTING ROOM: Overturned furniture: Table and chairs, once-lavish decorations tarnished by time. **Portrait** above the mantel depicts a scowling magician in violet robes, wearing an amulet engraved with Noximander's emblem. **False fireplace** with violet crystals where the flame should be. **Secret door:** The back wall of the fireplace is illusory, concealing a 3' entrance to a stairway and corridor to 5.

16. BEDROOM: Ransacked furniture: Bedsheets torn off, dresser drawers thrown onto the floor, shelves emptied. **Invisible chest** on one of the shelves. **Opening:** A blast of shadowy phantasmagoria. Anyone watching must **save versus spells** or wander disoriented along random paths for 1d6 turns (roll for each PC's path separately, check for random encounters normally, effect ends after taking damage). **Inside the chest:** 500gp, black opal (1,000gp), *wand of radiance* (12 charges). (If not using Advanced magic items: a wand that casts *light*, 12 charges.)

17. LOCKED LIBRARY: Bookshelves lined with journals on the nature of light and darkness, Underworld ecology, and monster anatomy. **Cluttered desk:** 6 crystal prisms (1,000gp each), bejewelled silver mirror (3,000gp), half-melted candles, silver shears, **research notes** on the shadow severance ritual. **Reading the notes:** Requires an INT check to interpret. Once done, an arcane caster can perfect the ritual (30,000gp and 6 months of magical research). **Hidden compartment beneath a sliding bookshelf:** Contains Noximander's spell book (referee should select spells) and 300pp.

**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**
RETRO ADVENTURE GAME

CARCASS CRAWLER

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- ▶ **Deities and cults:** 4 deities, their cults, and spells.
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