

Into the Dark



a Forged in the Dark game by

Stras Acimovic & John W. Sheldon

THE WORLD IS COVERED IN MURK...

It is more than just darkness. It is a miasma that hates the light, devours flame, and warps the living. Somewhere, in that hungry dark is a Nightwell, and near it a Shade—a creature born of the Murk itself, and not just twisted like the beasts that it creates. Your lands are threatened, and someone must bear the Silver Flame to the Nightwell to close it. If you're lucky, you might make it back with treasures from the world before the Murk. If you're careful you might just survive your expedition into the dark.

Into the Dark is a game about delvers who brave a strange and alien darkness-covered environment to protect their homes, and in the process hope to recover valuables and find information on the world that existed before the dark.

This game focuses on using wits to overcome obstacles, life and death struggles, and exploration of unfamiliar and dangerous environments. It mixes familiar dungeon-delving fantasy themes with a post-apocalyptic horror-tinged world.

Included are:

- **Four Unique Delver Types.** Detailed within are the well-armed Murkhunter, the quick-witted Explorer, the Murk-touched Shadowbinder, and the Silver Flame attuning Lightbearer. Each comes with unique powers, gear, and advancement rules suited to their role.
- **Adventure Generation.** Tables and instructions to help you build your own expeditions into the murk, as well as five included murkwells (and spooky attendant monsters) to let you jump immediately into the game.
- **Streamlined Forged in the Dark System.** A super-minimized, complete system that emphasizes player decisions, non-binary successes, and is geared for adventuring and delving into the dark.

INTENDED FOR

SINGLE SESSIONS / SHORT CAMPAIGNS.

3-5 PLAYERS (INCLUDES GM).

2-4 HOURS PER SESSION.

LOW PREP. MEDIUM COMPLEXITY.



Into the Dark

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Horror-tinged Dungeon Fantasy

Forged in the Dark

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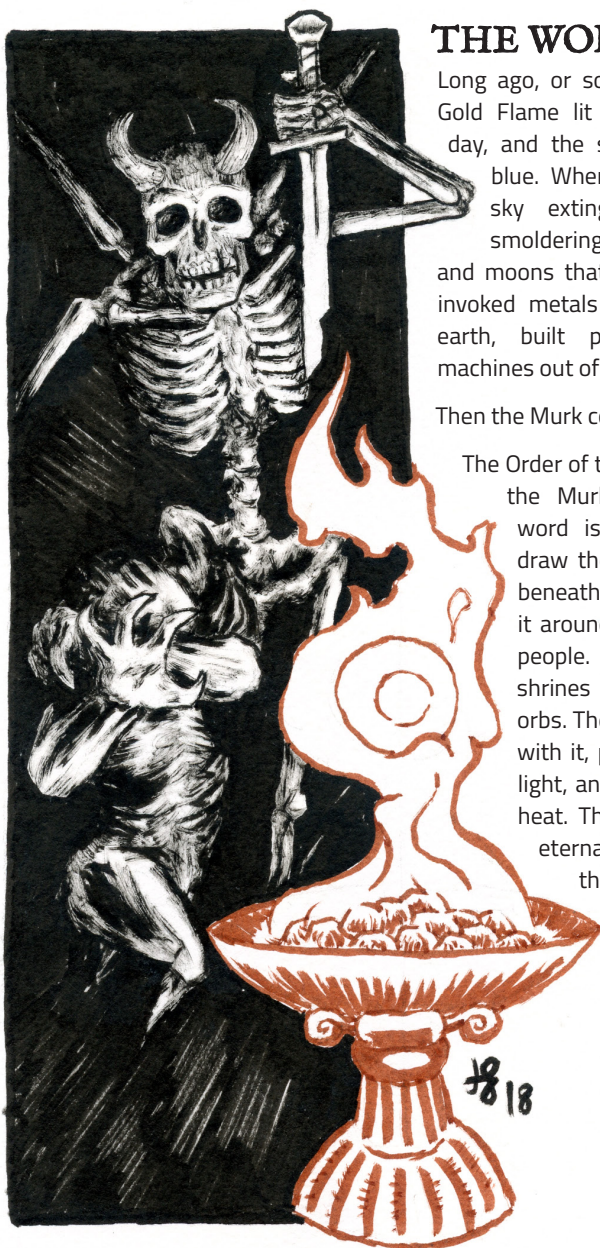
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Into the Dark

In a night-covered world, the Murk invades pockets of light—stealing people, and extinguishing the fires that keep it at bay. You play Murkdelvers, people who volunteer to take the Silver Flame to close Nightwells in the night regions. Don't stay too long. Once your flame dies, the Nightmares will almost certainly claim you.



THE WORLD

Long ago, or so the story goes, the Gold Flame lit the land during the day, and the sky burned a vibrant blue. When the Flame set, the sky extinguished, except for smoldering sparks that shone and moons that glowed. The People invoked metals and glass from the earth, built palaces and mighty machines out of them.

Then the Murk covered the world.

The Order of the Silver Flame keeps the Murk at bay, and their word is law. Their temples draw the last Fire from deep beneath the ground and pipe it around the enclaves of the people. It floats above their shrines in argent burning orbs. Their priests forge metal with it, protect roads with its light, and warm flesh with its heat. The Silver Flame burns eternal, unless devoured by the Murk.

Once in a while, the Murk invades the Lit lands. Nightmares come out of the dark to throw themselves onto the fires to extinguish them, and drag people into the Nightlands far from the light.

There in the dark, the Murk breeds more monsters from the living. Its Nightwells give these monstrosities strength and drive.

Somewhere, up to a few days from the border of the Lit lands, the well sits—a black portal vomiting forth a deeper dark, guarded by monsters bred in the Murk. Nobody knows why wells form, just that they do.

Some people are not like others. They can bear the Murk without becoming monsters in its presence. People like this are often found as survivors of incursions. They are paid by the Order to delve into the Murk.

Often, these are people without training. They're not famed soldiers. They are not powerful priests. They are simply not yet Murk-corrupted.

But if they survive their excursions into the unlit dark, they will become famed and powerful delvers.

If they are very lucky, they'll exit carrying treasures acquired in the Murk and earn coin (both legal and illegal) and the respect of the people they protect.



ROLLING DICE

There are two types of rolls players make: **action rolls** and **resistance rolls**.

ACTION ROLLS

When you attempt a dangerous or difficult action, the GM will tell you to make an **action roll**.

To make an action roll: take 1 six-sided die per **attribute**, and **+1d** if you have an **action** that applies. You may gain up to **+/- 1-2** dice if you have significant advantages or disadvantages. You may **push** (spend 1 stress) to add **+1d**.

Roll all the dice together, and read the highest value(s).

If you have zero (or fewer) dice to roll, roll two dice and read the lowest value.

Ajo tries to leap from the dark to stab a Night Render. His GM rules that surprise grants him +1 advantage. Ajo has 1 Prowess and Skirmish, so he rolls 3 dice (attribute, action, advantage)—1, 4, 2. He has a 4 result.

ACTION ROLL OUTCOMES

- **Critical (multiple 6s):** You succeed and go beyond. There's an added benefit.
- **Success (6):** You succeed. You do the thing!
- **Success at a Cost (4/5):** Success with a consequence. Limited effect, taking damage, complications.
- **Failure (1-3):** You don't do what you wanted to and may also receive trouble for your efforts: damage, complications, or both.

Criticals usually add +1d6 to deliver damage, or create an opportunity which can be leveraged for an advantage (+1d)—not necessarily by the same character.

Here are possible consequences for partial or failed rolls:

- **Damage:** The opponent deals their appropriate damage.
- **Limited Effect:** Half-damage. It takes longer than expected.
- **Complication:** A piece of gear is broken. You use extra ammo. Enemy escapes. You're left in a bad position (pinned, blinded). Take disadvantage on related rolls (-1d). More enemies appear. Enemies focus on you.

RESISTANCE ROLLS

You can try avoiding bad outcomes with a **resistance roll**. To resist, pick up 1 six-sided die per appropriate **attribute** and **+1d** per toughening for that attribute. Roll the dice, and read the highest value.

RESISTANCE OUTCOMES

- **Critical (multiple 6s):** May resist multiple things.
- **Full Resist (6):** Resist a thing. Half damage vs very powerful foes.
- **Partial Resist (4/5):** Mark 1 stress. Full resist. Half damage or reduced consequences vs powerful foes.
- **No Resist (1-3):** Mark 1 stress. Reduce consequence or half damage.

Because stress is such a limited resource, you can resist after you know the consequences. If there are multiple consequences, resist each separately. When damage or corruption is halved, round down.

If you have to mark stress and have none, you're knocked out or helpless for the rest of the scene. Unless your friends protect or save you, it's likely the end of your delver. If you are defended or ferreted to safety, you'll wake up in the next scene.

DAMAGE

When a delver engages an opponent in combat, they might take damage. Delves start with 6hp, though more experienced delvers might have more. A lethal attack (such as a knife wound, or the claws of a beast) typically does 1d6 damage. Powerful attacks usually add 1-3 to that damage, and things that are almost impossible to survive (drops from great heights, acid baths, breath weapons) will roll multiple dice.

Armor reduces damage taken. Armor is additive. So if your delver has heavy armor (armor 2) and a shield (armor 1), they would reduce a hit from 4 damage to 1 damage (4 damage - 3 armor) taken. Armor also slows those wearing it, making it more likely that heavily armored delvers will have to weather attacks before they get a chance to retaliate.

Some attacks also add corruption (see page 29). This is in addition to damage done, and is resisted separately.

Unless your table decides otherwise, the GM rolls damage.

You start each adventure with full health points. The most common way to heal is to apply medkits when the group has a moment to rest and bandage their wounds. Some special abilities (such as those of Lightbearers) may also heal.

DEATH

If you ever reach 0hp, your delver dies. There are no negative health points. Remember that resistances and some equipment can negate damage.

Losing a delver might be a good time to consider returning to the Lit lands.

Ajo rolls a 4 when trying to stab a Night Render. On a partial success, the GM describes him sinking his blade into the beast. The beast whirls and smashes its back (with Ajo still on it) against a wall. The GM rolls a 6 on the damage. Ouch! Ajo has no armor, so this will kill him.

Gene (Ajo's player) declares that his delver resists by letting go and rolling under the Murkbeast. Since this is about Ajo's reflexes and anticipating the crush, the GM asks for an Insight resist. Gene grabs 2 dice, one for Insight, and one for a toughening (the circle beneath Insight on his character sheet).

He rolls a 4 and a 5, so he marks 1 stress and takes half damage (3hp) because Night Renders are powerful foes. The GM describes Ajo getting slammed against a wall, but managing to wriggle loose—the delver is now beneath the beast!

Perhaps Ajo can use that position as an advantage on his next attack.

BRAVERY IN THE DARK

Delves first start with very few actions and attributes. It can be daunting to look at a roll and realize that you start with zero dice. But remember that your position in the fiction matters. Look for ways to gain an edge or an advantage (which translates into extra dice), and remember that you can always push yourself. A result of 4-5 is still success, even if it's at a cost.

CHARACTER CREATION

I Who were you, before you became a Murkdelper? Choose a category (heretic, craftsman, peasant, religious, scoundrel, noble) and detail it. Perhaps you were a religious mute scribe who copied script in silver. Or a peasant red-bulb farmer. Or a heretic apprentice to a Murkbinder.

2 Select your character **attributes** and **toughening**.

ATTRIBUTES

- **Insight:** Awareness, reflexes, smarts.
- **Prowess:** Fighting, athletics, physical toughness, strength.
- **Resolve:** Willpower, mental toughness, charisma, persuasion.

Attributes range from 0 to 2. Pick one attribute to start at 1 and two attributes at 0.

Toughening (circles under attributes on the sheet) indicates your capacity to anticipate and deal with problems in that domain. Pick 2 for your character. An attribute has a max of 2 toughenings.

3 Pick one **ability** from your Murkdelper's list. If you're not sure what to take, the first ability on the list is a good choice.

ADVANCEMENT

When you complete an excursion, return to the Lit lands, and sell any loot that you have, mark **xp** according to your **xp-triggers**. Note that some triggers can be marked multiple times per delve, and some are only marked for selling certain items.

You may clear 7xp at any time to do one of the following:

take a new action — take a new toughening (max 2 per attribute) — take a new Murkdelper ability — increase available stress by 1 (max 6) — +4 hp (max 18).

You may clear 13xp at any time to: *add +1 to an attribute (max 2).*

4 Your playbook starts with one **action** set. Pick one more action.

ACTIONS

- **Athletics:** Running, lifting, jumping.
- **Attune:** Attune to the Silver Flame.
- **Channel:** Channeling the Murk. *Very DANGEROUS to use.*
- **Leadership:** Organize people, maintain morale.
- **Lore:** Academics. Ancient or Arcane lore. Knowledge of Murkbeasts.
- **Prowl:** Sneak, disguise, following, sleight-of-hand.
- **Shoot:** Bows, throwing, spring-shot.
- **Skirmish:** Fighting with weapons.
- **Study:** Spot danger, read people.
- **Threaten:** Scare or threaten people.
- **Tinker:** Traps, mechanisms, alchemy.
- **Vigilance:** Alertness, reaction time.

5 Note on your sheet your **health points (hp)**, **corruption**, and **stress**. By default each character starts with 6 health points, 0 out of 40 corruption, and 0 of 4 (highlighted) stress.

6 Roll for starting **coin** (it's ok to adjust your ability choice after marking this), and purchase **gear** for the expedition. Mark your **speed**. To buy gear, spend the first number in coin to rent the item for this excursion, and the second to have it permanently.

MURKDELVERS

The Explorer: Not all Murkdelvers handle problems with power and force. Explorers are useful because they study the ruins of the old world. They are good at surviving the Murk and evading Murkbeasts. You start with **Study**.

The Lightbearer: Someone has to bear the Silver Flame into the Murk. Lightbearers are often members of the Order (or once were). The Flame keeps the worst of the Murk at bay. Beware, while a powerful tool, it may burn to embers if you're not careful. You start with **Attune**.

The Murkhunter: Some problems just can't be solved with stealth, fickle Bindings, or a guttering flame. That's when you do your thing. You bring the violence. You put your body and flesh on the line. And you might just be tough enough to walk away afterwards. You start with **Skirmish**.

The Shadowbinder: The Murk is dangerous. The Murk is evil. Only the Silver Flame keeps us safe, says the Order. Nonsense. The Murk is power. You were touched, and can still feel the Murk inside you. You can Bind things in the dark lands. But be careful... the Murk demands a price. You start with **Channel**.



THE GAME

Before your first session, make sure to explain the world and the pitch to the players. The players (aside from the GM) should make delvers to portray. Part of the buy-in is that you're playing delvers who are working together. You've worked together before and know each other. You may not love each other, but you've learned that your different skills are necessary to survive incursions into the Murk.

A standard session of *Into the Dark* starts with a hook. A Nightwell has opened somewhere in the Murk, and the Order has put out the call for delver teams. They offer coin and a piece of the Silver Flame to a group of delvers willing to go into the dark and close the source of the problem.

The delvers typically take a moment to procure any gear or information they need before crossing the border into the Murk.

During the delve, they overcome obstacles, fight terrifying monsters, loot wonders of the world now lost to the dark, and (hopefully) close the source of all the problems and corruption—the Nightwell.

Once they return to the Lit lands, the delvers collect the pittance the Order pays, sell their loot (legal and otherwise), and mark xp and possibly advance their characters.

Remember that incursions occur infrequently. Most delvers have day jobs and other things they do in society between delves. Time passes, so make sure to clear all your stress, and reset your hp to max at the start of each delve.

COIN AND LOOT

Coin is an abstract currency used to purchase goods and services before you brave the Murk again. The Lit lands are limited in resources and knowledge. Folks will pay well for useful bits of the old world, plants, animals from the Murk that don't consume the Lit resources, and—if you know the right buyers—even for Murk-tainted monster bits and objects.

When you have a moment to search areas of the unlit world, ask the GM if there is anything of value. If there is, they will tell you what it is, how many slots it takes, and its quality.

Goods come in 3 levels of quality:

- **Scrap:** Worth 1–3 coin. *Decorative pieces of the old world. Unflawed glass. Books of relevant knowledge. Blood of Murkgoblins.*
- **Solid:** Worth 4–5 coin. *Difficult to manufacture parts for machines. Rare mushrooms used to brew alchemicals. Old weapons.*
- **Mint:** Worth 6–9 coin. *Ancient energy sources. Ancient jewelry of great beauty. New formulae. Hearts of Well Dragons. True names of Shades.*

Goods take up different amounts of loot slots, which in turn can affect a character's speed. Generally, one slot is for items roughly fist sized, while something arm sized takes two.

You might find bigger things, but remember that you have to somehow carry it while traveling through the Murk. Retrieving huge items, like statues or entire engines, would be an entire adventure in and of itself. The GM can also make a fortune roll for size if needed.

If the GM wants inspiration for loot, or a quick way to generate items, roll on the tables on the right (if you have to roll extra dice, take the best result).

SELLING LOOT

Selling illegal goods (like forbidden tech, Murkbeast parts, or the names of Shades) requires special contacts to move quietly and efficiently. If you don't have the right abilities, make a **resolve** roll. On a **crit**, you double your profit. On a **6**, you get your money's worth. On a **1–3**, you are arrested—the goods are gone. Make a new character. On a **4–5**, you make it, but the Order is onto you. If you ever roll a **4–5** for selling illegal goods again, you are arrested. Make a new character.

RETIRING

No delver expects to avoid corruption and the horrors of the Murk forever. You can put some money away for retirement before every delve. For every 10 stash you put away, your lifestyle improves.

STASH

- **0–10 Stash:** Cheap meals.
Communal quarters. Few changes of clothes. Sometimes you go hungry.
- **10–20 Stash:** Some privacy.
Occasional nice meals. Few luxuries (regular baths). More than one change of clothes.
- **30–40 Stash:** Place of your own.
Nicer clothes. Well cared for gear.
- **40–50 Stash:** Nice clothes. Gear and items may have flair or customized personal style.
- **50+ Stash:** Tell the GM before each expedition why you don't leave the delving life and retire. What drives you to keep going into the murk?

LOOT QUALITY & SIZE

D6	QUALITY	SIZE
1	SCRAP	2+ LOAD
2	SCRAP	2 LOAD
3	SCRAP	1 LOAD
4	SOLID	1 LOAD
5	SOLID	1 LOAD
6	MINT	0 LOAD

GENERATING LOOT

The crew is resting in a Pre-Murk building when the Explorer looks for loot. Sam—the GM—rolls a 4 and 5 for quality and size. A solid item about the size of a fist. She then rolls on the old-world table with a 2—a piece of art. She describes how the Explorer comes across a small statue of an unfamiliar, furry animal holding a ball. When held, the creature animates and plays with the toy. Someone rich might buy this for a child. The explorer notes the load and tucks the piece away.

SELLING LOOT

Lauren wants to sell the Pre-Murk battery back at the Lit lands. This is solid loot that took up 2 load. Since this is legal tech and she's selling it to the Order, Sam rolls for coin. She rolls 2 dice (equal to the object's load) and comes up with a 1 and 4—she reads the highest die, so the piece is worth 5 coin.

Lauren also found a shiny 0 load piece of ancient scrap. Since its load is 0, Sam rolls 2 dice and read the lowest to see how many coins it's worth. She rolls a 6 and 4—2 coins for this bauble. Nice!

SELLING Roll 1d per load & use best die.

D6	SCRAP	SOLID	MINT
1	1 COIN	4 COIN	6 COIN
2	1 COIN	4 COIN	6 COIN
3	1 COIN	4 COIN	7 COIN
4	2 COIN	5 COIN	7 COIN
5	2 COIN	5 COIN	8 COIN
6	3 COIN	5 COIN	9 COIN

OLD WORLD Roll in Pre-Murk areas.

D6	LOOT
1	TECH Batteries. Lights. Tools.
2	ART Jewelry. Statues. Trinkets.
3	WEAPON Pre-Murk weapons. Guns.
4	CODEX Lost Pre-Murk knowledge.
5	MAP Pre-Murk areas to explore.
6	MATERIAL Reusable metal, glass, etc.

RECLAIMED Roll in Previously Lit areas.

D6	LOOT
1	GEAR Delver Gear. Common gear. Usually medical supplies but could be anything.
2	
3	ANTIQUES Order texts, seals, & artifacts. Family heirlooms to return or ransom.
4	
5	COIN Jewelry. Rare spices. Actual coin stashes folk left when the area was Murk-claimed.
6	

MURK Roll in Open Murk areas.

D6	LOOT
1	OCCULT Remnants of binder rituals or hideouts (true names on circles, athame supplies, etc).
2	
3	FLORA & FAUNA Murk-touched plants to harvest. Pure animals to hunt for food. Changed beasts to harvest.
4	
5	OTHERS Exiles to trade with. Dead delver groups to loot. Neutral Shades or beasts to bind.
6	

LOAD AND SPEED

You can only carry so many things and still remain fleet and nimble. Adventurers with up to 3 load of gear have **light** load. They are quick and agile, and can run faster than those in normal and heavy load. Those between 4 and 6 load have **normal** load. And those with up to 9 have **heavy** load. Delvers in heavy load are slow and often loud.

Items in italics on the sheets do not count towards your load limit as they are small and light. Some larger items may take multiple load.

Faster characters go first in combat. In general very quick combatants go first, followed by quick, normal, and then slow opponents. Those at higher loads may have to resist attacks and hold out till they spot an opening.



BUYING GEAR

There are two ways to acquire gear. Each piece of equipment has two numbers next to it. The first is how much it costs to rent the gear, the second to acquire it permanently.

Most gear is specialized and rare enough that you only take one on an expedition. But you may want multiples of other gear—like medkits.

RENTING

If you're renting an item, you must pay the rental cost before each expedition. Acquiring an item for just one expedition can take many forms—alchemicals with a limited shelf life, or items made of precious metal that the owners reclaim when Murkdelvers return. If they break or you lose them, that's assumed as part of the cost.

Items with a dash instead of the first number cannot be rented. Either the item is too precious to send into the Murk when it's unlikely to return, or it's so rare that a permanent source can't be acquired.

ACQUIRING

Acquiring an item permanently might involve getting one such item made for yourself (such as a suit of heavy armor), or simply having a steady supply of it (such as medkits). Discuss with the GM which it is.

Once you've permanently acquired an item, you may always equip it before an expedition without paying additional costs.

A dash in the second position means the item may not be acquired permanently. Either it's temporary and hard to manufacture, or it's hard to get a continuous supply.

EQUIPMENT

TRAITS

- **Alchemical:** Liquid in a flask or vial.
- **Armor:** Always reduces damage by the number shown. Armor is additive.
- **Count:** You may equip up to this many of this item.
- **Heavy:** You never count as being light load.
- **Light:** Does not take up load.
- **Pre-Murk:** Ancient tech from a previous era. Hard to replicate.
- **Slow:** You never count as being light or normal load.

COMMON EQUIPMENT

Armor: *Heavy.* *Armor 1.* Fire/ghostly attacks ignore it. **Cost:** 1/3. **Load:** 1.

Blackwater: *Alchemical. Light* Black liquid. Ignites on contact with air. **Cost:** 2/-. **Load:** 0.

Bolts: *Light* Ammo for Spring Casters (5 uses). **Cost:** 1/2. **Load:** 0.

Books: Notes on Pre-Murk world. Spend for **+1d** to looting/study/tinker rolls. **Count:** 2. **Cost:** 1/3. **Load:** 1/per.

Box Kit: *Pre-Murk.* Bits of old world tech. May be able to restart/override tech in the Murk. **Cost:** 5/10. **Load:** 1.

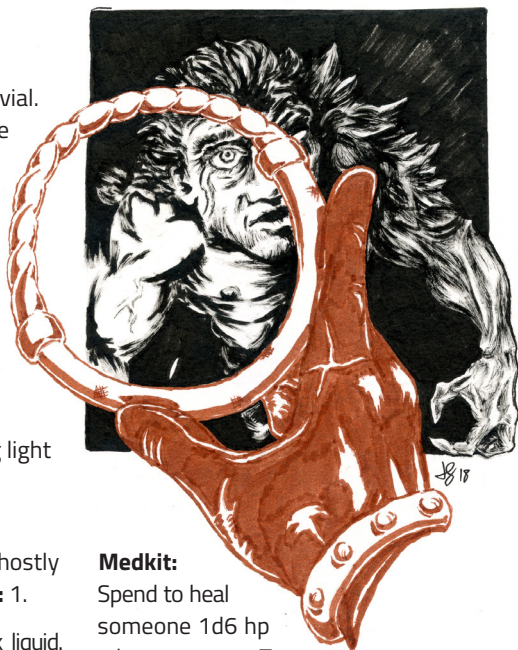
Chain & Winch: For heavy lifting or tying things tied up. **Cost:** 1/3. **Load:** 1.

Compass: *Pre-Murk. Light* Helps find your way in the murk. **Cost:** 1/3.

Climbing Kit: Rope. Grapples. Pitons. Etc. **Cost:** 2/5. **Load:** 1.

Hand Weapon: Axes. Spears. Swords. One-handed. Keep it sharp. 1d6 damage. **Cost:** 1/4. **Load:** 1.

Heavy Armor: *Slow.* *Armor 2.* Heavy plate made of Pre-Murk materials. **Cost:** 3/7. **Load:** 2.



Medkit:

Spend to heal someone 1d6 hp when you rest. Treat someone to give +1d to resist wounds, poisons, burns, diseases, etc. **Count:** 3. **Cost:** 1/4. **Load:** 1/per.

Seal: Silver Flame worked metal. Spend to reduce corruption by 1 and add **+1d** to resist. **Cost:** 3/5. **Load:** 1.

Shield: *Armor 1.* Destroy to completely negate 1 hit. **Cost:** 2/5. **Load:** 1.

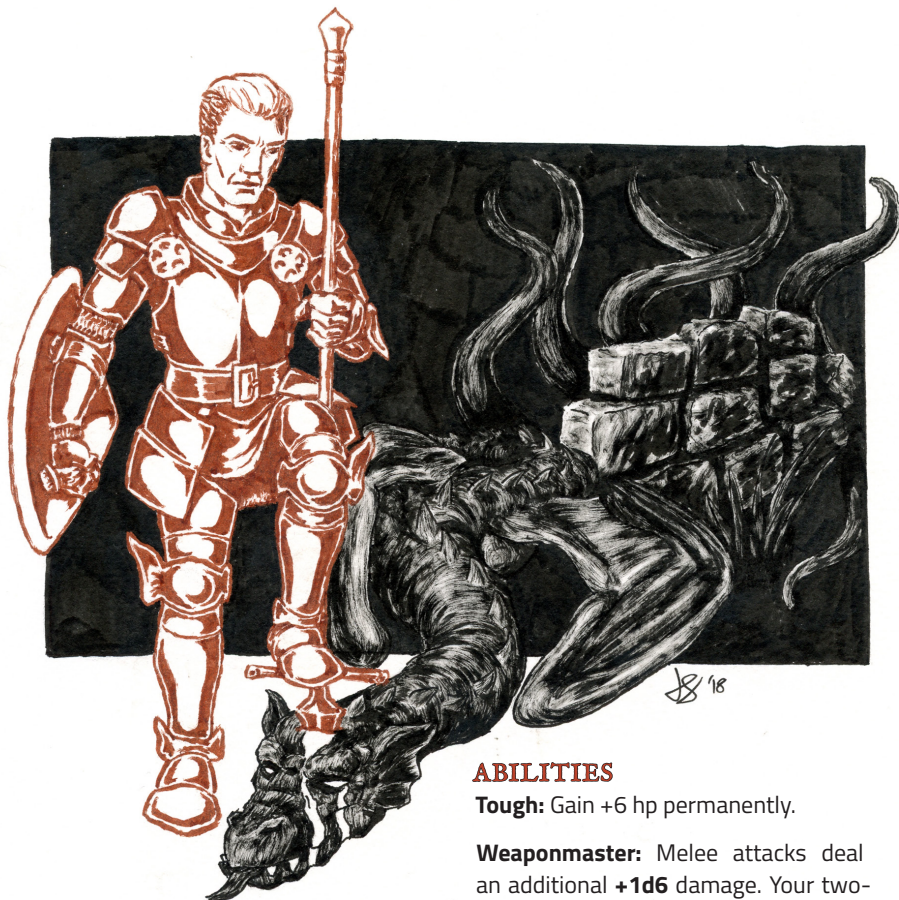
Spring Caster: Wind the spring. Load the bolt. 1d6 at range. Relatively accurate. **Cost:** 3/6. **Load:** 1.

2H Weapon: 1d6+1 damage. Like hand weapons but bigger. **Cost:** 1/4. **Load:** 1.

Torch: Keeps the dark at bay. Lights things on fire. Metal. Strike to light. **Count:** 3. **Cost:** 1/4. **Load:** 1/per.

The Lightcage: Contains the orb of Silver Flame. Someone must always carry it. **Cost:** 0. **Load:** 1.

Wrecking Kit: Mauls. Crowbars. Drills. Gets through walls. **Cost:** 2/5. **Load:** 2.



MURKHUNTER

Sometimes, problems can't be solved with stealth or Murk Bindings. That's when you do your thing. You bring the violence. You put your body on the line, and you might just be tough enough to walk away afterwards.

The society of the Lit lands isn't violent, so folks with such tendencies are taught to channel them outwards. Why are you a delver? Is it vengeance against Murkbeasts, penance for a crime, or the rush of facing death?

STARTING ACTION

Murkhunters start with **Skirmish**.

STARTING COIN

Start with **4d6** coin to spend.

ABILITIES

Tough: Gain +6 hp permanently.

Weaponmaster: Melee attacks deal an additional **+1d6** damage. Your two-handed weapon melee attacks do **+1d6+1** instead.

War Machine: Heavy armor you wear counts for **2 armor**, and does not have a limitation on your speed.

Vigorous: When you camp or rest for a while, you heal **1d6** damage automatically.

Loaded for Bear: You may carry up to two extra items per load category. *Ex: you may carry 5 items at light load and still count as quick and quiet.*

Hard as Nails: Roll **+1d** to resist poisons, the elements, alchemicals, and environmental hazards.

Veteran: You may take a power from another delver type.

MURKHUNTER GEAR

Armor Kit: Alchemical bonding agents & plates. Spend to repair damaged armor. **Cost:** Always available. **Load:** 1.

Birdstone: *Light. Pre-Murk.* Small box. Attached to an object, it makes it weigh a fraction. **Cost:** -/9. **Load:** 0.

Redline: Your personal life essence, painfully harvested over time. Injection that heals 1d6 instantly. **Cost:** Always available. **Load:** 1.

Screamer: Don't ask the Binders how they make these. Glass jar that moans softly. When shattered, will attract monsters as if it were a delicious bleeding morsel. Perfect for a distraction. **Cost:** 2/- . **Load:** 1.

Flicker Flash: *Alchemical. Light.* Small explosive. Lights up the area. Can blind a small group. **Cost:** 2/- . **Load:** 0.

Crackler: *Pre-Murk.* A pair of disks. When set up, passing between them discharges lightning (3d6 damage). Spent on use. **Cost:** 3/- . **Load:** 1.

Harvest Kit: Knives. Clamps. Saws. Everything needed to bring the right kind of monster trophies and organs back. **Cost:** Always available. **Load:** 1.

Shadow Band: Placed around a limb. You can activate it to make the limb inhumanly strong, but the band constricts. After several uses, you lose the limb. Removing a partially constricted Band is a delicate process involving both a doctor and a Binder. **Cost:** -/5. **Load:** 1.

ADVANCEMENT

During an expedition into the Murk, you may mark the following as it happens:

- **The Shield:** Protect a teammate from a Murk threat. *May be marked twice.*
- **The Slayer:** Land a killing blow on a large Murkbeast. *May be marked twice.*
- **The Unyielding:** Reduce a blow of 4+ damage to 0. *May be marked twice.*
- **The Wrecker:** Land a blow for 4+ damage. *May be marked three times.*
- **The Survivor:** Survive a successful expedition into the Murk. *May be marked once.*

Take **1xp** per mark at the end of every expedition into the Murk, then clear all the marks. *See page 5 for advancement rules.*





LIGHTBEARER

Full members of the Order are too valuable to send into the Murk. You're an aspirant seeking recognition, an outcast, or a priest fallen out of favor. You can shape the Silver Flame with Attune, though doing so may consume it. Sometimes, it's the only solution to problems in the dark.

An average Order member has a cushy life. Observe the rituals and maintain the flame, and they'll take care of you.

What did you do to lose such status? Did you anger a higher up? Did you hate the drudgery of maintenance prayers? Are you seeking to skip the long apprenticeship process by taking on foolhardy missions for the Order?

STARTING ACTION

Lightbearers start with **Attune**.

STARTING COIN

Start with **5d6** coin to spend, and **10** coin in your stash. The Order is well reimbursed for their services. Even the lowliest of their members are well dressed and equipped.

ABILITIES

Seals: Branded into skin. Once per expedition, spend to fully ignore a consequence of Murk powers or magic.

Wards: You can Attune the Flame into barriers and warding circles. Keeps Shades/Murk effects out. Roll to resist when powerful things try breaking it.

Medic: You can spend medkits in combat to patch people up quickly. When you rest, the kits you spend on others heal for an extra **+1d6** hp.

Dispel: Grab a handful of Silver Flame and use it to consume mystic effects. Dispels may burn you.

Fireblood: You can Attune to infuse the living with Silver Flame. Caulterizes wounds (**1d6** healing), removes enchantments and venoms. Hurts.

Silver Weapon: You can Attune the Silver Flame into a melee weapon. It does **+1d6** damage to those touched by the Murk.

Veteran: You may take a power from another delver type.

LIGHTBEARER GEAR

Argent Oil: *Light. Alchemical.* When lit with the Silver Flame, it can burn through metal and stone. Can coat melee weapons for +1d6 damage for a scene, but doing so consumes the gear. **Cost:** 2/- **Load:** 0.

Bullets: *Light.* 5 uses. **Cost:** 2/- **Load:** 0.

Handgun: *Pre-Murk.* 2d6 damage at range. Only a few shots. Loud. Have to re-buy bullets. **Cost:** -/6. **Load:** 1.

Medkits: You have access to plenty of cheap Order medicine and medical supplies. **Cost:** 1/2. **Load:** 1.

Rebreather: *Light. Pre-Murk.* Small stick held in mouth. Lets you breathe in smoke, poison gas, vacuum, or water. **Cost:** 1/4. **Load:** 0.

Smoggers: *Light. Alchemical.* Prayer cigarettes lit with the Flame. Allow you to exhale roomfuls of smoke. **Cost:** Always available. **Load:** 0.

Unbreakable Chain: Metal forged in the Silver Flame. Unbreakable. Burns Murkmonsters. **Cost:** -/8. **Load:** 1.

Whisper: *Light. Pre-Murk.* A few small black marbles. Allows communication at a distance. **Cost:** 3/- **Load:** 0.



ADVANCEMENT

During an expedition into the Murk, you may mark the following as it happens:

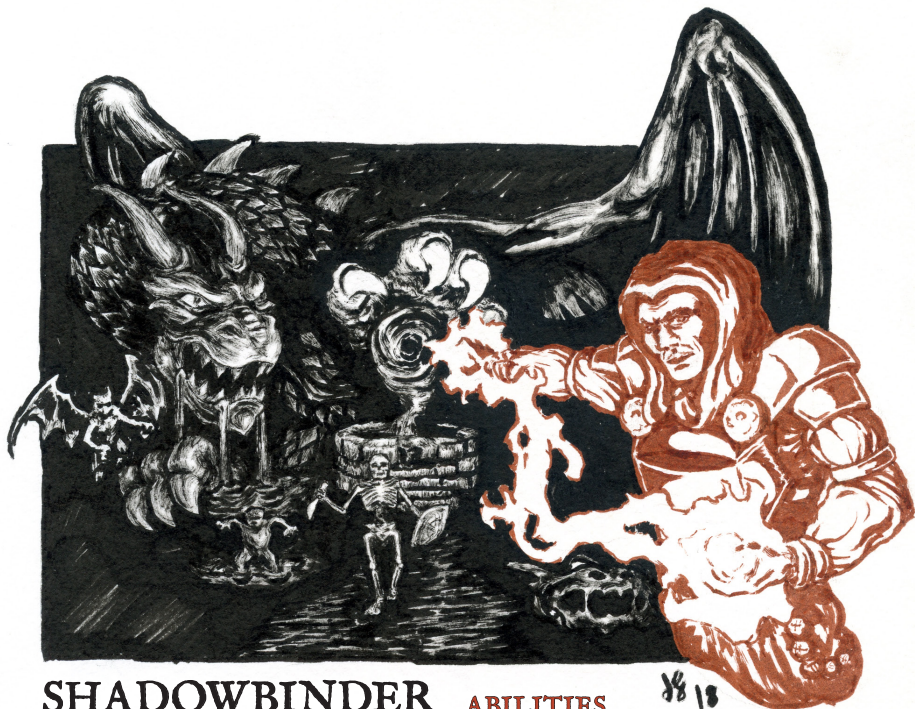
- **The Mercy:** Heal a teammate for 3+ damage. *May be marked three times.*
- **The Leader:** Overcome a difficult obstacle using leadership and wisdom. *May be marked twice.*
- **The Bearer:** Use the Silver Flame to end a threat to your group. *May be marked three times.*
- **The Closer:** Personally close a Nightwell. *May be marked once.*
- **The Survivor:** Survive a successful expedition into the Murk. *May be marked once.*

Take **1xp** per mark at the end of every expedition into the Murk, then clear all the marks. *See page 5 for advancement rules.*

THE ORDER OF THE SILVER FLAME

Here's a few handy facts to help portray the Order.

- They wear white and red robes, and polished silver armor. Far newer & cleaner than most own.
- There are 2 major branches of the Order. The Builders—who pray and maintain the Flame. And the Bearers—who guard the shrines and routes (often by paying delvers for the latter).
- Having a life-critical role, the Order is well compensated. They have money and privilege, and many see themselves as betters of the common folk.
- The Order has no legal power, but they can turn off the light to regions if they are thwarted.



SHADOWBINDER

Folks who survive being captured by the Murk can sometimes shape the dark. It speaks to them. If they train properly (and evade the Order's attention) they can summon Shades to do their bidding, and speak to Murkbeasts. They can mix blood and Murk to vicious effect. They provide options others can't on the delves.

Some Shadowbinders spend much time past the light border listening to the Murk. Many tattoo themselves with wards to help control the Murk, and dedicate themselves to fighting the dark.

How did you learn to control your powers? Study of hard-to-find tomes? Learning on the job? Apprenticing to a senior Shadowbinder?

STARTING ACTION

Shadowbinders start with **Channel**.

STARTING COIN

Start with **4d6** coin to spend.

ABILITIES

Shadowshaping:

Channel the Murk into weapons, claws, and the like that emerge from you.

Conjuration: You can Channel Shades from deep in the Murk. You know the true name of one Shade to start. It has two knowledges (for example *slaying*, *scouting*, *assisting with magic*).

Blood Magic: Bleed yourself (1d6-2 damage) to add +1d to a Channel roll.

Binding: You can command or bind still Murkbeasts, though you may have to resist their will or strength.

Shadowy Contacts: You can safely sell Murkbeast parts, plants harvested from the dark, or other heretical objects. Add +1 coin per loot object.

Wards: Adds 1 armor against mystic & insubstantial attacks. Always take -1 corruption.

Veteran: You may take a power from another delver type.

SHADOWBINDER GEAR

Quicksilver: *Light. Alchemical.* Adds +1d to Channel. Hallucinogenic. Distracting. Addictive. **Cost:** 2/4. **Load:** 0.

Black Candles: *Alchemical.* Add +1d to summon Shades. Don't ask what the wax is. **Cost:** 4/- . **Load:** 1.

Dreamsmoke: Herbs that let your senses depart your body and travel the Murk ahead. **Cost:** 2/4. **Load:** 1.

Fetch: *Light.* A small Murkgoblin that was once a person. You have a piece of their former self you can use to compel it. May require a resolve test for particularly suicidal commands. **Cost:** 2/8. **Load:** 0.

Glimmerstone: *Light.* A small stone that chills when Murkbeasts approach. May run out. **Cost:** 2/- . **Load:** 0.

Bladder of Fresh Blood: Murkbeasts may trade for this. Smell is distracting to them. And you need to feed your Shades somehow. **Cost:** 1/8. **Load:** 1.

Athame: The ingredients necessary to make a small weapon that can strike incorporeal creatures. **Cost:** -/3. **Load:** 1.

ADVANCEMENT

During an expedition into the Murk, you may mark the following as it happens:

- **The Binder:** Tackle a threat or difficult problem using a minion or controlled creature. *May be marked three times.*
- **The Shaper:** Tackle a threat or difficult problem by channeling the Murk. *May be marked twice.*
- **The Cunning:** Tackle a difficult problem using cunning or arcane knowledge. *May be marked three times.*
- **The Hungry:** Find a new source of power or occult knowledge in the Murk. *May be marked once.*
- **The Survivor:** Survive a successful expedition into the Murk. *May be marked once.*

Take **1xp** per mark at the end of every expedition into the Murk, then clear all the marks. *See page 5 for advancement rules.*

ARE WE THE BADDIES ?

Since the Murk is a source of constant danger, and Binders do questionable stuff, why are they not run out of town with torches and pitchforks?

The Order may provide light, but they are far too few to protect every corner of the Lit lands. If a Murkbeast bites your child when they're playing too close to the border, the Order won't fund an expedition for medicine—the Binder will cross and get what you need. The Order won't grind up Murkbeast parts to make inebriates that help ease the harshness of life. Most Binders are well known people that picked up something during an attack—and often still live among the townsfolk, and know their woes and problems and can help.

Some Binders are too corrupt, or too vile in their actions. Those folks are run out of town. But the others are just too useful to exile.



EXPLORER

The Murk is a place of danger, but it's also a place of resources (like metal, glass, and stone) that the Lit lands need. It has wondrous plants, unique creatures, and artifacts whose making is lost to the Lit lands.

While most fear the Murk, the Explorer finds it most curious. They see the value and possibility in the unlit world. They find paths and move through the dark alone looking for treasures and opportunities. Experienced Explorers often have Pre-Murk artifacts they've salvaged and kept.

You don't have to jump into every problem headfirst with a knife in hand. Studying the problem often lets you bypass it more effectively than just barreling through. Guide your team past what obstacles you can, and yell for help when you can't.

STARTING ACTION

Explorers start with **Study**.

STARTING COIN

Start with **4d6** coin to spend.

ABILITIES

Ambush: Roll +1d for surprise attacks. Also add +1d6 damage when doing so.

Alchemist: At the start of the delve, you may choose up to 3 *Alchemicals* to bring with you without needing to pay coin for them.

Looter: GM rolls an extra die for loot fortune rolls. You can sell forbidden and Pre-Murk tech. Make +3 coin when selling loot at the end of a delve.

Tinker: You know a fair bit about Pre-Murk tech—your knowledge counts as a perfect tool for fixing or studying such tech. However, Pre-Murk tech is old and therefore not always stable or predictable.

Trapper: You get +1d to Tinker when placing traps. You also get +1d to notice, resist, or avoid traps or ambushes of any sort.

Quick: You act as if you were one speed category faster than you are.

Veteran: You may take a power from another delver type.

EXPLORER GEAR

Box Kit: *Pre-Murk.* Same as per the common item, but better stocked. Lets you interface with or repair ancient tech. **Cost:** Always available. **Load:** 1.

Quiet Oil: *Light. Alchemical.* Big bottle of oil. When a surface is covered, anything on or within it makes no sound. **Cost:** 4/-. **Load:** 0.

Murksight Shrooms: *Light. Alchemical.* Lets you see in the Murk till you next rest. **Cost:** Always available. **Load:** 0.

Brighters: *Light. Alchemical.* Cold, bright, flare. The light burns Murkspawn. Lasts 30 mins. **Count:** 3. **Cost:** 2/-. **Load:** 0.

Quickbone: *Light. Alchemical.* Turns bones to jelly for a few minutes. You can squeeze through inhumanly small spaces. **Cost:** 4/-. **Load:** 0.

Shadowbite: *Light. Alchemical.* Poison applied to blades. Makes Murkspawn weak. Choose one: halve their damage, or add +1d to resist their abilities. **Cost:** 3/-. **Load:** 0.

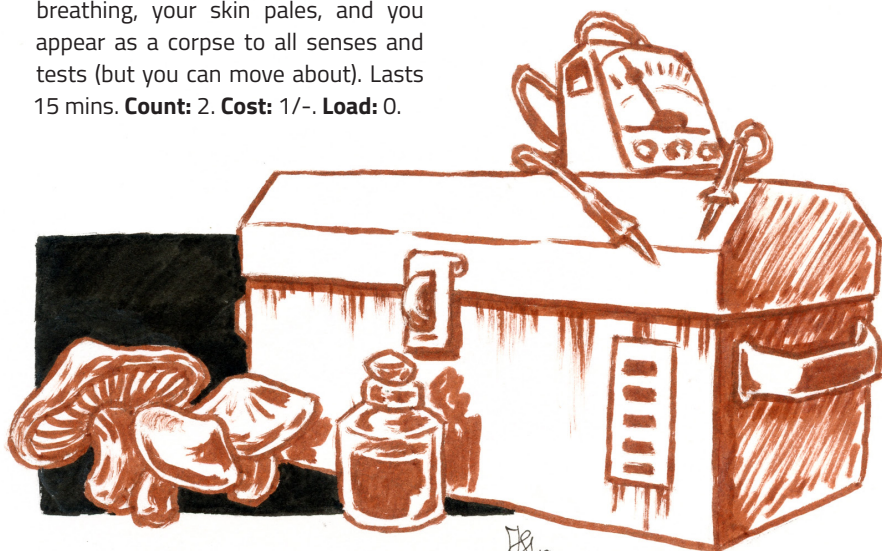
Corpsesip: *Light. Alchemical.* You stop breathing, your skin pales, and you appear as a corpse to all senses and tests (but you can move about). Lasts 15 mins. **Count:** 2. **Cost:** 1/-. **Load:** 0.

ADVANCEMENT

During an expedition into the Murk, you may mark the following as it happens:

- **The Archaeologist:** Tackle a threat or difficult problem using Pre-Murk tech. *May be marked twice.*
- **The Master Brewer:** Tackle a threat or difficult problem with Alchemicals. *May be marked three times.*
- **The Fixer:** Repair or reconstruct Pre-Murk tech or artifacts to help on your expedition. *May be marked once.*
- **The Looter:** Sell a piece of loot worth 3+ coin (can happen after a run). *May be marked twice.*
- **The Shiny:** Find a mint piece of loot. *May be marked once.*
- **The Survivor:** Survive a successful expedition into the Murk. *May be marked once.*

Take **1xp** per mark at the end of every expedition into the Murk, then clear all the marks. *See page 5 for advancement rules.*



EXAMPLE OF PLAY

DELVERS

Cast of Characters.

TINNY-BELL

A Murkdelper covered in heavy plate. Named after the sound blows make when raining down on his heavy armor.

Delver Type: Murkhunter

Ability: War Machine

Player: Dylan

NYX

A young Shadowbinder with wards and tattoos scribed on her skin. Known for the strange creatures she keeps about her.

Delver Type: Shadowbinder

Ability: Conjunction

Player: Lauren

AJO QUICKFINGERS

Quiet with a scar over one eye, Ajo is known for moving quietly ahead of the group in the Murk.

Delver Type: Explorer

Ability: Alchemist

Player: Gene

IN THE LIGHT

Sam describes the ruined village as the Murkdelvers enter. The broken doors, the Order guards in their shiny silver armor with their red and white liveries, the missing people and animals. The Order have dragged a simple wooden desk from a blood-spattered house to use for posting the bounty. A large brazier of Silver Flame and several light cages sit next to them. The Order accountant gestures the delvers forward.

The players agree to go into the Murk for the four dice of payment, and Sam kicks off the expedition with the two classic questions.

"So, who's carrying the Lightcage?" she asks. The group looks at each other, and Gene raises his hand. "I think Dylan uses a shield, so I'll volunteer for now. We can switch up who carries it as needed."

Sam draws a six-clock on an index card, labels it "Silver Flame," and hands it to Gene.

"Ok," says Sam. "So you folks cross the boundary into the Murk, and the light fades behind you a little quicker than you'd expect. How do you know which way the Nightwell is?"

Gene speaks up. "Can I track all the people that got dragged off into the Murk?"

"Sure," says Sam. "That's an awareness and smarts thing. So an Insight roll!"

"Great," says Gene. He picks up his one die for Insight. "And I can study the ground to track, right?" Sam nods, and he picks up another die for Study. "And how easy is this to do? The incursion was just like a day ago, and they grabbed a whole bunch of people, so the tracks should be somewhat obvious, right?"

"Yeah that sounds like a big advantage. I'll give you two dice to track 20-some people with relatively fresh tracks."

Gene rolls his 4 dice—1, 3, 4, 5. He reads the highest value. "A 5. So a partial success."

Sam knows that a powerful Murkbeast haunts the area, so it stalking the party is a good complication. "Yep, you totally follow the tracks. They're pretty clear!"

"Oh, oh, I don't like everything coming up roses on a 4/5," says Gene. "But I think I want to save my stress for more obvious resists."

DUBIOUS ALLIES

"Before we leave," says Lauren, "I'd like to summon my Shade from deep in the Murk."

"What's that look like?" asks Sam. "And what is its name, and what can it do?"

"Well I think I wander like 10 feet from the edge of the light, and sketch out a circle on the ground with my Athame," says Lauren. "I think Nyx puts her hand on the line, and you realize that the last piece of the binding circle is tattooed on the back of her hand. I use my Channeling to speak its name into the Murk—Za'verax the Seven Eyed. Would you say its true name is a perfect tool?" Sam nods.

"Ok," says Lauren. "I've got my die for Resolve, one for Channel, one for the true name, and one from these black candles I bought for just this sort of summoning." She rolls and gets a six. "I think Nyx walks back into camp, and on her shoulder is a little rat that she had brought out in a cage, but now it has like seven eyes, all violet." Her teammates give her thumbs-up. She answers the question Sam asked earlier. "I think Zavvy here can help with channeling the Murk, and watching for unseen threats."

"Sounds good," says Sam.



A DIFFICULT PATH

"You travel for a few hours when you find a large road made of smooth black rock. It leads to a large structure," says Sam. "How close are you getting with that light?"

"I think once we hit the road, I'll pull ahead," says Gene. "I'll eat my Murksight Shrooms, which let me see in the dark. What are we coming up on?"

"Looks like a huge wall," says Sam. "The tracks vanish on the stone surface of the road, but you see a massive set of double doors up ahead. And those may be Murkbeasts atop them, watching the path."

"Well, that's no good," says Gene. "Do I know of any other way in or past?"

"How would you know that?" asks Sam.

"Well, Explorer's talk and Ajo frequents some notorious Explorer dive-bars. I don't have a map of this area, but a wall like that is probably well known. Someone must have found a way past."

"Sounds like a Resolve and Lore check," says Sam.

"Oooh, I'm not bad at that," says Lauren.

"Yeah, but I think chatting up some Explorers gives me a better position to try," says Gene. "And though I have zero Resolve or Lore marked, I'll push for a die."

"Take 1 extra for your story," says Sam.

Gene picks up 2 dice and rolls—a 4.

"Well you know there is a way, but there's a Pre-Murk door, and it's not easy to reach. It's down a collapsed shaft. And it requires climbing through some tunnels."

"Good thing I brought my climbing kit," says Gene.

NASTY SURPRISES

The climb is easy with ropes and winches. Ajo tries to Tinker the door and rolls a 5. Success, with a complication. Sam has one up her sleeve.

"So the door isn't fully powered," says Sam. "And it'll take a minute or two to slowly grind open. That's when this horrific creature pounces on Nyx with speed and deadly grace."

"Whoa," says Dylan. "Can I resist that? Put myself in the way?"

"Well, it's an ambush," says Sam. "You're Slow with all that armor, so the beast is faster. You could try an Insight resist to see it coming, but at a 2 die penalty"

Dylan shakes his head. "Sorry Lauren, Nyx is on her own here for a second."

"No worries," says Lauren. She turns to Sam. "So I think the beast is coming for me because I have the lightcage." Sam shrugs, smirking. "Can I channel the Murk to cloak myself, and confuse the thing for a second?"

"Sure," says Sam. "You're quick, so you can react at +1, but the Insight resist applies."

"Remember that Zavvy helps me spot danger," Lauren mentions. "And I have 1 toughening in Insight." She rolls 2 dice and gets a 6. Full resist. No stress cost.

"You see it coming," says Sam. "Want to try and channel?"

"I'm good at this. Resolve?" Sam nods. "I'm quick, I have channel, and Zavvy helps me. Plus I'll push." She rolls a 4.

"I think your illusion works, the Murkbeast is distracted. Take a die of corruption as you channel the Murk through your body,"

Lauren rolls 1 die for corruption and gets a 3. She marks it down on her sheet.

TOUGH BATTLES

"I think the beast roars and whirls around at you. You realize it's catlike, but it has a few different animal parts sewn on it. There's like a head of a goat taken from the Lit lands, and a bull one. They're all pissed, as it charges towards Ajo and Tinny-bell."

"We just have to keep it busy untill that door opens. I'm going to try and get in its way," says Dylan. "Can I hold it? I'm ok doing less damage when we tangle, if I can keep it from hurting us for a hot second."

"Sounds like a Prowess roll. You're still slow, so you're at -1d," says Sam.

"Ok, I've got Prowess and Skirmish, but at minus one it's only one die. I think I'll push." He rolls, and gets a 5.

"I think you do what you expect, you hold it for a hot minute. I think its claws and teeth bat you around, but your armor largely soaks up the damage."

"We need a plan," says Gene. "Can I squeeze through the door yet?" Sam shakes her head—no. "With quickbone making me all jelly like?" Sam nods—yes. Gene marks off the alchemical. "Are there controls on the other side?"

"Sure," says Sam.

"Great," says Gene. "I'll slip through and see what I can do to shut the door faster than it's opening."

"That's a tough Insight Tinker, roll since we know the door isn't super well-powered. Minus 1 die," says Sam.

Gene grabs his one die, and pushes for another by marking off a stress. "Ok, let's do this!" He rolls a six. "Yes!"

"You figure it out," says Sam.

DESPERATE GAMBLER

"Ok, we just gotta keep it off of folks for one minute," says Dylan. "Is that rope still there?" Sam nods. "I'll try to grab the rope, and tie it up for just a second for us to get away."

Sam chuckles, "I see your plan. It's probably a tough Athletics check to run by it and grab the rope. And tying it up..."

"Well, good thing I have that action," says Dylan. "Still hard because it's large and mean?"

"Actually," says Lauren. "Can I make a Lore check to see what I know about this critter and its construction?" Sam nods. She picks up a die for Resolve and Lore, and she rolls a 5.

"You remember some key facts. You know the beast is made by a specific kind of Shade that stitches together monsters, and that stitching is a weak point. I'll give you +1d for any lore checks on future Murkbeasts of the same kind."

"Can I see if I can attack the Murk holding it together?" asks Lauren.

"Sure, but that might be dangerous. That's powerful Shade Murkstuff there."

"Great," says Lauren. "I'm gonna try to distract the beast, and maybe slow it down so Tinny-bell can get it trussed up for the moment."

She rolls Resolve plus Channel, with a die from Zavvy, and ends up with a 4. "I warned you it might be rough.

Take 1d6+2 corruption." Lauren rolls a 5—7 corruption!

"Yikes, can I resist that with Resolve? I think I'm going to just use my power and will to keep it off of me." Sam nods, and Lauren rolls 3 dice and gets a 1, 1, and 3.

"Rough," says Lauren, marking off the stress as required on a miss. "But at least it still reduces it—half, right Sam? And we always round down?"

Sam nods. "Tinny-bell. You see Nyx gesture, and the monster screams and struggles, and Murkstuff comes out of its seams. You're in a good position now, and the critter is slower."

"Great. Prowess/Athletics you said?" Sam nods. Dylan rolls four dice and gets a 4. "So it looks like I do it, but it's not all roses. How bad is it Sam?"

Sam rolls 1d6 for the beast's damage and gets a 6. "Pretty bad. Take six damage."

"I have 2 armor, but I don't think my shield is out while I'm tying up this thing. Can I Prowess resist? I know it's a powerful foe, but want to halve the damage so I take only 1 after armor. I'll use the rope to make sure I don't get clawed up too badly?"

Sam nods. Dylan rolls a 4/5. "Take 3 if you spend a stress. This thing is SUPER strong." Dylan marks the stress and the 1 damage Tinny takes after armor.

"Ok, we clear to get out of here?" asks Gene, and Sam nods.

The delvers dash through the door, Ajo slams it shut, they hear angry roars behind it, and they journey forward ... into the dark.

RUNNING THE GAME

Into the Dark is a beer-and-pretzels style game that mixes some classic fantasy tropes (skeletons, dragons, monsters) with horror elements.

This world was once advanced, so to make an adventure, pick areas of a town you're familiar with, and paint them spooky and scary (as if a kid was imagining horrors in the dark). Add a few monsters and twist locations to make the town more horrific.

Somewhere within the Murk is a Nightwell—a source of power for the monsters, and a key to the infestation. The delvers are hired to bear a piece of the Silver Flame to the well and throw it inside, closing this specific Nightwell for good. If they can get out and maybe bring back a few artifacts of the world before... that warrants a bit more of a reward.

USING DICE ROLLS

Players roll dice when their Murkdelver does something risky or they try to avoid a bad outcome. If neither apply, just say what happens—when you say something bad happens, the players can roll to avoid it!

The GM doesn't roll for monsters. A player's roll covers both the delver's action and the enemies action. If a delver fights a monster toe-to-toe, a 6 means the delver does harm, a 1-3 means the monster does harm, and a 4-5 means that they

both do harm, or the delver's weapon breaks, or howls of new monsters come out of the dark (*fights can be different, this is just an example*).

Resistance rolls by the delvers can reduce outcomes. They can reduce or avoid damage, resist effects that grip their minds, shake off terror, and weather poisons. Remember that resistances do not negate the roll, they were still hit, but they may reduce or avoid the consequences.

A **fortune roll** can be applied if sheer chance is involved—the GM rolls 1d6: high is good for the players, low is bad. *"Is there a good place to hole up and rest in that building? Not sure! Let's make a fortune roll!"*



BONUSES & PENALTIES

The GM may assign **bonuses** and **penalties** to the players' rolls to reflect unusual circumstances.

When a delver has a significant advantage, give them **+1d** to their roll. When they have a dominant advantage, give them **+2d**. When a delver is at a disadvantage, give their roll **-1d**. When they have a serious disadvantage, give them **-2d**.

A player's approach to a situation and how they use their gear and abilities can influence rolls—the players might come up with a great idea and execute it well; so they deserve a bonus! Or when they make a huge mistake or end up in a really bad position, penalties are called for. Examine and discuss what's happening in the fiction with the table. However, the GM has final say over any bonuses and penalties.

"You're outnumbered pretty badly by these Murklings. I think you're at -2d."

"True, but I brought some Blackwater on this delve, which I'll throw to ignite the area here. We know these particular critters are scared of fire, from our Murkbinder's previous Study roll. When the fire spooks them, I'll press my attack."

"Nice! That's the perfect tool for this situation. Take +1d instead."

The GM's job is to present a credible world with consistent rules. Players can then anticipate how their actions might overcome the Murk. The world you present also sets the game's tone (less horror and more action, or vice versa).

Here are some suggestions for possible situations where modifiers might appear in your game:

BONUSES

- **Teamwork:** An ally fights alongside you—but both of you might take the consequences.
- **Follow-up:** Teammate pins a monster, and you follow-up with an attack.
- **Slower enemies:** If the delvers have room to maneuver: easier to hit or escape.
- **Perfect tool:** Bright flare used to hold back light-sensitive monsters. Heavy armor against simple claws or teeth. Acid used on a metal grate.

PENALTIES

- **Outnumbered:** Fighting multiple opponents at once, who are coordinating their efforts.
- **Bad conditions:** Slippery footing. Blinding smoke. Terrible lighting.
- **Faster enemies:** If they have room to maneuver: harder to hit them or escape from them.
- **Bad tool:** Using a sword to threaten a well armored monster. Wielding a knife against spears or swords.
- **A terrible idea that still might work:** Trying to get badly damaged Pre-Murk tech to work. Trying to Bind a Nightwell's power from enhancing the monsters near it.

Note that many pieces of equipment are just preset bonuses using this method. A Shadowbinder's black candles are just a *perfect tool* for summoning Shades.

Don't double dip bonuses in these instances—it's not both a perfect tool, and a **+1d** from the item itself.

THE SILVER FLAME

Before each excursion into the dark, the Murkdelvers must dip a lightcage into the Silver Flame usually found at the temple of the Order, or one of the posts channeling it in town. Someone must hold the lightcage at all times (or the flame starts to die out). Though Lightbearers prefer this duty at all times, in truth the lightcage and flame respond to the grip of any untainted living.

This burning Silver Flame is anathema to the Murk, and provides a significant area of light. All Murkdelvers embark into the Murk to drop a piece of the Silver Flame into a Nightwell, which ignites and destroys it. Any other objectives are secondary to this goal.



There is a catch. The Silver Flame is not infinite. At the start of the delve, the GM will give players a clock to represent the amount of Silver Flame left.

Any time delvers rest, or a significant amount of time passes, a portion of the flame burns down (tick the flame clock once). Lightbearer powers may also reduce the flame (the GM will state the cost before the player rolls).



**FLAME
CLOCK**

If even one piece of the flame remains, you may drop it into the well to close it. When all segments are marked, the flame dies out. Only the Murk remains.

The GM can pace the game by adjusting the flame clock size and the number of obstacles. Use a smaller flame clock and fewer obstacles for a shorter game, or a bigger clock with more challenges for a longer one. A six-segment flame clock is good for a four hour session.

Once the well is closed, the group must make the trek back to the Lit lands. Resolve the journey home with a single roll (ask the group if someone leads, or how they want to go back).

If the Silver Flame burns brightly, the consequences of failed or partial rolls are probably less dire. But if the Flame is out altogether... well, the creatures of the Murk have significant advantages against humans with no Silver Flame to light the way.

Normal lights (like torches) are dimmer and weaker in the Murk, but they do still work. A trek lit only by torches will be harrowing. Good luck!

CORRUPTION

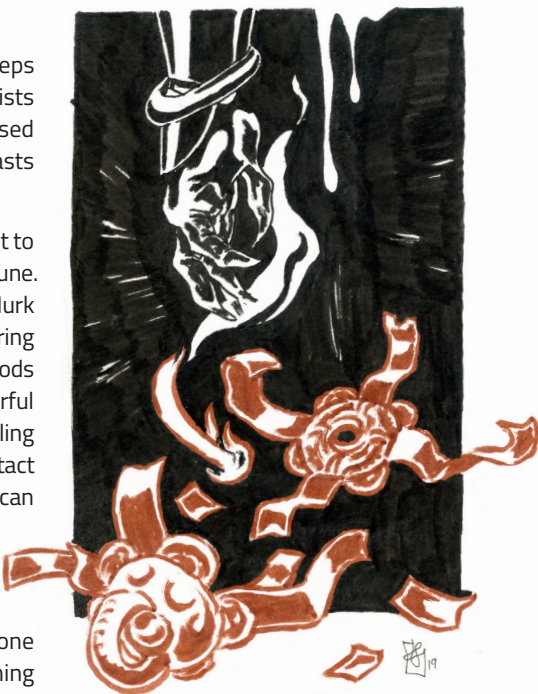
The Murk isn't just darkness. It creeps into people. Finds their fears. Twists and changes them. People immersed in the Murk change into Murkbeasts over time.

Murkdelvers are somewhat resistant to this effect, but not completely immune. The Silver Flame burns away the Murk around the delvers. But wandering into unlit places alone for long periods of time, interacting with powerful Murk-related obstacles, Channeling the Murk, or being in physical contact with Shades are all things that can generate corruption.

Corruption is the physical effect the Murk can have on the body. When a Murkdelver is exposed to one of the effects above (or something similar), they may take 1d6 corruption as a consequence. Mitigating factors might add up to +/- 2 to that roll.

There is no known way of clearing corruption, though rumors persist of artifacts or warped locations lost in the Murk that might help afflicted delvers. Powerful Shadowbinders hoard such knowledge and dangle it as a promise to afflicted folks (or with friends or family with such issues).

The descent into corruption for many Murkdelvers is not immediate. Forgiving friends and fellow delvers may make allowances for the afflicted, and will help find the means to alleviate their corruption. However, the Order is less forgiving and may attempt to imprison or execute anyone with over 30 corruption. Obvious signs of corruption cause fear and distrust among the general populace of the Lit lands.



CORRUPTION EFFECTS

- **10+ Corruption:** The Silver Flame is too bright. Acquire tinted goggles to wear around it. Extended exposure leaves your skin reddened and raw.
- **20+ Corruption:** Minor physical signs, such as pitch-black eyes or sharpened teeth. Fear smells good. You may crave blood or flesh.
- **30+ Corruption:** Major changes. Claws, fur, or feathers. You might be able to understand Murkbeasts. Shades or Nightwells will command you unless you resist with Resolve.
- **40 Corruption:** You are no longer a playable character. Depart into the Murk (future delves may feature the thing you have become), or be ended by your friends or the Order.

EXPEDITION SETUP

There's a few steps you should follow to prepare an expedition for your group.

I Duration, Obstacles, & Rewards.

Decide the expected duration of the delve. You'll want to set up about 2-3 obstacles per hour of play, with some taking longer (monster encounters often do) than others. You'll want to set the Flame clock size accordingly as well. The Order pays 1d of coin to the group as a whole (not each individual) per obstacle they expect them to face.

2 The Big Bad. When a Nightwell opens, it becomes a problem when something like a Shade crawls out of its depths and assaults the Lit lands. Figure out its motivation (see table on the right) to figure out its theme.

Next, think of a horror genre to color the delve. Is it body horror? Reality horror (creepy visions, jump scares, distrust of the senses)? Slasher horror (carnage, destruction, rending and tearing)? Or is it environmental horror (mutagens, toxins, corruption)? Use this to flavor your big bad and most of the Murkmonsters during the adventure.

3 Detail the Murk. You don't need to cover every inch of the journey in great detail, but you will want to have several major sections or areas for the delvers to traverse. Expeditions are like movies. Build a few set pieces and have punchy scenes among them. Travel between them can be handled with a roll if necessary, or hand-waved if there isn't a specific obstacle or problem in the way.

It's often helpful to sketch out a list (or map) of places you plan to put in the expedition. It's fine to pick familiar areas of your locale. *Into the Dark* draws on the post-apocalyptic genre (the Murk being the apocalypse in this instance), so feel free to give these areas interesting names that allude to their nature. Remember that info about such things comes from previous expeditions into the Murk, and is often viewed through the lens of a small bubble of light.

4 Detail Obstacles. This is where you come up with monsters, hazards, or problems to challenge and stymie your delvers. If you need inspiration, consult the chart on the right (some examples follow).

BEYOND NIGHTWELLS

If you want to do things other than expeditions to close Nightwells, here are a few ideas:

- A wealthy Shadowbinder hires you to capture a specific Shade in the Murk. Where do you get a lightcage?
- A badly wounded Explorer found a cache of Pre-Murk tech. He wants you to get it, and is willing to split the profit. How do you get a lightcage?
- A famous Murkbeast has been spotted near the border. A rich patron wants someone to protect him while he hunts it.
- The Order hires you to escort a metal stagecoach caravan heading to another Lit city. What is this city like?



MURK MOTIVATIONS

Roll or pick the Big Bad's Motivation.

D6	MURK MOTIVATIONS	
1	DESTRUCTION	Anger. Violence. Rage. Destroy the Light. It burns. You hate it. Powerful, angry beasts. Teeth, claws, and rending strength.
2	CORRUPTION	Temptation. Insidious poisons. Corruption by the Murk. Slow descent into mutation and spread of your kind.
3	CONSUMPTION	Endless Hunger. You're so cold. Eat the fire. Eat the warmth of the people. Grow in strength. Drink. Consume. Never Enough.
4	CONQUEST	These fools do not understand the majesty of the dark. Eat them. Rend them. Show them terror until they kneel. Expand the dark.
5	SUFFERING	Inflict pain. Listen to screams. Watch their terror. Feast on it. Let it strengthen you. Let their fear birth more of your children.
6	HOARD	You want what they have. Pretty colored blood, tasty meat, shiny baubles. You want it all. Woe to any who would take from you.

OBSTACLES

Roll or pick to select obstacles.

D6	OBSTACLES AND PROBLEMS	
1	OBSTACLES	Gates barring the way. Cracks filled with nasty Murk mist in your path. Access or climbing a Pre-Murk building.
2	ENVIRONMENT	Strange Murk weather or mists that might warp and change you (or strip flesh from bone). Dangerous plants with toxic gasses.
3	PUZZLE	Losing the trail. Figuring out Pre-Murk tech to advance. Negotiating with exiles or Binders in the Murk.
4	JOURNEY	Finding supplies. Surviving a long rest in the Murk. Traveling a long, dangerous distance without becoming lost or attacked.
5	MONSTERS	The Murk is filled with Murkbeasts. Some circle the light until the Murkdelvers are distracted. Others make traps (leaving wounded people, weaving webs, etc). Some just pounce, striking at the light first. Some kill, others will drag delvers off. Good luck.
6		

THE MURK

The Murk covers the majority of the world, so it is vast and varied. But there are some things that are consistent about it.

MURK FACTS

- **The Unchanged:** There are still plants outside the Lit lands, few of which interact with the Murk in a predictable fashion. Trees sway in winds that humans don't feel, and grow in sunlight that humans can't see. Some plants (like Murksight Shrooms) only grow in the Murk.
- **The Wells:** Nightwells change the rules. They often transmute the area they appear in. Even when a well is closed, plants and animals stay changed, and reality remains fluid (walls become like shadow, gravity gets strange).
- **The Changed:** Most animals change over time. Some gain bioluminescence. Others warp and mutate (often the same way among members of the same species in an area). Their flesh has strange effects when ingested.
- **Change Storms:** Weather is odd and often deadly in the Murk. It is unpredictable and often accelerates corruption. It acts almost malevolent, haunting, and predatory when it finds something living. It may change the landscape. Delves best avoid fogs and storms.
- **Places:** Much of the Pre-Murk world still exists. Delves speak of vast stone paths, covered in husks of metal cages, or tall buildings, with plants growing out of them. The Murk or the wild changed or reclaimed many structures, but many still have treasures within.

When in the Murk, describe pieces of the world, but never name them as we would today. A massive parking lot becomes a vast black plain, with scattered metal trees growing out of it. Perhaps they spark with remnants of lightning from a malfunctioning engine far away. If it's been affected by the Murk enough, that lightning might even be an obstacle for the delvers.

A bunch of drunk college students might become exiled people, now stumbling about, infected with a Murk-mushroom, seeking to poison the delvers with their spores.

A library becomes a maze, with the plant material of the books sprouting into a dangerous, whispering forest.

Feel free to add surreal elements (several buildings growing out of each other) created by ages of change storms. Or strange phenomenon near previously closed Nightwells, like building debris floating in the air.

The Murk should always feel eerie and unsettling.

DWELLERS

Great crimes in the Lit lands often end with exile into the Murk. Rumors persist of individuals and communities that use powerful Bindings and Pre-Murk tech that creates light to survive the dark.

Though such enclaves are theoretically possible, Murkdelvers should be wary. These groups are rarely friendly or benevolent (though they often might appear that way). They capture delvers and give them as offerings to Shades or other horrors to fulfill their bargains with the Murk.

THE MONSTERS

The Murk is full of scary things that want to eat, corrupt, or capture humans. It's useful to keep a few notes on classifications in mind.

SHADES

Shades are things that were never born into the world. Nobody is sure exactly where they come from. Some wander like shadowy giants through the Murk. Others climb up through the Nightwells, dragging themselves into the world above. They can be compelled if their true name is known. Apparently, some such names were studied and scribed in Pre-Murk days, and can be found scribed on walls in some Pre-Murk locations.

They are often fantastical creatures, powerful combatants, and their bodies are partially made of Murkstuff. Their abilities are wide ranging, though they tend to excel in their areas of expertise, while remaining utterly uninterested in things outside of it.



MURKBEASTS

A Murkbeast is any sentient creature that's been changed by the Murk over time. There are a few major types of Murkbeasts to consider.

Minor Murkbeasts are often called *Murkgoblins*. Most of them are small imps or minor nightmares created from the fears those who died in the Murk. Some Shades can accelerate the number and strength of Murkgoblins by drowning the living in a Nightwell. The strongest of these are called *Nightmares*.

Murkmade are crafted by Shades. Sometimes Shades stitch people together, or corrupt plants and animals through direct contact. Most of the time, Murkmade bear a distinct look that identifies what type of Shade made them, and they have drives and impulses derived from the Shade as well. They don't tend to multiply, being servants and minions.

When a Shade dies, most of their Murkmade become feral or listless. Others continue to function, hunting beasts and people wandering the Murk. Explorers often swap stories of well known feral Murkmade hunting grounds as areas to avoid. Some travel great distances in search of a new Nightwell and Shade to serve, offering fealty for power and purpose.

The Fallen are the most common type of Murkbeast. They were once living beings corrupted by the Murk into something else. Many gain features relating to their greatest fears, seeking to inflict them on others. Nobody knows why, but people who fall to corruption or die together in the Murk tend to become the same type of Murkbeast.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Sam sits down to put together a quick adventure of *Into the Dark* for her friends. She throws a couple dice to inspire her with some concepts. She rolls on the motivation table. She rolls a 6—hoard.

Dragons are traditionally creatures that hoard things, but she decides to remix the concept. Maybe the Shade is an emperor, scaled in gold, with leathery wings.

An emperor needs servants, treasure, and armies. So when the incursion into the Lit lands happens, she makes a note that not just people, but shiny things are taken and dragged into the Murk. Who are his armies? The strongest can be warped and changed by his touch, but they must prove themselves in his arena. She thinks about her hometown, and decides to twist her local stadium and the high-rise across the street into the Nightwell's location. Deadly mists surround it like a moat, adding to that emperor motif. The strongest of those taken become knights, clad in Murk-twisted black metal. The weak become hordes of Murkgoblins they use like hounds. She borrows the stats for a creeper swarm for the Murkgoblins, and crafts a stat line for the knights, giving them some armor and metal-cleaving blades.

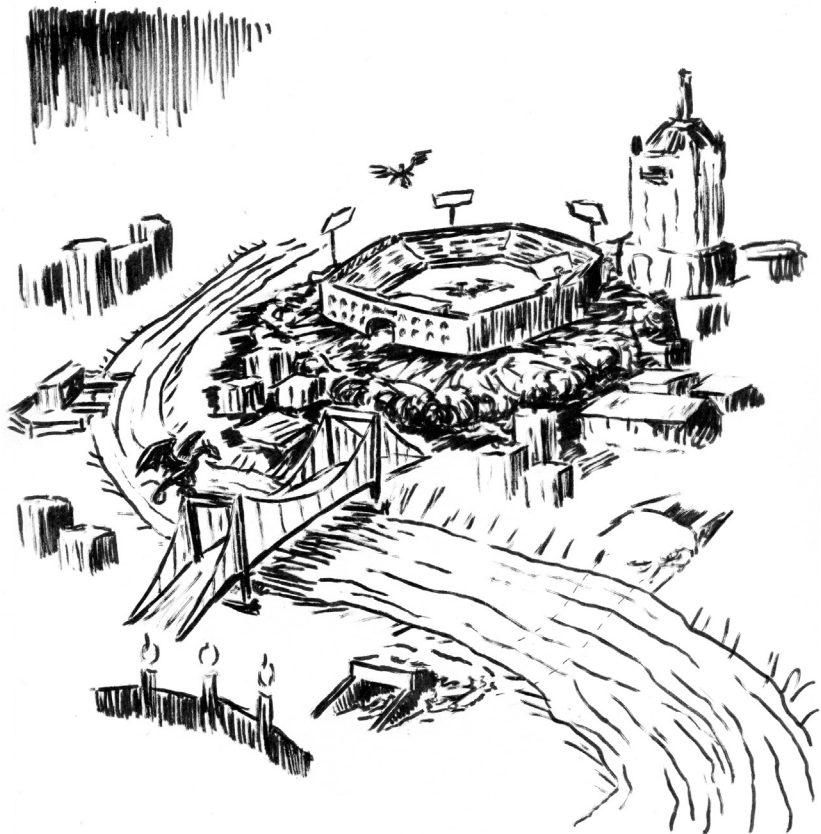
Still enjoying the original dragon motif, she adds a couple wyverns to the emperor's retinue. She borrows a shadow dragon stat line, but tweaks it down. She removes the deadly breath, adds a poison, and gives it a vulnerability to light.

Sam makes a few fun set-pieces and four obstacles for her delvers to overcome. Her hometown sits on a river, so she decides that a tunnel passage and bridge crossing in the dark could be spooky. She renames the tunnel "Undermount Pass" and the bridge becomes the only known passage Explorers talk about over the Dark Waters. She rolls for the types of obstacles that might crop up.

She throws some dice for inspiration on obstacles. The first one comes up a 1. A literal obstacle. She decides that the tunnel has collapsed. Perhaps there was a fight with a previous Murkdelver group there. Passing the obstacle may mean fixing and powering Pre-Murk tech to open alternate routes, or climbing over the mountain in the dark.

The second obstacle is a 2. A puzzle. She decides that one of the Wyverns nests atop the bridge now, but there are rumors of nearby dwellers. They might have a Binder who knows spells to keep a craft safe from the Dark Waters and can get folks to the opposite shore. However, they may need supplies (or some Silver Flame) from the Lit lands. Her delvers may need to negotiate with the Binder, or find a way to sneak by (or fight) the wyvern.

The third roll is a 4. Journey. Perhaps the streets to the well are patrolled by knights and their packs of goblins. That's a harrowing journey to make. This obstacle may require a few Prowl rolls or some clever climbing across rooftops to get past. She makes notes that there's probably some measure of alertness or alarm.



Sam loves some of the old gladiatory movies. She makes a note that if the delvers put up a good fight, the knights will drag them to the arena to be tested for the Emperor's touch. Escaping the gladiator pens or climbing up the side to fight the Emperor-shade could be a cool scene. She makes a note to stat up a Murk-touched animal or a champion for them to fight. The Silver Flame will of course be ticking down dramatically, as it's either displayed as a prize, or stored in the building behind the Emperor (maybe the Lightbearer can sense it).

She doesn't bother rolling for the final obstacle. The Emperor is sitting in judgment above the arena, and the Nightwell is guarded by the Wyvern behind the Shade. She dreams up some imagery of ruined buildings with plants growing out of them, and shadowy mist-like waterfalls falling out of several windows to the ground below.

The adventure is ready for the evening. She figures with character creation, she can entertain her friends for the 4 hours they're meeting. This and a few similar sample adventures follow.

WELL OF BLOOD AND SAND

INFORMATION

- **Type:** Hoard.
- **Shade:** The Murkborn Emperor.
- **Possible Well Location:** Atop a tall building (guarded by a Wyvern). In an arena (guarded by the Emperor, or his Champions).
- **Horror Level:** Low. This is a mostly fantasy scenario with some disturbing overtones tied to the knights and their Murkgoblin hounds.

Borrow the fanatic pack stats from the Well of Fire and Ash for large swarms of Murkgoblins. Good environmental problems might be: guarded routes forcing detours, Pre-Murk doors locked by the Emperor's passcodes, and ancient overgrown buildings to ascend. Good opportunities might be escapees willing to trade info for supplies.

DETAILS AND HOOK

The Emperor claims a Pre-Murk stadium as an arena where he tests people to join his armies.

The Nightwell spawned the Emperor and his Wyverns, who bring him subjects to be tested. The initial incursion should have claw and wing marks from the Wyverns, as clues to upcoming problems.

If the delvers are defeated after a good fight, the Knights take them to the arena to be tested before the Emperor.

Many of these Murkbeasts can be talked to or reasoned with (use Resolve). Powerful warriors or Binders may get bonuses if volunteering to go without a fight. These beasts remember little of their former lives.

THE MURKBORN EMPEROR

A man with draconic wings, and slightly glowing gold hair. Clad in gold armor (mint, 2-load treasure), possessed by a powerful Shade. He has exceptional strength, and his very touch corrupts. His touch upon metal warps it into armor and weapons, but his weakness is his pride. Baiting or taunting him is done at +1d. Will test the best contestants in the arena personally, corrupting them into knights with his touch.



MURKBORN EMPEROR STATS

Powerful Foe. **HP:** 16 **ARMOR:** 3 **SPEED:** Fast **TYPE:** Shade

Mystic Hide: The Emperor is incredibly tough. Has a minimum of 1 Armor vs all attacks (even magical).

Wings: Used for deflecting attacks and gliding. Slow, clumsy, flier.

Attacks: Weapon strikes (1d6+3). "Who needs these toys" (1d6 barehanded damage and 1d3 corruption). Murkbreath (3d6, assign 1 damage die max per target. Takes a moment to recharge. Also does 1d3 corruption).



MURKNIGHT

Humans clad in Pre-Murk armor with Murk enhanced strength. Often have a few Murkgoblins on chains to hunt down and pin prey. Found 2-4 in a unit. Some may have shields (+1 armor).

MURKNIGHT STATS

HP: 8 **SPEED:** Normal **ARMOR:** 2
TYPE: Murkbeast. (1d3+1 in a squad)

Goblin Hounds: 3 HP. Very fast. Usually have 1d6 on chains per squad of Murknights.

Attacks: Defensive formation (+1 armor, 1d6-1 damage). All-out attack (1d6+2 damage, may break opposing weapon/armor as a complication).



WYVERN

Very large. Scaled. Often only parts of it are seen, striking from the edges of the light. They're sensitive to light. If exposed to bright light, they are blinded (granting +1d to attack them).

WYVERN STATS

HP: 14 **SPEED:** Slow **ARMOR:** 2
TYPE: Murkbeast. *Powerful Foe.*

Venomous: Fast acting tail venom (1d6 poison per round until a successful Resolve save is made).

Attacks: Grab and drop (*Grabs prey and flies off. Drops for 2d6 from a height a moment later*). Claw/bite (1d6+1). Tail strike (1d6. Also see *Venomous trait—see above*).

CHAMPION

A Murknight who did very well in the arena. Many bear the black handprint of the emperor's corrupting touch above their heart or on their face. May lead a squad or protect important areas.

CHAMPION STATS

HP: 12 **SPEED:** Normal. **ARMOR:** 1
TYPE: Murkbeast. *Powerful Foe.*

Attacks: Weapon strikes (1d6+3, *destroy a weapon or armor unless prowess resisted*). Armor represents parries (if disarmed, it disappears).

LOOT & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Wyverns:** A Wyvern is a treasure trove of solid loot to harvest. Its scales, heart, and tail poison glands are all harvestable. The GM should make a few loot rolls if the delvers bring one down and have a harvest kit. The scales are even legal to sell.
- **Murknight Gear:** Their armor and weapons are good gear, but the metal is precious. The GM should roll twice per squad. Add +1d if a Champion was present.

WELL OF BLUE TEARS

INFORMATION

- **Type:** Destruction.
- **Shade:** The Well Dragon.
- **Possible Well Location:** Inside the trunk of a massive, mutated tree. Hollowed out, vine-covered Pre-Murk building. At the center of an overgrown garden maze.
- **Horror Level:** Low. Make sure your group is ok with violence to animals (even if they are mutated).

This well is a classic adventure using monsters as primary antagonists. This well produces a dull blue glow. Whenever something is corrupted by the well, it manifests a blue phosphorescence (lesions on the skin, a glow deep inside a throat, blood etc). To turn down the horror if needed for your group, keep the monsters mythical rather than clearly mutated.

DETAILS AND HOOK

The first sign that something is wrong is when a Night Render bursts into the Lit lands and tears apart a small settlement (this is where the delvers will meet the Order). The well wants to destroy the Silver Flame that burns and pains all of its children. The Shade guarding this well is fierce, and will give its life to keep the blue light spreading outwards.

A common obstacle for this well is large cracks that expose the blue glow spreading like a river beneath, cutting off paths and creating monsters. Being too near the glow deals 1d3 corruption, touching it causes 1d6, and extensive exposure (like being dipped in it) does 2d6. Animals are particularly sensitive, mutating instantly into something monstrous.

THE WELL DRAGON

Twenty feet from snout to tail, this monstrosity has tough black scales, and teeth and claws that can rend metal. Its heart glows blue with corruption. The dragon is intelligent, and can speak to Shadowbinders. If properly extracted, its hide and heart are both solid loot on the black market.



WELL DRAGON STATS

Powerful Foe. **HP:** 16 **ARMOR:** 4 **SPEED:** Normal **TYPE:** Shade

Scales: The Dragon's armor applies to Silver Flame and Binding attacks, though if its hide is split, both do extra +3 damage when attacking the wound.

Terror: The dragon is terrifying. Make a Resolve test to not flee when first seeing it.

Attacks: Teeth/claws (1d6+3, reduce armor by 1). Wing buffet/tail swipe (1d6, add -1d while prone/recovering). Corrupting breath (4d6 damage, divide dice among targets, each take 1d6 corruption).



FURIES

Birds that gain mass when they eat people. Their feathers and claws are metallic, and are efficient at rending gear and equipment. Usually travel in flocks of 2d6-1.

FURY STATS

HP: 4 ARMOR: 1 SPEED: Normal
TYPE: Murkbeast. (flock of 2d6-1)

Flight: Not graceful. No lone Fury can carry a full person, but 2 can. When swooping, they count as *Fast*.

Attacks: Rending claws (*d6+1, and reduce armor by 1*). If multiple Furies attack the same person, roll 1d6 per Fury, and choose the highest.



NIGHT RENDERS

Renders gain intellect when they devour people. They look like black-furred cougars, bears, and wolves, with glowing blue radiance of corruption streaking throughout their fur. They smoke and sizzle in the light.

NIGHT RENDER STATS

HP: 14 SPEED: Normal
TYPE: Murkbeast. *Powerful Foe*.

Corrupt: Takes 1 point of damage for each round it's in light.

Frenzy: Increase damage by +1 for each round it's in the light.

Attacks: Bite and Tear (*1d6+2 and 1d6 corruption*).

SERPENTINES

The corruption of the well seems to particularly affect reptiles. Stories abound of deadly serpents as big as a horse who lull the unwary to sleep with their direct gaze.

SERPENTINE STATS

HP: 8 ARMOR: 1 SPEED: Fast
TYPE: Murkbeast (large).

Attacks: Hypnotic gaze (*Resolve save to take action*). Coil (*Grabbed. Prowess save to escape. Take 1d3 on failure*). Bite (*1d6+2*).

LOOT & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Render Hide:** The glowing render hide is used to make Shadow Bands, but transporting it back causes 1d6 corruption to whoever carries it. Their teeth and claws are also used in alchemy (though less corrupt).
- **Fury Feathers:** The metal imbued in the feathers is purified and worth a coin or three.
- **Serpent Eyes:** Actually made of a milky stone substance. 1 load, solid (always).

WELL OF SHADOWS AND DESPAIR

INFORMATION

- **Type:** Consumption.
- **Shade:** The Neverborn.
- **Possible Well Locations:** In places deep underground—caves, sewers, subway tunnels. The longer the well remains open, the colder it gets (particularly near it).
- **Horror Level:** High. Generally more creepy than horrific. Use low lighting to crank up the horror factor.

A classic adventure with ghosts, jump scares, and visions in the dark. This makes for a great spooky adventure where the goal is to sneak or survive to the end. As most of the Murkbeasts here are incorporeal, a Lightbearer might be extra useful. Ask players to list some fears they may have before they start, and use them as inspiration for visions in the dark.

DETAILS AND HOOK

The incursion point for this Nightwell may have evidence of grisly deaths—folks burning themselves alive to keep warm, or clawing out their own eyes to unsee their worst fears. Adjust for your group's horror threshold. In general, a single wraith will sow chaos. Any people it feeds on for warmth and life will corrupt and rise as deathtouched to further wreak havoc.

Echoes make for good opponents and obstacles at the same time. Other good obstacles might be the cold (may need supplies) close to the well, or finding hiding places and routes past Echoes and Wraiths. If your group comes up with clever solutions to an incorporeal problem (like using torches as weapons), give them +1d or +1 damage for perfect tools.

THE NEVERBORN

A liquid shadow that speaks in a dozen voices that sound like dead family or acquaintances. People near it may recall past pains, see people they miss, and get consumed by visions of places and times that don't exist. These make good consequences, and it may require Resolve resists to block out these visions. This creature is extra light-sensitive. If saturated in extra bright light, actions against this Shade have +1d.



NEVERBORN STATS

Powerful Foe. **HP:** 12 **SPEED:** Fast **TYPE:** Shade

Incorporeal: Physical attacks (unless with something imbued with Silver Flame) do 1 damage. The Neverborn's attacks ignore physical armor and defenses.

Attacks: Incorporeal touch (1d6+2 and 1d3 corruption, ignores physical armor). Nightmare visions (You are trapped in visions of your fears or people of your past. Resolve resist to shake off. -1d for being distracted on a partial).



WRAITHS

Shadowy apparitions whose eyes glow red. They often toy with their prey's mind just outside of the light, then move in for the kill.

WRAITH STATS

HP: 12 **SPEED:** Very Fast
TYPE: Murkbeast.

Incorporeal: Physical attacks (unless Silver Flame imbued) do 1 damage. Wraith attacks ignore physical armor and defenses.

Attacks: Death touch (1d6+1, and 1d3 corruption). Nightmare visions (Resolve resist to do more than weep, or wander lost in your mind. More than 1hp damage breaks this).



ECHO

Echoes are insubstantial Murkbeasts that animate ancient machinery and form bodies out of debris. Delvers may have to pry these shells open to strike.

ECHO STATS

HP: 6 **SPEED:** Normal
TYPE: Murkbeast. *Powerful Foe.*

Blind Strikes: Echoes strike at loud noises and can smell fear (Resolve resists may render you invisible).

Incorporeal: Physical attacks (unless with something imbued with Silver Flame) do 1 damage.

Attacks: Animate object strike (1d6+2). Storm of hurled debris (1d6).

DEATHTOUCHED

People drained by Wraiths appear as corpses that radiate unearthly cold. Alert groups will notice their breath frosting right before 1d6+2 of these attempt to steal their life and warmth.

DEATHTOUCHED STATS

HP: 4 **SPEED:** Normal
TYPE: Murkbeast. (group of 1d6+2)

Attacks: Freezing touch (1d6 and the target is slowed—very slow comes after slow). Direct contact with the Silver Flame drains a segment.

LOOT & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Gear:** Wraiths don't steal trinkets, so Deathtouched may carry supplies and gear (roll on Lit lands table for inspiration) that can be gathered.
- **Spark:** Pre-Murk machinery goes haywire when an Echo touches it. But power is usually left in wires and batteries and can be harvested for loot. Pre-Murk tech that wouldn't have worked otherwise may also be available (GM roll +1d for loot).

WELL OF FIRE AND ASH

INFORMATION

- **Type:** Corruption.
- **Shade:** The Blood-Soaked God.
- **Possible Well Location:** Near a large body of water. Amidst an old Shipping yard.
- **Horror Level:** Medium. The finale for this delve can be particularly gruesome. You can swap out the Shade for any big guardian beast to tone it down if needed.

This well wants to corrupt the Silver Flame. The Blood-Soaked God tends a pit surrounded by large, strange statues made of Murkstuff. They bleed captives into the pit to make a pool of blood, which the statues absorb to further corrupt the Silver Flame. Fanatics surround the site, asking any delvers if they can see the glory of the Blood-Soaked God.

DETAILS AND HOOK

The town's Silver Flame turns a dark red and screams. Several incursions happen, with many people being captured. Some are drowned in the pool of blood and converted into Drowned who hunt for more victims. Others have gazed deep into the eyes of the corrupted statues, and now fanatically believe in the cause of this Nightwell.

The ritual to corrupt the well is visible as a dull red glow reflects off clouds and pierces the Murk from miles off. You may want a second 6-segment clock to indicate the town's Silver Flame corruption (the delvers getting delayed or stymied on the road tick this clock up). Good obstacles on this delve are gates and blockages in the route.

THE BLOOD-SOAKED GOD

A massive crocodile-headed Shade, corrupting sigils carved on his flesh. The statues that stand about the blood pool are actually other Shades who gave up their mobility to try and destroy the Silver Flame. They draw upon blood and life in the pool, and use it to project beams into the pit to corrupt the Silver Flame. Players who try clever tricks (throwing stuff in the crocodile's mouth) can bypass its powerful defenses.



BLOOD-SOAKED GOD STATS

Powerful Foe. **HP:** 20 **ARMOR:** 4 **SPEED:** Normal **TYPE:** Shade

Runed Hide: The crocodile's defense is massive and applies to magic too. Give +1d6 damage to things that hit its mouth or insides.

Attacks: Tail sweep (1d6-1 to all nearby). Corrupting breath (blood and parts of people. 1d6 damage plus 1d6+1 corruption to all in its wake. May need to swim to recharge). Bite or grab with claw (1d6+3, and grabbed). Swallow whole (anyone grabbed. 2d6 damage per round after that).



FANATIC

Humans encrusted in blood. Their eyes are milky as if they are blind. They scream prayers to their god and attack delvers, telling them about the beauty of what they've seen.

FANATIC STATS

HP: 12 **SPEED:** Fast
TYPE: Murkbeast (many).

Pack: Only takes half damage unless hit with area attacks. When the pack is defeated, it becomes 3 individual Fanatics (4hp. Fast. 1d6-1 damage, +1 if they seize a weapon).

Attacks: Swarm with no regard to safety (1d6. Grab weapons away).



PRIEST

Clad in bone armor (easy to shatter). May shape Murk into tentacles to hold targets. They also channel the Murk to preach the word of their god, inciting the packs of fanatics they travel with.

PRIEST STATS

HP: 14 **SPEED:** Slow **ARMOR:** 2
TYPE: Murkbeast. *Powerful Foe.*

Murk Prayers: Binding (*grapples a delver, requires concentration to maintain*). Corrupt flame (*removes a segment of the Silver Flame, can be Resolve resisted by the bearer*). Corrupting wave (*3d6 corruption, 1 die per target max*).

Attacks: Athame (1d6+1).

DROWNED

Corpses drained of blood. Move like puppets. Have immense strength. Tend to crawl on walls, and grapple and strangle their opponents. Must be chopped up to be stopped.

DROWNED STATS

HP: 6 **SPEED:** Fast
TYPE: Murkbeast. (group of 1d3)

Attacks: Grab (*grapples*). Strangle (*Requires grapple. 1d6+1 damage, you pass out unless you Prowess resist*). Barehanded rend (1d6-1).

LOOT & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Pre-Murk Tech:** Most of the enemies here have nothing to harvest (they're just people). But the well is found amidst Pre-Murk areas. There are often pieces of technology nearby that can be activated or looted. Since the well doesn't care about possessions, there may be piles of stuff (possibly of previous delver groups) that can be found. Roll on tables for random inspiration.

WELL OF SCREAMING STITCHES

INFORMATION

- **Type:** Suffering.
- **Shade:** The Seamstress.
- **Possible Well Location:** In a forest (or tunnel, or between a pile of buildings) to give Spiderlings and the Seamstress places to spin webs and attack from above.
- **Horror Level:** Very High. Make sure your group is cool with this level of gross body-horror.

A body horror and stitched-together-monsters type Nightwell. Murkbeasts leave wounded people to lure in more prey. They offer the living to the Seamstress so she can sew them into the family. Good environmental problems might be web-strewn trees and alleyways, or stitched-together Murkbeasts forcing you down harder routes.

DETAILS AND HOOK

A Nightwell rends the ground inside a dark forest, or amidst alleyways. What crawls out is a spidery, nightmarish Shade, which hunts animals and stitches them into monstrosities. These animals raid nearby dwellers and cross the border into the Lit lands to bring her materials for creating more monsters. Areas near the well are covered in shadowy webs.

This type of incursion into the Lit lands is different to others, as it involves stealing animals as well as people (most Murkbeasts don't care about simple beasts). You may want to run obstacles or puzzles as things that block the path while a Chimera hunts the delvers. The Seamstress is probably near the well with a pile of sewing "materials."

THE SEAMSTRESS

A woman with red eyes growing about her body. She can summon shadowy spider limbs with blades at the end of them. This Shade creates spider-silk and sews animals and people together. She severs parts off of people with her limbs while they're still alive, and uses their dying terror to empower her newly stitched creations. She nests in an area strewn with webs. The webs are sticky, but burn if touched with Silver Flame.



SEAMSTRESS STATS

Powerful Foe. **HP:** 16 **ARMOR:** 2 **SPEED:** Very Fast **TYPE:** Shade

Shadow Body: Her armor is her body being partially made of Murkstuff. Attacks that bypass incorporeality may do normal damage.

Attacks: Piercing limbs (2d6, *reduce armor by 1*). Surprise strike (2d6, -1d to resist). Shadow webbing (*Entangles*. -1d to *Prowess* tests to escape. +1d to *Channel* or *Attune* tests to do the same). Draining (*drinks blood for 1d6*. Heals for that much damage).



SPIDERLING SWARM

A bunch of Spiderlings (a dozen plus). Tend to skitter in every direction. Attacks may take out more than one. But there's always more that spring out of hiding until the swarm is defeated.

SPIDERLING SWARM STATS

HP: 12 **SPEED:** Very Fast
TYPE: Murkbeast (small, many).

Swarm: Only takes half damage unless done by area attacks. When the swarm is defeated, it becomes 3 individual Spiderlings (see below).

Attacks: Swarm all over biting/clawing (d6). Poisonous bite (d6. *Resolve save. Half damage on 4/5 even with no stress spent*).

SPIDERLING

Made by the Seamstress from children, they skitter about on extra-sewn-on spider-like limbs. They sleep in webbed cocoons until something disturbs the webbing nearby. That's when they swarm.

SPIDERLING STATS

HP: 3 **SPEED:** Very Fast
TYPE: Murkbeast (small).

Attacks: Tackle delvers biting and clawing (d6). Poisonous bite (d6. *Resolve save. Half damage on 4/5 even with no stress spent*).



CHIMERA

Murkbeasts made from people stitched together with multiple animals. An example is a centaur, its arms replaced with half-a-dozen huge Murk-snakes. Love prowling just outside the radius of the Silver Flame, looking for an opportunity to pounce. May leave corpses for delvers to examine/ be distracted by so they can attack. Incredibly strong.

CHIMERA STATS

HP: 12 **SPEED:** Normal
TYPE: Murkbeast. *Powerful Foe.*

Attacks: Charges and pounces out of the Murk (2d6 *initial attack. Anticipate with insight*). Bite & tear (1d6+3 *plus pin/grab if appropriate*).

LOOT & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Leftovers:** Chimera are messy eaters. Even when they drag off bodies of other delvers, their stuff might be around.
- **Black Heart:** Chimera hearts hold Nightwell-stuff. Properly sewn up, they fetch a pretty penny on illegal markets.
- **Rescue:** Spiderlings often wrap up envenomed people in their webs. Rescue is possible.
- **Venom:** Spiderling venom can be used in Alchemy.

RANDOM THINGS IN THE MURK

When traveling through the Murk, roll on the charts below for inspiration, or to generate a scene. If you know what the delvers will be facing, use your prep. Pick and choose what you need: if you know they'll be facing a Murkbeast (because you rolled an obstacle on the chart on p. 31) you can add a location and some weird effects as the backdrop if you don't already have one. Murk effects are particularly great to add around Nightwells.

RANDOM THINGS IN THE MURK						Roll 1d6 or pick
	1	2	3	4	5	6
AREA	Once Lit	Pre-Murk			Open Murk	
EFFECT?	No Murk Effect		Common Effect			Rare

ONCE LIT

These are areas that once had folk from the Lit lands living there. They might be abandoned now, or they could be still inhabited by dwellers, or folks surviving in the Murk. May be lit by normal light (not Silver Flame), like torches.

Previously Lit areas are good places to engage with current society. These are people that understand the Murk-covered world, and places that delvers can relate to personally. Some good themes to stress are familiar objects left behind (a child's toy, a stack of wood) and ingenuity of people struggling to survive.

ONCE LIT AREAS		Roll 1d6 or pick
1	Dweller Settlement. <i>Are they suspicious? Friendly? Do they test you for corruption?</i>	
2	Binder Enclave. <i>Warded. Possibly guarded by a Shade. Is there anyone there?</i>	
3	Nest. <i>Someone's home. They're collecting something (car doors, road signs, bones).</i>	
4	Road. <i>Previously lit road. Still mostly clear. Are there signs of recent use?</i>	
5	Unfinished. <i>A Lit expansion never completed. What could have stopped it?</i>	
6	Town. <i>Once the size of your home area, now lost to the Murk.</i>	

ONCE LIT ENCOUNTERS

Things you may encounter in once Lit areas. It is not necessary to roll one of these every time (true of all encounter charts), but they can add color, creep factor, or interest to an otherwise static location. Use for inspiration or as necessary.

ONCE LIT ENCOUNTERS		Roll 1d6 or pick
1	Other Delvers. <i>Are they hurt? Lost? Willing to trade? Anxious about competition?</i>	
2	Murkgoblins. <i>Corrupted previous inhabitants (use Fanatic stats on p. 43)</i>	
3	Fresh Meat. <i>Freshly killed people. What did it and is what killed them still nearby?</i>	
4	Beastie. <i>Tiny Lit lands animal (pet or farm animal), lost and frightened.</i>	
5	Murkbinder. <i>Harvesting materials, or practicing a ritual. What protects them?</i>	
6	Murk-carried Encroachment. <i>Roll on a different encounter table.</i>	

PRE-MURK

Remnants of a previous age. Though mostly dark, some areas are powered either through Murk interference or the batteries of a bygone era. These areas may have glass, metal, and other resources the Lit lands need—much of which is legal loot. Explorers prize information and maps leading to other areas in the dark. Delvers and dwellers use a common shorthand to paint signs for each other (area dangerous, safe water here, detour this way, etc.). Pre-Murk areas are good places to re-interpret our modern day world as alien, and see the obstacles it presents.

PRE-MURK AREAS			Roll 2d6 or pick
I-2	I	Statue. <i>Part of a face. A massive colossus. A stone hand bigger than you are.</i>	
I-2	2	Music. <i>A forgotten machine. Echo of a voice trapped. Beautiful and eerie tune.</i>	
I-2	3	A ship. <i>Huge sailing vessel, miles away from any known water.</i>	
I-2	4	Brilliance. <i>A huge painted mural. Old signs. Brilliant colors in the Murk.</i>	
I-2	5	Graveyard. <i>Massive pile of skeletons, possibly posed. How did they die?</i>	
I-2	6	Window. <i>Glowing glass in a frame, with an animate image of the Old World.</i>	
3-4	I	Bathhouse. <i>Brilliant stone. Gardens. Water's still warm.</i>	
3-4	2	Museum. <i>Beasts & jewels frozen in glass cages. Has the Murk changed them?</i>	
3-4	3	Mirrored Buildings. <i>The Silver Flame reflects, for the moment, light abounds.</i>	
3-4	4	Library. <i>A building filled with books in a forgotten language. May have maps.</i>	
3-4	5	Stadium. <i>A massive arena clearly for gladiators to do battle.</i>	
3-4	6	Tower. <i>A massive spire that reaches the clouds. How do you ascend?</i>	
5-6	I	Tunnel. <i>A hole bored by something huge. Is the full path clear?</i>	
5-6	2	Asphalt Plain. <i>Covered in metal trees, lightning striking the ground near them.</i>	
5-6	3	Docks. <i>Metal boxes, and titanic metal trees above them. The smell of water.</i>	
5-6	4	Traffic Jam. <i>A stone river, covered in thousands of ancient metal cages.</i>	
5-6	5	Bridge. <i>Massive path summoned across water. What nests above?</i>	
5-6	6	Crossroads. <i>Paths tied into knots at various elevations. What nests beneath?</i>	

PRE-MURK ENCOUNTERS

Things you may encounter in once Pre-Murk areas. Can add color, creep factor, or interest. Use for inspiration or as necessary.

PRE-MURK ENCOUNTERS		Roll 1d6 or pick
I	Signs. <i>Dweller painted signs. Can anyone read them? How old are they?</i>	
2	Ritual. <i>Remnants of a binder ritual. Anything useful left or inscribed?</i>	
3	Remnants of Battle. <i>How many bodies? Did you know them? Did they win?</i>	
4	Light. <i>Piercing the Murk even over a distance. Is it safety, or a trap?</i>	
5	Echoes. <i>Voices of the past trapped in the murk. Are they ancients? Children?</i>	
6	Screaming Statues. <i>Statues of people, incredibly lifelike, all screaming in pain.</i>	

OPEN MURK

These are wild areas between settlements and Pre-Murk locations.

OPEN MURK AREAS		Roll 1d6 or pick
1	Fields. <i>Knee-high grasses. Strange grains and flowers. Sense of being watched.</i>	
2	Hillside. <i>Trees and loose rocks. Are you following a path? Watch out for avalanches.</i>	
3	River. <i>An obstacle or a curiosity? What color is the water? Can you drink it?</i>	
4	Chasm. <i>A rend in the earth. Climb or go around. Can you see the bottom?</i>	
5	Light Forest. <i>Wooded but navigable. May have spread out from Pre-Murk areas.</i>	
6	Deep Forest. <i>Overgrown. Easy to get lost. Hard to traverse quickly.</i>	

OPEN MURK ENCOUNTERS		Roll 1d6 or pick
1	Color. <i>A colorful bird, brilliant in the Silver Flame.</i>	
2	Animals. <i>Wild beasts. Unphased. They don't view humans as predators.</i>	
3	Glassification. <i>Forests with ripe fruit, frozen in dripping glass like ice.</i>	
4	Murkshrooms! <i>They glow and can be harvested. Lucky and tasty!</i>	
5	Whispering. <i>Grasses and tree leaves move in a wind you do not feel.</i>	
6	A Murder of Crows. <i>Seven-eyed crows, sitting on branches watching you pass.</i>	

MURK EFFECTS

The Murk often breaks natural rules, and provides eerie effects that are sometimes benign and sometimes lethal. Some Murk effects are transitory (may pass as you watch), and others are known obstacles that have to be bypassed. Some rare effects are legendary, and delvers swap half-believed stories about them.

COMMON EFFECTS		Roll 1d6 or pick
1	Signs of Battle. <i>How many bodies? Did you know them? Did they win?</i>	
2	The Thin Place. <i>Buildings floating. Gravity light. Birdstones are common here.</i>	
3	Strange Water. <i>A lake inches deep, turning into drops that rain up into the sky.</i>	
4	Black Mist. <i>Seeks to devour. Corrupting. Dense. Find a way around, or above.</i>	
5	Change Storm. <i>Seek shelter, or change (1d6 corruption per turn exposed).</i>	
6	Vortex. <i>All metal pulls toward the center. Prowess resist. Harder near center.</i>	

RARE EFFECTS		Roll 1d6 or pick
1	Massive Murklife. <i>A Shade the size of a mountain, asleep, but moving slightly.</i>	
2	Geyser. <i>Silver Flame erupts upwards from underground. May have lava.</i>	
3	Furnace. <i>Area still on fire after the ages. Ash falls. What color are the flames?</i>	
4	Burnt Area. <i>The land is charred for quite a distance. A Nightwell was closed nearby.</i>	
5	Frozen Time. <i>Affects pockets. May have people, dust, or animals trapped inside.</i>	
6	The Eye. <i>Rare enough to be mythical. The Murk clears here. Sky may be blue, or starlit.</i>	