

The Gongfarmer's Almanac



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JELLAIRFISH

By Daniel J. Bishop

Jellairfish are creatures of the air, similar in many ways to jellyfish. They gracefully float through the atmosphere using bladders filled with light gasses, are frequently beautiful, but even more often, dangerous. They range in size from half an inch across up to diameters of 20 feet. Their hanging tendril-like oral arms and tentacles can reach up to three times the diameter of the creature's main body (or "bell").

Similar to ocean jellyfish, jellairfish have a mass of thin, strand-like tentacles and a few thick oral arms hanging below them as they float along. The tentacles contain stinging cells which deliver various forms of paralyzing or venomous stings (depending upon the type of jellairfish encountered).

Jellairfish are composed mostly of gasses, with approximately 5% of their bodies being solid or liquid matter. Many jellairfish species are almost completely transparent, and are thus well-camouflaged until prey stumbles into their tentacles. Other species use bioluminescence at night to track each other, remaining in a "school" formation. These tend to be the smaller types of jellairfish, such as the so-called "fairy lanterns."

Jellairfish do not have brains, blood, or much in the way of discernable anatomy. This makes them immune to mind-control, poisons, many critical hits, and most Mighty Deeds. On the other hand, their gas-filled bell makes them extremely vulnerable to fire, with some species taking up to four times the normal damage from fire-based attacks, and Sky Phantoms exploding if they take any fire damage at all.

Below you will find seven types of jellairfish, listed from the smallest to the largest, for use in your adventures. These beings can be used in both *Dungeon Crawl Classics* and *Mutant Crawl Classics* games!

JELLARIFISH SWARM

The smallest of jellairfish have bells about half an inch across. They are primarily filter feeders, found in places where the air is filled with the dry dust of mummies or the miasma of the catacombs. They do not attack living creatures intentionally, but they are extremely difficult to see in the dark places they inhabit. Often, it is the first painful stings that make creatures aware that they have blundered into a jellairfish swarm. Withdrawal from the swarm is usually the best way to deal with the threat, as the swarm itself has no interest in pursuit.

Although the stinging of these jellairfish is painful, and can cause shortness of breath (manifested as temporary Stamina damage), creatures surviving contact with a swarm discover that any Stamina lost from their venom is recovered at a rate of 1 point per minute, beginning one minute after the initial sting.

Jellairfish Swarm: Init +2; Atk swarming sting +3 melee (1 plus venom); AC 9; HD 4d4; MV fly 20'; Act special; SP camouflage +12, attack all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, venom (DC 10 Fort save or 1d3 temporary Stamina damage), jellairfish immunities, fire vulnerability (x2 damage); SV Fort -4, Ref +10, Will +0; AL N.



FAIRY LANTERNS

Between half a foot and a foot in diameter, the fairy lanterns are notable for their soft bioluminescent glow, which flickers in the twilight like blue-green flames. These signals keep a shoal of jellairfish loosely together, although how the mindless creatures process them is not clear. Players mimicking these signals (using, for example, a cantrip spell) can easily draw fairy lanterns to haunt desired locations. In this way, magicians and creatures from Elfland sometimes use fairy lanterns as guardians.

Fairy lanterns only feed at night – seeking nocturnal birds, rodents, and bats. By day they retreat into the upper reaches of the air. Even though they feed on smaller prey, they will sting large creatures as a method of defense. They only luminesce intermittently at night, with the best time for a sighting being twilight or just before dawn.

The venom of fairy lanterns causes paralysis for 2d6 turns unless a DC 15 Fort save is successful. Those who use fairy lanterns as guardians usually have some means to recover paralyzed intruders before mobility returns! A character can attempt to milk 1d3 doses of venom from a dead jellairfish, but a DC 10 handle poison check is required to do so safely!

Fairy Lantern: Init +3; Atk sting +4 melee (venom); AC 8; HD 1d4; MV fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP venom (DC 15 Fort save or paralysis 2d6 turns), jellairfish immunities, fire vulnerability (x2 damage); SV Fort -6, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.

SUNSET CLOUD

The sunset clouds are a fantastic sight – jellairfish with two-foot diameter bells colored in streaks of pale pink, orange, and yellow, reminiscent of a beautiful sunset. These jellairfish often travel in shoals of 3d6 individuals and are completely harmless, only feeding on small insects and microscopic spores. Their tentacles have no venom, making movement among the creatures a rather wondrous and pleasant experience.

Sunset cloud jellairfish would be more plentiful in the world were it not for the fact that their vital essence can be used to undo magical corruption and detrimental mutations. The exact methods of extracting the essence of these creatures is a secret kept by a few wizards, shamans, or mutants, as the judge sees fit. Learning the proper method of extraction and preparation is a Quest For It opportunity, with the desired information hidden in ancient books or datacores patched together from Ancient artifacts. A sunset cloud can renew this essence in 1d10 months, so knowing how to extract the essence without killing it is of real value. Not all creatures who know how to extract the essence from the dead can do so from the living.

The judge should remember that both the creatures and the knowledge of how to use them are precious commodities. A shoal of sunset clouds may appear to be nothing more than bucolic color added to help dress a scene, but something or someone is likely to consider the jellairfish as their own personal property. These beings are unlikely to take kindly to PCs killing their flocks, or attempting to “milk” the sunset clouds for their own purposes!

Sunset Cloud: Init +0; Atk none; AC 8; HD 1d5; MV fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP essence, jellairfish immunities, fire vulnerability (x3 damage); SV Fort -6, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.

RINGED JELLAIRFISH

Among the rarest of jellairfish, and certainly numbered among the most dangerous, the ringed jellairfish is almost invisible, with only the ring-like bluish pigments on some of its internal structures warning unwary creatures before blundering into its tentacles. Similar to the sunset clouds, when mature, their main bodies are only two feet in diameter and they subsist off of small insects and microscopic spores. The ringed jellairfish, however, possesses one of the most virulent toxins known to humankind. So virulent is this venom, that the judge is advised to make this monster the subject of horrific rumors, so that the PCs are amply warned before they

encounter it. Indeed, once the ringed jellairfish's toxin is properly described, the mere suggestion of one in the vicinity may be as effective as an in-game encounter with the creature.

Anyone coming into contact with a ringed jellairfish must succeed in a DC 20 Fort save or be immediately paralyzed, dying in 1d3 rounds. If the save is made, the creature instead suffers 1d3 points of temporary Strength, Agility, and Stamina damage each round until death or the poison is halted by an antitoxin, magic, or drug of the Ancients. During this time, the creature is in such extreme agony that they suffer a -1d reduction on the dice chain to all rolls, increasing by -1d per round until venom is neutralized. When falling below 1d3 on the dice chain, the poisoned creature is rendered helpless from the pain, and all roll results are considered a 0.

Those trying to harvest the toxin from a slain jellairfish must succeed in a DC 15 handle poison check to avoid coming into contact with the toxin themselves, but gain 1d5+3 doses for their efforts if successful. A ringed jellairfish slain by fire cannot provide any recoverable venom.

Ringed Jellairfish: Init +0; Atk sting +2 melee (venom); AC 8; HD 1d6; MV fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage +8, venom (see above), jellairfish immunities, fire vulnerability (x3 damage); SV Fort -5, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.

SKY PHANTOM

Although it has a large bell between 5-7 feet in diameter, the sky phantom's near-transparent body is difficult to see. Not particularly fearsome by nature, the sky phantom is still large enough to feed on humanoids (even if its normal prey is much smaller). Sky phantoms are dangerous primarily because they are so hard to spot, and because they are violently flammable.

If a sky phantom takes even 1 point of damage from heat or fire, it will explode. Everything within 10 feet takes 3d6 damage. Between 11 and 20 feet, the damage is 2d6, and

between 21 and 30 feet, damage is 1d6. Characters may make a Reflex save (DCs 20, 15, and 10 respectively), to take half damage. Failing this save knocks all creatures prone. Even creatures from 31 to 40 feet away must succeed in a DC 5 Reflex save to remain upright. This explosion will utterly destroy the sky phantom. If a creature is on a ledge (or similar) when knocked prone, they must succeed in a Luck check or be knocked off.

Sky phantom venom is relatively weak. A DC 10 handle poison check will extract 1d5+1 doses of this toxin so long as the sky phantom was not destroyed. The toxin does a base 1d3 damage, with a DC 10 Fort save to avoid an additional 1d3 damage.

Sky Phantom: Init +0; Atk sting +0 melee (venom); AC 10; HD 2d6; MV fly 30'; Act 2d20; SP camouflage +15, venom (1d3 dam plus DC 10 Fort save or additional 1d3 dam), jellairfish immunities, explodes from fire (see above); SV Fort -3, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.

TIGER JELLAIRFISH

The tiger jellairfish's diet of large mammals has made its membranes tougher and less transparent than those of its kin. Instead, relying on a pattern of striped markings to offer some concealment. Unlike many jellarifish, the tiger jellairfish does not travel in groups, but tends to avoid other jellairfish of the same type. The bell of an adult tiger jellairfish is from 8 to 10 feet across.

Tiger jellairfish toxin causes 1 point of temporary Agility damage, with a DC 12 Fort save required to avoid paralysis for 1d6 turns. A tiger jellairfish can use its oral arms to devour a paralyzed creature slowly, at a rate of 1 hp every 1d6 rounds, so long as the jellairfish is not being attacked. The tiger jellairfish attempts to capture and paralyze all opponents before beginning to feed. As a jellairfish can only consume one creature the size of an adult human a day, it is a matter of luck as to who in a group is devoured, and who remains when the jellairfish is finished.

Clever scavengers may follow a tiger jellairfish at a distance (tiger jellairfish do not distinguish prey species from scavengers). Once the jellairfish has finished feeding, these scavengers may pick at the remains...or the untouched, but paralyzed characters!

A DC 10 handle poison check can extract 2d4 doses of toxin from a defeated tiger jellairfish.

Tiger Jellairfish: Init +2; Atk sting +5 melee (venom); AC 12; HD 4d6; MV fly 30'; Act 3d20; SP camouflage +5, venom (1 temporary Agility plus Fort DC 12 to avoid paralysis), slow consumption, jellairfish immunities, fire vulnerability (x4 damage); SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +0; AL N.

TITAN OF THE AIR

The largest of the jellairfish, having bodies of up to 20 feet across. Although they spend most of their time in the upper reaches of the atmosphere, titans will descend to feed. Their tentacles can be up to 40' long, making it difficult for prey animals to do meaningfully damage to these jellairfish. In addition, a titan of the air can shoot toxin-laden darts from its body allowing them to subdue prey up to 100 feet away.

The venom of a titan causes 2d6 points of damage and requires a DC 15 Fort save to avoid taking 1d6 points of temporary Agility damage. On a natural "1", 1 point of Agility damage is permanent. A paralyzed creature lifted to the titan's oral arms can be devoured at a rate of 1d3 hp per round, with the body being irretrievable 1d3 minutes after it has reached 0 hp.

Unlike many jellairfish, the titan of the air is so bulky that it announces its descent by casting a heavy shadow. As long as creatures look up, they cannot be surprised. Because titans of the air have such thick membranes, they take the least amount of damage from fire-based attacks, compared to other jellairfish species.

With a successful DC 10 handle poison check, a character can extract 1d6 doses of toxin from a titan of the air. Up to 30 doses can be extracted, requiring multiple handle poison checks to do so.

Titan of the Air: Init +0; Atk sting +4 melee (1d3 plus venom) or dart +4 ranged (1 plus venom); AC 16; HD 10d6; MV fly 50'; Act 6d20; SP venom (2d6 plus Fort DC 15 to avoid 1d6 temporary Agility), consumption, jellairfish immunities, fire vulnerability (+1d3 damage per die); SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +0; AL N.



MONSTERS SLIGHTLY BEYOND THE PALE

by Blair Wettlaufer

One of the best things that *Dungeon Crawl Classics* does is provide monsters that are strange and wonderful – ghouls with worm like creatures that burst forth from them when struck down, mutated beast men, semi-sentient vines that animate corpses, and so on ... but sometimes you need something that's just a little odd, a little strange, a little ... unknown. You can't always have Cthulhuian horrors from the spaces between worlds, but that doesn't mean falling back on generic orcs, goblins, and wolves, and using something a little unexpected.

The phrase “beyond the pale” refers back to medieval England, describing things beyond a marked border or pallum, meaning outside the border, outside of civilization, or outside acceptable society. If you tell your players that a creature is beyond the pale, it's something that crawls outside the bounds of civilization, preying on lone travelers or luckless farmers far from the lanterns and beacons of a walled city, or well-patrolled village.

Below are eight monsters from my campaign that I use instead of 'standard' monsters. Some are a little different, some are very odd, most are memorable – but if you find you need a woodland random encounter, or a marauding tribe of humanoids, try these instead – something to frighten and threaten your hapless adventurers, when they go wandering beyond the pale...

(Shorter articles on the Boggard and the Grue were previously published on my blog, Archade's Tower, at archadestower.blogspot.com).

BLACKVOLE

A hideous, malformed wolf with matted black fur and a disjointed loping movement, that hunts wounded and sick creatures, or unsuspecting travelers. While they tend

to feed on carrion left by other predators, It is said they often skulk at the edge of villages and farms, and will pounce upon children wandering about after dark.

Being seen by a blackvole is thought to be extremely bad luck, and the old women of the village say the only way to offset the curse of a blackvole's gaze is to recite all five verses of the Rede of the Green Rider.

These houndlike creatures are more cunning and intelligent than one would think, hunting in packs with tactics, cutting off travelers and forcing them from the path, and luring people into the forest with soft whimpers and mutterings. A blackvole will never enter any church, and can be turned by Neutral clerics as they are inherently harmful to the natural order of things.

Blackvole: Init +5; Atk bite +6 melee (1d6+2); AC 14; HD 2d6 (7 hp); MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL N.

Anyone in sight of a blackvole suffers a fumble on a 1-2, and a -1 to all Luck checks.



Boggard

A large, slumping humanoid figure with mottled gray, toad-like features, standing about 12 feet tall. Boggards are crude predators that hunt wild game, fish, and wayward travellers. They have claws, but often wield rocks or small trees as clubs. When boggards are threatened, they can inflate sacs on either side of their mouth and exude a unique and powerful smell to them that causes most folk to become nauseous.

Boggard: Init +3, Atk claw +6 melee (1d6+6) or tree club +6 melee (1d12+6) or hurled rock +6 melee (1d8+6); AC 16; HD 4d8+8 (27 hp); MV 30' or swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP noxious stench, underwater regeneration, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; AL C.

Boggards can use an action to exude a stench, and any creature within 30 feet must make a DC 14 Will save or suffer a -1d penalty to all attacks, skill checks, casting, attack rolls, or saving throws for 1d6 rounds.

If a boggard submerges itself in water, it regains hit points at a rate of 1d8 per round. Fire damage can is not regenerated.

Blood Grubs

These small creatures can be found feeding on carcasses, and are small, white, and harmless, ranging from 1" to 2" in length and a mottled grey color - unless handled improperly.

If a corpse is handled or touched by an unsuspecting adventurer, the blood grubs have a single chance to burrow into the unsuspecting intruder's flesh, with a +8 attack roll. Otherwise, they will crawl slowly towards a living creature, seeking a warm haven inside their flesh, but are easily avoided or slain.

If a successful attack is made, the grub burrows into its newfound host, inflicting 1d2 points of damage, but that is just the beginning. Each turn (10 minutes), the

creature makes another attack roll, and if successful, gorges himself on the blood and flesh of the host, while releasing toxins into the bloodstream and inflicting pain and disorientation, causing 1 hp of damage plus 1d3 points of Personality damage. If a 3 is rolled for Personality damage, the host will have hallucinations (judge's discretion). Should a host have their Personality attribute reduced to 0, they become comatose, and will die within 1d6 hours.

To remove an embedded blood grub, someone else must look for the wriggling form under the skin, and cut it out (rolling against AC 11). As time goes on, the grub burrows deeper, so their Armor Class increases by +1 per turn to a maximum of AC 14. Each attempt to cut it out, successful or not, causes 1d3 damage to the host.

Blood Grub: Init -2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d2); AC 7; HD 1d3 (2 hp); MV 5' or climb 5'; Act 1d20; SP burrowing attack, feeding toxins; SV Fort -3, Ref -2, Will -3; AL N.

Dream Wurm

Drifting on the ethereal currents between worlds, dream wyrms find their way into the slumbering minds of creatures of the material world, feasting on memories and feelings. However, sometimes a dreamer may instinctually detect an intruder and attempt to repel it from the mind, and that's when the dream turns to a nightmare.

A creature 'attacked' by a dream wurm wakes to find a floating serpentine creature, the length of ten men, with slavering jaws and small forearms, with silvery scales and an iridescent fin ridge running down its back, attempting to devour them. Whether they are successful in fending off the dream wurm or not, there is a 75% the encounter occurs completely within the dream of the traveller, and 'death' in a dream is a temporary thing, with them waking again to find the creature is gone.

As creatures of the immaterial world, they pass through walls and other solid matter. They only take half damage from physical weapons unless they are enchanted.

If it successfully bites, the wyrm loops its body about the target, and each round thereafter, constricting its coils for automatic damage in addition to making further bite attacks. An opponent can break free with a successful DC 16 Strength check.

Dream wyrms can exhale a cloud of vapors every 1d6 rounds, that cause exposed skin to blister and burn, attacking at +8, range 30', any number of creatures within 30' of each other, for 4d6 damage. Targets may attempt a DC 14 Reflex save for half damage.

Defeating a dream wyrm in the waking world grants experience as normal, but defeating a dream wyrm while sleeping grants +1 Luck instead. For those that are harmed by the creature, hp damage in the dream world is halved upon waking.

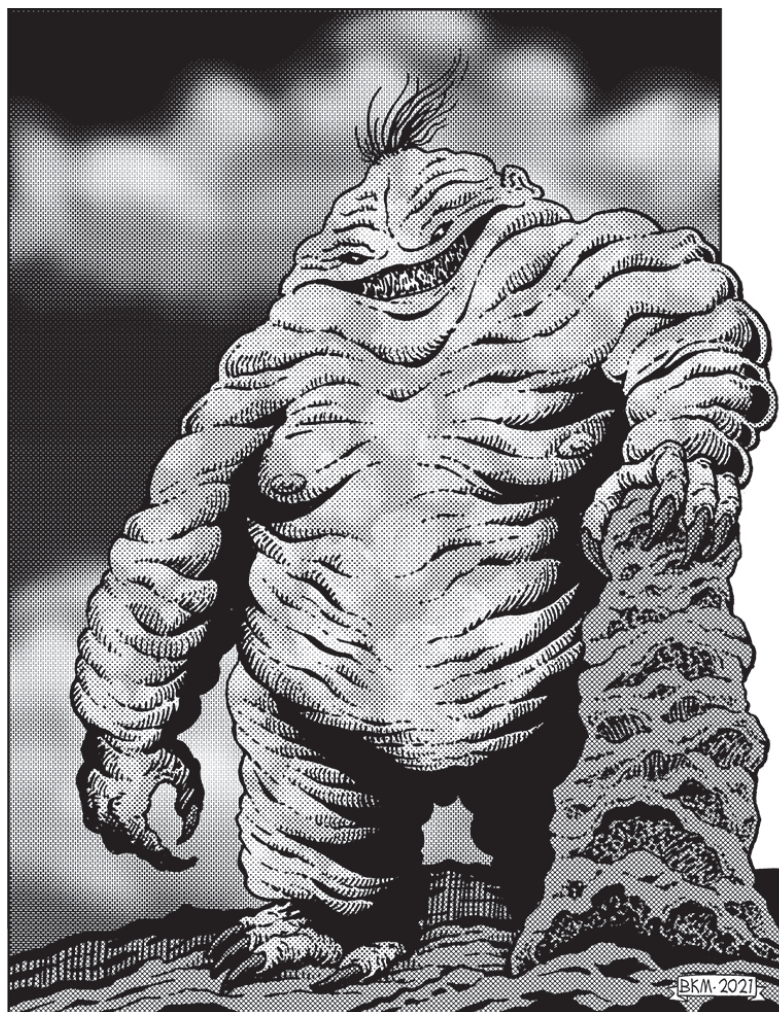
Dream Wyrm: Init +4; Atk bite +8 melee (1d8+2); AC 16; HD 8d8+8 (45 hp); MV flight 30'; Act 1d20; SP constriction 1d8, immaterial creature, resistant to non-magical weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL N.

Great Unclean One

Some rumors say it is a child of the Chaos Lord, Nimuul the Unclean. Others say it is born of foul sorcery, corruption of magic taking shape into its own corporeal form, others just scream and fear and flee its presence.

It is a large, slumping figure, with great folds of distended, pox-marked flesh all but obscuring the shape of its form. It's clawed fingers are encrusted with disease, and its maw chortles as it attempts to swallow creatures whole.

The miasma of gnats and the smell of disease is overpowering, and any that approach within 20' must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or suffer a -2d penalty to all rolls and take 1d3 hp damage from biting pests.



The poisoned talons of the beast cause damage and require a DC 14 Fortitude save or cause a -2 penalty to all die checks. Subsequent saving throws can be made each day, and two successful saves free the creature from the poisons.

If the Great Unclean One succeeds in a bite attack, it can use its second action die to attempt another attack to swallow the target. If the second attack succeeds, the target takes bite damage again and is then sucked into the toothy maw, and is trapped within the monstrosity, taking

a further 1d10 acid damage each round. A swallowed creature can cut its way out with a small weapon such as a dagger, by inflicting 15 points of damage against AC 16.

The Great Unclean One can cast Choking Cloud or Emirikol's Entropic Maelstrom, with a +9 to the caster check.

Great Unclean One: Init +, Atk talons +4 melee (1d6+1) or bite +8 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 10d12+20 (85 hp); MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP degenerate presence, immune to non-magical weapons, infravision 120', poisoned talons, spell like abilities, swallow whole; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +6; AL C.

Grue

An emaciated but nimble creature with cold, reptilian skin and bulbous staring eyes, these creatures live underground in sewers, caves, or under bridges. Grues favour the dark, coming out at night to hunt. They tend to pounce on unsuspecting quarry and rend them with their razor claws and fanged maws. They are cruel and selfish, but willing to wager or bargain for personal gain, speaking broken Common. Anyone who speaks Grue will have a +2 to any skill checks involved in negotiation.

Grues live in small groups, called "clutches", and obey the will of the eldest matriarch in the clutch, calling her Mother Grue. These are often the fiercest, largest of the group, and are often hardest to slay. It is said that Mother Grues' talons cause the blood of their foes to become poisoned.

Grue: Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d6) or spear +2 (1d8); AC 13; HD 3d8+6 (20 hp); MV 30' or swim 30'; Act 2d20; SP degenerate presence, infravision 120'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Sneak Silently +6; AL L.

Any food or drink touched by a grue will spoil, becoming inedible, water it touches becomes unpotable, plants wither, and the like (although the grue does not notice

or care). Any wounded creature struck or touched by a grue must make a DC 12 Fort save each time or suffer an additional 1d3 hp of damage from their wounds festering.

Mother Grue: Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6) or spear +3 (1d8); AC 13; HD 5d8+10 (33 hp); MV 30' or swim 30'; Act 2d20; SP degenerate presence, poisoned claws, infravision 120'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Sneak Silently +6; AL L.

Any food or drink touched by a mother grue will spoil, becoming inedible, water it touches becomes unpotable, plants wither, and the like (although the grue does not notice or care). Any wounded creature struck or touched by a mother grue must make a DC 14 Fort save each time or suffer an additional 1d3 hp of damage and become poisoned (losing 1d3 Agility points temporarily).

Restless Soul

A restless soul is an emaciated un-dead that slain traveler who has suffered an unfortunate fate in the wilds, and their spirit causes their corpse to wander paths and roadways, seeking the warmth of living bodies.

At a distance, a restless soul appears as a cloaked traveler, wearing mud-stained and tattered clothing. To the casual eye they may be mistaken as living until they approach.

If both melee attacks result in a hit, the un-dead wraps both hands around their opponents neck, choking them in subsequent rounds for an automatic hit, but it cannot use actions to make further melee attacks while doing so.

While near living creatures, they leech warmth and life from the air – nothing dramatic, just a few degrees drop in temperature, and a sense of misplaced unease. That is how they feed their hunger. If provoked, they can increase their pull on the souls of the living, causing nausea and chills. The restless soul can take an action on its turn to feed on all souls within 30', causing 1d6 cold damage unless a DC 12 Fortitude save is successfully made.

Restless souls are un-dead, and thus can be turned by clerics. They do not eat, drink or breathe. As un-dead, they are immune to sleep, charm and hold spells, as well as other mental effects and cold damage.

This unquiet corpse can only truly be slain by magical weapons or spells – if it appears to be damaged by non magical weapons, and If a restless soul suffers 10 or more points of damage in one strike (magical or not), or is reduced to “0 hp” by mundane weapons, they fall motionless to the ground, but 1d3 rounds later they rise again with full hit points and unharmed. All witnessing a rising restless soul must make a DC 12 Will save or be shaken (-2d to all checks, attacks and saves for 1d3 turns (10-30 minutes).

Restless Soul: Init -1; Atk slam +5 melee (1d6+2); AC 12; HD 4d12 (26 hp); MV 25'; Act 2d20; SP un-dead, choking grasp (1d10 damage), darkvision 100 ft, feed on living souls, risen from the dead, half damage from non-magical weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

Wererat

A humanoid creature with ratlike features that wells in sewers and dark alleys, who can act with stealth and human-like intelligence, while chittering and squeaking in the language of the rats. They often wield short swords, and also have a ferocious bite.

Anyone injured by the wererat's bite attack might contract the disease of lycanthropy, changing them slowly into one of them. At the end of the combat, all PCs injured by a wererat must make a Fort save vs. a DC equal to 12 (or the number of hit points in bite damage taken, whichever is higher). If the saving throw fails, they are corrupted with the curse of lycanthropy. Each night a DC 12 Fort save must be made or roll on the table below. If a result grants no new effect, instead treat the roll as a 16 result. Should a victim ever be reduced to 0 Personality from this table, their mind becomes entirely and irredeemably ratlike.



The progress of the curse can be postponed by consuming belladonna, but that is a poisonous plant (DC 14 Fort Save or suffer 1d3 Stamina, 1d3 hp damage each time a plant is consumed). Lycanthropy can also be cured by a remove curse spell or certain esoteric means of the judge's creation.

1d16

Lycanthropic Corruption

- 1 Starts growing thick, bristly fur in tufts. If this result is rolled a second time, it becomes impossible to hide. If rolled a third time, their body is completely covered in fur, granting +2 to AC.
- 2 Bones start twisting and reshaping to the new form, causing extreme pain and 1d6 hp damage.
- 3 Eyes start adapting to the dark, gain +10' of infravision each time this is rolled, up to 100'.
- 4 Teeth start extending, granting a 1d2 bite. If this is rolled subsequent times, the bite damage increases to 1d3, 1d4, 1d5 and 1d6. Once the bite attack reaches 1d6, the teeth are impossible to hide.
- 5 The physical body reverts to human form temporarily. Any physical traits of lycanthropy such as teeth or a tail or fur, and their relevant bonuses are temporarily lost, but other effects such as infravision or protection from non-silver weapons or the like remain.
- 6 A tail starts growing, but can be hidden. If rolled a second time, it becomes impossible to hide. If rolled a third time, it grows to full size, granting +2 to Reflex saves.

7 The body grows resistant to non-silver or non-magical weapons, only taking 75% damage from other weapons. If rolled a second time, non-silver and non-magical weapons only cause 50% damage. If rolled a third time, non-silver and non-magical weapons only cause 25% damage. If rolled a fourth time immunity is granted to non-silver weapons.

8 Your aggressive instincts increase, granting a +1 to Initiative checks and attacks. If rolled a second time, it increases both bonuses to +2.

9 Fingers lengthen and joints loosen, granting the skills of Climb Sheer Surfaces, Hide In Shadows, and Sneak Silently as a Chaotic 1st level Thief. If rolled again, it grants these skills as a Chaotic 2nd level Thief.

10 Hunger for flesh and blood cannot be denied, either feast on a freshly killed creature of 1HD or more, or suffer 1d4 temporary Personality damage.

11 The chittering of rats is now understood, and is gained as an additional language. If rolled a second time, the mind of the victim becomes more animalistic, and a random non-rat language is lost.

12 Your bite becomes diseased, granting you the ability to transmit lycanthropy.

13 Your sense of smell and acuity of eyesight heightens, granting a +1 Bonus to checks involving smell or sight. If rolled a second time, it increases to +2. IF rolled a third time, you suffer a -1 to checks involving smell or sight in bright daylight.

14 Rats see you as a kindred creature, and will no longer harm you unless harmed first.

15 Gain +1 hp permanently as your unnatural vitality increases.

16 The victim is plagued by animalistic urges and thoughts, suffer 1d6 temporary Personality damage

Wererat: Init +2; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6+1); AC 15; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 30', Climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP immune to damage from normal weapons, lycanthropy (see below); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Climb Sheer Surfaces +3, Hide In Shadows +3, Sneak Silently +4; AL C.

Man From St. Ives (The Lord of Cats)

A DCC RPG patron by Eric Harshbarger

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Whether he was an elf cast out of Faerie because he valued felines over his brethren, one of the original Creators of the World who was tasked with fashioning the first great cats from Chaos, or just a powerful wizard who succumbed to the thrall of the common house cat; these days The Lord of Cats acts as an enigmatic patron to those who would protect felines of all types. Rarely is he actually encountered by his vassals, and never is he addressed with the title "Lord of Cats". Rather, his business is conducted through his faithful envoy, Baudrons, and he is simply referred to as the "Man From St. Ives."

Should a PC wizard show kind and generous manners toward a cat during her adventuring [for example, player characters in my campaign released a rare white tiger captured by kobolds rather than selling the valued beast for profit], word may eventually get back to the Lord. If the wizard in question does not already possess a familiar, or if the familiar possessed is a feline of some sort, then Baudrons will be dispatched to meet with this personage who has gained favor in the eyes of the Man From St. Ives.

The initial encounter with Baudrons will be anything but typical. One account (from the mediocre geomancer, Malinda Foulbreath) goes thusly:

I recall, decades ago, a strange fellow approaching myself and my companions as we caroused in the Duck & Drake Inn of Stonefell-on-Brembrooke. This well dressed dandy seemed quite out of place in that seedy public house, but he was quite aloof and paid no attention to the surroundings. Rather, he sat down, promptly ordered all of us drinks, and acted as if he'd been involved in our most recent escapades.

He introduced himself as "Baudrons" and said that he was an ambassador from his liege, a "man from St. Ives". He'd somehow heard that I'd spared the life of a were-tiger in the Swampshades, despite it having initially attacked our weakened

party (I opted to magically sleep the beast rather than bombard it with enchanted javelins — over the objection of Dwandle the Dwarf). He was friendly enough, I suppose, but there was no doubt that he was scrutinizing us with his weirdly colored eyes as he learned the details of our exploits (plying us with plenty of drink, to be sure).

Finally, he took on a more somber tone and asked me directly if I had yet aligned myself with a “patron of the magical arts”. When I stated that I had not, and had not yet even learned how to enrapture a beast to act as a familiar, he replied that his lord might be able to help me with that, and much, much more. He withdrew a gold coin from his pocket (it was not from the King’s mint, having, instead, on the obverse an embossed scene of a walking man surrounded by house cats, and on the reverse the mark of a tiger’s paw.

In an instant he spun the coin on the tabletop and said, “quickly now, before the coin settles, answer my riddle:

On the road to St. Ives
I met a man with seven wives.
Each wife had seven sacks,
Each sack held seven cats,
And each cats had seven kits.
Kits, cats, sacks, and wives;
How many were going to St. Ives?”

Quickly we tried to calculate the solution. Pudric the Wise, our priest, was sure he was close to the correct sum, but I could see the coin beginning to wobble, so I blurted out my own answer. Baudrons immediately slapped his hand down atop the coin and revealed it to be “heads up” (though, oddly, now I realized the coin was, in fact, silver, not the gold I’d first imagined).

“Travel to St. Ives and give this coin to my Master, and in return he will bestow upon you much knowledge, wisdom, and magic that favors felines and their kin.” When I told him that I had never heard of such a place as St. Ives, he responded, “I do not expect you to find the place today, this week, or even this month, but should you discover its whereabouts, the road to that city will be worth treading upon. This token will undoubtedly help you find the way.” He handed me the coin.

I still have that coin, but to this day, no one I ever asked, and no map I ever studied, could show me where St. Ives might be. Whoever this "man from St. Ives" is, at this point I'd rather learn higher magic from someone a bit more forthright.

Similar encounters are described throughout the "St. Ives lore". While details vary, some things seem to remain constant: the wizard is always approached by Baudrons, and this mysterious character eventually spins a coin and asks the above riddle. If the riddle remains unanswered by the time the coin settles down [give players 2d30+30 seconds to provide a solution, or, actually spin a large coin as a timer], the coin will appear "tails up" after Baudrons slaps it. In this case the wizard has failed the most basic test, and the envoy will retrieve the coin and depart; the Man From St. Ives will look elsewhere for protégé.

Should the wizard answer the riddle in time, the coin will reveal itself as "heads up"; the metal of the coin will be copper, silver, or gold depending on how "correct" the answer is. The coin will be given to the wizard, and she will be instructed to travel to St. Ives and return the coin to the patron. If the wizard successfully casts patron bond upon the coin, she will receive a vision that details a quest of some sort. This quest should be cat-themed (subtly or overtly), and successful completion of this adventure will result in the character obtaining knowledge of the location of St. Ives (possibly on a found map, maybe from the whispers of a beggar, etc). The town will seem to be in a nearby, and simply heretofore overlooked location, but it can never be found without completion of the aforementioned quest.

During the subsequent journey toward St. Ives, the wizard will meet a man traveling away from the hamlet (when it has just come into view). The man is accompanied by seven women who are leading a large, mule-drawn, covered wagon (from within the wagon faint mewling can be heard). All of these figures are rather haggard looking, only steps about abject poverty. The man will be supplicant and ask if the wizard has any money to spare for a destitute clan such as his. If the wizard proffers the coin mentioned above, the man will reveal himself

to be the Man From St. Ives and the patron bond will be completed. From this point on invoke patron may be cast (according to the results of the originally cast patron bond). Furthermore, one of the "wives" accompanying the Lord of Cats will give to the wizard an adult cat retrieved from within the wagon. The cat will be loyal to the wizard, and if the mage casts find familiar, this animal will be the companion gained. The animal has 1d7+2 hit points rather than the usual 1d4+2 for a familiar. All other attributes for the familiar should be determined in the usual way (See core rulebook, p.316, or at judge's discretion). Barring extraordinary circumstances, the wizard will never directly encounter the Lord of Cats again.

Vassals of the Lord of Cats may be any alignment but will always be expected to serve the Man From St. Ives faithfully. The various quests set forth by the patron will seem whimsical or nonsensical to most, but the Lord has his reasons, and all such tasks in some way further the well-being of felines and their ways. The number seven is considered sacred by the Man From St. Ives.

Invoke Patron (The Man From St. Ives)

12-13 Fleas and Ticks. The next opponent the caster touches is plagued by fleas and ticks. The target itches horribly and is at -1 to all attack, spell, and skill rolls. The affliction will last 1d7 rounds or until a neutralize poison or disease spell is cast upon the victim.

14-17 Caterwaul. The shrieking of a thousand harried cats arises from the depths of the earth. All foes within 10' × CL of the wizard must make a Will save (DC 7 + CL) or flee from sight.

18-19 Lick wounds. The caster may take an action next round to lick any wounds on him/herself. Roll 1d7 per CL to determine the amount of damage healed.

20-23 Cat Got Your Tongue? One spellcaster (cleric, wizard, or elf) per CL of caster must make a DC 15 Will save or be struck mute for 1d7 rounds (roll separately for each victim). As most spells require verbal components, affected opponents lose their magical powers during this duration. The targeted opponents must be within sight of the caster.

24-26 Catnap. By pointing at a single target within line of sight and purring softly, the caster causes the victim succumb to deep sleep. If the opponent fails a DC 17 Will save it immediately lapses into magical slumber. The victim will remain asleep for 2d7 hours and may only be awoken earlier by the sound of a dog barking. Creatures with immunity to sleep spells are unaffected.

27-29 Black Cat. A black cat appears from seemingly nowhere and deftly wends its way between the feet and crosses the paths of the caster's opponents. The affected have all their fumble ranges increased to the CL for 1d7 rounds (no save allowed). For example, enemies of a 4th level caster will automatically fail all combat, spell, and skill checks on a natural 1, 2, 3, or 4.

30-31 Cat-o'-Nine-Tails. A magical flail with nine chains materializes in hands of the caster for 7d7 rounds. The weapon requires both hands to wield. The nine tentacles may be used against any combination of up to nine opponents (all must be in melee combat with the caster). A separate attack roll is made against each target (not chain). For example, the caster could target one melee opponent with two chains, one with four, and three others with one attack each; five attack rolls would be required. The caster uses her usual Attack bonus plus her CL. Damaged delivered by a successful hit is equal to 2d7+CL per chain involved in that attack.

Hellcat. A single, giant, black-furred cat with glowing embers for eyes is summoned in a fog of steam. Reeking of sulfur, it has the following stats: Init +6; Atk claw +6 melee (1d7) or bite +6 melee (1d7); AC 15; HD 4d8; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP +10 stealth at night, fire breath; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; AL C, and can breathe fire up to seven times per day. The fiery breath forms a cone 10' wide at its base and is 20' long. All (friend or foe) caught in the flames will receive damage equal to the cat's remaining hit points (DC 17 Ref for half). It is resistant to normal heat and fires, and ignores the first 10 hit points of damage per round from fire-based attacks. Cold/Ice based attacks against it are made at +4 to hit and do double damage. The beast has human intelligence and will understand and obey the commands of the caster. It will allow the caster to ride it as a mount (a saddle is needed). Each evening at sunset the caster must make a DC 20 spell check or the hellcat will vanish in a flash of heat and flame; otherwise, it will remain in the company of the caster if treated humanely (if the caster still shares company with a previous hellcat, this invoke patron casting has no effect).

Patron Taint: Man From St. Ives

When patron taint is indicated roll a d7 on the table below. If the caster has acquired all taints at all levels, no further rolls on this chart are made. However, at that point, each future patron taint results will trigger a visitation by a house cat while the caster sleeps. If a DC 20 Will save is failed, the cat will sit upon the caster's chest and draw forth her soul from the mouth; this irrevocably kills the character. If the Will save is made, the caster wakes up before the soul is sucked from her body, and the cats flees.

- Hairball.** At the most inopportune times fits of coughing overcome the spellcaster. Any time the caster fumbles a spell check (rolling a natural 1), she
- 1 spends 1d3 rounds retching uncontrollably — unable to perform any other actions. The fit culminates with the vomiting of a disgusting hairball. This affliction is in addition to any other misfortune.

- Curiosity.** The caster develops the insatiable curiosity of a cat. The first time each day when presented with a new portal (closed door, lid of chest, stoppered vial...) and a Will save is failed, she will go to any
- 2 lengths to open it — ignoring any warnings of traps or such. The DC of the save begins at 7 the first time this patron taint occurs and increases by 3 for each subsequent occurrence, up to a maximum of DC 25.

- Mischief.** The caster becomes possessed by the innate mischief of a restless house cat. The first time after sunset when around small objects (mugs, dice, bottles, vials, etc) near the edge of a table or ledge,
- 3 the wizard must pass a Will save or knock the object off. The DC begins at 7 the first time this patron taint is rolled and increases by 3 for each subsequent occurrence, up to a maximum of DC 25.

Aquaphobia. The caster develops an intense dread of water. Any action that will get her wet (swimming, going out in the rain, bathing, etc) requires a Will save, else she will refuse to perform it. The DC begins at 7 the first time this patron taint is rolled and increases by 3 for each subsequent occurrence, up to a maximum of DC 25.

Feline Features. The first time this patron taint manifests itself, the pupils of the caster change into the vertical slits associated with a cat's eyes. The second time this is rolled, the caster grows the whiskers of a cat. The third manifestation brings a coat of fur covering every part of the body except the face. The final transformation grows a cat's tail. None of these transformations bring any physical benefits to the character (the new eyes are not any better at seeing, the tail does not provide extraordinary balance, etc).

Felinthropy. Each night a full moon rises the caster must pass a DC 15 Will save or transform into a **tiger**: Init +5; Atk claw +5 melee (1d6) or bite +5 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 3d6; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP camouflage, stealthy; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; AL N. For each subsequent roll of this taint the "window of transformation" increases by two additional days (one on each side of the full moon) until the caster is susceptible on any night except that of a new moon.

Cat Scratch Fever. The caster's body is scarred by prominent claw marks. Each morning the caster must pass a DC 15 Fort save or be struck by illness that brings chills, a fever, and the swelling of the lymph glands. She is at a -1 to all actions for the rest of the day (a neutralize poison spell dispels the effects for that day).



Spellburn Result

Casters beholden to the Man From St. Ives soon learn that cats of all sizes are, despite their beautiful appearance, vicious man-eaters that should not be trifled with. The Lord of Cats shares this demeanor, and his demands surrounding spellburn at times seem harsh. Whenever a caster uses spellburn to cast invoke patron or one of this patron's spells, roll on the chart below:

- 1 Cats vs. Dogs.** The enmity between cats and dogs is real; do not let anyone tell you otherwise. In order to recover stats lost to spellburn the Lord of Cats demands that the caster kill some type of canine. One stat point is recovered for each HD of dog or canine-related creature slain. Exceptional creatures (werewolves, hellhounds, etc) might confer bonus recovery at the judge's discretion.

- 2 Cat and Mouse.** For each point of spellburn spent the caster must offer up a dead mouse or similar rodent (rat, shrew, vole, etc) to the Man From St. Ives. The small corpses will vanish in desiccation when the associated spell is cast. If the caster does not have such sacrifices on her person the attempted spellburn fails (though a spell check must still be made).

- 3 Carnivore.** Cats are carnivores who relish the hunt; the caster must be ready to adopt this outlook if she wishes to find favor with the Lord of Cats. If the spellburn results in an offensive spell that contributes to the death of an opponent, the caster must eat some of the raw flesh of at least one of the slain. If the victims do not have flesh to eat (for example, a stone golem or an animated slime), the spellburn may be recovered in the usual way.

Herding Cats

Level: 1 Range: Self Duration: 1d6 + CL turns
Save: None Casting Time: 1 round

Cats (Init: +CL; Atk claws & bite +CL melee (1d2); AC 14; HD 1 (CL hp); MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort 0, Ref +4, Will CL; AL N) are magically conjured and defend the caster if she is threatened; however, morale checks are necessary (one check after the first cat is slain, again after half are killed). The cats are not above typical intelligence, but the caster does share a magical empathy with them, and they follow basic commands that are not contrary to their nature. The cats remain in the vicinity for 1d6 + CL turns or until they are dismissed by the caster. If the caster mistreats the summoned animals, they flee and the caster incurs the wrath of the Man From St. Ives.

Manifestation: An apparition of one of the Man From St. Ives's wives appears holding a sack. She will undraw the tie and "let the cat(s) out of the bag". The number of cats that come forth (all in a single round) depends upon the spell check result. Coloration of cats conjured is (d10): 1. solid black, 2. solid white, 3. solid gray, 4. solid brown, 5. solid red/orange, 6. gray tabby, 7. red tabby, 8. tortoise shell, 9. calico, 10. tuxedo.

1	Lost, failure, and patron taint.
2-11	Lost, failure (spell lost for the day).
12-13	1 cat is conjured.
14-15	1d3 cats are conjured.
16-18	1d6 cats are conjured.
19-21	1d10 cats are conjured.
21-23	1d14 cats are conjured.
24-26	1d16 cats are conjured.
27-29	1d20 cats are conjured.
30-31	1d24 cats are conjured.
32+	1d30 cats are conjured.



Feline Physicality

Level: 2

Range: Self Duration: Varies

Save: None Casting Time: 1 action

The caster gains physical advantages of felinity. The caster chooses any result at or below the spell check.

Manifestation: A ghostly, ethereal form of a cat appears nearby and suffuses the caster's body. When the spell's duration expires, the apparition separates from the body and quickly dissolves.

1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11 Lost, failure (spell lost for the day).

12-13 Failure, but spell is not lost.

14-15 **Alertness.** For the next $7d7+CL$ rounds caster may not be surprised (opponents may not get a free first round attack before initiative is rolled).

16-17 **Land on your feet.** If cast immediately at the start of a fall, the damage from descent should be treated as $10' \times CL$ shorter. For example, if a 3rd level caster falls 50', she will only take damage associated with a 20' fall ($2d6$).

18-19 **Feline's Grace.** For the next $2d7$ turns the caster's Agility stat is increased by her CL (maximum 18).

20-21 **Leopard's Leap.** The caster may make up to CL number of consecutive leaps. The length of each leap, if mainly horizontal in nature, is equal to $5' \times CL$. Vertical leaps may be up to $2' \times CL$. No Agility check is required on landing unless the target surface is particularly unsafe or unstable. Each leap requires one action, and if any non-leaping physical action interrupts the jumping, the spell expires.

22-23 **Cheetah's Speed.** During the next $3d7$ rounds the caster's movement increased by $10' \times CL$. Furthermore the caster gains an additional $d20$ action during these rounds.

24-25 **Jaguar's Stealth.** For the next $1d3 + CL$ hours the caster may sneak silently and hide in shadows as if she were a thief (of level equal to her wizard level). A $d20$ action die is used for such actions, and the modifier obtained from the thief skills chart (alignment as that of the caster).

Eyes of the Tiger. For 2d7 turns the caster gains enhanced vision. She sees in the dark to 120', sees invisible creatures, and not tricked by visual illusory spells. The caster gets two checks to spot a secret doors or traps and gets to add CL to all such rolls in addition to any usual modifiers.

26-27

Claws of the Catamount. The caster's hands grow razor sharp claws. Weaponless the caster may make two d24 melee attack rolls per round against a single opponent (adding the caster's Attack bonus). Each claw does 3d6 + CL damage. The critical threat range for these rolls is 23-24 (though automatic hits occur only on a natural 24). For criticals use the crit table associated with a warrior of level equal to the caster. This spell lasts for 7d6 rounds.

28-30

Lionheartedness. The caster's courage and charisma are elevated to incredible highs. For the next 2d7 turns the spellcaster's Personality stat is raised to 18. Any followers or henchman of the caster automatically pass any morale checks. Furthermore, all allies within sight of the caster (including self) make attacks and Will saves at +CL above and beyond any usual modifiers.

31-33

Saber-toothed. The caster's mouth enlarges as dagger-sized teeth sprout forth. In melee combat the caster gets an extra d30 action die for a bite attack (adding the usual Attack bonus) that does not fumble on a roll of natural 1. A successful bite does 7d7 damage. The critical threat range is 29-30 (automatic hit only on natural 30). If a critical of any sort is obtained, the caster may chose to hold the victim in her jaws on subsequent rounds. Unless the opponent breaks loose by making a Strength check (DC equal to previous bite attack result), the caster will automatically do 1d7 + CL damage for each round the bite is maintained.

34+

Nine Lives

Level: 3	Range: Self	Duration: Permanent
	Save: None	Casting Time: 9 turns

The wizard gains extra chances of life after death. The first time casting requires 1 spellburn just to initiate the magic (additional spellburn may be expended to modify the actual spell check). The second casting requires 2 extra spellburn, and so forth. This spell may only be cast eight times total by a particular wizard; after the eighth casting (when the caster is on her “ninth life”) this spell is no longer available.

The spell requires a lengthy ritual and is generally cast while the wizard is in good health. Any spellburn used is spent during this casting time, even though the actual spell check is not rolled until the spellcaster dies. After the character is definitively dead (“bleeding out” and “recovering the body” chances have not succeeded) the spell check for this previously cast incantation is finally rolled (be sure to remember any modifiers to the roll from the time of casting, including CL at time of casting and any spellburn).

Any hit point damage to the body is fully restored, but, depending upon the result the spell check, some stat and experience points may be lost. Stat points are permanently lost (not to be lowered below a score of 3) and which stats are lowered is at the discretion of the player. Experience points lost (not to be lowered below 0) may cause the loss of class levels.

Note that if the body of the deceased has been buried, this could pose significant problems for the newly resurrected character. The character is the same entity, retaining all memories of the previous life. The caster may only have one instance of the spell “active” at a time (i.e., she may not cast it twice in a row with no intervening death).

Manifestation: If the corpse of the caster has been interred, a house cat arrives at the grave site and mews incessantly until either the caster's (now alive) body is dug up, or the caster perishes again underground.

If the corpse is not already buried, the cat will breathe a soul into the mouth of the deceased, reanimating the body.

- 1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.

- 2-11 Lost, failure.

- 12-15 Failure, but spell is not lost.

- 16-17 Nine years after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 9; experience points lost: 9d10.

- 18-20 Nine months after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 8; experience points lost: 9d8.

- 21-22 Nine weeks after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 7; experience points lost: 9d7.

- 23-24 Nine days after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 6; experience points lost: 9d6.

- 25-27 Nine hours after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 5; experience points lost: 9d5.

- 28-30** Nine turns after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 4; experience points lost: 9d4.
- 31-33** Nine rounds after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 3; experience points lost: 9d3.
- 34-35** Nine seconds (effectively 1 round) after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: 1; experience points lost: 9.
- 36+** Nine seconds after the death of the spellcaster she comes back to life. Total stat points lost: none; experience points lost: none.



SIN EATER OF THE SHUDDERS

A new starting occupation, gramaree rite and class for rambles through the mountains

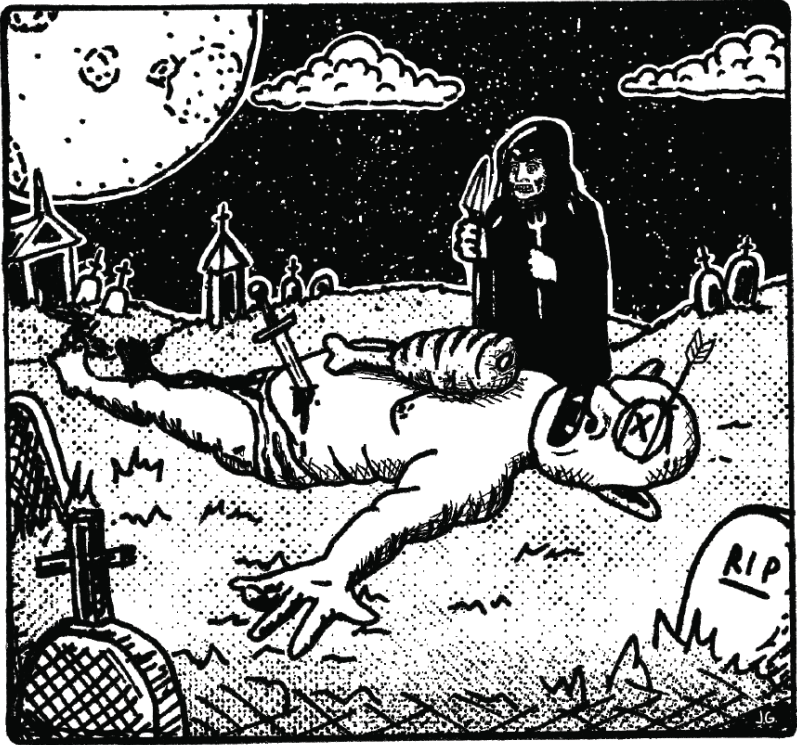
The sin-eater class (referred to as born-again sin-eaters) should be reserved for 0-level characters that die in a funnel or that begin with the sin-eater occupation. Rarely, a leveled character that knows the Last Meal rite might die and be 'born again', losing his old class abilities.

For some, sin-eating's just a job, and not a prestigious one. Beneath even rat-catcher or gongfarmer, most sin-eaters live in hovels or secluded cabins, both ostracized and tolerated for the bit of gramaree they will perform. For a pittance, a sin-eater will consume the sins of the dead, lightening the load a soul carries in the endless dark of the afterlife.

Opinions on the Last Meal vary. Many view it as cheating, and sin-eaters as undermining the Sovereign. Why worry about being a good person when you can just pay a sin-eater to eat all your transgressions away? Others believe that eating all those sins corrupts the sin-eater and damns them to eternal darkness, or worse, that sin-eaters are conniving conjure-men that trick bereaved families into offering up the souls of the recently departed for snacks.

Few want to associate with someone willing to all but ensure damnation for themselves by taking on the sins of others for a buck. In turn, many sin-eaters wear hooded robes or other garments to hide their identities. A rare few manage to keep their hooded personas secret and otherwise live normal, if lonely, lives in a community.

While they may be shunned, more than a few folks are willing to secretly pay a sin-eater to surreptitiously perform last rites for the recently departed. When a family member dies, concern for a beloved's final hereafter may be enough to invite the sin-eater over for one Last Meal with the dead.



THE RITE OF THE LAST MEAL

Anyone can learn sin-eating as a gramaree ritual (see the Chained Coffin Companion) if they are able to find a sin-eater willing to teach it. Last Meal is a DC 12 gramaree ritual, and may only be attempted once per day.

Last Meal (DC 12): First, food is prepared (a good home-cooked meal is traditional, but a hand-waved blessing over trail rations will do in a pinch) and placed on the chest of the corpse. The sin-eater makes the oath “I promise thee easement, and accept your sins” then quietly partakes of the deceased’s Last Meal, eating their sins along with the food. If the spirit is willing to pass on, the sin-eater recovers a point of Luck (up to their original Luck score maximum) and the spirit, now free of the burdens of sin, is prepared for the trek through endless night to reach the Sovereign’s Kingdom.

If a spirit is unwilling to pass on, for all but a born-again sin-eater (see below), the rite fails.

BORN-AGAIN-SIN-EATERS

Rarely, when a person dies under momentous circumstances, instead of finding their way to the Great Kingdom or becoming a wandering spirit, they come back to the world of the living. And not some half-life— no ghoul or haint or zombie, but a real life; scarred maybe, but miraculously healed of the wounds that killed them. Other times a simple sin-eater manages to survive a near-death experience but finds themselves changed more than metaphorically. Either way, a sin-eater is confirmed born-again when they discover that normal food no longer sustains them as in their first life.

In the rite of Last Meal, godly born-again sin-eaters take on the sins of the dead, and maybe offer a portion of the light the Sovereign used to draw them back from the afterlife in return. These born-again devourers of evil also have a divine calling to send on their way those restless dead that refuse to move on quietly. Other reborn sin-eaters seek only to siphon power from the dead to postpone the Great Reward their sins, and the sins they imbibe to fuel their power, earns them in the afterlife.

Hit Points: Sin-eaters use a d8 to determine hit points at each level.

Weapon Training: Sin-eaters are trained in the following weapons: club, crossbow, dagger, flail, handaxe, longbow, mace, short bow, sling, spear, and staff. The rite of Last Meal requires a certain amount of humility and formality, preventing sin-eaters from using armor more costly and ornate than studded leather, though they may still use shields.

Action Die: A sin-eater's action dice can be used for attack rolls, spellcasting and sin-eater abilities, or skill checks.

Alignment: Lawful born-again sin-eaters are so devoted to the Sovereign that they postponed their own afterlife in Glory to help less righteous souls get there; they're confident of the calling the Sovereign laid on them, even if most folks aren't. Neutral sin-eaters, often not having been so "on fire" for the Sovereign the first time around, might second guess exactly what they were 'sent back' for, and question whether their

miraculous second life is devil-work after all.

Chaotic sin-eaters secretly practice the witchcraft that gives other sin-eaters a bad name, huckstering grieving families into offering up the souls of their beloved for coin and power.

Luck: Sin-eaters add their current Luck bonus to all navigation-related rolls, and on any roll related to meal preparation, eating, or drinking.

Last Meal: The rite of Last Meal varies slightly for born-again sin-eaters.

There is no limit to the number of Last Meals a born-again sin-eater may perform in a day, but the sin-eater may only recover up to their level in Luck points in a single day, no matter how many sins they eat.

Unlike standard gramaree, a born-again sin-eater suffers no Stamina or Intelligence damage from performing a Last Meal. As long as they complete the meal, the ritual succeeds with no need for a roll.

Also, where the standard rite requires a willing spirit, a born-again sin-eater can perform The Last Meal to draw a spirit forth for parlay, or worse (see ghost, p. 413, DCC RPG). When lively debate fails, a good smacking-around by a lowly sin-eater might embarrass the lingering dead enough to offer up their sins on a platter and hurry on to whatever awaits them.

Most importantly, born-again sin-eaters rely on the rite of Last Meal to sustain themselves. Without regular ingestion of the sins of the dead, food loses taste and nourishment. For each week that a born-again sin-eater fails to eat sins, the sin-eater suffers a cumulative -1d to all rolls as they waste away. If the sin-eater starves to less than a d3 action die, they die, with no chance of rolling the body no matter how lucky they might be. Each Last Meal performed restores +1d, up to the sin-eater's normal action die maximum. If already at their maximum action die, a sin-eater can add +1d to their next roll.

Luckily, no man is without sin, and apparently no demihuman either; if a creature has a modicum of human-like intelligence,

the rite of Last Meal can be performed over its corpse, at the judge's discretion (a sure sign that, contrary to some Sovereign clergy, demihumans have souls after all). Especially heinous individuals might have led such sin-heavy lives that gorging on their sins restores +2d or greater, or provides +1d or more to the action die for multiple actions, at the judge's discretion. Even demons and extraplanar creatures might be able to have their sins devoured if they leave a corpse (possible support that demihumans don't have souls?). However, eating the sins of entities without conventional souls requires a Fortitude save to prevent minor to greater corruption (p. 116, DCC RPG), as might the souls of the exceptionally depraved, with the save DC dependent on the wickedness and alien-ness of the creature (judge's discretion).

Magic: Sin-eaters harness the power from sins to cast cleric spells, and learn a number of spells per the table below.

Lawful sin-eaters often learn spells traditionally associated with clerics of the Sovereign, but already being on the fence regarding traditional faith practices they have no prohibition against *darkness* and are less squeamish about spells like *binding*, *animate dead*, and *speak with dead*. Neutral sin-eaters may also learn the *river rites* found in the original sin-eater description (p. 109, Weird Frontiers). Chaotic sin-eaters may also learn the following wizard spells: *find familiar* and *patron bond*.

Sin-eaters may also burn Personality to empower their magical abilities by willfully succumbing to the degradations of sin on their own souls.

Sin-eaters do not suffer disapproval as clerics. Instead when a sin-eater fails a spell check, the sins they have absorbed manifest and corrupt the area around them; plants wilt, milk sours, alcohol and holy water lose their potency, and any silver the sin-eater carries tarnishes. Special properties of the sin-eater's silver items cease to work when tarnished with sin, requiring at least 1 turn of scrubbing to restore. Other PCs must succeed at a Luck check or also find the inherent powers of any silver objects and weapons they carry inhibited until shine is restored. On a natural 1, and on higher rolls for each

failed spell or ability as standard cleric disapproval, in addition to any other listed effects, a sin-eater finds themselves starving for sins and their action die is reduced as if they went without a Last Meal as described above.

Silver Implement: Sin-eaters who can obtain one use a small piece of silver, usually a silver plate, a teacup, or even a large silver coin, when serving a Last Meal. The sin-eater can store a portion of the power from consumed sins in the silver; for each Last Meal they perform with their silver implement, the sin-eater reserves a charge of power which can be expended for the following purposes:

Healing Meal: By expending a charge over 1 turn, a sin-eater can prepare and serve a meal with their implement to heal themselves and their companions. This ability functions as a cleric's lay on hands ability, except anyone partaking is treated as the same alignment as the sin-eater, regardless of actual alignment, and heals the maximum hit dice for their level based on the result rolled on the check. A cleric who accepts such a meal risks disapproval, however.

On a failed *healing meal* check, the implement literally tarnishes with sin and must be thoroughly polished before it can be used again. On a natural 1, anyone partaking of the failed meal becomes sickened from the sin-tainted silver and suffers -1d on all rolls until they have a chance to rest, or until an actual cleric uses lay on hands to remove the sickness.

Turn Unclean: By expending a charge and brandishing their silver implement, a sin-eater can turn un-dead and demons as a cleric. As with a healing meal, a failed check tarnishes the implement, which must be thoroughly polished before it can be used again. On a 1, un-dead and devils instead feed off the backlash of sin, gaining +1d to their next roll.

Smell spirits: Born-again sin-eaters can smell spirits of the dead within a range of 100'. The more sinful the deceased, the stronger the scent. Malevolent spirits tend to stink up a room, so cannot be pinpointed within close range to overcome any invisibility. Even souls that do not manifest as spirits carry a trace scent of their sins in life, which sin-eaters can follow

Sim Eater Progression Chart

Level	ATK	Crit Die/ Table	Action Die	Ref	Fort	Will	Spells known by level			Disguise	Hide/ Sneak
							1	2	3		
1	+0	D8/II	1D20	+0	+1	+2				+3	1
2	+1	D10/II	1D20	+1	+2	+2	3	-	-	+5	2
3	+2	D12/II	1D20	+1	+3	+2	3	1	-	+7	3
4	+2	D14/II	1D20	+2	+4	+3	3	2	-	+8	4
5	+3	D16/II	1D20	+2	+4	+3	4	2	1	+9	5
6	+4	D16/II	1D20 + 1D14	+3	+5	+4	4	3	1	+11	6
7	+5	D20/II	1D20 + 1D16	+3	+5	+4	4	3	2	+12	7
8	+5	D24/II	1D20 + 1D20	+4	+6	+5	5	4	2	+13	8
9	+6	D30/II	1D20 + 1D20	+4	+6	+5	6	5	2	+14	9
10	+7	D30+2/II	1D24 + 1D24	+5	+7	+6	6	6	3	+15	10

to locate earthly remains. Age and state of decay have little bearing on the ability to track down these remains; the more sinful the departed, the more odorous the remains, whether bloated cadaver or bone dust. Wicked dead may be easier to find, but as long as a soul's sins haven't been eaten, a sin-eater can sniff out mortal remains within range like a bloodhound.

Disguise Self: The taboo against sin-eaters leads many to keep their identity secret. In addition to hiding their faces behind dark hoods, many sin-eaters learn the disguising arts and may disguise themselves as a Chaotic thief of the same level.

Hide and Sneak: Living on the edges of society and being asked to covertly enter the homes of their clients also gives sin-eaters some skill in remaining unnoticed. Sin-eaters add their level to checks to Hide in Shadows and Sneak Silently.

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