

# CALL of CTHULHU<sup>®</sup>

# Cthulhu Dark Ages<sup>™</sup>

## Setting Guide



By Chad Bowser and Andi Newton  
with James Holloway and Mike Mason





# CTHULHU

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By Chad Bowser and Andi Newton  
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In honor of Hudson.

This supplement is best used with the *Call of Cthulhu* (7th Edition) roleplaying game and optionally *Pulp Cthulhu*, both available separately.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	6
FOREWORD .....	7
ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND.....	9
A TO Z OF THE DARK AGES .....	43
DARK AGE INVESTIGATORS.....	57
GAME SYSTEM .....	97
INVESTIGATIVE HORROR IN THE DARK AGES.....	129
THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES.....	139
BESTIARY.....	167
TOTBURH .....	191



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE HUNT (SCENARIO) .....	221
THE DOOM THAT CAME TO WESSEX (SCENARIO).....	233
ESEWEALD (SCENARIO) .....	243
APPENDIX 1: DARK AGES GLOSSARY.....	251
APPENDIX 2: DARK AGES TIMELINE .....	255
APPENDIX 3: WHO'S WHO .....	258
APPENDIX 4: BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	261
INDEX .....	263
AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES .....	269
CHARACTER SHEET .....	271



# INTRODUCTION



elcome to *Cthulhu Dark Ages*!

*Cthulhu Dark Ages* is a rules and setting supplement to the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game and focuses on investigative horror during the period 950 to 1050 CE. Your investigators risk life, limb, and sanity in a secret struggle to hold back the darkness of the Cthulhu Mythos. Working together, investigators strive to keep their homeland and communities safe from the horrors of the night.

The Dark Ages are a time of change. Old empires have collapsed, although their echoes remain. Monks toil in monasteries, reproducing books to ensure that knowledge lives on, even though most people, including many of the monks, can't read them. Instead, the oral tradition dominates. Skalds, troubadours, and wise folk remember the tales of old and pass them down. Stories carry wisdom, learning, and warnings. The time of the sea wolves from across the sea is fading, but it's not over yet, and there are still plenty of riches and supplies to plunder and sack. Would-be kings are beginning to solidify their power and unite petty warlords beneath them. Peasants toil in their fields, ensuring the day's work is done well before nightfall—before the creatures that haunt the shadows come out to hunt.

Your investigators seek to maintain order while also exploring forgotten secrets and uncovering the terrors of the Cthulhu Mythos. Sure, there might be combat, but at its crux, this is a game of personal horror. What will your investigators sacrifice to save their loved ones? There are no world-spanning conspiracies or globe-trotting adventures. Instead, the darkness threatens livelihoods, communities, and reputations. Monks, bailiffs, farmers, and guards don't necessarily cut dashing figures, but it's up to them to break from their everyday roles and step into harm's way for the greater good.

Books do exist, but those few who can read guard them jealously in small libraries. The investigation of mysteries and evil acts is often conducted by asking the right questions, looking for clues, and in some cases, fighting to gain secrets. Rather than trying to plumb the depths of the *Necronomicon* or the ravings of the mad monk Clithonus, investigators rely on the tales told around campfires or in crowded mead halls to learn what they need to know to battle the darkness.

This is the world of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*.

—Chad Bowser and Andi Newton



# FOREWORD

**T**he first *Cthulhu Dark Ages* was a success, spawning several monographs. Unfortunately, it never received official support in the form of released-to-distribution books. Rather than reprint the original *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, Chaosium decided to produce an updated version, with an increased page count. Andi and I were handed the task of building upon Stephane's original masterpiece. As a fan of the first edition, and somebody with an advanced degree in 10th century history, I was thrilled. Deciding how to update it and increase its value as a game proved a monumental challenge. One of the most important changes is that the new *Cthulhu Dark Ages* is a supplement, not a standalone product. While most of the rules you need to play are contained within, the book does reference the core game rules, some spells, and creatures from the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*.

As you read through the book, you will undoubtedly see many changes. Some changes are minor. First and foremost, *Cthulhu Dark Ages* has been updated for the latest edition of *Call of Cthulhu*. There are some changes to the combat system to make it more deadly, a new, optional Sanity mechanic to better situate the rules within the early medieval mindset, and rules for the oral tradition—something to take the place of Mythos tomes in an illiterate world.

Some other changes are more grandiose in scope. The original *Cthulhu Dark Ages* was a toolkit but lacked a defined world for players and their Keeper to tackle. There were hints of the Dark Ages world here and there, but nothing to tell the players what made the Dark Ages unique and different from the High Middle Ages or the ancient world. Now, there's the village of Totburh, a fully developed Anglo-Saxon burh (fortified dwelling) nestled snugly within the Severn Valley; filled with interesting characters and more plot hooks than a Keeper can shake a shoggoth at.

Granted, not everybody is going to be excited by Anglo-Saxon England, so there's also a player's guide to life in the Dark Ages that explains many of the concepts that were fairly widespread, but by no means universal, across the continent during the 10th century, which aims to illustrate exactly how alien the 10th century can be to modern players.

—Chad Bowser and Andi Newton







# ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

**A**nglo-Saxon England is the primary setting for *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. This chapter presents an overview of life during the 950 to 1050 CE period. The material presented here is aimed to get Keepers and players acquainted with the setting, the land and its people.

To give a complete picture of life in the Dark Ages across Europe would take numerous volumes—that's beyond the scope of this book, so key elements to highlight the era are given here. For Keepers who want to delve further into Anglo-Saxon life, there's a bibliography (page 261) that provides good references for follow-up research.

Note that a detailed Anglo-Saxon community, **Totburh** (page 191), is provided later in this book. Totburh represents a Dark Ages fortified settlement and Keepers are encouraged to use it as a focused setting for their games.

## ENGLAND

Anglo-Saxon England is a land on the periphery. It's far from the population centers on the continent, lacks anything resembling a city, is surrounded by forests, and is under the constant threat of invasion from the Norse.

## THE LAND

The most basic measure of land in Anglo-Saxon England is the "hide," which is enough land to support a family. Depending on the quality of the land, hides vary in size, but average between 40 and 120 acres. They're used as the basis for determining the "geld," or land tax.

Ten hides form a "tithing." The tithingman, head of this administrative unit, is primarily responsible for law enforcement. The tithingman is usually a thegn (an aristocratic retainer of a king or nobleman). Roughly, one hundred hides

form a "hundred." The specific number of hides varies, usually because of the merging or splitting of hides as families and estates change over time. A hundred is overseen by a hundred-eolder (an eolderman). He's responsible for administration, meting out justice, and supplying and leading the troops. A hundred court meets periodically to handle cases. Most hundreds take their names from the court's meeting place.

Above the hundred is the "scir," or shire, the largest administrative unit beneath a "kingdom." An ealdorman oversees the scir during the early days of *Cthulhu Dark Ages* and a shire-reeve manages the scir in the latter days. There is no hard and fast crossover date from when management shifted from ealdormen to shire-reeves.

## Weather

The climate around Totburh and the Severn Valley is fairly mild. There are a few days of snow each year, but rain is most common. Precipitation increases during the winter months. Temperatures run the gamut from hot in the summer to near freezing in the winter.

## SETTLEMENT TYPES

There are several types of settlements dotting the landscape of Anglo-Saxon England during the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*.

## Burh

A burh is a fortified settlement that serves as home to a thegn and houses a mint, where the kingdom's coins are minted. Burhs are fortified with wooden palisades, earthen ramparts and, in some cases, stone towers. When Alfred planned the network of burhs, he placed them so that no Anglo-Saxon settlement was more than a day's march (20 miles) from a burh in the event of a Viking incursion. The centralized location of burhs led to their development as centers of commerce. Harvests are transported to burhs for sorting, storage, and taxation.



## KINGS OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

This list provides the kings of Anglo-Saxon England, their house, their reign, and common spellings of their name. This list covers the unification of England to the Norman Conquest. Houses changed back and forth several times, so Keepers should feel free to put investigators' loyalty to the test.

### House of Wessex

- Egbert (802-839)
- Æþelwulf (839-856)
- Æþelbald (856-860)
- Æþelberht (860-865)
- Æþelred (865-871)
- Alfred the Great (871-899)
- Edward the Elder (899-924)
- Æþelstan the Glorious (924-939)
- Eadmund the Magnificent (939-946)
- Eadred (946-955)
- Eadwig (955-959)
- Edgar the Peaceful (959-975)
- Edward the Martyr (975-978)
- Æþelræd Unræd [Aethelred the Unready] (978-1013) first reign

### House of Denmark

- Svend Tveskæg [Swein Forkbeard] (1013-1014)

### House of Wessex (restored)

- Æþelræd Unræd (1014-1016) second reign
- Eadmund Ironside (1016)

### House of Denmark (restored)

- Knútr [Cnut] (1016-1035)
- Harald Harefoot (1035-1040)
- Hardeknud [Harthacnut] (1040-1042)

### House of Wessex (restored, second time)

- Eadweard the Confessor (1042-1066)
- Harold Godwinsson (1066)
- Eadgar Æþeling (1066 - proclaimed, never crowned)

## Hill Fort

The Anglo-Saxons maintain some hill forts, solely for defense, not as permanent settlements. Such hill forts are usually located on the site of Iron Age hill forts or even Roman fortifications. Some are manned year round, others only in time of need. Villagers unable to reach a burh in times of trouble may flee to a hill fort instead.

## Monastery

Monasteries, while sites of religious education, often become a focus for industry and trade. The communities that spring up around monasteries produce specialized goods, such as textiles and metalwork.

## THE BURHS OF ANGLO-SAXON WESSEX

The *Burghal Hidage*, a document from 916, lists the 32 burhs in Wessex. Keepers looking for the most urbanized areas in Anglo-Saxon England should consult this list. The number of hides under the administrative control of the burh is noted in parenthesis. Astute Keepers will notice that London is missing. London is a fortified settlement at this time but when the *Burghal Hidage* was compiled, London was a Mercian asset, not a Wessexian one. Other Mercian burhs include Hereford, Tamworth, and Winchcombe.

Axbridge (400)	Lyng (100)
Bath (1,000)	Oxford (1,500)
Bridport (760)	Malmesbury (1,200)
Buckingham (1,600)	Pilton (400)
Burpham (720)	Portchester (500)
Chichester (1,500)	Sashes (1,000)
Chisbury (700)	Shaftesbury (700)
Christchurch (470)	Southampton (150)
Cricklade (1,400)	Southwark (1,800)
Eashing (600)	Wallingford (2,400)
Exeter (734)	Wareham (1,600)
Halwell (300)	Warwick (2,400)
Hastings (500)	Watchet (513)
Langport (600)	Wilton (1,400)
Lewes (1,300)	Winchester (2,400)
Lydford (140)	Worcester (1,200)



# ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND



Anglo-Saxon England map



**Wic**

A wic is a secular version of the community that exists around a monastery. Wics are planned settlements belonging to the king. They have streets, uniform housing, and manufacturing zones. These settlements are not full towns like burhs, though. They lack royal and ecclesiastical functions. The Viking raids have rendered many wics untenable and they've been abandoned, leaving small ghost towns dotting the landscape.

**Village**

A village is similar to a burh, but lacks a mint and usually a thegn. Villages range from a few homesteads grouped together in the countryside to settlements of twenty or so families. Most villages lack defensive structures. In the event of an invasion, the residents flee to the nearest burh or hill fort.




## THE KINGDOMS OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND AND THE DANELAW

Prior to the unification of England under a single king, England was a patchwork of kingdoms, all fighting among themselves and warring with the Celts and Vikings. Keepers who want to situate their games in earlier times should know that the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the 9th century were Wessex, Kent, Essex (subsumed into Wessex in 825), Mercia, Northumbria, Sussex (subsumed into Wessex in 825), and East Anglia.

The year 865 saw the arrival of the Great Heathen Army, the largest Viking invasion force to date. In 871, the Great Summer Army reinforced the initial invaders. By 877, only Wessex stood against the Vikings, all the other kingdoms had fallen. In 878, Alfred, King of Wessex, launched a counter-attack, taking the fight to the Vikings. Eventually, the Vikings capitulated and peace was gained. The Vikings kept control of East Anglia and the North, a region known as the Danelaw. Wessex had the south and midlands, except for Cornwall, home to Britons. The Danelaw effectively ended in 954 when Eric Bloodaxe, ruler of Northumbria, an exceptionally ruthless Viking, was killed by Edmund.

This time period can make for an adventuresome and chaotic period in which to roleplay. Investigators can try to defeat the demons (or shan) possessing Eric Bloodaxe, or join forces with the Vikings to root out cultists hiding in Christian monasteries, spreading a corrupt Gospel.



## SOCIAL STRUCTURE


During the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, roughly 950 CE to 1050 CE, England is in flux. At the Battle of Brunanburh in 937 CE, Athelstan became king of a united England. He ruled over a mixture of Anglo-Saxon and Viking residents, many of whom resented being ruled by a single king. When he died, rebellion broke out and it wasn't until 973 CE that Edgar became King of England.

Like many early medieval kings, the king of Anglo-Saxon England didn't have a year-round residence. Instead, he traveled the country staying with nobles, always at their expense.

Ealdormen, later known as earls, serve as councilors and deputies to the king.

Reeves and thegns in turn are under the ealdormen. Reeves provide administrative responsibilities, such as collecting taxes, overseeing markets, and managing estates. Thegns are wealthy landowners who are leaders of communities and warriors. By the time of King Cnut, there are divisions in the thegn class. Kingly thegns are answerable only to the king, while the much more numerous inferior thegns answer to bishops or other thegns.


The witenagemot is an advisory council to the king, made up of the most important secular and ecclesiastical personages in the kingdom, including ealdormen, thegns, and bishops. The witenagemot meets only when summoned by the king; to meet on their own is treason. It also has no fixed meeting spot. The members have the power to organize the land, rule on taxation



## SHADOWS OF THE PAST

During the early Dark Ages, English monasteries were ripe targets for Norse raiders. By the reign of Æþelstan and the start of the *Cthulhu Dark Ages* timeline, there are only thirty or so monasteries left in England and most have strayed from their original charter. Spurred on by a triumvirate of reformers— Æþelwod, Dunstan, and Oswald— Æþelstan and subsequent kings grant land, economic rights, and other benefices to the monasteries to encourage their re-growth. Both existing and newly built monasteries are founded as Benedictine Monasteries.

While the reforms and subsequent growth help the English economy, the religious fervor that strikes relegates women to a second-place role in society and causes a wave of intolerance to sweep the country.





and jurisprudence, and advise on internal and external security matters. Two powers possessed by the witenagemot that aren't often invoked are the rights to choose and depose kings.

Below the reeves and thegns are the ceorls, the lowest rank of free landowners. A successful ceorl can rise to the rank of thegn by acquiring the accoutrements of a thegn. As a freeman, a ceorl is obliged to pay taxes and perform public duties. In return, the ceorl can participate in court, including swearing oaths.

The next step down from ceorls are the geburas, a class of tenant farmers that do not own their land. They pay rent in labor or in kind.

The lowest class, comprising about 12% of the population, are slaves. The line between geburas and slave is very grey. All the classes from ceorls on up employ slaves. Slaves can be beaten, but they can't be killed with impunity. Freeman can choose to become slaves to meet financial obligations. Parents can sell children into slavery to settle fines or other commitments. Captured warriors can become slaves. Slavery can also be levied on a person as punishment for committing a crime. Slavery isn't a permanent condition. Slaves can be freed via wills, marriage, manumission, or buying their own freedom, since slaves aren't forbidden from earning money or operating a business. Slavery is on the decline during this period, and some churchmen even rail against it.

## NAMES

Anglo-Saxon names are diathemic; two words are combined to make a whole. The first part of the name, the prefix, is often not gender specific. The second part, the suffix, usually is. To create an Anglo-Saxon name, combine a prefix with a suffix. Alliteration between generations is common.

**Common Prefixes:** Aelf, Aethel, Al, Alf, An, Beorht, Beorn, Bot, Coel, Coen, Cuth, Cyne, Ead, Eald, Ealh, Ecdg, Ed, Eg, Eor, Frea, Frithu, God, Heah, Here, In, Leof, Os, Sige, Wig, Wiht, Wulf.

**Common Male Suffixes:** bald, frea, frith, gar, geat, heah, helm, here, laf, mund, noth, raed, red, ric, sige, stan, wald, ward, wine, wig, wulf.

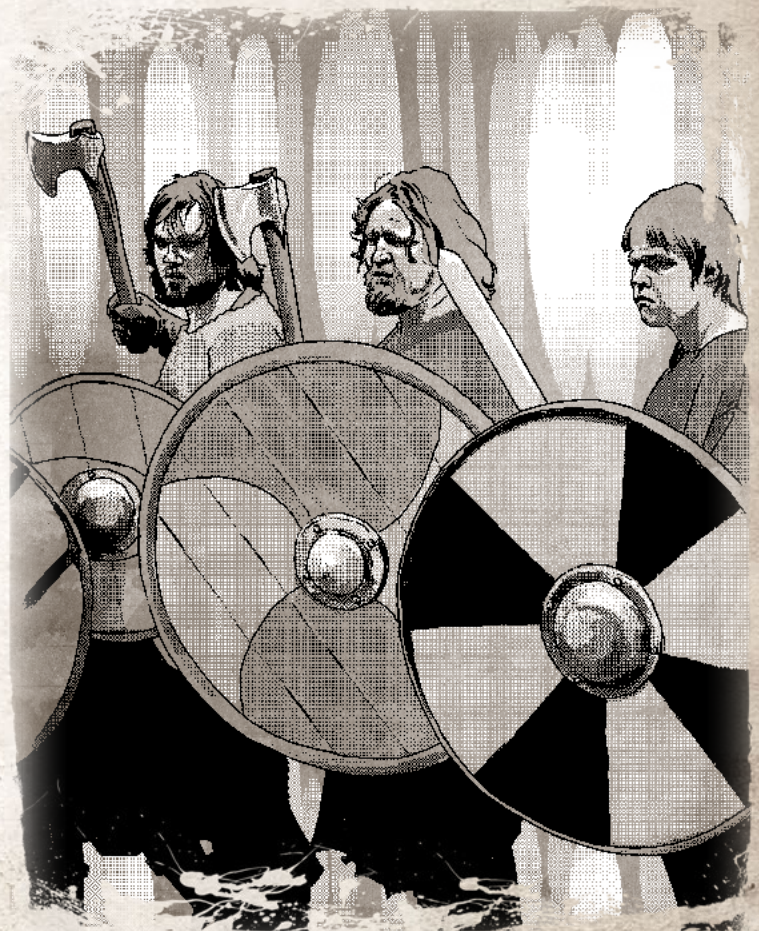
**Common Female Suffixes:** burh, gifu, gyth, hild, laed, red, swith, waru, wynn.

To differentiate between two people with the same name, bynames are often given. Bynames add to or completely replace given names. Bynames usually provide some kind of descriptor, either occupational or personal, about the person. They aren't always complimentary. The box nearby provides some example bynames.

## BYNAMES

Byname	English Translation
Bealluc	Bollock
Braders	Broad Arse
Gupe	Buttock
Heofudwund	Headwound
Langa	Tall
Lytla	Short
Muf	Stale
Scirloc	Brighthair
Tredwude	Treadwood

*The Viking leaders of England, the Danlaw.*













## THE PEOPLE

It is dangerous to stereotype any population, but it is necessary to provide a little information about the people. Anglo-Saxons during the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages* are Christian: the last Pagan king died in 686, and contentious wars between the various kingdoms continued even after unification; pastoral: most Anglo-Saxons are farmers; communal: village life and self-regulation are common; heroic: individual honor is paramount and shame is to be avoided; generous: gifts are given to those higher in station as loyalty and to those below as rewards; intelligent: a complex system of administration and law governs many facets of life and a portion of the secular population is literate; introspective: poems recounting everything from famous battles to haunting Roman ruins are entertainment; loving: children are considered a family's greatest joy; and pecuniary: most things have a price and can be bought.

At the same time, for every Anglo-Saxon that fits the above stereotype, there will be someone clinging to the old Pagan ways

or perhaps darker beliefs; willing to besmirch their own honor; or even murder their own children. It's these complexities that make the society interesting and Keepers should draw upon such things to create an interesting and diverse landscape.

### Family

The basic unit of an average Anglo-Saxon family is the "hired," a unit consisting of a husband, wife, and their children. According to the law, a kinless man is one who has no close family (extended family is not taken into account).

An extended family, or *cynn*, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins, might live in the same household, but they don't legally define the family.

The head of the family is the husband, but his duties often keep him in the fields or on the battlefield so women play an important role in the household. Unlike other societies, the father does not have absolute control over his family.

Ancestry is important to Anglo-Saxons. A man should be able to recite his ancestry and their great accomplishments.

### Marriage

Since the basic unit of organization is the hired, marriage plays an important role in society and is regulated. Marriages at this time are done either for love or politics. There are a few types of improper marriages: bigamy, young brides under the age of 15, and a widower marrying his stepmother or sister-in-law are all looked down upon by society.

When a couple gets married two transactions take place. The first is the bride price, which is money given to the bride. In the event of separation, the money transfers to the bride's family. Although viewed by some as "buying a wife," it is intended to ensure good behavior on the part of the husband. By the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, this practice is rare.

A more common practice is the *morgengifu* (morning gift) given by the husband to his new wife the first morning after consummation. It is irrevocably hers unless she remarries—after waiting a year after the death of her husband, in which all property that her husband brought into the marriage, including the *morgengifu*, are returned to his family. If the wife dies childless, the *morgengifu* passes to her family.

Theoretically, marriage lasts until the death of one of the partners. Sometimes, however, that doesn't work out. In Anglo-Saxon England, a man can leave his wife or a woman can leave her husband merely by doing so and stating it as fact. How the property is divided depends on who leaves and whether or not the family has children. If the wife leaves and takes the children, she is entitled to one-half of the communal goods. If the husband leaves and takes the children, the wife gets one-quarter of the communal goods. That is the same if the husband leaves and the family has no children.





### WOMEN

Women in Anglo-Saxon England occupy a tenuous position. Tenth century monastic reforms are undermining women's roles, especially in the Church, however women still have many of the rights and privileges they held during Pagan times.

Women are legally responsible for their actions, even if married. In addition, they are responsible for family honesty. If a woman knows of a crime committed by her husband or children, she must report it or be sold into slavery.

Women in Anglo-Saxon England hold rights that are uncommon for women on the continent. They can own property, be witnesses in court, call witnesses in court, serve as patrons and founders of churches, own and administer estates if wealthy, administer households if of ceorl status, and inherit and bequeath. All this is done without input from men.

Women also own a chest or cupboard to which only they have access. The contents of this chest are the woman's purview and run the gamut from money to nice clothing or ritual implements. Women carry keys to this chest and are usually buried with the keys.

As has been the practice for centuries, marriages are often of political expediency, even if the politics is only on the village scale, where two ceorl families intermarry to be able to take advantage of combined resources. To counteract this trend, some families send their daughters to monasteries to protect them from politics.

### CHILDREN

Children are the pride of Anglo-Saxon families. In the wealthiest families, byrðenu (midwives) assist with the birthing process. Most families do not have that convenience and infant mortality rates are high among all classes.

Childhood has several important stages. If a child is going to be fostered, this typically happens around age 7. In Anglo-Saxon fosterage, a child lives with another family for an agreed upon period of time. There are several reasons for sending a child away for fostering. Since times are dangerous, it insures that an orphan will be cared for; fosterage also widens a child's network of support. The wealthy may take in children of lower social class; not only does this give the foster child unprecedented chances for education, but it insures the loyalty of the family.

In the foster system, the foster parents are legally bound to look out for the foster child, treating them as their own. Maltreatment of foster children is socially and legally unacceptable. If a foster child is injured or dies due to maltreatment or neglect, the foster child's birth family can sue for compensation.

Formal education begins around 7 years of age. The type of education available varies depending on gender and status. Both lower and upper class children learn from listening to the epic poems and heroic stories recited by poets. The poems teach important guidelines for behavior, such as generosity and bravery. They also learn the histories of important families and events, the politics of feuds, land rights, and boundaries. By the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, most learning for the elite families occurs in monastic schools where both children and adult learners attend a leorninghus. Teachers at a leorninghus even employ textbooks to teach complicated subjects such as Latin. In addition, boys are given their first spear and learn of its usage. Girls begin to learn the skills they'll need as adult women.

Literacy, however, is not confined to the elite. In the 9th century, King Alfred stipulated that a thegn should be read to every night; if not by his oldest son, then by someone else in his house, whether free or a slave. Girls brought up in the monastic system are also taught to read and write.

*Women in England hold rights that are normally uncommon.*





Between the ages of 10 and 12 a child is considered to have reached the end of childhood. Boys are given their first shields and girls are given girdles, brooches, and keys. Although children of this age have reached their legal and ritual age, children between the age of 10 and 15 can be given special dispensation because of their age if they commit a crime. Note that they can be given dispensation, they don't necessarily have to be given it. For example, King Ine convicted a 10 year-old of thievery. The real end of childhood usually occurs between 15 and 20, when execution becomes a viable punishment.

## Children's Games

Numerous games happened on the plaistow (playground). Many adults also participate in the games, some to pass the time, others to train for war. Games include physical ones,

such as running, spear throwing, mock combat, king of the hill, and climbing; board games such as hnefatafl, which features 13 defenders (12 soldiers and a king) trying to escape from 24 attackers; and dice games. If Church commentators are to be believed, the most popular game for boys is running naked through the mud, taunting churchmen.

## BUILDINGS

The typical Anglo-Saxon building, regardless of purpose, is made of oak timbers with a turf or thatch roof. As the Anglo-Saxon word for "to build" is timbran, that makes sense. By the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, churches and some towers are made of stone, but few other buildings. The stone comes from incorporating Roman buildings directly into the architecture or by pilfering Roman building materials, *spolia*, from the landscape. There are a few quarries during the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, such as Quarrendon and Standhill, whereas Roman ruins are easily accessible.

Buildings are usually aligned on an east-west axis with entrances facing north-south. As only the wealthy have interior lighting and beeswax is reserved for the church, it's necessary to maximize direct sunlight for as long as possible. There is no glass in windows; instead, there are openings to allow light in and smoke out.

## THE BÉOT

The béot is a ritualized boast, promise, vow, or threat made by an Anglo-Saxon man. By the time depicted in *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, the béot is no longer in practice, a relic of a more heroic past. Christianity lumps the béot in with sinful pride, but there's no reason Keepers and players can't use it to liven up their games.

In the pleasant confines of a thegn's hall, a warrior, usually on the eve of battle makes a boast. Maybe he'll be the first to strike a blow in battle or he'll be the one to save the community from the monster. He then recounts his past glories, usually embellished, as proof of his capabilities. If he manages to succeed, his status among his people is greatly increased.

The béot follows a certain structure. First, the warrior makes his pledge; he states what the challenge will be. Then, he defines the meaning of two possible outcomes, success and failure; what will happen if he succeeds and what will happen if he fails (usually death). Finally, the warrior places the outcome in the hands of a higher power: the Christian God or a Pagan deity.

In game terms, if an investigator goes through a béot and is successful in the task, he or she gains 1D10 Status immediately. If the task is failed, the terms of the failure condition are imposed. At the player's discretion, an Art/Craft (Orate) roll can be attempted when boasting: if successful, and the challenge is accomplished, the investigator receives 2D10 Status instead of 1D10.

## THE QUESTION OF LITERACY AND THE ALPHABET

King Alfred stipulated that thegns and ealdormen be able to read if they were to serve him, or at least have someone in their household who could read. There's debate over the actual literacy rates but it can be inferred that many men and women of thegnly class and higher are at least pragmatically literate in the vernacular, Old English (known then as "Englisc"). Some also knew Latin. Priests, monks, and nuns are also literate. They can read and write Latin and Englisc, providing translations.

Suffice it to say, any investigator, regardless of social class who puts skill points in a language or writing can read or even write the specified language.

By the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, the Anglo-Saxons have adopted the Latin alphabet with some modification. The runic alphabet, which can be found at ancient sites around the country, was replaced in the 8th century. Few can still read or write it.



Although personal chests and wardrobes are frequently locked, few houses had door locks. Wooden fences also surround many buildings. Cattle roam free and it's a landholder's duty to ensure that his property is protected from the cows.

## Ruins

The Anglo-Saxons are very aware that they are not the first people to inhabit the land where they live. Not only do they tell tales of heroes who overcame the wealhas (the Britons or Welsh) in battle, but they also can see the ruins of Roman civilisation all around them. Roman roads, milestones, and buildings litter the landscape, constantly reminding passers by that they live in the ruins of a much grander, more complex civilization. One Old English poem describes the ruins of a Roman city as *enta geweorc*, "the work of giants."

Roman ruins are already sites of mystery to many in Dark Age England. Their complex building techniques are far beyond the technological level of the 11th century, and the half-destroyed mosaics and frescoes present hauntingly beautiful and enigmatic images. Local people may think of ruins as the former dwellings of saints, the abode of elves or other supernatural beings, or simply a convenient source of stone. Many a Roman building has been dismantled by an Anglo-Saxon community looking to save money in building its church walls. Some walls, however, are best left standing. The inscriptions on these might warn the Anglo-Saxons away—if they could read Latin, that is.

## Personal Residence

The average Anglo-Saxon home is a single-room building. Curtains provide privacy when needed. The most common furniture includes beds, tables, and benches with cushions for sitting. Boxes and chests with locks are used for private storage. Wealthier homes have wall hangings and table linens as well.

A fire pit provides heat, a cooking area, and a measure of light. Some have earthen floors while others have wooden floors covering a sunken cellar.

## Thegnly Residence

To become a thegn, a man needs only a few things: five hides of land, a church, a kitchen, a bell-house, a burh-gate, and a seat and special office in the king's hall. Most of the items can be built provided enough wealth. The last item on the list might be the hardest to get, but loyalty and good deeds will go a long way. All of the physical requirements are usually contained within a palisade, which is more for status than defense.

A residence fit for a thegn is a long wooden hall, usually with a second story and a cellar. The interior is a large open space with a central fire pit. Long rectangular tables and benches are set up for meals, which can be moved out of the way for sleeping. A wooden floor covers a pit that is used for

food storage and to help with humidity regulation. Curtains and moveable walls provide privacy.

Junior warriors, *geoguth*, sleep on the ground floor. Experienced warriors, *duguth*, who are married or have been granted land, live in their own building or on their own estate. The owner of the residence and his immediate family sleep on the upper floor. Other important women, unmarried sisters, mother-in-law, mother, sleep in separate apartments within the palisade.

## Grubenhauser

A *grubenhause*, or grub hut, as they're affectionately known, is a wooden building with a gabled roof, no windows, a single door, and a wooden floor covering an earthen walled cellar. The buildings are almost exclusively used for weaving, an important craft in Anglo-Saxon England.



## OLD ENGLISH PHRASES

Talk like a native! Refer to the **Pronunciation Guide** on page 37 for help with proper pronunciation.

### Old English

Gea  
Na  
Eaþe mæg  
Spricest þu Englisc?  
Help!  
Wæcce!  
Hit nis min læst.  
Eala  
Ic hatte  
Hu gæþ hit?  
Hit gæþ god  
Ic wille hors.  
Cymst þu to beorscipe?  
Beginnaþ!  
Min sword bræc!  
Hit is ana hydes wund.  
Hwær is læcehus?  
Eart þu gehal?  
Hit bledeþ!  
Hwær wærcest þu?  
Irnaþ onweg!  
Wes þu hal.  
Wulfstan is min nama.

### Modern English

Yes  
No  
Maybe  
Do you speak English?  
Help!  
Look out!  
It's not my fault.  
Hi.  
My name is...  
How are you?  
I'm good.  
I want to buy a horse.  
Coming to the feast?  
Charge!  
My sword broke.  
It's only a flesh wound.  
Where is the doctor's?  
Are you ok?  
It's bleeding!  
Where do you hurt?  
Retreat!  
Hail/Farewell/Cheers!  
My name is Wulfstan.





## CURRENCY AND TAXES

Although Anglo-Saxon England has coinage, barter and payment in goods is still the primary basis for transactions. Animals and agricultural goods such as honey, ale, loaves, and butter are frequently traded. The average landholder pays most of his dues, taxes, and rents in goods, not coin.

The silver d (penny) forms the basis of the Anglo-Saxon fiduciary economy. A typical coin is about the size of a modern day American quarter, has the king's portrait and name on the obverse and a design, typically a cross, and the minter's name on the reverse. Other values are referred to, but they represent a number of pence, not individual coins.

Number of Pence	Stated Value
240 pence	Pound
120 pence	Half-pound
30 pence	Mancus
12 pence	Shilling

Beginning in 973, coins are recalled and reissued every 6 years. The old coins become non-legal tender. To exchange the coins, a person must travel to a burh with a mint. A tax is levied when the money is exchanged so people typically returned home with less coinage than they had before the exchange.

Any transaction that involves four or more pence requires a witness, ensuring that, should a question later arise, there is an impartial party to state that everything was traded properly.

Various animals cost in pence, and by extension, what the item is worth in barter.

Good	Pence
Work Horse	120
Ox	30
Cow	20
Pig	10
Sheep	4
Goat	2

### Taxes

Anglo-Saxon England has a very efficient and accepted taxation infrastructure. The tax collector, a shire-reeve, doesn't expect trouble when collecting taxes. As a matter of fact, the first person killed in the first Viking invasion was the shire-reeve of Dorchester. Three ships had landed, so he traveled to the beach to collect taxes. The Vikings weren't interested in paying.

Taxes are collected at trades and markets, the amount of the tax dependent upon the value of the transaction. Usually 10%, but greedy reeves sometimes add a few extra percent for themselves.

Foreign ships are also taxed, either in goods or cash. A small ship putting in must pay a half penny, larger ships with sails must pay a penny, and a merchant ship must pay 4 pence.

A final form of taxation is the burden placed on landowners and anyone who holds land by royal decree. These people are responsible for the maintenance of bridges and fords on their land, as well as the maintenance of town fortifications (and providing men for military service). Undoubtedly the labor is drawn from the landowner's slave and geburas population, but the cost of supplies and lost labor on the estate itself can place hardship on the landowner.



## ADJUDICATING COURT CASES

If investigators find themselves embroiled in a court case the single more important skill is Status. The case should be broken down into several phases:

**First phase:** swearing of oaths by the accused and the accuser; both make an opposed Art/Craft (Orate) roll—note down who wins the roll.

**Second phase:** swearing of oaths by witnesses. Make a Status roll for each witness the accused and accuser can call upon—keep a tally for each side in terms of successes and failures; the side whose witnesses garner the greater number of successes wins.

**Final phase:** the court determines the verdict; the accused and accuser make an opposed Status roll—modified in the following ways:

- The character who won the opposed Art/Craft (Orate) roll receives a bonus die.
- The character whose witnesses had the greater number of successes receives a bonus die. If a draw, then no bonus die is awarded.

Anyone who fails a court case, whether accuser or accused, suffers a 2D10 point loss to their Status (to a minimum of 01%).





## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Since Anglo-Saxon society is, at heart, communal and familial, one of the biggest motivators for “proper behavior” is shame. Everybody in a community usually knows everyone else, so keeping a crime secret is almost impossible. Add to that the constant gossiping, especially at feasts, and

everybody knows everybody’s business. To compound the difficulty, what would a thief do with the stolen goods? Most people in the village will recognize something unique and other communities will consider a stranger looking to fence something with suspicion and probably send him packing.



## CRIME AND REPARATIONS

Here are several crimes and their associated punishments. Some of the crimes are duplicates—the Keeper should pick the one most fitting.

Crime	Fine in Shillings* (or other punishment)
Fighting in a Monastery	120
Fight in the House of an Ealdorman	60 to victim, 60 to crown
Fight in the House of a Taxpayer	6 to victim, 120 to crown
Break into a king’s residence	120
Break into an archbishop’s residence	90
Break into an ealdorman’s or bishop’s residence	90
Break into a thegn’s residence	30
Break into a ceorl’s residence	15
Break the fence around a ceorl’s house	5
Rape a ceorl’s slave	5
Incest	Loss of all possessions
Adultery by man	15
Adultery by woman	Loss of all possessions, including ears
Burn a freeman’s trees	120
Chop down a freeman’s trees	90
Kill a freeman	Person’s wergild
Kill a slave	Slave’s value
Quarrel while drunk (one person shows restraint)	30
Female slave steals	Immolation
Robbery	Scalping/eyes gouged out/ears cut off/nose mutilated
Cattle eat unprotected crops	No punishment
Cattle break down fence to eat crops	Cost of fence and destroyed crops
Place a ceorl in the stocks	30
Scourge a ceorl	20
Cut a man’s hair to insult him	10
Cut a man’s hair like a priest’s	30
Cut off a man’s mustache	20
Tie a man up and cut his hair like a priest	60

*\*Shilling equals 12 pennies.*





Bandits wait in the forests to ambush travelers.

That's not to say that crime didn't occur. When a person wants to accuse another of a crime they are advised to do so publicly. The accused and accuser appear before a court of their free neighbors. Evidence isn't as important as a person's character and the number of good character witnesses which can be called. In most cases, someone with a bad reputation will be found guilty, regardless of whether or not they committed the crime, whereas a well-regarded, important member of society will most likely be found innocent.

Another important element in determining guilt is whether or not the crime was committed in secret or in public. A crime committed in secrecy is more heavily punished than one committed in public. Burning a man's trees is worse than chopping one down, because fire burns silently, while anyone nearby can hear an axe. If a man kills a thief and publicly proclaims it, the victim's family has no redress, but if he hides the killing, the relatives can bring him to court.

Restraint is also taken into account. If a person resists the temptation to become involved in violence, the person who showed restraint is eligible for compensation. The visibility

of the damage is also a factor. A person injured in such a way that scars are left visible is eligible for more compensation than someone whose scars are easily concealed.

## Weregild

Weregild, the value placed on a person, is one of the cornerstones of early Anglo-Saxon law. By the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages* it's losing favor in place of set fines and corporal punishment, but can still be found in some areas. Depending on the time and place, a person's weregild varied, but it is always directly tied to the person's status in society.

Although values shifted throughout the period, here is a sample of weregilds drawn from 9th century Mercian law codes, payable to the family in the event of murder. If a person is injured, only a pro-rata amount is paid. Goods, rather than actual money, are the primary form of payment.

Status	Weregild in Shillings
Slave	Purchase price, payable to owner.
Ceorl	200, payable to surviving family.
Thegn	1,200, payable to surviving family.
Bishop	15,000, payable to surviving family.
King	30,000, 15,000 payable to surviving family, 15,000 payable to the people.

## Punishment

The most common form of punishment is a fine. The guilty party can pay a rate based on the weregild of the injured party or a set fine. Given the high fines, most are paid in goods, however slavery is also a possibility for the loser.

It's up to the winner in the case to ensure payment of fines; no court system exists to act as an intermediary in the payments. The parties agree upon the terms of payment, usually not to exceed one year from the date of the judgment. Failure to pay can result in the confiscation of goods or even a blood feud.

## Mutilation and Execution

Toward the end of the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages* mutilation and execution became more common punishments. If a person is mutilated for their crimes they must be abandoned for three days. If after that time the person is still alive, friends and families may give aid.

Executions are performed in public. They can range from immolation to decapitation, slitting the guilty party's throat, or tossing them off a cliff. The body of an executed person is always buried face down in unconsecrated ground with his hands tied behind his back. If he's decapitated, his head is placed between his legs.





### OUTLAWRY

An outlaw is someone stripped of all their legal rights. This means they can be killed with impunity and without the fear of retribution. Anyone who aids an outlaw also runs the risk of being outlawed himself.

Outlawry is usually reserved for repeat offenders but can be levied on a first offender if the crime is particularly heinous, such as mass murder.

No one is safe from a sentence of outlawry. King Cyneheard of Wessex was deprived of his kingdom by the witenagemot. Cyneheard, with no refuge, fled the kingdom and was killed by an ordinary swineherd.

### FEUDS

The fæth (blood feud) comes into play when a murderer refuses to pay wergild. Protracted blood feuds can wreak havoc on a society, so there are laws in place to curtail them. Around 940, King Edmund insisted that the relatives of a man killed unlawfully could only legally extract vengeance on the killer himself and only if the killer and his associates were unable to raise the wergild after a year of trying. In addition, anyone who legitimately killed someone as part of a blood feud would only be admitted to the king's presence if he carried out penances. The vengeance seekers must also announce their intentions to their target. Secret or sudden vengeance on an unsuspecting man was not legally tolerated.

In theory, a blood feud should end after the first legitimate vengeance killing. In practice, blood feuds degenerated into a tit-for-tat bloodletting that can span generations.

### APPEARANCE

The average Anglo-Saxon male is 5'8" tall, while the average woman is 5'4" high. Hair color can be blonde, brown, black, or red; indicative of the various ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons.

#### Clothing

Clothing is either made of wool or linen—linen being more expensive and only available to the wealthy. The truly wealthy wear linen with silk trim.

Although status is often defined more by the weapons carried, there are differences between the common folk and the wealthy in their clothes as well. The common man wears a short woolen tunic that falls above the knees, belted at the waist, over leggings. A wealthy man adds a long cloak that falls below his knees, secured at the shoulder with an expensive brooch. A sword is also the purview of the wealthy man; a commoner may only carry a spear.

Women wear long dresses. Wealthy women add dark grey veils attached to colorful headdresses; they may also sharpen their nails to points. Children wear short, loose tunics and usually run around barefoot.

Shoes for both sexes are simple leather uppers sewn to a leather sole with a heel. Most shoes are ankle high. When the sole wears out, it's pulled away from the upper and replaced. Accoutrements include gems, necklaces, and arm rings made of gold. Bags and pouches with walrus or elephant ivory closure rings are hung from belts. During winter, people add leather leggings, shoe covers, and over shirts to keep out the rain and the snow. Everyday headwear for men is a woolen slouch cap.

#### Hairstyle

A privilege of freemen, regardless of class, is to wear their hair long, which they do. Only slaves and priests have short hair. Men, especially warriors, also wear long, trimmed mustaches. To forcibly cut a man's hair or mustache is a crime.

Children wear their hair short. They're permitted to grow it out after reaching adulthood (around ten or twelve years of age). Women also have long hair but either pull it back in braids or wear an early form of a wimple to control their hair. Slaves have their hair cut short, indicative of their loss of status. Priests have a tonsure, either at the front in the Celtic style or at the top in the Roman style. Priests also have to shave their mustache.

### FOOD, FARMING, AND HUNTING

The Anglo-Saxon diet is fairly consistent with little variety. Although meats and fish are salted and grains dried, seasonality affects what foods are available.

Beyond providing basic sustenance, food is used to reward followers, cement political and kinship relationships, and strengthen social ties at marriages, feasts, and funerals. Eating, like many things in Anglo-Saxon life, is properly done communally. A glutton is not only someone who eats too much but also eats in private, away from the community.

#### Food

A typical diet consists of vegetables, meats, fish, and some spices. Common fruits and vegetables include grains (collectively called corn), such as wheat, barley, and rye for making bread; peas, hazelnuts, cherries, sloes, parsnips, plantains, blackberries, apples, plums, and pears. Meats available include cattle, goat, sheep, pigs, deer, boar, chicken, geese, partridge, buzzard, blackbird, and even mice and rats when times are hard. Most fish are river fish such as salmon, eel, rudd, barbel, perch, trout, and pike. The common deep sea fish is herring.



*"Don't let it get away!"*

Other foodstuffs include bread and butter (a staple of the Anglo-Saxon diet), honey (the only readily available sweetener), rosemary, mint, rue, and gentians. Corncockle (a weed usually growing in wheat fields) is included in many diets—a mild irritant that causes stomach aches.

Drinks include mead, milk, ale, wine, and beer made from fermented fruits. The staple drink is mead. Wine is reserved for special occasions and beer is nothing like we know it today.

The availability of certain foods, especially meats, depends on a person's place in society. The wealthy have access to a wider variety of foods, including venison, hare, pike, and oysters, while the common folk content themselves with cattle. The most common meat sources are goats, sheep, and pigs.

Exotic imports find their way to the tables as well. Coriander, pepper, oil, lavender, cinnamon, ginger, liquorice, and sugar are available, at least to the wealthy, in small quantities.

### Preparation and Meals

Livestock, allowed to roam free, is brought to the market and sold on the hoof. The buyer then takes the meat back to his home and slaughters it in the backyard. The backyard is also where he keeps a small garden to grow vegetables.



Bread is baked in a pan over a fire or the pan is buried in hot ashes. A few bread ovens exist but they are in the minority. The grain for bread is either ground by women at home or by men with water, tidal, or oxen driven mills.

The primary food, stew, is cooked in a kettle suspended over a fire. Those seeking a more luxurious meal roast their meat over a fire.

On most days a typical Anglo-Saxon eats two meals. One meal is around noon, the other in the evening. Both are usually stew of some kind. On Sundays, the meals are very early in the day and then very late at night, to allow time for church. Special days might have more meals or fewer, depending on whether it's a festival or fast day.

Common festival days, where more food is consumed communally, are winter's day, Easter, after harvest, after sheaf binding, after plowing, mowing, rick making, wood carting, and corn carting. These extra feasts are rewards for hard work. At a feast, people can interact with their neighbors, especially those that live on the other side of the community, listen to prayers from the priests, and receive extra food to help them through tough times. Feast food is provided by the thegn or another local leader to reward the ceorls for their hard work (and to remind them who is in charge).

A single bladed knife, spoon, and fingers are the most common eating utensils. People bring their own utensils to a meal. Because stews are *de rigeur*, bowls are the most common tableware. Round bottom cups and horns are for drinking. The round bottoms indicate that the beverage is to be drunk in one go, or in the case of large horns, passed from person to person. Tableware is made of pottery, wood, leather, or metal, with wood being the most common.

### Famine

Between the 5th and 11th centuries, there were fifty serious famine years. These famines might be caused by weather changes, either too much or too little rain damages the crops and reduces the yield, or the deprivations of war, with invading forces burning fields and slaughtering livestock to hinder their foe. In addition to increased disease and death from hunger, famine also increases the number of slaves; people unable to feed themselves or their families sell themselves to the wealthy so that the wealthy are compelled to provide food.

### Farming

Anglo-Saxons practice open-field farming. Arable land is divided into strips that combine into furlongs and then grouped into fields. One field is left fallow every year, used for livestock grazing or for the growing of herbs and medicinal plants.

Effective drainage and plowing, and other good land management techniques, increase the amount of food available from one year to the next. Oxen typically pull the



plow, creating a ridge and furrow field, although slave pulled plows can be used.

### Fishing and Hunting

Most fishing is done on rivers using nets. Some deep sea fishing, with lines, is performed at coastal communities. Weirs and traps are also placed in rivers to catch fish and eels.

Hunting is done with spear, sling, or bow. Animals frequently hunted for food include boar, roe and red deer, otter, and beaver. Any bird that can be hit with a sling stone is also fair game.

## TRAVEL

The Romans left a legacy of roads in England, many of which survived in some form or another to the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. However, the Anglo-Saxons didn't stay confined to the roads, they ranged far and wide.

Overland travel is usually done on foot, following the road. Off road travel is prohibited. Horse riding is an elite activity and many people are rightly leery of an armed man on horseback. Wagons, pulled by oxen or by slaves move goods across the island.

Rivers are the preferred way to move goods long distances. Roads connect ports to cities and the rivers are continually being upgraded through the digging of channels. Most ships that ply the rivers do so via oars.

Ocean going travel is important to the Anglo-Saxons. It's how Anglo-Saxon goods reach continental markets and how foreign goods, even some from as far away as the near east or India reach England. As a matter of fact, if a man undertakes three trading missions to the continent at his own expense, he is eligible to be made a thegn.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Anglo-Saxons, regardless of class, seek entertainment. Some examples are listed under the children's games section. Those aren't the only forms, though.

Both hunting and hawking are considered good ways for warriors to maintain their skills when not on the battlefield. Wolf, boar, deer, hare, otter, and beaver are all viable targets. Spears are the primary hunting weapon, especially when hunting for sport; however, some warriors demonstrate their prowess by taking on boars with sword and shield. Hunting dogs are frequently used. Hawking is particularly popular among the elite, especially on long journeys and when on campaign. Hawks are trained to bring back small mammals and other birds.

In addition to hnefatafl (a strategy game where an outnumbered king and retainers try to escape an encroaching

army), variants of modern-day backgammon, nine-men's morris, and fox and geese are played. Chess, while popular with the Vikings, isn't that popular with the Anglo-Saxons. Gambling goes hand-in-hand with Anglo-Saxon board games.

### Poems and Riddles

Heroic poems serve to drive men to greatness. Poems remind warriors of the great deeds of their ancestors, tell of titanic struggles between men and monsters, and remind everyone of what is expected of them. A scop (poet), memorizes numerous poems and recites them in thegns' halls long into the night, using firelight and occasional music to great effect.

Riddles are a popular form of entertainment. They run the gamut from tame to ribald. They're used not only as a form of entertainment, some are a vehicle for philosophical and religious discourse. They're typically rendered in verse. *The Exeter Book* contains over 95 riddles.



### SAMPLE RIDDLES

Here are two sample riddles that Keepers can use to befuddle and bemuse their investigators. Wiley Keepers will insert clues to the Mythos into riddles.

*I am solitary, wounded by iron/Battered by weapons, tired of battle-play/Wear of sword-edges. I often witness war,/fierce fight, with no hope of help,/Or an succor, before I./Among warriors, am totally destroyed./Hammered blades, hard-edged and horribly sharp,/Batter me, the handiwork of smiths,/Biting in the burb. I must abide at all times the hateful strife./Never in all the habitations of man/Could I find the medicine to heal my scars with herbs,/But the wounds increase on me by day and night.*

The answer to the above riddle is: a shield.

*I am a wondrous creature: to women a thing of joyful expectancy, to close-lying companions serviceable. I harm no city-dweller except the one who kills me. My stem is erect and tall – I stand up in bed – and whiskery somewhat down below. Sometimes the pretty daughter of a countryman will dare, rude girl, to grip me. She attacks me, red as I am, and seizes my head and clenches me in a cramped place. She will soon feel the effect of her encounter with me, this curly-haired woman who squeezes me. Her eye will be wet.*

The answer to the above riddle is: an onion.





## WARFARE

The Anglo-Saxons came to the island in violence and they will lose control of the island in violence. Over the centuries that they've been in England, they've fought Romans, Britons, Welsh, Danes, Norwegians, and each other. This section provides a brief overview of Anglo-Saxon fighters and their gear.

### Fyrd

The fyrd is the basic unit of any Anglo-Saxon fighting force. It's a levy of all free men between the ages of 15 and 60 capable of fighting. Because this can rapidly deplete a region of its workers and leave homes undefended, each group of five hides must supply one man for combat. The remainder of the men pays 4 shillings to cover 2 months of expenses for the man.

Members of the fyrd supply their own weapons and gear. In some cases the men who stay behind combine resources to supply war gear for the man selected to join the fyrd.

Sometime during the 9th or 10th century, the concept of a select fyrd emerged. A select fyrd draws soldiers only from thegns and ceorls experienced in combat. It's an attempt to create a more disciplined, less hodgepodge fighting force. Again, they supply their own arms.

### Hearthweru

The hearthweru (hearth guard) are the personal troops of kings and powerful thegns. They are semi-professional warriors and form the core of any Anglo-Saxon fighting force. Much of their free time is spent training for war, usually through hunting and physical contests.

A hearthweru gets his gear from his lord. This gear, called the heriot, consists of four spears, four shields, four horses (2 with saddles), two swords, a metal helmet, and a mail shirt. This gear is returnable should a member of the hearthweru decide to leave his lord's service. The most common reason for leaving is dishonorable behavior on the part of the lord. Loyalty to the hearthweru supplants loyalty to family.

Under the reign of King Cnut, the hearthweru are replaced by huscarles, the Scandinavian equivalent.

## WAR GEAR

The most common gear wielded on the field are spears and leather helms for ceorls, and swords, mail shirts, and metal helms for thegns. Both groups also use shields. There is nothing prohibiting a ceorl from wielding a sword and wearing a metal helm and mail, but it doesn't make him a thegn.





## ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Thegns and hearthweru wear mail shirts into battle. These steel shirts are thigh or knee length tunics. Most ceorls wear their normal woolen tunics. War helms are conical helmets either made of leather supported by a metal frame or made entirely of metal. A nosepiece protects the bridge of the nose.

The spear is by far the most common weapon. Warriors had long spears for thrusting, short spears for throwing, and intermediate length spears that could be thrown or thrust. Spears had iron leaf blades for tips. A few warriors prefer to use single-headed axes in battle.

Bows aren't common on the Anglo-Saxon battlefield. They go against the idea that an enemy should be met face-to-face. When archers are used, it's done piecemeal, not as a massed force as seen in later English armies. When used, the bows are longbows with a six-foot stave. Yew or ash is the wood of choice for the stave. Poplar or beech is used for the arrows. The string is wound linen.

Swords, a sign of power in Anglo-Saxon England, are double bladed. They're pattern welded; hammer welding combines twisted sections of different grades of steel into the blade. Swords are often the pride of a warrior's kit and even the most basic sword can be passed down from generation to generation.

The seax is a single bladed knife carried by most fighters. It's a weapon of last resort should all other weapons be lost or damaged.

### VIKING INVASIONS

The Vikings are an ever-present threat to England during the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. Keepers who want to insert a Viking invasion into an Anglo-Saxon campaign can pretty much choose any year. Keepers who want historical accuracy can choose from the following dates and locations. This is a list of major invasions. Smaller, localized invasions happened more often.

Stainmore (954)  
Maldon (991)  
Folkestone (991)  
London (994)  
England (1016)  
Northern Scotland, most of it conquered (1030-35)  
England (1042)  
Fulford and Stamford Bridge (1066)





Shields are round and made of linden planks covered in cowhide. An iron boss, usually unadorned, attaches the handle to the shield.

Horses are used for transport to the battlefield and chasing down fleeing foes. Fighting takes place on foot, another example that honorable warriors fight face-to-face.

## Mustering

The call to muster is carried by messengers from hide to hide. Those selected to join the fyrd gather at pre-defined mustering points, usually along roads. Once assembled, the troops are reviewed for fitness by a thegn or shire-reeve. The fyrd gathered at a single mustering point typically serves as one unit in the larger army.

If someone didn't show, he forfeited his land to the king. Without land, he can no longer be considered a free man. A thegn or ceorl can opt out of service by paying a 40 shilling substitution fee to his lord. If the lord, in turn, doesn't actually recruit a substitute he pays 40 shillings to his lord.

Once assembled, the fyrd marches to meet with the king and the other forces. As the fyrd marches, it grows in size as more contingents coalesce into one force. Essential food, supplies, and gear are carried. Most gear is carried on ox, horse, or man pulled carts. Non-combatant ceorls manage the baggage train and carry additional supplies on their backs. Along the way, men stay in villages or in tents in field camps. Villages, churches, and lands owned by the king provide additional supplies to the army as it marches.

A member of the fyrd is obligated to serve 60 days. When those 60 days are up, he goes home. It's not uncommon for men to leave as soon as their 60 days are up, even if they're taking part in a siege or a battle.

To counteract this, kings divide the call-up into two groups that serve 60 days each. One group remains at home while the other group is in the field. In theory, the group that's at home replaces the group in the field just as the 60 days is reached. In practice though, the king and his hearthweru sometimes find themselves without an army when the replacement troops are delayed for some reason.

## The Shield Wall

Anglo-Saxon battlefield tactics consist of a shield wall backed by spears that slowly advances on its enemy's shield wall. A shield line provides protection not only to the shield holder but also to his neighbor as well. The tactic is popular, as it doesn't take much skill to hold a shield in a line and advance en masse. The two walls clash, becoming a back and forth shoving match comprised of brute strength and spear thrusts. The walls soon collapse and fighting devolves into small groups and one-on-one combat. It's a messy, bloody affair.

Couriers on foot or horseback carry commands from one contingent of the fyrd to another as needed.

Once an enemy is broken and flees the field, the victor takes to his horse in pursuit.

# BELIEF

The religion section in A-Z of the Dark Ages (page 50) covers many tenets of Dark Ages Catholicism, so they won't be repeated here. Instead, there is some information on churches and folk belief.

## Christianity

By the Dark Ages, the majority of people in Anglo-Saxon England are Christian. Men and women enter monasteries, get married in the Christian tradition, and attend church. Most settlements have at least one stone church. Many have more than one; some have private churches for a thegn, others have public churches open to anyone. Note that older superstitions still linger under the surface and, during times of stress, these often bubble to the surface.

The supreme religious figure in Anglo-Saxon England is the Archbishop of Canterbury. As the pre-eminent bishop in England, he occupies the Chair of St. Augustine, named for the first Archbishop. The selection process varies. Some are elected by the canons of Canterbury Cathedral, while others are appointed by secular rulers.

The average person will never meet the archbishop. Most will deal with their parish priests, traveling monks, and friars. Residents of a large burh, such as Canterbury or Gloucester, might attend a head minster church presided over by a bishop.

Note that Sundays are important as a day of church service and a day devoid of labor. A Christian guilty of working on a Sunday must pay penance.

## COMMON TITHES

The Church and its priests live on tithes. People donate all manner of goods to churches and the Anglo-Saxon Church established certain days where certain tithes are to be made.

Tithe	Due
Plough Alms	Fifteen days after Easter
Young animals	Pentecost
Harvest grains	All Saint's Day
Peter's Pence	St. Peter's Day
Dues	Martinmas
1/2 d of beeswax	Easter Eve, All Saint's Day, and the Purification of Mary
Soul Scot	Burial



## Types of Churches

There are four types of churches in Anglo-Saxon England. Unlike homes and other buildings, churches are frequently built of stone.

**Heafod-mynstres:** head minsters, usually the seat of a bishop.

**Medemran mynstres:** medium rank churches have a collegiate or monastic group of clergy. Often have daughter churches under them.

**Git læssan:** literally “yet lesser.” These churches have a graveyard and perform basic divine services. Most private churches founded by laymen fall within this category.

**Feld-circan:** field churches are country chapels without a graveyard. These churches usually lack a permanent priest.

## Charms

A frequently seen syncretism between formal religion and popular belief are charms against elves, devils, poisons, and disease. Elves are ambivalent, immoral creatures that lurk beyond the borders of human settlements causing all kinds of problems. The elves use their elf-shot to cause all sorts of ailments, both physical and spiritual. A run of bad luck or a pain in the side that just won't go away can both be caused by elves. Possession by devils can cause fevers, madness, or other health concerns. To counteract these things, Anglo-Saxons use charms. Mostly, charms are verbal: spoken, sung, or intoned—although some charms may have physical components. During Pagan times, the charms called on deities to heal the person. As Christianity enveloped the region, the names changed from Pagan gods to Christian saints, but the means of delivery stayed the same.

Some sample charms are provided on page 48.

## Amulets

Like charms, amulets protect people from diseases caused by elves and evil spirits. Found in many Pagan graves, these items are sometimes discouraged by church authorities but often tolerated in practice. Worn on a thong around the neck or carried in a belt pouch, amulets can include sprigs of herbs like mugwort, stones (such as amber or amethyst), crystals, seashells, wolf teeth, or eagle claws. Although these are the most common types, any unusual object can become an amulet—small fossils, for instance, or Roman or Scandinavian coins. This is a likely fate for any Mythos or pre-human artifacts turned up by an Anglo-Saxon farmer's plough. A vital clue or dangerous item might wind up as a treasured family heirloom, requiring a good deal of finesse for investigators to retrieve.

## The Old Ways

Although the people have been Christian for a century there are undoubtedly followers of the Pagan ways. The Church would paint such people as lurkers in the shadows who aim to corrupt and deceive good Christian hearts, however things are never so clean cut.

Mixing Pagan beliefs into a campaign is a good way to add depth and also bring the true horrors of the Mythos to light. If a baby-sacrificing worshipper of Wotan is bad, exactly how depraved are those who follow a Mythos deity?

During Pagan times, all the gods were provided their due worship. While an individual might favor one god over another, he or she was careful not to slight any of them. Most worship is performed at simple household altars, although sacred groves, stones, and trees might also be visited. Ritual observances and sacrifices (usually of food or animals) are frequent.

In the Anglo-Saxon cosmology, there are seven realms. Humans live in Middangeard, which is surrounded by two saltwater seas and two freshwater seas. A barricade, made from the eyebrows of the giant Claeg, surround Middangeard, separating it from the other worlds. Above Middangeard is Heofon, home of the gods and connect to the land of men by the Heofonlic Boga (Heavenly Bridge). The land of the dead,

## ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY

A list of the Archbishops of Canterbury who reigned during the Dark Ages is provided in case investigators try to seek them out for council. “el” means they were elected; “dep” means they were deposed.

From	To	Name
941	2 Jun 958	Oda
958	959	Ælfsige
959	dep. 959	Byrthelm
959	19 May 988	Dunstan
988	Feb 990	Æthelgar
990	28 Oct 994	Sigeric the Serious
el. 21 Apr 995	16 Nov 1005	Ælfric of Abingdon
1006	19 Apr 1012	Ælfheah
1013	12 Jun 1020	Lyfling
13 Nov 1020	c. 29 Oct 1038	Æthelnoth
1038	29 Oct 1050	Eadsige
Mar 1051	dep. Sep 1052	Robert of Jumièges



Hel, lies below Middangeard. Within the boundaries of the three worlds are four realms belonging to the Dweorgian, Beorht Aelfan, Deorc Aelfan, and Ents.

The three worlds are connected by the Yew of Irminsul. One root of Irminsul reaches into Hel and draws sustenance from the Sweging Cital (Roaring Cauldron), which is guarded by the devourer of corpses, a great wyrm named Fretanre Death. Irminsul's second root draws from the Spring of Wisdom in Middangeard. The third root of Irminsul reaches into the Spring of Destiny in Heofon.

The three daughters of Niht—Wyrd, Metod, and Sculd—exist outside, but near the three worlds, serving as Fate, Measurer, and Cutter. Each day Wyrd drinks of water from the Spring of Destiny and spins a man's thread of life. Metod measures it, making it long or short. Sculd cuts the thread according to Metod's measure. If the cut is ragged the man dies viciously, if the cut is the clean the man dies honorably. The trio weaves the threads on a loom made of bones, weighted by skulls. No one can escape their thread.



## WHO'S WHO?

During the days when the Pagan gods were worshipped, the Anglo-Saxons often drew fine distinctions between different types of practitioners. By the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, anyone who claimed one of these titles was inviting proclamations of heresy. The male title is listed first, followed by the female.

- Dryman/Drycge: used magical apparatus such as cauldrons, crystals, and wands.
- Galdre/Galdorice: sang or chanted their rituals and spells.
- Lyblaeca/Lybbestre: potion makers.
- Scinnlaecca/Scinnlaecce: summoned spirits and conversed with the dead.
- Witega/Witegestre: soothsayers and prophets.

If a practitioner performs magic out of hate, spite, greed, or another negative emotion, they're called a Wareloga/Haegtess. This isn't really how the magic is performed, but instead why the magic is performed.

To many people, though, these different kinds of magic can all be summed up with one word. A wicce (or wicca, if male) is a witch, someone who uses magic to harm others. Despite witch-burnings being far in the future, the church condemns witchcraft and those who find themselves accused of it may be shunned, taken to court, or even attacked by their neighbors.



## Anglo-Saxon Pagan Gods

Dark Ages England isn't so far removed from its Pagan roots that the gods have been forgotten. Many of the charms and feasts dedicated to the Christian God and his saints were once dedicated to the Pagan gods. Keepers wanting to inject some Paganism into their game can draw from this list of gods. Some suggested conflations with the Cthulhu Mythos are included; however, Keepers should remember that the more the Mythos appears, the less frightening it becomes. Each Keeper can choose which and whether such conflations are used in their games.

**Woden:** the father of gods as well as the god of wisdom, war, and death. Symbolized by the ring and the spear. *In the Cthulhu Mythos, he can be conflated with Tarwil at'Umr.*

**Frig:** mother goddess, wife of Woden, and protector of animals, also a healer. Her symbols are a sheaf of grain and a necklace of amber. *She can be conflated with Shub-Niggurath.*

**Thunor:** the god of weather, foe of giants, and protector of the weak. Symbolized by the hammer and often considered a "friend of the common man." *He can be conflated with either Nyarlathotep for Keepers seeking a malign influence or with Nodens for those seeking a protective influence.*

**Ēastre:** a fertility goddess, of dawn and spring, after whom Easter is named. Her symbol is the hare. *She, like Frig, can be conflated with Shub-Niggurath.*

**Tiw:** a god of justice, vows, and leadership. His symbol is the sword. *Tiw can be conflated with Gla'aki, whose vows have a certain justice in them.*

**Hama:** a vigilant god who guards the rainbow bridge between Midangeard (earth) and Heofen (heaven). He can see into any world and hears everything. *Can be conflated with Yog-Sothoth.*

**Ing:** the green man, a god of fertility. *He can be conflated with the Green Man avatar of Nyarlathotep or the Green God worshipped in Varrenni territory.*

**Niht:** not a god per se, and not worshipped, but Niht created existence in conjunction with Eallfaeder.

**Eallfaeder:** another creation deity, Eallfaeder worked with Niht to bring about existence.

## Paganism in Practice

Unlike Christianity, English Paganism was not a unified system of belief with consistent rules and an unchanging holy text. Each Saxon tribe had its own sacred rites, many of which



have been lost with the coming of Christianity. Christian authorities speak of animal sacrifices and of a caste of priests who lived according to a set of strict taboos, forbidden to touch weapons or ride stallions. Wooden or stone idols to the heathen gods, as well as to animal spirits like the stag or the serpent, stood at the heart of English villages or in lonely and sacred spots. People in Dark Ages England are most likely to encounter their Pagan ancestors through the burials they left in the landscape. Unlike Christians, who bury their dead in church cemeteries within their towns and villages, Pagans tended to locate cemeteries nearby (but not in) their settlements. Many of the graves in these burial grounds contain grave goods such as spears, amulets, keys, drinking vessels, jewelry, or even gold coins. The graves of the wealthy and powerful could be even more elaborate, with richly-dressed beds for the deceased's eternal rest or even boats to carry them into the next life. Large grave-mounds marked the location of royal or chiefly tombs, many of which remain visible. Despite their Pagan origins, these mounds serve as meeting places or landmarks for many Anglo-Saxon communities.

Not all burials are so richly furnished. Many have nothing at all in their graves or simply the buckles and pins from the clothes in which they were buried. In other cases, someone has taken care not to provide for the deceased's journey to the afterlife but to protect the living from them; these people are buried face-down or weighed down in their graves with heavy stones. Perhaps such measures are a means to prevent the dead from returning to harry the living.

Some of these cemeteries are now beneath fields while others are overgrown wilderness. Where mounds or other monuments mark a cemetery, many Christians stay away, viewing the site with superstitious awe and dread. Some have heard the stories of golden treasure to be found in Pagan graves, so grave robbing, though frowned on, does happen.

A handful of sites and towns have names that suggest the influence of Paganism—Wadnesbyrig means “Woden's fort” for instance, and Thunreslea means “Thunor's grove.” Although these reminders of Paganism are ever present, few people actually remember what they mean. The people of Dark Age England know the name of Woden but most assume he was an ancient king whom the ignorant Pagans foolishly believed to be a god.

### Walkers in the Night

Nightgenga (walkers in night) and sceadugenga (walkers in shadow) are interchangeable, generic Anglo-Saxon terms for all monsters and beasts encountered in the darkness. They can be werewolves, ents, nicor, thrys, or elves. The unquiet dead are especially feared.

Púcel is also used to describe likes of goblins, trolls, and other creatures encountered in the wilderness. By the High Middle Ages, púcel are known as pookas or pucks.

### Wyrd

Wyrd is the Anglo-Saxon concept of inexorable fate. A man's fate is written and there is no way around it. During the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, a man's wyrd is decided by the Christian God.

The events of the past color the events of the future, and vice-versa. If you behaved inappropriately in the past, wyrd will weigh heavily upon you and your future undertakings will not go smoothly. However, if you turn a new leaf, your future actions can overturn your past misbehavior. Wyrd should not to be confused with the idea of predestination. Anglo-Saxons were influenced by wyrd and many feared it, but they were not controlled by it.

## NORSE PAGANISM

The Old Ways may have mostly died out among the English but they are a much more recent memory for England's Scandinavian population. Viking conquerors in the 9th century settled in the north of England, with many more Norse merchants and farmers following. Even though the north is now once again firmly in English hands, many Scandinavian families still remain. Officially, most have converted to Christianity, just like many of their relatives back home in Denmark and Norway. However, some traces of Pagan belief and ritual surely remain tucked beneath their newly-adopted religion.

Norse Paganism is similar in many ways to its Anglo-Saxon counterpart. Pagan Scandinavians believe that our world, called Midgard, is only one of nine worlds joined by the sacred ash tree, Yggdrasil. Among the other worlds are Hel, the grim abode of the dead, and Asgard, the home of the gods. The most popular god is Thor, the bluff, warlike, god of thunder, while the mysteries of Odin, brooding king of the gods, are reserved for chieftains and nobles. It was Odin who gave humans the art of poetry and mastered the secret of seidr (sorcery).

Norse Pagans believe that the world will end at Ragnarok—a massive battle between gods and giants, and that a new world will rise from the ruins.

Most Danes in England have converted more or less sincerely to Christianity but many still know the old tales, which they regard as entertaining stories and harmless superstition. The common view is that the “gods” of the myths are merely human heroes whose deeds were so great that Pagans viewed them as gods. Other Danish Christians incorporate elements of Pagan tradition into their belief, much to the frustration of their priests.



## CHAPTER I

### THE GODS

There are many gods and goddesses in Norse belief. Some of the most significant are:

- Odin, king of the gods, god of magic, and father of the slain.
- Frigga, his wife, queen of the gods.
- Thor, god of thunder, strongest of the gods.
- Tyr, god of war.
- Heimdall, watchman of the gods.
- Freyr, god of fertility, one of the tribe of gods called Vanir.
- Freyja, sister of Freyr, goddess of love.
- Njord, father of Freyr and Freyja, god of the sea.

- Aegir, another god of the sea.
- Bragi, god of poetry.

As important, if not more so, than the gods are the spiritual creatures that inhabit the world, who can bring health or sickness, good luck or bad, and even help humans foretell their own fortunes. One of the most important is the fylgja, an animal spirit that represents a person. If a man whose fylgja is a goat sees a dead goat, for instance, this might be an omen of his coming death.

Norse Pagan rituals vary from place to place but traditionally they were an important part of public life, with feasts and

### ANGLO-SAXON MONTHS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

<i>Modern Julian Month</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon Month</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
<b>January</b>	Æftera Jéola/Wolf Monath	Plowing and Sowing. Colloquially known as “wolf monath,” the time of wolf hunts, which extends until March 25.
<b>February</b>	Sol-mónaþ of Fillibrook	Pruning vines.
<b>March</b>	Hréð-mónaþ	Digging/raking/sowing.
<b>April</b>	Eostur-mónaþ	Feasting.
<b>May</b>	Þrimilki-mónaþ	Tending sheep.
<b>June</b>	Ærra Líða	Cutting wood/reaping.
<b>None</b>	Þrilíða	The inter-calendrical month.
<b>July</b>	Æftera Líða	Mowing/cutting wood.
<b>August</b>	Weod-mónaþ	Reaping/mowing.
<b>September</b>	Hálig-mónaþ	Feed pigs on pannage (releasing pigs in the forest to feed on fallen acorns etc.)
<b>October</b>	Winterfylleth	Hunting wild birds.
<b>November</b>	Blót-mónaþ	Stocking firewood
<b>December</b>	Ærra Jéola	Threshing



sacrifices to mark holidays and commence public events such as legal proceedings. In Christian England, Pagan rites continue in secret. Secret idols, crudely carved in the likenesses of the gods, may still receive offerings in hidden places in the woods or by the sea. Such offerings may include gold and silver or homelier gifts, like food or cloth. Worshippers of Odin hang animal sacrifices from trees in memory of the time the god himself hung upon Yggdrasil to gain wisdom; offerings in multiples of nine, the sacred number of Odin, are particularly holy. The darkest and most powerful sacrifice, practiced at the holy site of Uppsala in Sweden, is the sacrifice of nine different kinds of living creature (including human beings).

Norse Pagans believe that an individual's fate is fixed before death by supernatural beings called norns and that nothing can change this outcome. Fortune-telling to discover one's fate by casting bone or stone tablets carved with runes or spattering blood from twigs and examining the patterns is a common practice in Norse communities, even Christian ones. Like Anglo-Saxon Pagans, Norse Pagans believe that the dead sometimes walk and speak even after death. Slain Vikings might rise from their graves to demand vengeance or warn their descendants of impending doom.

Even though most Danes have converted to Christianity, many Anglo-Saxons suspect that the Danes' conversion is only skin deep. Small cultural differences, from bathing habits to haircuts, are ascribed to secret Pagan beliefs. For many, the words "Dane" and "Pagan" are interchangeable. When things go wrong in mixed communities, the English can be quick to blame the Danes, creating an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and distrust.

## TIME AND YEAR

Anglo-Saxons measure their day from sunset to sunset. Since adopting Christianity, they've also adopted the seven-day Latin week. Sunday is a day of rest, even for slaves—owners are held responsible if the law is not followed.

The Anglo-Saxon year begins on December 25th and is divided into twelve months with room for an intercalendrical thirteenth month every nineteen years to correct calendrical drift. The Anglo-Saxons view their months as purpose driven. There's a specific event that tends to take up most of the time in a given month.

## HEALTH, HEALING, AND DEATH

Overall, Anglo-Saxons are healthy, but life in Anglo-Saxon England can be rough. Bee-stings, gashes from pig tusks, the common cold, and injuries from a season of fending off Viking incursions can lay anyone low. Luckily, there are

## MEDICINE FUMBLES

Skill fumbles can make medicine even more treacherous than it is already. If the laece fumbles the Medicine roll while bleeding a patient, the patient loses 1D3+1 additional hit points from blood loss. If a laece fumbles a Medicine roll when attempting cautery, the patient loses 5 APP from scarring.

healers to tend the wounds. In England, there is a mix of treatments from natural sources to a belief in miracles. The two elements, natural and supernatural, work hand-in-hand and are indistinguishable to most Anglo-Saxons.

Many women are dead by the age of thirty. Men live until their forties. Only 10 percent of the population survives past forty-five years. Living to old age didn't mean a loss of status, although many families do request that the Church care for the elderly.

Many old treatments were imagined for unknown ailments.





## CHAPTER I

### Sanitation

Sanitation in most Anglo-Saxon communities is rudimentary at best. Most communities have shared cesspits to facilitate later fertilizing of farmland. The Old English word, *feltun*, means both privy and dunghill. Other refuse, such as animal carcasses and rotten vegetables, are dumped behind the house. Domestic rubbish (animal bones and partially eaten food) are left on the floor where they fell.

The Anglo-Saxons take for granted that their bodies play host to numerous parasites, from whip-worms to fleas. Lice are everywhere. Cleanliness as disease prevention doesn't exist. If food falls on the dirt, pick it up, brush it off, make the sign of the cross over it, and then eat it.

### Illness and Injury

Common afflictions in Anglo-Saxon England include: vertebral degeneration osteoarthritis (a breakdown of the cartilage of the joints and discs in the neck and lower back; almost everybody suffered from the condition—a reward for a lifetime of hard work), tuberculosis, and leprosy. Outbreaks of plagues devastate the countryside. The victims of contagious diseases are sometimes separated away from the community.

Both the Devil and God also send sickness. A common belief is that disease is caused by elf-shot—tiny barbs fired by agents of the Devil. Elf-shot typically causes diseases, pain, and injuries that have no obvious cause. Intestinal pain or

side stitches are usually caused by elf-shot. However, someone who transgresses against God or the Church can find they are struck down with paralysis or another debilitating condition.

Battlefield and occupational injuries are serious matters, which can be life threatening. Daily labor, such as felling trees or repairing a wall, can result in accidental death or broken bones. When violence strikes, the chance of death rises dramatically. Warriors tend to aim for the head and shoulders, insuring many lethal blows.

### Treatment

The first line of treatment is the family. Many people with minor injuries or illnesses are treated with herbal remedies made in the home. Often a cunning man or woman, one who knows of herbs and remedies, may be consulted; however, the Church and God-fearing folk might view such people with suspicion. More serious injuries and illnesses call for a visit to the *laece* (physician). The most common forms of treatment are bleeding and cautery, which require the successful application of a Medicine roll.

To bleed a person, the *laece* applies leeches to the infected area or cuts the flesh to allow it to bleed freely. It is unwise to bleed when the moon is waxing and the tide flowing.

Cautery is the application of red-hot pokers to the flesh in a form of acupuncture. An illustrated Italian manuscript detailed all the necessary locations to apply the searing poker to ensure

## DOCTOR'S TOOLKIT

Bald's *Leechbook* includes a list of tools considered necessary for someone practicing the trade.

Tool	English	Use	Tool	English	Use
Mortere	Mortar	Pounding	Niwum cytele	New kettle	To make steam
Fepere	Feather	Application	Micelne citel	Large kettle	Boiling
Smael sife	Small sieve	Sieve	Ane brade pann	A wide pan	Heating fat
Hæwenne clað	Blue/grey cloth	Sieve	Foporne	Lancet	Cutting
Linenne clað	Linen cloth	Sieve	Seolc	Silk (thread)	Sewing
Crocc	Pot	Boiling	Bydene	Big bucket	Sauna equipment
Æren fæt	Brass vessel	Simmering	Þorne	Thorn	Digging out pus
Cyperenum fæt	Copper vessel	Simmering, boiling	Brocen glaes	gearn gegrunnen	Finely ground glass
Ceac ofnete	Lidded jug	Boiling			Ingredient
Grate	Grater	Grating	Tige horne	Cupping horn	Drawing blood
Toþ gare	Tooth pick	Applicator	Honey	Honey	Antiseptic
Bleda	Saucer	Catching worms			



maximum efficacy. It also recommends the liberal application of strong mead prior to commencing the procedure.

A laece relies on experience, observation, and Bald's *Leechbook*, which is a handbook for secular doctors. It is not a comprehensive book and assumes knowledge on the part of the reader, being a compendium of Ancient Latin and Greek medical texts. It serves as an aid to help the doctor remember diseases and their cures rather than containing the cures within its bindings. For instance, the compiler and his scribe substituted appropriate local herbs for the Mediterranean ones mentioned in the original text. It often includes numerous

remedies for the same ailment, sometimes with notes as to which are efficacious, and stresses throughout that the doctor is to proceed intelligently, taking into account the patient's history and current state. If a patient is young, weak, or pale, the doctor should lower the dosage and not view the book as an absolute. The doctor is instructed to first diagnose the illness before treating it and the book includes guidelines for determining the severity of the issue and how quickly the doctor must act.

The *Leechbook* consists of two parts. The first starts with head illnesses and injuries, and proceeds around the body including

### SAMPLE TREATMENTS

The treatments range from practical application of experience to the use of charms. Here are some sample treatments to assist the Keeper in providing verisimilitude.

**Baldness:** apply the ointment from the ashes of burned bees to the scalp.

**Poison:** the *Lacnunga* includes the advice for dealing with "flying venom," requiring that person be slashed four times in the hind quarters with an oak branch, so that they be made bloody; the branch should then be thrown away. While Bald's *Leechbook* includes the following recipe for curing the victims of poisons:

*"For drink of poison; seethe a hen and leaves of mallow in water, remove the fowl and the worts, give the man the broth to sip, well buttered, as hot as he can tal'e it. If he hath drunken poison before, it will be none the worse with him. If he supneth the broth beforehand thou mayst not that day give him poison"*

**Shingles:** combine the bark of aspen, apple, maple, elder, willow, sallow, myrtle, wych-elm, oak, blackthorn, birch, olive, dogwood, ash-tree, and quickbeam (mountain ash) into a poultice and apply over the shingles liberally.

**Sores and other skin conditions:** gangrene can be a serious problem in a world without good sanitation. Bald's *Leechbook* contains guidelines for numerous remedies:

*"Cure the scarifyings thus; take bean or oat or barley meal, or some of such meal as to thee seemeth good, so that it will serve, add*

*vinegar and honey, seethe together and lay on, and bind upon the sore places. If thou shouldst wish that the salve be stronger, add a little salt, bind on at whiles and wash with vinegar or with wine. If need be, give at whiles a wort drink, and observe always when thou art applying the strong leechdoms, what the power be, and what the nature of the body of the patient; whether it be strong and hardy, and easily may bear the strong leechdoms, or whether it be nice and tender and thin, and may not bear the leechdoms."*

**Spider bites:** fry and grind black snails to spread over the bite.

**Evil spirits:** trepanning; a mechanical bow drill is used to puncture the skull, freeing the soul from evil spirits.

**A wen (sebaceous cyst):** the Anglo-Saxons believed in bleeding, followed by the following charm:

*Wen, wen, little wen,  
Here you shall not build, nor any dwelling have.  
But forth you must, even to the near-by hill.  
Where a poor wretch, a brother you have;  
He shall lay you a leaf at your head.  
Under the wolf's foot, under the eagle's wing,  
Under the eagle's claw—ever may you wither!  
Shrivel as the coal upon the hearth!  
Shrink as the muck in the stream,  
And dwindle even as water in a pail!  
May you become as little as a linseed grain,  
And much smaller, likewise, than a hand-worm's hip-bone!  
And even so small may you become, that you become as nought.*



sections on worm diseases, and those caused by insects and parasites. It concludes with a discussion on treating fevers and madness. The second book deals with diagnosing and treating internal illnesses.

Another Anglo-Saxon medical text is the *Lacnunga* (Remedies). It, like the *Leechbook*, is a collection of remedies and cures for illnesses and injuries. Various sections are written in Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and a corrupt form of Old Irish. The *Lacnunga* includes practical remedies, but also intersperses charms to be recited. Whether the charms are intended to invoke spiritual aid or have a calming psychological effect is unclear.

Religious centers serve as places of healing. People travel for days or weeks to visit a holy site to pray for healing. If a location, such as St. Swithun's Tomb at the Old Minster, Winchester, has a reputation for miraculous healing, the sick will travel from Rome for healing.

Serious injury or illness that doesn't end in death can result in an invalid. These unlucky people are cared for by their family, kinsmen, neighbors, or a monastery. The first choice is always family, kinsmen, or neighbors, because the sick can stay in the community. Some monasteries include facilities for the care of the sick and terminally ill. Depending on the illness, people might live another decade or more under the care of monks or nuns.

## DEATH AND BURIAL

Death comes to everyone. As Anglo-Saxon England is a Christian land, burials are performed in a churchyard without grave goods. Burials are oriented east-west and are sparse on the north side of the church, an area of bad luck. Infant burials are clustered around graveyard walls. The wealthiest are buried with coffins and stones as markers. The poor are buried in a consecrated hole without a coffin or marker.

Not everyone receives a consecrated burial. Those executed (whose mortal remains are more or less intact) are buried outside churchyards, face down with their hands tied behind their back. If they were decapitated, the head is placed between their legs. Other people not eligible for churchyard burials are adulterers, oath breakers, homicides, those who refused to pay church dues, and those who have sex with nuns.

The Church has the right to refuse churchyard burial to those who died in such a way that they might not have received final confession or absolution, including women who died in childbirth, children who died unexpectedly, strangers and foreigners, and men who died in battle. In some cases, the Church compromises and the person is buried half in and half out of the churchyard.

## GAZETTEER OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

What follows is a brief overview of some of the key settlements, towns, or cities in Anglo-Saxon England. Alongside some of the entries are sections concerning possible Mythos connections or plot seeds that the Keeper can choose to incorporate into their Dark Ages games.

### Aberffraw

The *llys*, or princely seat, of the Kingdom of Gwynedd in northwest Wales. On the island of Ynys Mons, the site's been inhabited for almost 8,000 years. The Romans maintained a castrum during their rule of the island. Its solid construction is appropriated and enhanced by the princes of Gwynedd.

During the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, the throne of Gwynedd is in contention and often changes hands between families, making Aberffraw a hotbed of intrigue and violence.

**Mythos:** the *Barclodiad y Gawres* ("apronful of the giantess") is a Neolithic burial mound near Aberffraw. The locals tell of ancient tales of bloody, fire-filled sacrifices to a dark mother in the deepest chamber of the burial mound. On dark nights, some say lights have recently been seen coming from inside the mound.

### Altclud

An impressive wooden fortress surrounded by a town. It's the center of the British kingdom of Strathclyde. Situated on a massive volcanic rock where the rivers Leven and Clyde meet, Altclud has been a strategically important and prosperous settlement. The Romans traded with the residents, and legends say that Merlin stayed here, as did Arthur's nephew, Hoel. The settlement suffers numerous predations—the worst in 870 when Olaf of Dublin took the town and hauled off 200 long ships worth of slaves and treasure.

**Mythos:** the scholar and sorcerer Merlin is said to have buried one of his tomes, *Black Rites*, deep within the rock on which Altclud stands. He said that as long as the book remained buried, Altclud would be safe. What happened in 870?

### Canterbury (Cantwaraburh)

This area's been occupied since prehistoric times. As their empire crumbled, the Romans fortified the town with a solid rampart housing seven gates. Through the intervening years, it served as the main town of the Jutes. In 597, Augustine traveled from Rome and converted the king of Kent to Christianity. Canterbury, with its history as a Roman town, becomes the Episcopal See and a cathedral is built. The



designation led to a revival in Canterbury's fortunes. Trade blossomed, gold coins were struck, and prosperity grew. In 672, the see of Canterbury becomes the head of the entire English Church.

This newfound prosperity comes at a cost, however. During the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, Norsemen repeatedly sack Canterbury. In 1012, the Danes are so bold as to kill Archbishop Alphege. Despite these setbacks, Canterbury is one of the most powerful cities in England.

**Mythos:** the seven gates of Roman Canterbury were a last ditch effort by the Romans to maintain their hold on the island. If seven carefully crafted keys are brought to the seven corresponding gates at the appropriate hour, the gates of limbo are thrown open and the *dveorg* issue forth to slay all they find. The Romans never managed to acquire all the keys and the island was eventually lost. Maybe the Danes are looking for the keys? Perhaps hoping to stop the archbishops from acquiring them.

## Carlisle (Caer Liguallid)

Originally a Roman border fort, named Luguvalium, Carlisle is known for its impressive stone walls. The Romans remained in the area until almost 400 CE, including a brief period when the town was part of a breakaway republic. Currently within the Kingdom of Strathclyde, Carlisle has been fought over for centuries, alternating between Northumbrian and Strathclyde rule. It was sacked by the Norse in 876 and nearly burnt to the ground. Rather than rebuild, the town was left in partial ruin. Travelers to Carlisle will find a decaying town, one where people still live, but where the many buildings have been left to rot.

**Mythos:** the pain and suffering of those who died during the Norse raids left an indelible mark on the land. The raiders sacrificed so many townsfolk through the vicious blood-eagle rite that the streets were turned to mud by the offal. When night falls, it's said that twisted parodies of people, formed from rotting entrails, still go about their business as if they never died.

## Chester (Ceaster, Caerlleon in Cymric)

Chester has a long and storied history. It was a Roman castrum, *Deva Victrix*, and then a walled Welsh town. It's an important border town between the English and Welsh kingdoms. Augustine held a synod here in 616 to try to unite the English and Welsh churches. Shortly thereafter, the Anglo-Saxons took the city from the Welsh in a bloody



## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

This is a quick pronunciation guide to Old English to help Keepers and players sound authentic. If a letter is not listed, it's pronounced as in modern English.

### Vowels

Pronounce vowels individually, including a final "e." Stress usually falls on the second sound, typically in odd numbered syllables:

- a as in aha.
- æ a single sound, as in hat.
- e as in bed.
- i as in bid.
- o as in body.
- u as in bull.
- y as in bid.

### Diphthongs

- ae "a" as in hat followed by "e" as in Cuba.
- eo "e" as in met followed by "o" as in poetic.
- io "i" as in bit followed by "o" as in poetic.
- ie "i" as in bit followed by "e" as in Cuba.

### Consonants

- c as in chin if followed by an "i" or an "e." Else as in can.
- f as "v" if between vowels. Else as in father.
- g as "y" if followed by "i" or an "e." If at a syllable end as "ch" in cachet; else as gate
- h as "ch" in loch if at a syllable end. Otherwise as in hand.
- r as in rudiment. Often trilled.
- s as "z" if between vowels. Else as in soon.
- j, q not used.

### Double Consonants

- cg as in "dg" in ridge.
- ng as in finger.
- sc as "sh" in shout.
- th as in anthill.
- ð as thorn between vowels. Else as in then. Capital is Ð
- þ as in thorn.





battle. As part of the reconstruction, the Anglo-Saxons strengthened the walls to defend against the Norsemen. The current layout of the burh was designed by Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians and King Alfred's daughter. In 976, King Edgar held his court in Chester, further increasing the prominence of the city. Markets, a mint, and thriving border trade define the current city.

**Mythos:** during Roman times, the woods around Deva Victrix were the home to a cult of debased, misguided druids who worshipped a lloigor. Recently, some Welshmen have fallen under the psychic thrall of the lloigor and are being driven to cause havoc in the town.

### Dinefwr

A wooden fortress built on the River Tywi by Rhodri the Great. It was chosen by Hywel Dda to be his royal seat. It's from Denefwr that Hywel launched his campaigns to conquer most of the other Welsh kingdoms and form Dehuebarth.

Visitors find a thriving fortress that can be tough to reach for those who don't know the right path, or are deliberately led astray. It's also a center of law and learning. The law codes of Hywel, informed by his study of continental and Islamic laws, are stored here.

**Mythos:** Hywel's travels to Rome and further afield resulted in not only a deep respect for various laws, but also a gnawing curiosity about the more profane texts he discovered. Hywel hopes that the tomes contain a means to summon up spirits who can provide him the secrets of the future. To this end, he has a special scriptorium in Dinefwr, where Arabic scholars taken from the House of Wisdom, *Bayt al-Hikma*, in Baghdad, labor to translate Mythos tomes.

### Durham

The first building in the town of Durham, the monastic cathedral, was built on a wooded hill-island formed by a tight gorge-like meander of the River Wear in 995 under the guidance of the spirit of St. Cuthbert. The town is still small, but growing rapidly as more and more pilgrims visit the relics of St. Cuthbert. The relics of St. Bede are translated to the cathedral in 1020, adding a further draw.

In its early years, Durham had no defensive structures. There's no ramparts or towers to keep marauding Norsemen or Anglo-Saxons looking to loot the cathedral of its riches at bay. Instead, it relies on the natural steep banks to provide protection.

**Mythos:** the tale of the dun cow is known to everybody in Durham. While St. Cuthbert's remains were being transported, his coffin refused to move and the bishop

leading the procession had a vision telling him St. Cuthbert needed to go to Dunholme. Unfortunately, nobody knew where Dunholme was—at least not until a young woman passed by looking for a lost cow. Another woman said she'd seen the cow heading toward Dunholme and pointed out the way. The monks immediately set out in that direction and St. Cuthbert's coffin allowed itself to be carried that way.

The truth is much darker. Neither woman was a cowherd, but were actually the same entity, a manifestation of Lilith made flesh. She guided the monks to an ancient site sacred to her where the relics of St. Cuthbert are slowly being warped into something foul, causing an unimaginably evil blight.

### Exeter (Escancaester)

The Roman *oppidum* of *Isca Dumnoniorum* was built on banks of the River Exe in 50 CE. A castrum was built five years later to house Legio II Augusta and defend the region. However, Mediterranean coins dating back to at least 250 BCE have been found here, showing the importance of this region to international trade.

When the Saxons took the town from the Britons in the early 7th century, the Britons were allowed to stay in the town but were relegated to their own quarter. Things continued fairly harmoniously, except for a brief period when the Danes conquered the town—until 928, when King Athelstan expels the Britons from Exeter and enhances the stone walls. The new walls repulsed several Norse invasions until 1003, when an agent of Emma of Normandy unlocked the city gates for the invaders.

Now, Exeter is a bustling trade town with over 500 homes. Goods from as far away as Constantinople and Baghdad can be found in the markets. The abbey at Exeter is also a highly regarded training abbey and monks from across Europe come to study.

**Mythos:** the Britons didn't leave, or at least not through the gates. One day the Britons were there. The next they were gone. All their belongings were right where they had left them. At the time, the Anglo-Saxons didn't complain. However, now some English families have gone missing. Did they just move without telling anyone or is it happening again? And if so, just what is making them disappear?

### Ipswich (Gipeswic)

The largest and most important port in the former Kingdom of East Anglia. Ipswich is an important trade center with connections to Scandinavia and the Rhine. A large settlement of Frisians settled in the area around 700 CE and set up a pottery industry that would dominate English pottery for over 200 years.

The town's thick earthen ramparts were built by the Danes (around 900 CE) to prevent the English from retaking



Ipswich. It didn't work and the English retook the town. The English established a mint, and now Ipswich is a well-defended administrative center for the region, handling large portions of the North Sea trade.

Two interesting sites are not far from Ipswich. The first is a large, abandoned Roman administrative complex situated on a tall hill. The other is the Sutton Hoo cemetery complex, comprised of two cemeteries.

**Mythos:** local lore reports that a large, black dog with glowing eyes stalks the lands around Ipswich. Anyone who gazes upon it dies within a week. Known as the dog of Odin, it is a servitor of Yog-Sothoth that was summoned to this world and which quickly killed the man who called it up.

### Leicester (Ledecestre, Ligeraceaster)

Leicester was one of the five fortified towns of the Danelaw. However, when the bishop fled, the city lost its status as a bishopric. During the time of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, Leicester is a city, but struggles between the Church and kings mean Leicester is on the verge of losing its city status.

The city encompasses about 1,900 hides, is home to 2,000 people, and is well fortified. It is surrounded by ancient Roman walls and additional earthworks put in place by the Danes.

**Mythos:** buried under the streets of Leicester is a dark secret. The Romans who occupied the area previously had buried numerous curse tablets asking their gods to punish offenders. Someone has dug up those tablets and the curses have reawakened.

### Lincoln (Lincylene)

Built on a hill overlooking the River Witham. The Romans built a fort on the remains of an Iron Age settlement in 48 CE. By 71 CE, it was developed into *Lindum Colonia*, a settlement for retired legionaries. It prospered under Roman rule, reaching upwards of 8,000 residents.

When the Romans withdrew, the town was practically abandoned. The upper city, on the hill, served as an administrative center, and the lower city, which stretched down to the river, was allowed to rot. It wasn't until the Danelaw was established that Lincoln saw a resurgence, becoming, like Leicester, one of the five boroughs. By 950, Lincoln's mint produced almost as many coins as York's, the largest in the north. The upper and lower cities exploded with prosperity as the population swelled to nearly 6,000. New buildings front most of the streets and a suburb, Wigford, is founded along the river. The weekly market draws travelers from all over the central part of the country, and traders from as far away as the Mediterranean and Near East hawk their wares.

**Mythos:** not everyone is happy the lower city is seeing a resurgence. During Roman times, the Valens family had been declared *homo sacer* (banned or accursed) for their violent rituals to Magna Mater. The family went into hiding. When Lindum Colonia was abandoned, the Valens reemerged and resumed their old ways. The family continued to inbreed and crossbreed with some of the monstrous entities attracted by their rituals over the centuries, producing degenerate offspring. Now, the Valens family's secret is at risk of being discovered as Lincoln is rebuilt, and they will take any steps in order to hide it.

### London (Londinium)

The Roman settlement of Londinium was abandoned after the withdrawal of the empire. Rather than live within the Roman walls, the Anglo-Saxons established the port settlement of Lundenwic to the west. By the late 7th century, London was again a major port, but that's the only role it filled. Goods were made elsewhere and shipped in. The population shrank again in the 9th century when Norse raiders successfully sacked the city in 881 and 886. That same year, 886, King Alfred re-founded the city, which involved the abandonment of Lundenwic and the transfer of operations to within the walls of London. At the same time, London became part of the Kingdom of Guthrum and part of the Danelaw.

London grows slowly until 950, when trade and resettlement take off. London is now also part of Anglo Saxon England again, and its largest settlement with around 18,000 residents. It's England's most significant port and recognized throughout Europe as an important city.

**Mythos:** as a city grows, its unsavory elements grow as well. From Damascus, a lone sorcerer and follower of Azathoth came into the city via a Byzantine trader. Once within the walls, she established herself as someone able to commune with the spirits and see the future. She's attracted a following among London's wealthier citizens, all of whom hope to see their fortunes grow. So far, her actions have been fairly innocuous. However, now that she has a large following that can protect her and provide the necessary sacrifices, she plans to resume her ambition of opening a gateway to Azathoth.

### Norwich

While London faltered after the fall of the Roman Empire, Norwich grew. Prosperous trade with Scandinavia and Europe drew more traders and artisans to the town. By the early 10th century, Norwich was famous as a market town. Coins bearing mint marks from Norwich are found as far away as Italy. However this prosperity comes at a price: raiders. The town is sacked in 1004, but by 1050 it is



the second most populated place in England after the re-founded London, with roughly 8,000 residents.

**Mythos:** the Roman settlement of Caistor was about 5 miles from where Norwich was founded. The residents of Norwich have a rhyme that goes, “Caistor was a city when Norwich was none, Norwich was built of Caistor stone.” Unfortunately for Norwich, some of the stones in Caistor were binding a malevolent creature that was defeated by the Romans. Now that the stones are in Norwich, and in a different alignment, the creature is starting to reform in Norwich. Hopefully the Roman records still exist somewhere in the ruins of Caistor that describe how to stop this creature.

### Oxford (Oxenaforða)

Founded in 900 CE near the monastery of St. Frideswide, Oxford is a military town at the confluence of the River Thames and River Cherwell. It served as an outpost along the border of what were the Kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex. Under a unified English king, Oxford maintained its military purpose (watching the rivers for invaders) and has a bloody history. One such group of invaders burned the town in 979. In 1002, Oxford is one of the sites of the St. Brice’s Day Massacre where King Æthelred orders the slaughter of every Dane in England. The Danes in Oxford sought refuge in the church at St. Frideswide, so the English burned the church to the ground with everybody trapped inside. In 1009, the Norse burned Oxford again. Then, in 1015, the chief thegns of the Five Burroughs come to an assembly in Oxford where they are murdered by the traitorous Eadric Streona.

After those murders, Oxford quiets down and becomes important politically, growing to house 800 homes within its walls. Cnut is recognized as King of England at Oxford in 1018 and the Witenagemot is held here several times in the 1020s and 1030s. It’s not until the first teaches are held in 1096 that Oxford gains a reputation as an academic center.

**Mythos:** the extreme amount of murder and bloodshed at Oxford is the result of human behavior. However, that behavior attracts the attention of several dokkalfar (wights, also known as dark elves) who now haunt the wood around Oxford, preying on anyone who wanders off alone.

### Pengwern (Scrobbesburh)

After the fall of Rome, Pengwern became the llys (court) of Powys. During the seventh century, legendary prince Cynddylan held court here. It’s from Pengwern that Cynddylan first aided the Mercians against the Northumbrians, and then defeated a Mercian army after Cynddylan and Penda of Mercia had a falling out.

By the 10th century, the town is now an Anglo-Saxon burh, Scrobbesburh, and fortified against any Welsh incursions. Home to 250 families, the town serves as an important trading post between the Anglo-Saxons and the Welsh.

**Mythos:** Cynddylan isn’t resting peacefully. After his death, his sister accepted the Oath of Glaaki on his behalf and Cynddylan is now an undead slave to Glaaki. As Scrobbesburh expands toward the forest that keeps Cynddylan alive, he and his men are plotting their revenge.

### Thetford (Theodford)

During the pre-Roman and Roman times, Thetford was an important center of the Iceni tribe and the residence of Queen Boudicca. During the Kingdom of East Anglia, Thetford was the kingly residence.

Thetford is a good-sized town with nearly 1,000 residents and about thirty miles from the fens, a large swampy region dotted with small islands. The fens are a popular hide out for outlaws and monks.

Thetford forest is home to a sacred grove that was used by the Iceni, while north west of Thetford are ancient flint mines that the Anglo-Saxons call Grime’s Graves. Just south east of the town center is a large hill that some claim is honeycombed with tunnels cut through the chalk.

**Mythos:** one of the old gods that was worshipped at the grove in Thetford Forest is still resident, wallowing under the turf. Every so often, the god excretes protoplasmic goo that takes the shape of a boy and girl with green skin. These children speak an unknown language and use magic to lure children and adults to the grove where their god can feast. Strangely, some of the victims emerge from the grotto seemingly unscathed. These people go on to great acts of leadership and usually violence, but their friends and family state that the victim was never the same after spending time in the forest. Some of the people of Thetford believe the children can be killed with baptism.

### Wareham (Werham)

Although the region’s been inhabited for 10,000 years, the town of Wareham was built by the Saxons in the middle of the seventh century. At 1,600 hides, it’s the third largest town in England, even housing two royal mints.

Situated near a large natural harbor between the Rivers Frome and Piddle, Wareham has a maritime industry and is a prime target for sea-borne raiders. Alfred built large earthen ramparts to defend the town against the Danes, but it didn’t stop them. The Danes attacked Wareham in 876, 998, and 1015—the 1015 raid is led by Cnut and results in the destruction of Wareham. The town is rebuilt again and continues to prosper.



Not far from Wareham is the Isle of Purbeck, where King Edward was martyred in 978, his body hastily interred in the minster in Wareham. He's not the only king buried in Wareham, as he's joined by King Beohtric of Wessex, who ruled from 786 to 802.

### Winchester (Winestre)

Although Anglo-Saxon kings have no fixed court, traveling from location to location and relying on the compelled generosity of their supporters, Winchester is considered the capital of Anglo-Saxon England.

The Romans built *Venta Bulgarum*, a non-fortified market town, on the site of a decrepit Belgae hill fort. Over time, the Roman settlement grew to cover 150 acres and was protected by a stone wall. After the Roman withdrawal, the Saxons slowly settled the area. In 676, the Bishop of Wessex moved his see to Winchester and the Old Minster church became a cathedral. When Alfred became king, he established a residence at Winchester and destroyed the old Roman street pattern, replacing it with a newer grid.

Winchester is one of the largest cities in Anglo-Saxon England, comprising 2,400 hides. It's a cathedral city and home to New Minster and Nunnaminster, two of the largest and most renowned centers of learning in England. Winchester even has an advanced drainage system, the lockburn, for sanitation.

**Mythos:** legend has it that a toad incubated a chicken egg in the cellars under Nunnaminster. The resultant offspring, a basilisk, stalks the city, slaying at random. The city has offered a reward of four acres of farmland to anyone who can kill the creature. However, the true story is more sinister. Yes, there's a basilisk wandering Winchester, but it's the result of foul experimentation by several nuns in Nunnaminster who used the *Sapientia Maglorum* to corrupt the relics of St. Edburga. The corrupted relics caused the basilisk to spring forth from the toad-incubated egg. Who knows what the nuns will get up to next.

### York (Jorvik)

Founded as Roman Eboracum in 71 CE, it became one of the largest Roman settlements in Britain and a provincial capital. Prone to flooding from the rivers Ouse and Foss, Eboracum was abandoned after the fall of the Roman Empire. The Angles moved in and began work to stop the flooding problems. In the early 7th century, King Edwin of Northumbria made Eoforwic his primary city. In 866, the Scandinavians took Eoforwic and renamed it Jorvik. The rulers took the title, King of Jorvik. Under Norse rule, the city prospered and the mints produced many of the coins used in the Danelaw.

The Anglo-Saxons drove Eric Bloodaxe out and reconquered the city in 954; the King of Jorvik officially became the Earl of York in 960. The change in leadership had no impact on York's role as an economic center, which grows to become the second largest city in England, second only to London.

The cathedral school at York is one of the greatest centers of learning in the north of England. Alcuin, advisor to Charlemagne, trained here.



*Ethelstan, King of England from 927-939*







# A-Z OF THE DARK AGES

**T**he Dark Ages were a different time and usually very different to many peoples' perceptions of the High Middle Ages, which is the traditional milieu for fantasy roleplaying games. This chapter provides A to Z thumbnails of aspects of living in the Dark Ages that either aren't readily apparent to many, or are very different from expectations. Think of this as an introductory taster.

Most of the concepts presented here aren't unique to one culture. Instead, these are fairly ubiquitous ideas that are represented across Europe. They are also intended as suggestions for groups that want to make their *Cthulhu Dark Ages* characters ring truer than the stereotypes of generic fantasy. The previous chapter, Anglo-Saxon England, has already provided deeper information relevant to games set in Dark Ages England. Some of those details are further developed here.

## Battle

Battles during the Dark Ages are small-scale affairs compared to the later Middle Ages. Armies often number into the hundreds and skirmishes are much more common than pitched battles. Ambushes are also a preferred technique.

## Castles

The 10th and 11th centuries are the early stages of castle development. Most castles have a central donjon (fortified building), surrounded by a palisade wall. Defensive measures such as curtain walls, towers, and arrow slits haven't been developed yet. During this time castles are usually of wood and earth, although some Norman donjons are stone. Whenever possible, castles take advantage of the surrounding landscape, such as rivers, hills, and gorges for added defense. Beyond their defensive purposes, castles are also centers of administration and the economy.

## Communication

Getting a message can take time. There are no radios, cell phones, or regularly scheduled mail delivery. To get a message from one person to another, it has to either be relayed verbally or in writing. If it's a written message, the sender first has to find someone, usually a monk or merchant, to write the note. Then he has to find someone who is traveling in the direction of his recipient. It's not uncommon for a message to pass through two or more travelers' hands as it winds its way from the source to the destination. This can take weeks or even months. The difficult lines of communication can make it tough for investigators to coordinate actions over long distances. Even coordinating the search of a monastery is difficult when the investigators split up. There are no cell phones to allow for instant communication.

## Community

The concept of community, both familial units and extended societies, such as entire villages, are very important in the Dark Ages. Without community, resources are limited. A person cannot be truly self-sufficient in the Dark Ages, so the community works together to ensure that as many people as possible are helped. This is not meant to imply a utopia where everyone's needs are met. Fighting, arguing, backstabbing, and threatening still occur, and do so quite frequently.

Communal groups help their own. If someone's not a member of the defined community, there is no obligation to help them. A small Dark Ages village can have several communities, sometimes at odds with each other and sometimes assisting each other. Communities provide economic and emotional support structures. When a man is ill, others in his community will help his family, providing food or even labor. If a family is "cursed" with a lunatic or "idiot," other members of the community will lend a hand to

Opposite: Christ ascends to heaven



help care for the person. If a horse falls lame and can't till the fields, another farmer might lend his support by loaning his horse for a few hours to the unlucky farmer.

To be outside of a community is tantamount to a death sentence. Exile as a punishment is frequent and oftentimes deadly. With no support structure, the exile is left to try to survive on their own (and rarely does so). Even famous outlaws like Grettir found life a struggle once outside the community that exiled him. When someone encounters a lone person outside a village or city, the individual is met with suspicion. He might be an outlaw, cast out from his own community because of crimes, or he might be a religious hermit who, although touched by God, can cause strange, dangerous things to happen. Another potential risk is that the person is a wandering lunatic and might lash out or bring bad luck upon whoever finds him. Even worse, it might not be a person at all, but a changeling in the guise of a man looking to lure unsuspecting farmers to their death.

When a stranger enters a new community, he is likely to be the cause of suspicion and not trusted. He represents instability. He does not understand the delicate fabric that

supports the community and can easily upset it, even if he's not an outlaw, thief, or murderer.

An outgrowth of community is the concept of a feud. In a feud, social groups such as families, clans, or even communities have the right to seek vengeance when one of their own is injured or killed. The injury need not be physical. Insults and theft are suitable ground for starting a feud. Although designed to end violence by putting a limit on how vengeance can be sought, it's not uncommon for feuds to tear a community apart when neither side adheres to the limits so the bloodshed continues for generations.

## Darkness

It's dark out at night. The ambient light that keeps most regions of the modern industrialized world in a perpetual haze, even at the dead of night, does not exist. The darkness pervades even the largest of cities. Constantinople, the greatest city in Europe, only lights some of its main streets by torchlight. The remainders are left to fall into darkness. Because of this, people don't like traveling at night. Once darkness falls, people light fires, lanterns, and candles and stay inside. Many view setting out at night as a fool's errand. Beasts, thieves, and rumors of monsters are enough to keep even the bravest soul safely inside. Not to mention the very real risk of getting lost, especially in rural areas.

## The Devil

The Devil is considered by many people of the Dark Ages to be the single greatest threat facing mankind. He is a corruptor, an influencer, and granter of foul wants. The Devil is a force to be reckoned with, and the Church considers itself the first line of defense.

The *Canon Episcopi*, an early document of ecclesiastical law, states that "Bishops and their officials must labor with all their strength to uproot thoroughly from their parishes the pernicious art of sorcery and malefice invented by the Devil, and if they find a man or woman follower of this wickedness to eject them foully disgraced from their parishes." Excommunication from a parish can be a death sentence. The person, cast out from their community must wander and subsist on their own.

*The Testament of Solomon* is a 1st to 3rd century magical text attributed to King Solomon and one of the most popular grimoires of the Dark Ages. In this passage, Beelzeboul, prince of demons, explains what his role is in the demon hierarchy:

*I Solomon said unto him: "Beelzeboul, what is thy employment?" And he answered me: "I destroy kings. I ally myself with foreign tyrants. And my own demons I set on to men, in order that the latter may believe in them and be lost. And the chosen servants of God, priests and faithful men, I excite unto desires for wicked*





*sins, and evil heresies, and lawless deeds; and they obey me, and I bear them on to destruction. And I inspire men with envy, and murder, and for wars, and other evil things. And I will destroy the world.*

### Heresies

The Dark Ages are full of heresies. The Christian Church, while strong, isn't as catholic as it sometimes thinks. The most common form of heresy is the cult of personality. Charismatic men claim to have been touched by a saint or by God and are able to perform miracles. Some even claim to be a saint or Christ. A heretic of this nature can amass numerous followers, sometimes up to several thousand. When this many people wander the countryside depredations are bound to happen. Towns will be robbed and travelers waylaid. Reliance on word of mouth for communication makes it easy for scripture to get mis-remembered or misunderstood. One charismatic leader, known as Adelbert, armed his followers and made a practice of robbing travelers and merchants. All the proceeds of their crimes were redistributed among the needy.

The Church's reaction varies, usually in consideration of how powerful the pope is at the time. Bishops convene a synod to discuss the ramifications of the heretic and pronounce a resolution. Some heretics are ordered excommunicated, others executed, or in the case of Adelbert, who the pope declared a lunatic, ignored. One reason for the varied reaction is that a single force for dealing with heresies, such as the Inquisition, doesn't exist and the mainstays of local diocesan order are the bishops in conjunction with secular lords.

When the Church encounters heretics, their first mission is to bring the heretics back into the fold. Punishment is always the last resort. Torture will not be authorized by the Church until the 13th century. In the rare cases where a heretic is executed, it is performed by a secular authority, not by the Church.

An important thing to remember about most heresies is that if a given heretic is able to attract followers, he's probably fulfilling some need of the people, even if it's only for a short term rebellious release.

### Hierarchy

Society is hierarchical. The nobility are above the warriors and priests who in turn are over the average free man. Everyone is above tenant farmers and slaves. To the Dark Ages mind, this mirrors God's place in the heavens above angels and then mankind. Each person in the hierarchy owes some form of loyalty to the person above him. This loyalty can translate as performing services including farm work, construction, or warfare; or it can mean providing goods, such as textiles or produce.

### THE HERESY OF ORLÉANS

In 1022, twenty heretics, including monks, nuns, and the confessor to the queen of France, were accused of heresy and executed. Their self-invented rites included orgies, cannibalism, and infanticide. According to a mole within the cult, who availed himself of "the protection afforded by the Church," the group rejected all the sacraments of the Church, were free of sin, and dined on "heavenly food." This heavenly food was, according to a later chronicler, "a devilish viaticum made of the ashes of a murdered baby."

The heretics were arrested, tried by the King and Queen of France and a council of bishops. They were found guilty. Two recanted their beliefs, but the remaining members were burned when they refused to recant.



Satan



### Hostage Taking

A common practice in the Dark Ages is the taking of hostages, both in and out of combat. When someone's word must be secured, they offer hostages, usually family members, especially children. If a warrior beats another in combat, he can take the loser hostage to compel the opponent's family to pay a ransom.

Hostages are also used as a way to foster understanding between two groups, under the theory that if children from rival groups grow up under the enemy's tutelage an understanding could be reached in future generations. A hostage might live with his new master for years. He might grow up with the hostage taker's children and be educated in the household. Although rarely mistreated, the hostage is considered to be the hostage taker's property. If the debt is never settled or agreement closed, the hostage can be sold into slavery.

### Humor

Dark Ages tales are filled with episodes of dark humor. If the stories are any representation of what life was like, then people of the Dark Ages enjoyed gallows humor as much as the next person. Humor serves as a way of mitigating the struggles of everyday life. If a person can laugh at the problem, maybe he can survive it.

An excellent example of Dark Age humor comes from Njal's Saga. An armed group of men seeking vengeance approached the home of Gunnar:

*Thorgrim the Easterling went and began to climb up on the hall; Gunnar sees that a red kirtle [a coat or tunic] passed before the window, and thrusts out the bill, and smote him on the middle. Thorgrim's feet slipped from under him, and he dropped his shield, and down he toppled from the roof.*

*Then he goes to Gizur and his band as they sat on the ground. Gizur looked at him and said: "Well, is Gunnar at home?"*

*"Find that out for yourselves," said Thorgrim; "but this I am sure of, that his bill is at home," and with that he fell down dead*

### Knights

The classic medieval archetype of a knight in shining armor riding a valiant steed into battle doesn't exist in the Dark Ages. Chain mail was the armor of the day and many armies that rode to battle either dismounted for combat or dismounted after an initial charge. The cost of a horse and the paucity of stirrups make mounted combat rare. While the cantled saddle is useful for charging, stirrups are what make mounted melee combat feasible.

### Literacy

In a day of widespread literacy, it's difficult to imagine a time when a large percentage of people could not read, but that is the case in the Dark Ages. Reading and writing are two

very different skills. Unlike today where the two skills are learned together, reading was taught first and writing on an "as needed" basis.

There are two basic forms of literacy in the Dark Ages, pragmatic literacy and cultural literacy. A pragmatically literate person can read and possibly write his own name. He can also read, or at least get the gist of, legal documents, such as charters, wills, and writs (documents which directly impact his life). A culturally literate person is someone who can read and write free prose and poetry.

By far the most literate segment of society is the Church. Many, but by no means all, priests, monks, and nuns are able to read and write Latin, having learned so from the time they entered the Church. Among the laity, literacy is usually more pragmatic, either in the vernacular or Latin, and an element of the upper classes.

### Loyalty

Feudalism, as most people imagine it, is nascent during the Dark Ages. Benefices are used in some areas, particularly in the Frankish Kingdoms, but it lacks the rigidity many people interpret feudalism as possessing. Instead, a system of personal loyalty held many warrior groups together. *Beowulf*, *The Icelandic Sagas*, *The Alexiad*, *The Volsunga*, *Chansons de Geste*, and other tales stress the need for loyalty among a band of men. As the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries progress, this loyalty codifies into the feudal order.

## LITERACY IN GAME TERMS

For a character to be pragmatically literate, he or she needs to have 25% in a Read and Write skill for at least one language. If so, simple documents can be read without rolling for comprehension. A simple document should be no more than ten pages long.

A culturally literate character needs 50% in Read and Write for at least one language, to be able to read documents and compose prose documents of up to twenty-five pages long without needing to roll.

If separate Read and Write (Language) skills are used, the character must have 25% in Read Language to be pragmatically literate, while 50% in Read Language and 50% in Write Language to be culturally literate. The language the investigator knows how to Read and Write must be the same.



However, loyalty works both ways. In return for the support they give a leader, the men expect to be well rewarded with the chance for battle and the spoils of war. Elements of the heroic culture still exist, especially on the fringes of society.

As feudalism developed, there rose the concept of ideal loyalty, which is often imagined when feudalism is discussed. In reality, the loyalty system is very complex with multiple people making agreements with multiple lords, creating a Byzantine network of relationships guaranteed to result in violence.

The ideal loyalty, as written by Bishop Fulbert of Chartres to Duke William V of Aquitaine, is described as being: harmless, safe, honorable, useful, easy, and possible. Harmless, as a person should not harm their lord; safe, as secrets should be kept (especially those concerning secret passages and the like in a lord's fortifications); honorable, as a person should act with justice and not besmirch another's honor; useful, a person's own possessions should not harm their lord; and easy and possible, in that a person should not make difficulty for their lord, not make things impossible, while the lord should act in a reciprocal manner to his vassals.

In reality, actual loyalty means that a lord's relationship with a vassal is distinctly one-sided, as the lord can take advantage as he has absolute power over his domain, and able to demand whatever he desires. The vassal, if they are actually loyal, will comply without complaint, and can do little but comply.

### Magic

Magic is real to most people. However, this isn't the magic of fireballs, magic missiles, and withering. Most magic, from the casting of lots to the summoning of demons and angels is done to reveal the future and ensure a positive outcome for the caster. Some magic is also used to curse people or their homes, or to heal them. People who use magic are to be watched carefully and not trusted lightly. The Church frowns on most magic, actively hunting witches and *malefici* in some areas. In some regions, though, they turn a blind eye to magic that reinforces the status quo by demonstrating how the Christian God and the world He created can be used for the betterment of man.

Magic is an oft-discussed topic in the Dark Ages, at least among the clergy. Opinions differ on not only the nature of magic but whether it is real. Many theologians believed they are not battling witchcraft, but the belief in witchcraft. Magic varies from region to region in Europe. Verbal elf-charms are popular in Anglo-Saxon England, the casting of twig lots is frequent in German lands, and academic magic is common in Rome and Constantinople. What follows is a brief generalization of magic in the Dark Ages.

Isidore of Seville, 6<sup>th</sup> century Archbishop of Seville, and "last scholar of the ancient world" compiled an encyclopedia, *Etymologiae*, drawing on both Christian and Pagan sources. The section, *de Magis*, is the basis for many Dark Age Christian beliefs in magic. Isidore notes that magic first came to man through the intercession of evil angels and the first magi of note was Zoroaster, King of Persia. Magi, or *malefici*, seek that which is hidden from the world. They upset the elements, disturb the minds of men, and even kill through their spells alone, typically with demonic assistance. The common tools of the trade are blood, sacrifices, and dead bodies. Necromancers use charms to summon the dead for questioning about knowledge beyond the ken of mankind, using blood to entice demons to return the dead to life. Isidore reserves a special hatred for *malefici* who hang charms on the sick to heal them. To Isidore, all magic is result of cooperation between men and evil angels.

A later churchman, Rabanus Maurus, writing in the 8th century, relied heavily on the *Etymologiae*, but came to a different conclusion. On the frontlines of conversion in Germany, Rabanus came to believe that magic is illusory. In *De Magicis Artibus*, Rabanus claims that Pagan magi and witches are illusionists with no real power behind their actions.

A third commentator on magic, Burchard of Worms, wrote the *Decretum* in the early 11th century. Burchard references both Isidore and Rabanus, and concludes that magic is real, but proposes lenient punishment for practitioners.

### Types of Magic

It is difficult to demarcate a line between religious devotion and magic. The first division of magic is legal versus illegal, and this boils down to Christian versus non-Christian. If magic is used by a Christian for Christian aims, it can be considered a miracle and one of the steps to sainthood. If a Pagan uses the same magic for non-Christian aims, it is considered a sin by the Church.

Many Pagan locations, rituals, and beliefs are incorporated into Christian practices during the early Dark Ages. Churches were built on top of many Pagan sacred sites. Pagan healing rituals had the gods' names replaced with saints' names, but continued to be used to help the sick. The Church makes a distinction between natural magic and demonic magic. Natural magic, common in healing spells, makes use of the nature put forth on earth by God and is therefore acceptable to the Church. Demonic magic, on the other hand, required some form of congress with or sacrifice to demons.

A second division is learned versus folkloric. Learned magic is astronomy, divination, summoning of demons, and other "intellectual" magic that requires the use of grimoires (books of magical incantations and spells). This is rarely practiced outside of Constantinople and the great cities



of the Caliphates. Practiced throughout Europe, folkloric magic is healing, cursing, and divination through the casting of lots, observation of weather, and other “natural” means. Keepers should remember that although there are healing charms in the Dark Ages, such things are nothing more than a panacea in *Call of Cthulhu*, although the use of (non-magical) medicinal herbs may assist the healing process.

Essentially, if the magic is too powerful for a man to comprehend or handle, deals with supernatural forces, is practiced for selfish or fickle reasons, shows a lack of respect for the free-will of others, or the magical power is built into the blood or bones of a person, it's distasteful to the Church and punishable.

### Sample Charms

During the Dark Ages, the most common form of magic is charms. Charms can be written, verbal, or amuletic. Charms may be created to heal or curse. How effective such charms can be is determined by the Keeper; consider these options:

- Charms are purely psychosomatic, acting to influence the recipient's state of mind. The charm has no real effect, but

may work much like a Persuade roll, convincing the recipient that a certain course of action should be followed in order to stave-off some form of negativity or benefit from a blessing.

- Charms perform minor magic, incredibly distilled from an ancient Mythos source. The pronunciation of certain phrases or words causes a minute cosmic ripple in reality, unleashing a pale reflection of a Mythos spell.
- Charms are composed of natural ingredients, some of which are actually medically beneficial (such as honey being a natural antiseptic, and so on). Such charms may provide a bonus die to healing and recovery rolls.

### This charm cures scrofula (swollen lymph nodes):

*Nine were Noththe's sisters; then the nine came to be VIII, and the VIII to VII, and the VII to VI, and the VI to V, and the V to IV, and the IV to III, and the III to II, and the II to I, and the I to nothing. This will free you from kernel and scrofula and worm and misery of every kind. Sing Benedicite nine times.*

### A charm against the assaults of the Fiend:

*Red mullen is the name of an herb that grows near running water. If you have it on your person and under your pillow and over the doors of your house, a devil may not injure you within or without.*

### This charm is for headaches:

*Look for little stones in a young swallow's stomach, and take care that they touch neither earth, water, nor other stones. Select any three of them that you choose; put them on the person in distress: he will soon be well. They are good for headache, and for pain in the eyes, and against the temptations of a fiend, and against nocturnal demons, and for ague, and against incubi, and for sexual constriction, and for bewitchment, and against wicked incantations. They must be well-grown nestlings in whom you are to find the stones.*

### A charm for pain in the limbs:

*For pain in the limbs sing nine times the following charm thereon, and spit your spitde on [the place affected]: "Malignus obligavit, angelus curavit, dominus saluavit." He will soon be well.*

### Grimoires

Grimoires containing magical incantations and spells are rare during the Dark Ages. Concerted efforts by the early Church destroyed many such tomes. The most popular is the *Testament of Solomon*, a guide to the demons and what role they play in the demonic hierarchy. It is not until the High Middle Ages that grimoires again become popular and widely circulated.

In the Dark Ages, grimoires will be works that have survived since ancient times or one of the few, such as





Phileas' translation of the *Necronomicon*, that are created in the Dark Ages.

### Punishment

Where the Church disapproves of magic, its use is punishable. The most common forms of punishment involve penance. Penance varies, and there is no hard and fast rule as to what type of magic results in what type of penance. Common forms include the wearing of hair shirts, pilgrimage, joining a monastery, or showing good works, such as building a church. The duration of the penance also varies from weeks to years. In most cases, the matter is decided by the local priest. Magi, *malefici*, and witches can be killed for practicing magic. The most common forms of execution are drowning and burial alive. If a person is buried alive for witchcraft or *maleficium*, they are buried face down. The Inquisition does not exist as yet, so it won't be hunting down witches.

The belief in magic, and the history of magical belief, are complex subjects that are beyond the scope of this book. Consult the **Bibliography** (page 261) to find additional books the Keeper can use to bring Dark Ages flavored magic into the game.

### Oral Tradition

Literacy levels are very low in the Dark Ages, with only a few monks, nobles, and the like, able to read and write. For most of the population, the ability to read and write their own name, and perhaps make out a short verse was about the best they could do. Thus, storytelling is the main means of communicating information, such as histories, legends, and cultural traditions, as well as the news of the day. In a world where books are rare and not easily understood, the spoken word carries great weight.

### Written Evidence

Even if the investigators are literate, the documents they'll encounter in the Dark Ages are very different from modern ones. Many documents will be written by partially-literate people, and the difficulty of creating lengthy documents means that many letters or records are no more than terse summaries. Fragmentary or simplified documents are a good way to give investigators the kind of incomplete information that raises suspicions without explaining everything.

Most documents are written in the Latin alphabet but there is an older alphabet as well. The runic alphabet is similar to (although not exactly the same as) the alphabet used to write Old Norse. Few people understand it fully; reading such runes requires a Hard Read and Write (Old English) roll. At the Keeper's discretion, characters with Read and Write (Old Norse) may also be able to understand them. Because this alphabet is no longer in use, it has a certain reputation

for being mysterious. Magical inscriptions in runic script are common and educated writers sometimes use it for riddles and puzzles. Runic script lends an air of mystery and antiquity to a written clue, in addition to making it harder for investigators to understand.

### Ordeals

Ordeals are physical challenges meant to determine the value of evidence through *judicium Dei*, the judgment of God. Depending on the ordeal, guilt or innocence can be proven through surviving the ordeal, healing after an ordeal, or sometimes through death.

Like oaths and witnesses, ordeals serve as a central means of determining proof in a trial. If Oswyn accuses Wulfstan of theft, either party can choose to undergo an ordeal. If Oswyn elects to undergo an ordeal and is successful, he's proving the validity of his accusation. On the other hand, Wulfstan, if he underwent an ordeal, is proving his innocence. Ordeals are surprisingly effective because the innocent typically agree to undergo one while the guilty confess, knowing that God would not perform a miracle on his or her behalf. An

Storytelling was the most common way of divulging knowledge.





ordeal is always voluntary. A person can't be compelled to undergo an ordeal. While an ordeal is usually undertaken by the person affected, a powerful or wealthy person can have another to take the ordeal on his or her behalf.

### Types of Ordeals:

**Ordeal by Fire:** The *proband*, or person who elects to undergo the ordeal, must walk a prescribed distance over hot iron or carrying a hot rod. After the ordeal, the wounds are bandaged. If, after three days, the wounds are examined by a priest and show signs of healing, the proband's statements are accepted as fact.

**Ordeal by Hot Water:** Water is heated in a pot until it is almost boiling. A stone is then dropped in the pot. The proband must submerge their hand and pull out the stone. The burns are then bandaged. A priest checks them in three days. If the burns show signs of healing, the testimony is accepted. The depth of the water is determined by how many times the person is

accused of the crime. If accused once, the water is wrist deep. If accused three times, the water is elbow deep.

**Ordeal by Water:** The proband has a millstone tied around his or her neck and is then tossed in water. If the proband floats, the truth of his or her statement is accepted.

**Ordeal by the Cross:** Both the parties must agree to take part in this ordeal. A wooden cross is erected and the two parties stand on either side, their backs to the cross. They lift their arms parallel with the crossbeam. The one who keeps their arms up the longest is judged to have provided the most accurate testimony.

**Ordeal by Ingestion:** The proband is given a piece of dry bread blessed by a priest to eat. If he or she chokes, the testimony is false.

**Ordeal by Eucharist:** The proband swears to tell the truth and accepts the Eucharist (Holy Communion). If lying, the proband dies within a year.

**Ordeal by Turf:** Unique to Iceland, the proband walks under a suspended piece of turf. If the turf falls, the statement is false.

### Religion

Religion lies at the heart of Dark Age society. It is the largest community and serves as a way to define oneself. In the Dark Ages most decisions are filtered through a religious lens. Regardless of which religion one followed—Christianity, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Manichaeism, or any of the various still-extant Paganisms—people fervently believed in their faith. It was largely through this faith that they interacted with the world around them.

Heretics are not just executed. Heretics are those who deviate from truth, and thus the goal is to return them to the truth. Only obdurate or relapsed heretics, those who had been corrected but returned to error, are subject to capital punishment. It is also the case that heresy is much less common in the west before 1100 than is usually thought. For sure, Gregory of Tours (6th century) discusses Arians and other Late Antique variants of Christianity; official writers would continue to worry about these types of heretics in general terms for the next several centuries. However, if one looks for evidence of individual heresiarchs being identified and persecuted prior to 1100, one will find only a handful. The age of heresy is really consonant with the more developed institutions of the Church, and hence after c.1100

The dominant religion in Dark Ages Europe is Christianity; it impacts almost everyone's life in more ways





than are imaginable today. The Catholic doctrine in the Dark Ages can be summarized by paraphrasing the Nicene Creed, the standard statement of faith, which professes a belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as a belief in only one catholic and apostolic church.

Like all of society, the Church has a hierarchy. At its most basic, it can be summarized that the pope is the head of the Church; various levels of bishops under the pope; priests report to bishops; and the laity is at the bottom. This is a somewhat fluid hierarchy. A priest is reportable to his bishop, but not necessarily to the bishop of another diocese. A lot depends on the personalities, familial relationships, and politics at play.

During the Dark Ages, the pope is neither infallible nor does he have Petrine Supremacy yet (meaning that the pope is supreme over all bishops in the Catholic Church). Supremacy comes in 1075 after the investiture controversy, and infallibility is a product of the 19th century.

### *Corruption in the Church*

It is easy to paint the Christian Church, especially the selection of the pope, during the Dark Ages as a time of corruption. After all, there is no formal method for papal selection. For all intents and purposes, the counts of Tusculum chose the popes in the first half of the tenth century, and then the Crescentii clan effectively chose every pope from 974 to 1012. The Tusculan Papacy was where three successive counts of Tusculum appointed themselves pope between 1012 and 1049. Interestingly, both families trace their lineage back to Theophylact I who served as *vestararius*, the man responsible for papal finances and wardrobe, to the papacy.

However, the whole issue of corruption is a difficult one. The early middle ages knew that *ministerium* was ordained by God, and that those who held it—kings, counts, bishops, popes—were by right of that office obligated to correct and oversee religion. So what looks like corruption to the papal reformers of the 11th century and later was entirely normal in earlier centuries. Charlemagne, for instance, used his *ministerium* to appoint and dismiss bishops with impunity. Various emperors also used their *ministerium* to reform the papacy itself when, by their perception, the competition for papal office in Rome produced venal candidates.

### *Monastic Life*

Monasteries and convents can be found throughout Europe, ranging in size from tiny holds with only a few members to large stone structures that dominate the landscape and those who live nearby. Some monasteries are isolated from society while others fully take part in daily life and even have small villages of lay people develop around them. Monasteries are also important in international trade. Goods produced in

monasteries are found throughout Europe and rare items from far-flung ports often find their way to monasteries.

Monks take a vow of poverty, which means they have no personal possessions. The monastery as an institution, however, could accumulate vast amounts of wealth. The vow of chastity means the monk abstains from sexual relations. The vow of stability requires the monk to remain at one monastery. The vow of obedience means the monk agrees to follow the orders of the head of their house.

It is common to see the title of "prior." In Dark Ages Europe, a prior is not necessarily a specific title, but rather a term used to describe any of the leading members of a monastery. The term is slowly replacing the Benedictine rank of provost, but progress is slow.

### *Entering the Order*

An aristocratic person can choose to enter a religious order at any time, as long as they are willing to take the vows. Old warriors who can no longer fight, young children fostered to the monastery, and daughters who have no prospects for a good marriage are the most common entrants.

A scene from monastic life





Peasants may become servants of the monastery, but cannot become monks except in very extraordinary circumstances.

### *The Monastic Offices*

The primary duty of monks is to pray for the world and they do so through “offices,” also called the Liturgy of the Hours. As St. Benedict said, “to work is to pray. To pray is to work.” The offices are: matins with lauds, usually around 2 a.m.; prime, the first hour of the day, around 6 am; tierce, the third hour of the day, around 9 am; sext, the sixth hour of the day, around noon; none, the ninth hour of the day, around 3 pm; vespers, around nightfall; and compline, which occurs just before bedtime.

### *Other Duties*

Monks also work around the monastery pursuant to their skills. Some monks are scholars, dutifully transcribing and translating manuscripts. Others work the fields, providing food for the monastery and also for trade. Others produce goods to be used by other monks or for trade.

### *Monastery Hierarchy*

Just as in other facets of Dark Ages life, there is a hierarchy in a monastery.

- The abbot is the father for life of the community. All monks obey him without question or delay. He is sometimes seconded in his duties by a provost.
- The provost is second in command. The position can also be referred to as a dean or prior.
- The hospitaller ensures the service in the hostel, and carefully plans welcoming ceremonies. Other monks and servants assist him in his task.
- The almoner is in charge of the chaplaincy and cares for the sick of the neighborhood once per week, helped by a few servants. In prosperous monasteries, the almoner also organizes food distribution to the poor. Clothes worn by monks for more than a year are given away.
- The bursar is in charge of the clothing, the bedding, and the lighting. He is authorized to collect the rent money from the abbey’s lands and dues in kind.
- The cellarer is in charge of the storeroom and has a flock of subordinates. The refectory monk directs the service in the refectory; the loft monk supervises the corn lofts, the water mill and the bakery; the constable runs the stables, and the gardener takes care of the vegetable gardens and the orchard.
- The sacristan is the officer responsible for the church and the liturgical furniture. The preacher is master of ceremonies and librarian. The precentor is the choirmaster.
- The infirmarian cares for the sick and performs the ritual bleeding of healthy monks for the Annunciation Day. The most accepted treatment against illnesses consisted of feeding the sick with meat.
- Lay brothers are a relatively new phenomenon in monasteries. Prior to the 11th century most of the daily work is performed by the monks. Starting around the year 1000, some monasteries accepted men into their order whose sole purpose was to perform manual labor or administrative tasks for the monastery. They didn’t participate in the Liturgy of the Hours. Lay brothers typically wore a different habit from non-lay brothers. In the case of the Benedictines, lay brothers didn’t wear a cowl. Lay brothers should not be confused with the workers many monasteries hired to perform manual labor. It’s usually up to an individual monastery whether it makes use of lay brothers, hired workers, or a combination of both.
- Nuns, just like monks, are served by lay sisters, but male priests serve as chaplains.





### **Saints**

An important element of Dark Ages Christianity is the veneration of saints, “friends of God.” A saint is someone who is revered through an exemplary life, a sacrificial death, or both, and is rewarded with everlasting life. It is important to note that saints are worthy of *dulia*, veneration, not *latría*, worship. Only God is to be worshiped. Anything else is idolatry.

The most important of all saints is the Virgin Mary. Other saints are associated with professions, locations, or protection and assistance of individual Christians. A list of sample saints is included in the **Appendices** (page 260).

Most saints are celebrated with a public celebration on their heavenly birthday—their date of death. Some people also carry small tokens of their saint for protection. Whether this has any benefit against the Mythos is up to the Keeper.

### **Rural**

The majority of Europe is rural during the Dark Ages. Europe as a whole has fewer than 40 million inhabitants. North of the Alps, most of them live in settlements consisting of fewer than 5,000 people. Only 500,000 of Europe’s population lives in Constantinople, its largest city. Rome, the capital of Christendom, has a population of 50,000 people.

Most people live in small settlements with fewer than 1,000 residents. It is possible for someone to know everybody in a village of that size, at least by face.

### **Secrecy**

Because survival depends on community and community depends on communication, secrecy is a bad thing in the Dark Ages. To commit a crime in secret carries a worse punishment than committing the crime openly. Openly committing a crime does not mean declaring your intentions beforehand, as many crimes are crimes of opportunity, it means admitting to the crime afterward—even if you are not suspected. To commit acts in secret, even if it is just taking food to a privy to eat, can be punished by fines or even exile.

### **Serfdom**

A modified form of slavery that is prominent in continental Europe during the Dark Ages. Commonly known as “villeins,” a serf rents a house, with or without land, from a landlord. Their dues are paid in wheat and other services. A villein spends a specified amount of time farming his lord’s land, repairing fences, and working around the manor. Serfs are forbidden from hunting his lord’s forests and fields.

Serfs do have some rights. Any produce grown on their rented land is theirs to dispose of as they see fit, and some serfs sell enough at market-days to amass a tidy sum. Serfs are allowed to pick up deadwood from the forests on the landlord’s property. The children of serfs have the option to pay additional taxes to be allowed to inherit their father’s land and responsibilities when he dies. A lord cannot dispossess his serfs without a valid reason, which is usually an inability to pay taxes. The lord is also expected to protect his serfs from violence and provide charity in times of famine.

The greatest difficulty for a serf is that his lord’s work takes priority over his own. When the lord’s fields are ready to harvest, the serf must work them first before he can harvest his own, running the risk of his crops dying in the field.

Serfs can end their servitude. If a serf escapes and stays away for a year, he is considered free. Unfortunately, he has lost all means of support. Many escaped villeins turn to crime. Industrious serfs can buy their freedom, if their lord permits it.

### **Slavery**

Slavery still occurs in Europe, particularly in the North and the East. Sometimes, children are sold into slavery to pay off debts or make life easier for the rest of the family. Usually, however, slaves are spoils of war. If the captor does not think he could get a decent ransom for his captive, he will sell the person into slavery.

Not only poor or unprivileged people are subjected to slavery. Olaf Trygvesson, the future king who would force Christianity down the throat of Norway at sword point, spent time as a slave. He was captured as a boy in Estonia, sold for a ram, and then traded for a good cloak. He spent six years as a slave before a cousin learned who he was, purchased him, and took him to Novgorod to live in the court.

### **Supernatural**

The Dark Ages are a time of superstition. People believe in angels, demons, fairies and other creatures. As part of their worldview, they were not shocked when they heard stories of strange creatures, or when they saw a creature themselves. Of course, there is a big difference between hearing a story and actually coming face to face with something really supernatural.



### Suspicion

People in the Dark Ages tended to be insular, especially in rural settings. If you know someone, there is a good chance you can trust them; however, if you meet someone from outside of your community, there is good reason to be suspicious. The person might be a thief, an outlaw, a witch, or a heathen. Foreigners should not be trusted, as they will try to make any deal work out in their favor. Consequently, very few people moved from one community to another, especially in rural areas.

### The Theory of Limited Good

The Theory of Limited Good is an anthropological concept that posits some societies believe there is only so much good in the world and if something good happens to you, something bad will happen to someone you know. If a farmer has a bountiful harvest, he knows that someone else in his village will lose all his cows.

This idea is alive and well in the Dark Ages. It usually manifests itself in people not drawing attention to any good luck they receive, or even resenting lucky breaks that come their way. It also had the consequence of sharing. If a farmer has a bountiful harvest, he shares it with the community to help deflect attention away from his good fortune. By sharing his good fortune, he spreads his luck to the entire village; hopefully bad luck will fall on another village. It also leads to animosity and suspicion when one person has a run of good luck. Other members of the community worry about what harm will befall them and what the fortunate person is doing to deserve his success.

### Time

Dark Ages people relied on the cockcrow to give the signal for dawn, or listened to the bells sounding the canonical praying hours in a nearby monastery. Observation of the position of heavenly bodies was often accurate enough to know the time.

The only clocks are the sundial, the sandglass, and the *clepsydra*, or water-clock. Nighttime is mainly measured in terms of candles. The year is naturally divided into seasons and into weeks, with the Sunday rest, punctuated by religious fetes, celebrations and fasting periods.

Clerics keep track of the year, the month, and the day of the month, as well as computing the date of Easter and other religious ceremonies. New Year's Day does not start on January first, but varies from place to place. At the chancery of the king of France it is the first of March. In Germany and England, it is customarily Christmas.

According to the most widely accepted chronology, the world will be 4952 years old in 1000 CE, and scholars believe they are living history's last age: the sixth age.

### Travel

Travel in the Dark Ages is difficult, and few people travel more than 20 miles from their home in their entire lifetime. Most people travel by foot. The Roman system of roads that once crossed Europe and allowed for the legions and merchants to travel from city to city fell into disrepair after the sack of Rome. Now, many of the roads are overgrown and the bridges collapsed.

Water-borne travel, either via rivers, lakes, or the oceans, is the more common way to move people and goods. Cultures with a strong seafaring nature, such as the Norwegians, Danes, Swedes, and Venetians, travel further by sea. Only the bravest sailors, however, sail beyond the sight of shore into unknown waters.

This isn't to say that no one travelled. The Icelandic Sagas are full of stories of people going to Constantinople, Norway, England, Ireland, France, or Italy. Anglo-Saxon burhs (fortified dwellings) have pepper from the Orient, purple silks from Byzantium, and expensive wines from Germany.

Pilgrimages are undertaken, usually to Rome, by the wealthy and church members. Even some peasants decide to undertake a pilgrimage.

While traveling, it can be difficult to find a place to stay. A system of inns does not exist and small communities are suspicious of outsiders. The most common resting areas are monasteries. Monks take in travelers, in exchange for a gift to the Order. Land-holding travelers can find rest at households in their territory. Lacking any other option, people sleep under the stars.

### Wilderness

The wilderness is the area outside of settlements. It can be fields, forests, hills, or mountains. The wilderness is where bad things happen to people. Elves and other creatures stalk the wilderness waiting for the unwary to wander too far from home.











# DARK AGE INVESTIGATORS



*thulhu* Dark Ages is an adaptation of the *Call of Cthulhu* rules and character generation follows the same format as for the standard game. While character generation is fully detailed here, supporting explanatory information is not repeated here (see the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*). Life in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries was quite different, however, from life in the 19<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup>.

## CREATING AN INVESTIGATOR

Start exploring the horrors of the Dark Ages by creating a character. Take a blank investigator sheet and find a pencil. You will also need dice and a scratch pad. It's often more fun to have all players create investigators together, helping to build a cohesive group of characters.



### THE STEPS

Here are the steps to creating an investigator:

- Step 1: Generate Characteristics.
- Step 2: Determine a Life Event.
- Step 3: Determine derived attributes.
- Step 4: Determine Occupation and allocate skill points.
- Step 5: Create a Backstory.
- Step 6: Equip investigator.



## STEP 1: GENERATE CHARACTERISTICS

- Strength (STR): Roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Constitution (CON): Roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Size (SIZ): Roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.
- Dexterity (DEX): Roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Appearance (APP): Roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Intelligence (INT): Roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.
- Power (POW): Roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.
- Education (EDU): Roll 2D6+6 and multiply by 5.

Make a note of the result for each characteristic on some scratch paper (these results may be modified by age).

### Age

A player can choose any age between 15 and 90 for their investigator. Use the appropriate modifiers for your chosen age only (they are not cumulative) and apply these as necessary to the characteristics. Write down these final values on the investigator sheet.

Age	Modifier
15 to 19	Deduct 5 points from STR or SIZ, and also from EDU. Roll twice to generate a Luck score (see Luck, Step 3: Determine Derived Attributes, page 7) and use the higher value.
20s or 30s	Make an improvement check for EDU.
40s	Deduct 5 points from STR, CON, or DEX, and also from APP. Make 2 improvement checks for EDU.
50s	Deduct 10 points from STR, CON, or DEX (points may be split across two or all three), and also from APP. Make 3 improvement checks for EDU.
60s	Deduct 20 points from STR, CON, or DEX (points may be split across two or all three), and reduce APP by 15. Make 4 improvement checks for EDU.



- 70s Deduct 40 points from STR, CON, or DEX (points may be split across two or all three), and reduce APP by 20. Make 4 improvement checks for EDU.
- 80s Deduct 80 points from STR, CON, or DEX (points may be split across two or all three), and reduce APP by 25. Make 4 improvement checks for EDU.

To make an EDU improvement check, simply roll percentage dice. If the result is greater than your present EDU add 1D10 percentage points to your EDU characteristic (note that EDU cannot go above 99).



## TABLE: DAMAGE BONUS AND BUILD

STR+SIZ	Damage Bonus	Build
2-64	-2	-2
65-84	-1	-1
85-124	None	0
125-164	+1D4	+1
165-204	+1D6	+2
205-284	+2D6	+3
285-364	+3D6	+4
365-444	+4D6	+5
445-524*	+5D6	+6*

\*Add an additional 1D6 to Damage Bonus and +1 to Build for each additional 80 points or fraction thereof.

## TABLE: MOVEMENT RATES

STR+SIZ	MOV Rate
If both STR and DEX are each less than SIZ	MOV 7
If either STR or DEX is equal to or greater than SIZ, or if all three are equal	MOV 8
If both STR and DEX are each greater than SIZ	MOV 9



## STEP 2: DETERMINE A LIFE EVENT

Life events help to make each investigator unique. A player rolls 2D20, totals the results, and consults the table on page 60-61. The event you get might not completely fit the character concept for the investigator that you have in mind—if so, then adapt it to suit your ideas, or consult with the Keeper and perhaps roll again.

A life event can modify characteristics and/or base value; apply characteristic modifiers straight away, but just make a note of those for particular skills. Apply these skill modifications once occupational and personal interest skill points have been spent.

Note that a skill cannot go below 01% or rise above 75% after modification, while characteristics can't be reduced to 00 or raised higher than 99. A life event can also modify derived characteristics such as hit points, Sanity, magic points, Know, or damage bonus, and so on.

## STEP 3: DETERMINE DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

**Sanity Points (SAN):** Sanity equals POW. An investigator's maximum Sanity Points are never more than 99 minus the value of the investigator's Cthulhu Mythos skill (if any).

**Luck:** roll 3D6 and multiply by 5.

**Hit Points:** add CON to SIZ, then divide the total by ten (rounding down any fractions).

**Magic Points:** equal to one-fifth of POW.

**Damage Bonus and Build:** to determine damage bonus and build, add STR to SIZ and look up the total on the **Damage Bonus and Build** table.

**Movement Rate (MOV):** an investigator can move a number of yards (or meters) up to five times their MOV value in one round:

*If both STR and DEX are each less than SIZ:* MOV 7

*If either STR or DEX is equal to or greater than SIZ, or if all are equal:* MOV 8

*If both STR and DEX are each greater than SIZ:* MOV 9

- If age is in the 40s: deduct 1 from MOV
- If age is in the 50s: deduct 2 from MOV
- If age is in the 60s: deduct 3 from MOV
- If age is in the 70s: deduct 4 from MOV
- If age is in the 80s: deduct 5 from MOV



## STEP 4: DETERMINE OCCUPATION AND ALLOCATE SKILL POINTS

An occupation defines what position your character fills in society. Each occupation denotes applicable skills and purchasing power, represented by the Status skill. Once you have chosen the occupation, write it down on the investigator sheet and then make a note of the occupational skills.

After you have chosen an occupation, calculate your occupation skill points using the characteristics specified alongside the occupation. Allocate the resulting total as percentage points among those skills listed for the occupation—the investigator's professional skills. Points must also be allocated to Status within the range indicated for the occupation. Not all the skills need to have points allotted to them; however, points left undistributed are lost. Note that each skill has a number in parentheses next to it on the investigator sheet: this is the base chance of success in that skill, and any points allocated to that skill are added to this base number.

In the Dark Ages, most people were economically and socially tied to the clergy or a lay lord. Freeman or high status versions of common occupations give the investigator more autonomy. Note that no skill can start with more than 75% unless the Keeper agrees.

Now write down the final (modified) characteristic values on the investigator sheet. Also, write in the half and fifth values for each of them—entering the values alongside the full characteristic percentage in the smaller boxes provided:

- Divide the percentage value by two, rounding down, and enter for the “half” percentage value.
- Divide the percentage value by five, rounding down, and enter for the “fifth” percentage value.

Or, if you prefer, you can always work these out during the game as necessary. A Quick Reference Chart for half and fifth values can be found on page 63.

## OCCUPATIONS

### *Beggar*

You devote your life to begging food and salable items from passersby.

**Skills:** Art/Craft (Acting), Insight, Listen or Spot Hidden, Sleight of Hand, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), any two other skills as personal specialties.

**Occupation Skill Points:** POW x 2 + APP x 2

**Status:** 0-10

### *Cleric*

You are the child of a rich man, or a brilliant peasant boy who caught the notice of a man of the Church. You received a formal religious education in a bishopric or a monastery. Now you are a secretary, an administrator, a jurist, or an architect at the service of a count or a bishop.

**Skills:** Charm, Library Use, Persuade, Other Language (Latin), Own Kingdom, Read and Write (Latin or the local chancery language), Religion, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:** EDU x 2 + (POW x 2 or APP x 2)

**Status:** 9-99

### *Craftsperson or Shop Keeper*

You might be a smith, a baker, or a weaver. Choose your craft. You live in a village community or in a city.

**Skills:** Accounting, Charm, Art/Craft (choose one), Fast Talk, Insight, Natural World, Own Kingdom, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:** EDU x 2 + (STR x 2 or DEX x 2)

**Status:** 9-60

### *(Free) Farmer*

You are the salt of the earth, a well-to-do farmer or colonist. Society depends on your crops, and you work like a horse.

**Skills:** Animal Handling, Art/Craft (choose one), Drive Horses, Listen, Natural World, Navigate, Track, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:** STR x 2 + CON x 2

**Status:** 9-30

### *Guard*

You work in a cathedral city for the burgrave or the bishop. In times of peace, you have little to do but practice with your weapons and keep in shape.

**Skills:** Fighting (Brawl), Fighting (Spear), Listen, Own Kingdom, Ride, Spot Hidden, Throw, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:** STR x 2 + DEX x 2

**Status:** 9-30



## CHAPTER 3

### *Healer (also Cunning Man/Woman)*

To foreigners, you look like a villager, but villagers know better: your mentor granted you powers of the invisible world. Now villagers come to your hut for a cure or a potion, or for advice about love or birthing a child, the promise of rain, and the evil eye. Be wary of the ever-suspicious village priest!

**Skills:** Art/Craft (Potions), First Aid, Insight, Listen or Spot Hidden, Natural World, Occult, any two other skills as personal specialties.

**Occupation Skill Points:** EDU x 4 or POW x 4

**Status:** 9-45

### *Hermit / Heretic*

You are an outcast, a drifter, a person plagued by dreams and visions. You grasp at strange clues and bewildering notions. You either hide in the woods or mountains, or live in a secret community.

**Skills:** Insight, Listen or Spot Hidden, Natural World, Occult, Persuade, Religion, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:** POW x 4

**Status:** 0-30

## TABLE: LIFE EVENTS (ROLL 2D20)

Roll	Life Event
2	Born with a caul: +10 Luck
3	Father was a chapman (itinerant trader): +5 Charm, -10 Status
4	Had the pox: -5 CON
5	Sold into slavery as a child: +5 STR
6	Father was a merchant: +10 Other Language
7	Run down by a horse: -10 Ride, +5 Dodge
8	Mauled by a bear: -5 APP
9	Family crops failed: +10 Spot Hidden, -5 Conceal
10	Village pillaged by Vikings: +10 First Aid, -5 Stealth
11	Supposedly a child of a fairy lover: +10 Occult, -5 Insight
12	Father was a "troubled" craftsman: +10 to one Art/Craft, -5 Status
13	Kicked by a mule when young: -1 MOV
14	Father was a priest: +10 Religion, -5 Occult
15	Injured in a brawl: -5 DEX
16	Parents accused of heresy: -10 Status, +5 Natural World
17	Father was a woodsman: +10 Natural World, -5 Fast Talk





## TABLE: LIFE EVENTS (ROLL 2D20)

Roll	Life Event
18	Lived outside for a long period: +5 CON
19	Imbalance of the humors, phlegmatic: +10 Insight, -10 Persuade
20	Imbalance of the humors, sanguine: +10 Fast Talk, -10 Insight
21	Imbalance of the humors, choleric: +10 Persuade, -10 Listen
22	Imbalance of the humors, melancholic: +10 Art, -10 Fast Talk
23	Lost among the “elf hills” as a child: +5 POW
24	Injured by “elf-shot”: -5 SIZ
25	Abandoned in the woods: +10 Navigate, -5 Persuade
26	Raised in a monastery: +10 Library Use, -5 Dodge
27	Poorly healed wound: -5 STR
28	Worked in shipyards: +5 DEX
29	Born under a gibbous moon: -10 Luck
30	Hit as a child: -10 Spot Hidden, +5 Dodge
31	Eldest child: +10 Status, -5 Insight
32	Wolves raided farm: +1 MOV
33	Apprenticed on a ship: +10 Pilot (Boat), -5 Charm
34	Youngest child: +10 Dodge, -5 Status
35	Saw parents murdered: -10 First Aid, +5 Stealth
36	Caught in stampede as child: +10 Ride, -5 Drive Horses
37	Born on a saint’s feast day: +5 POW
38	Traveled in Arabia: +10 to one Science specialization, -5 Religion
39	Fell into a freezing river: -10 Listen, +5 Swim
40	Roll twice (ignore subsequent rolls of 40.)

**Example:** Harald’s player rolls 2D20 with results of 6 and 12, for a total of 18. Consulting the chart, he sees that Harald spent a lot of time outdoors and receives a +5 CON. He updates Harald’s CON characteristic on his character sheet.





## QUICK CREATION SUMMARY

This is a quick run through of character creation.

**Step 1:** Roll 3D6 once each for the characteristics STR, CON, POW, DEX, and APP and multiply each result by 5. Record the total for each characteristic.

**Step 2:** Roll 2D6+6 once each for EDU, SIZ, and INT and multiply each result by 5. Record the total for each characteristic.

**Step 3:** Determine your investigator's age and apply any age modifications to characteristics.

**Step 4:** Determine your investigator's Life Event. Make any characteristic changes immediately, but save skill changes until after skill points have been allocated (Steps 12 and 13).

**Step 5:** Write in the half and fifth values in the smaller boxes next to each characteristic.

**Step 6:** To determine Hit Points, total CON plus SIZ and divide by 10; round down any fraction.

**Step 7:** Sanity points (SAN) equals POW.

**Step 8:** Roll 3D6 multiplied by 5 for Luck.

**Step 9:** Total your character's STR and SIZ, and find the investigator's Damage Bonus and Build on the **Damage Bonus and Build** table.

**Step 10:** Enter the number 99 for 99 minus Cthulhu Mythos. If your investigator gains points in Cthulhu Mythos, lower this number by a like amount.

**Step 11:** For magic points, circle that number equal to POW divided by 5.

**Step 12:** Choose an occupation and note the occupation's skills and occupational skill points. Skills are described on pages 74-81. Apply occupational skills as noted by the occupation. Add these points to the base percentages

listed in parenthesis on the character sheet. Don't forget to allocate some points to the **Status** skill (see Status on page 80).

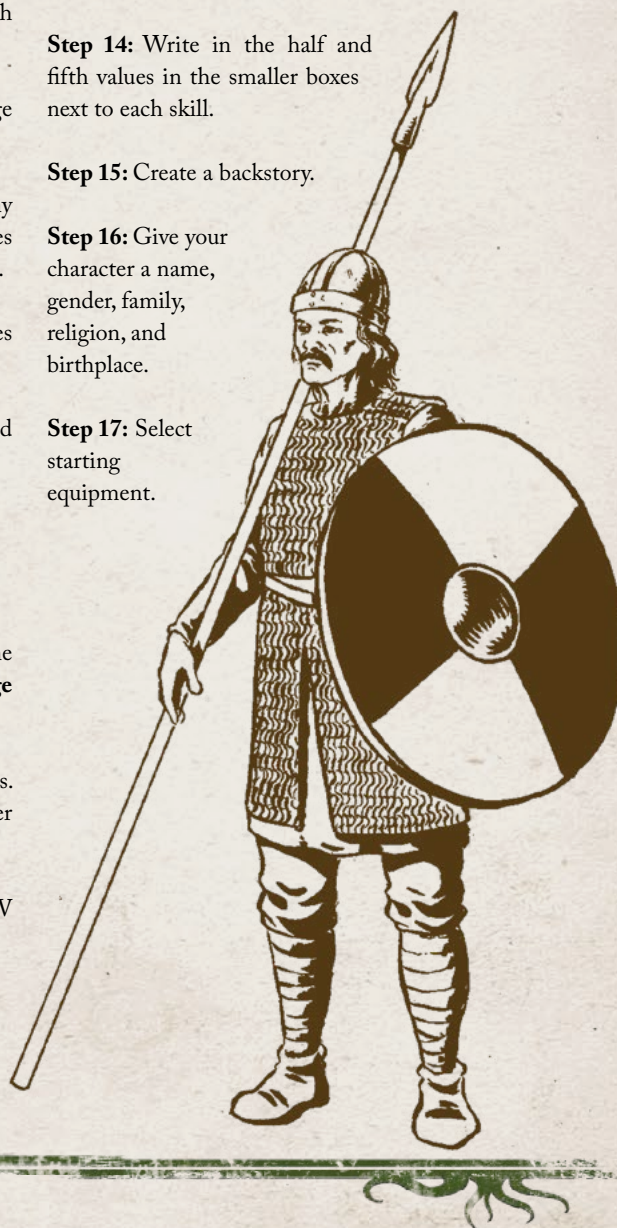
**Step 13:** Multiply INT x 2 to determine personal interest skill points. Apply these points to any skills (no skill should start higher than 75%).

**Step 14:** Write in the half and fifth values in the smaller boxes next to each skill.

**Step 15:** Create a backstory.

**Step 16:** Give your character a name, gender, family, religion, and birthplace.

**Step 17:** Select starting equipment.





# QUICK REFERENCE CHART FOR HALF AND FIFTH VALUES

Find the characteristic or skill value under the Base Number column,  
and read across to determine the half (Hard) and fifth (Extreme) values.

Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)	Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)	Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)	Base Number	Half Value (½)	Fifth Value (⅕)
1	0	0	26	13	5	51	25	10	76	38	15
2	1		27			52	26		77		
3			28	14		53	27		78	39	
4	2		29			54	28		79		
5		1	1	30	15	6	55	28	11	80	40
6	31			56			81				
7	32			16	57		82	41			
8	33				58		83				
9	4		34	17	59		29	84		42	
10	5	2	35		7	60	30	12	85		17
11			36	18		61			31	86	
12	6		37			19	62		32	87	
13			38	63			33		88		
14	7	39	20	64		34	89		18		
15		3		40	8	65	35	90		45	
16	41		66	33		91					
17	8		42	67		34	92	46			
18			43	68			93				
19	9		44	22		69	36	94	47		
20	10	45	9		70	14		95		19	
21		4		46	23		71	96	48		
22	47			24			72	97			
23	48				73		98	49			
24	12			49	74		37		99		
25		5	50	25	10	75	15	100	50	20	



## CHAPTER 3

### Household Officer

You serve your lord in his urban palace or his *castrum* (military building). Select one of the following functions: steward, headman of the stables, or keeper of order. You spend much of your day bullying lesser servants to do their work.

**Skills:** Animal Handling, Art/Craft (choose one), Fast Talk, Insight, Listen, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal specialties.

**Occupations Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 2 + \text{POW} \times 2$

**Status:** 9-65

### Juggler / Minstrel

You're witty and articulate, dress gaily, and you love to get attention. You might be adept with *chansons de geste* (songs of heroic deeds)—your heroes are Roland, Charlemagne and Alexander the Great—you play a musical instrument, recite poetry and stories that everybody already knows, and are maybe proficient at tumbling, juggling, rope walking, or some other entertaining craft. You might be a Goliard, composing and singing in Latin. You might even own a tame bear or monkey! If possible, you enter the service of a nobleman, who praises your singing, and in return you hope for gifts and treasures, and the security only a court can offer you.

**Skills:** Art/Craft (choose one), Charm, Fast Talk, Insight, Own Kingdom, and Persuade, any two other skills as personal specialties.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{DEX} \times 2 + (\text{APP} \times 2 \text{ or } \text{POW} \times 2)$

**Status:** 0-65

### Mercenary / Brigand

As a mercenary you fight for the highest bidder and then scavenge battlefields for trophies. As a brigand, you may have been the victim of some natural catastrophe or some heinous injustice that changed your life forever. Now you hide deep in the woods and rob traveling monks or traders.

**Skills:** Fighting (Brawl), Fighting (choose a weapon), Natural World, Navigate, Track, Stealth, Throw, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{CON} \times 2 + \text{STR} \times 2$

**Status:** 0-20

### Merchant

You live in a city or on the outskirts of a cathedral city. You make a living from accounts and agents. You import wine, exotic spices, and silks from heathen countries and sell them to arrogant nobles. If you're not a Christian, you're allowed to be a moneychanger and a moneylender.

**Skills:** Accounting, Charm, Fast Talk, Other Kingdoms, Other Language, Read and Write (Language), any two other skills as personal specialties.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 4$

**Status:** 9-65

### Monk / Nun

You live in a monastery, in silence and prayer, leading a simple life. When you don't pray or sing, you perform domestic tasks, or copy arcane manuscripts from the monastery's library. As a member of your order, you are not allowed to own private property but if you leave the monastery with special permission, you can always count on the hospitality and charity of other monasteries.

**Skills:** Art/Craft or a Science (choose one), Library Use, Listen, Other Language (Latin), Religion, Read and Write (Latin), any other two skills as personal specialties.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 4$

**Status:** 9-45

### Pilgrim

You live by the charity of other people. You accomplish a pilgrimage to a holy place, such as Rome, a monastery, or a cathedral city housing holy relics. You have your own reasons to be a pilgrim, maybe for the expiation of some crime, the wish to elevate your soul, or simply the desire for adventure in its noblest sense. You could be headed to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, Mont Saint Michel in France, Jerusalem, or Rome.

**Skills:** Charm, Natural World, Navigate, Other Language, Own Kingdom, Religion, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 2 + \text{POW} \times 2$

**Status:** 0-45

Beggar





## DARK AGE INVESTIGATORS

### *Priest*

You're on a mission from the Church to enlighten laymen and women in the ways of God. You could be an acolyte, an exorcist, or a fully-fledged priest who is bound to a parish and collects the tithe from the farmers, most of which goes to your greedy lord. Although St. Paul highly commends celibacy, and it is strongly recommended, you may have a concubine and even children, though they will not inherit from you.

**Skills:** Insight, Other Language (Latin), Occult, Persuade, Religion, any three other skills as personal specialties

**Occupational Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 2 + \text{INT} \times 2$

**Status:** 9-99

### *Sailor*

You're skilled with sails, boats, and ships, and know tides, the wind, and the stars. You have seen Hamburg, Venice, or Constantinople. Life is glorious, except for storms, pirates, and the terrors of the deep.

**Skills:** Climb, Fast Talk, Natural World, Navigate, Other Kingdoms, and Pilot (Boat), any two other skills as personal specialties.

**Occupational Skill Points:**  $\text{DEX} \times 2 + \text{CON} \times 2$

**Status:** 0-30

### *Scholar*

You belong to a monastic or cathedral school. You are the recipient and the dispenser of godly knowledge. You spend your time reading classical authors, writing manuals, and teaching. When you don't teach, you may be involved in political intrigues for some good cause.

**Skills:** Library Use, Occult, Other Language (Latin), Own Kingdom, Persuade, Science (choose one), Read and Write (Latin), any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 4$

**Status:** 9-45

### *Sergeant / Mayor*

You are employed by a lord or a monastery to supervise the administration of the domain. Your main task is to collect tax money and dues in kind.

**Skills:** Accounting, Charm, Fighting (choose one), Insight, Read and Write (Latin), Spot Hidden, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupational Skill Points:**  $\text{STR} \times 2 + \text{POW} \times 2$

**Status:** 9-75

### *Small Trader*

You own a few pack animals or a small boat. You circuit inland, up river, or along the coast for the benefit of your master. You know a lot about that route and its particular dangers.

**Skills:** Charm, Drive Horses or Pilot (Boat), Fast Talk, Insight, Own Kingdom, Other Language (depending on your trading route you might know Medieval Latin, Greek, Flemish, Low German, or Old Norse), Navigate, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupational Skill Points:**  $\text{INT} \times 2 + \text{CON} \times 2$

**Status:** 9-45

### *(Free) Warrior*

You are a professional warrior; a bold freelance adventurer, or in the employ of a warlord. Your proudest possessions are a horse, your weapon, and your chain mail armor.

**Skills:** Fighting (Brawl), Natural World, Own Kingdom, Ride, Track, any two other Fighting specializations, plus any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 2 + \text{STR} \times 2$

**Status:** 9-65



Guard



## Woodsman / Fisherman

As a woodsman you exploit the forest: you might be a hunter, a honey gatherer, or a woodcutter who produces charcoal. If a fisherman, you live in a fishing community by a lake or by the sea.

**Skills:** Art/Craft (choose one), Listen or Spot Hidden, Natural World, Navigate, Pilot (Boat) or Track, Swim or Stealth, Throw, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

**Occupation Skill Points:**  $\text{EDU} \times 2 + \text{INT} \times 2$

**Status:** 0-25

## Personal Interest Skills

Multiply the investigator's  $\text{INT} \times 2$  and allot the points to any skills (which can include adding further points to occupation skills), except for the Cthulhu Mythos skill.

Write down the total points for each skill on the investigator sheet—the points you've allocated plus the base chance printed on the investigator sheet, and then apply any modifiers from your investigator's life event.

The sheet has spaces to write in the half and fifth values for each skill, allowing you to reference them quickly in the middle of a game. No skill can start with more than 75%.

## STEP 5: CREATE A BACKSTORY

Think about what personal history, friends, enemies and achievements could have led your investigator to delve in to the secrets of the Mythos. There are ten categories listed on the back of the investigator sheet; try to write down at least one entry for the first six (Personal Description, Ideology/Beliefs, Significant People, Meaningful Locations, Treasured Possessions, and Traits). It's not essential to have an entry for each category, but the more you are able to define, the more your hero comes to life. Further entries may be added or existing ones altered during play.

The categories of Injuries & Scars, Phobias & Manias, Arcane Tomes, Spells & Artifacts, and Encounters with Strange Entities may be written in during play. Of course, some investigators might start the game with a significant injury or scar if implied by their history—if so, write it in.



## USING RANDOM TABLES FOR INSPIRATION

You can simply come up with your own backstory entries as you see fit; however, the following tables provide a quick way to determine some details. Either roll on the tables or just pick ones that you like.

Above all, be clear that the random tables are there as a springboard for your imagination. Each dice roll will give you something from that realm of life to react to: embrace it or reject it, but be sure to react to it and use it to help fuel your imagination.

## Personal Description

Think of a distinct "look" that sums up your investigator's appearance (APP). Whether your appearance and your personality match is another question; a person may look stuffy, but actually be personable and open.

### Here are some possibilities (choose rather than roll):

Rugged	Handsome
Ungainly	Smart
Untidy	Dull
Dirty	Dazzler
Bookish	Youthful
Wearry	Plump
Stout	Hairy
Slim	Elegant
Scruffy	Stocky
Pale	Sullen
Ordinary	Rosy
Tanned	Wrinkled
Stuffy	Mousy
Sharp	Brawny
Dainty	Muscular
Strapping	Gawky
Frail	



Hermit







## CHAPTER 3

### Ideology/Beliefs

Roll 1D10 or pick one of the following. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your investigator.

Roll	Ideology/Beliefs
1	There is one True God. Does he intervene in the world?
2	Superstitious. Does it get in the way of your faith?
3	Loyal to my lord on Earth. Would you follow him to your death?
4	The local priests are a sham. What about foreign priests?
5	Hard work conquers all. How about people who don't work?
6	There is evil in society that should be rooted out. What is the evil?
7	A believer in the old ways. Does anybody know?
8	My community is everything. Are you willing to leave it to save it?
9	Money is power, and I'm going to get all I can. How far will you go?
10	Outsiders can't be trusted. Can they earn your trust?

### Significant People

Roll 1D10 or pick one from each of the two lists below. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your investigator. Think of a name for these people.

Roll	Who?
1	Parent (e.g. mother, father, stepmother).
2	Grandparent (e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandfather).
3	Sibling (e.g. brother, half-brother, stepsister).
4	Child (son or daughter).
5	Partner (e.g. spouse, fiancé, lover).
6	Person who taught you your highest occupational skill. Identify the skill and consider who taught you (e.g. the person you apprenticed with, your father).

Roll	Who?
7	Childhood friend (e.g. fellow apprentice, neighbor, imaginary friend).
8	An outlaw. This person was evicted from society (e.g. the murderer of your parents, the man found guilty of killing your animals, someone wronged by society)
9	A fellow investigator in your game. Pick one or choose randomly.
10	A non-player character (NPC) in the game. Ask the Keeper to pick one for you. The person should be from the same community.

**Next**, roll to determine why that person is so significant to you. Not all of these options will mesh with every person, so you may have to roll more than once or simply pick something that feels appropriate.

Roll	Significance
1	You are indebted to them. How did they help you? (E.g. they saved your life, they bought you out of bondage).
2	They taught you something. What? (E.g. a skill, to love, to be a man).
3	They give your life meaning. How? (E.g. you aspire to be like them, you seek to be with them, you seek to make them happy).
4	You wronged them and seek reconciliation. What did you do? Are they willing to reconcile? (E.g. stole money from them, blamed them for something you did, refused to help when they were desperate).
5	Shared experience. What? (E.g. you survived hard times together, you grew up together, you bled on the battlefield together).
6	You seek to prove yourself to them. How? (E.g. through your profession, by finding a good spouse, by defeating a foe).
7	You idolize them (e.g. for their fame, their beauty, their work).
8	A feeling of regret (e.g. you should have died in their place, you fell out over something you said, you didn't step up and help them when you had the chance).



## DARK AGE INVESTIGATORS

Roll	Significance
9	You want to prove yourself better than them. What was their flaw? (E.g. lazy, drunk, unloving).
10	They have crossed you and you seek revenge. For what do you blame them? (E.g. death of a loved one, your financial ruin, caused you to be outlawed).

### Meaningful Locations

Roll 1D10 or pick one of the following. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your investigator. Think of a name for this place.

Roll	Meaningful Locations
1	Your seat of learning (e.g. the field behind your hovel, lord's court, apprenticeship).
2	Your hometown (e.g. rural village, market town, busy city).
3	The place you met your first love (e.g. farm, church, by the lake).
4	A place for quiet contemplation (e.g. a grove in the forest, the ramparts, the church).
5	A place for socializing (e.g. the lord's hall, tavern, father's house).
6	A place connected with your ideology/belief (e.g. parish church, Rome, Stonehenge).
7	The grave of a significant person. Who? (E.g. a parent, a child, a lover).
8	Your family home (e.g. a farm, the monastery where you were raised, the lord's hall)
9	The place you were happiest in your life (e.g. the river, your church, training grounds).
10	Your workplace (e.g. shop, monastery, wheat field).

### Treasured Possessions

Roll 1D10 or pick one of the following. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your investigator.

Roll	Meaningful Locations
1	An item connected with your highest skill (e.g. tool, boat).

Roll	Meaningful Locations
2	An essential item for your occupation (e.g. armor, wagon, Bible).
3	A memento from your childhood (e.g. lucky throwing stone, practice sword, spoon).
4	A memento of a departed person (e.g. jewelry, a favor, a dried flower).
5	Something given to you by your Significant Person (e.g. a ring, a carving, a wolf's tooth).
6	A Holy relic. What is it? (E.g. a piece of the cross, dirt from Golgotha, a saint's finger bone).
7	Something you found but you don't know what it is—you seek answers (e.g. a strange hide that doesn't match any animal you know, a strange medallion you found in your father's chest after he died, a curious silver ball you dug up in your garden).
8	Something from darker days (e.g. elf-shot, a talisman, a Pict's cursed spear-tip).
9	A weapon (e.g. family blade, your first bow, the hidden knife in your boot).
10	A trusted animal (e.g. a loyal dog, a hunting bird, a lame horse).

### Traits

Roll 1D10 or pick one of the following. Take the result and make it specific and personal to your investigator.

Roll	Trait
1	Generous
2	Romantic
3	Sanguine (cheerful)
4	Hedonist
5	Risk-taker
6	Phlegmatic (resolute)
7	Choleric (hot tempered)
8	Loyal
9	Melancholic (introverted)
10	Ambitious



## PLAYTEST NOTES

Here's an example of one of the backstory elements used in play. One of the playtesters rolled "something from darker days" for his treasured possession. He decided his character had a crude iron knife tied to a thin rope. When he held the rope and let the knife hang, it would slowly rotate to true north. Well, most of the time. As he learned to his chagrin, though, it would sometimes point him straight to the Mythos. After a while, he wondered what might just be lurking to the north...

## Key Backstory Connection

Consider your investigator's backstory and pick the one entry that you feel is most important to them. This is their key connection: the one thing above all else that gives meaning to their life. Mark it with a star or underline it on the investigator sheet. This connection can aid your investigator in regaining Sanity points (see *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 94).

Everything in the game is open to the Keeper to do with as he or she desires, except for the investigator's key connection. The key connection cannot be destroyed, killed or taken away by the Keeper without first allowing the player the opportunity to roll dice to, in some way, save that key connection.

## Name

Most people in the Dark Ages have no surname: John is just John. To further describe an investigator, or to distinguish between two with the same name, give a byname, as in John of Hereford, John Smith, or Erik the Red.

Old French, German, or English first names are ideally suited for Dark Ages investigators, as are the more pious names from the Bible. Here are some typical examples:

## Anglo-Saxon Names

**MALE:** Aelfhere, Aelfred, Aelfric, Aethelstan, Aethelweard, Aethelwulf, Aescwine, Birhtric, Birhtnoth, Caedmon, Centwine, Cenwulf, Cuthbert, Ealdhelm, Earcenbold, Godwine, Hildegils, Leofric, Leofwine, Odda, Offa, Ohthere, Penda, Sigebriht, Wighelm, Wigstan, Wufsige, Wulfstan, Wulfwige.

**FEMALE:** Aethelflaed, Aelfgyfu, Aetelgythe, Eadgifu, Ealhraed, Hereswith, Hilda, Leofflaed, Leofware, Wihtburg.

## Old French Names

**MALE:** Aimeri, Aimon, Aiol, Aleaume, Archembaud, Arnoul, Baudouin, Bruyant, Eustache, Fierbras, Fromondin, Galien, Gilles, Godefroi, Gui, Guibert, Guillaume, Hardouin, Jehan, Julien, Raimon, Raoul, Tancred, Thierry, Yves.

**FEMALE:** Adelaide, Adeline, Aiglante, Alienor, Beatrix, Beatrice, Belle, Berthe, Blonde, Catherine, Cecilia, Clarissa, Erembourg, Ermengarde, Esclarmonde, Heloise, Jehanne, Lutice, Mirabel, Nicolette, Olive, Oriabel, Passerose, Rosamonde.

## Old High German Names

**MALE:** Adalbracht, Adalbert, Adaldac, Adam, Addo, Adelgero, Agilwulf, Aistulf, Albwin, Arnolf, Berchhold, Berengar, Bernefrid, Bernhard, Boppo, Buobo, Brun, Bruno, Chlodowech, Chuonrad, Eberhart, Everhart, Egbert, Egilulf, Erhard, Erkanbald, Folcbert, Folcmar, Folkwin, Friderich, Frumolt, Fulco, Fulrad, Geseprant, Giseller, Gisilbert, Gislfred, Godfrid, Goslin, Gozlin, Griffio, Grimoald, Gundolfm, Gundelbert, Gundpert, Guntbrecht, Gunther, Guntram, Hatto, Heinrich, Herimann, Hermann, Hildulf, Hlothar, Hubert, Hugo, Ingo, Lampert, Landemar, Ldowich, Liudolf, Lindwin, Liutger, Liutker, Liutprant, Liutward, Luipold, Mainard, Mainfred, Maginfred, Meginbert, Obert, Otto, Odo, Odalrich, Ozbert, Ratbodo, Reginbald, Ribald.

**FEMALE:** Adalheid, Adelaide, Adalwit, Adred, Albsinda, Bertha, Hathwiga, Hedwig, Mathilda, Mechtild, Gisla, Gisiltrude, Glismuada, Hiltiburg, Ida, Ota, Imma, Regingarda.





## BIRTHPLACE AND LANGUAGE

Choose the investigator's kingdom of birth and language—the German empire (with four main dialects spoken: Frankish, Saxon, Bavarian, Allemanic—the term “German” (*thiudisk*) itself is only just evolving); the kingdoms of France, Burgundy, or Italy (where French and Occitan dialects are spoken), or the kingdom of England (English dialects spoken). These are all good starting points.

## Sex of Your Character

Many Dark Ages societies are unfortunately sexist. It's commonly argued that men hold most positions of power, and women, especially those of low rank, have fewer rights, privileges, and liberties. However, the same can be said of men of low rank. They have few rights, privileges, and liberties as well. There are always exceptions to the rule. Rights, privileges, and liberties, however, are things that can be earned or simply taken. No society is ever so rigid that there aren't people who buck convention and forge their own path.

Consider Hroswitha, a Saxon canoness, who is considered the first woman to write plays. She also penned prose and poetry. Or, there's Theodora, a Byzantine gutter-runner who put on bawdy plays that eventually attracted the attention of Emperor Justinian. They married and she became arguably the most powerful woman in the Byzantine Empire. If you need a more martial bent, consider Æthelflæd, daughter of Alfred the Great and “Lady of the Mercians.” After the death of her husband she oversaw the construction of numerous fortifications, led her forces into battle (whether or not she fought is unclear) and was considered a formidable leader and tactician. Matilda of Canossa not only spoke German, French, and Latin, but she could read and write Latin as well. She was also trained in horsemanship and weapon use. During the investiture controversy, she served as Pope Gregory's primary intermediary with northern Europe. For much of the controversy, papal supporters in Germany were only supposed to trust communications that came through her.

Granted, those women were in positions of power with wealth and high birth to give them a leg up in society. In that case, consider Auðr, a Scandinavian woman whose husband divorced her because she wore breeches like a man. In return, she attacked him with a sword. Hervor's grandfather taught her to use a bow, so she joined a group of bandits before changing her name to the masculine Hervardr and raiding with Vikings.

These women are exceptions to the rule, so a Keeper should feel justified in having a woman in a non-traditional role stand out. In the end, it's up to the Keeper, but, any one of these occupations would be suitable for a female character: beggar, craftsman/shop keeper, farmer, healer, hermit/heretic,

merchant, minstrel, nun, pilgrim, scholar, small trader, and woodman/fisherman. Essentially, any occupation should be available for a female character with a good backstory.

## STEP 6: EQUIP INVESTIGATOR

In the Dark Ages the question of currency is a complex one, since every governmental power mints its own coins. For the sake of playability, *Cthulhu Dark Ages* adopts a standardized monetary unit: the silver penny (d). One penny represents the minimum amount necessary for one person to survive one day in a city. Of course, one can always go hungry.

All occupations provide the investigator with a certain number of pennies—representing what the character might conceivably have saved living frugally, and indicate that occupation's barter potential. Note that people of the time rarely accumulate monetary wealth, but live from day-to-day, scrape by, and use barter in transactions.

## Barter and Assets

Look up your investigator's Status on **Barter and Assets** table (page 73) to determine their spending level, assets, and bartering difficulty.



Viking



## Equip Investigator

Refer to the equipment lists (page 88) and weapons tables (pages 92–93) and write down only the significant items that your investigator owns or carries on their person.

Each player should choose, subject to Keeper approval, items that the investigator begins play with. These basic items are what an investigator has amassed from birth until the present. Basic equipment depends on the culture, but usually includes clothing, cooking supplies, a knife, and tools required by their trade. Special items, such as swords, which are typically status symbols as much as they are weapons, and horses, are rare for starting investigators to begin with without good reason or an outlay of money or goods.

## SKILLS

This section provides details on the range of skills available to characters in *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. Many of the skills are common to standard *Call of Cthulhu*, so full descriptions, such as difficulty and pushing examples, are not provided for these (please refer to the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*).

## SKILL DEFINITIONS

Following each skill name, the base chance for the skill is given. Each entry includes basic information about what a character can accomplish with a specific skill in the Dark Ages. Creative players will undoubtedly find new and interesting ways to use these skills, and Keepers should allow them.

Some skills would be affected by location. An Anglo-Saxon investigator might have a Religion skill of 75% in Christian Wessex; however, if the same investigator were tested on the Muslim religion, the Keeper would probably increase the level of difficulty of the roll.

A skill level of 50% is high enough to let a character eke out a living from it. If an investigator rises high in a skill unrelated to their profession, player and Keeper could confer about changing the investigator to a new profession.

## SKILL SPECIALIZATIONS

Some broad skills are broken into specializations. A player may spend skill points to purchase any skill specialization. The generic skill cannot be purchased. Thus a player may spend points in Fighting (Brawl) or Fighting (Spear) but not simply Fighting.

In the case of Art/Craft, Natural World, and Science, these skills encompass a wide diversity of specializations. The Keeper must decide on the applicability of a particular specialization to the situation in hand. Depending on the situation, the

Keeper may allow the use of an alternate specialization at an increased level of difficulty where there is sufficient overlap with that specialization.

**For example:** Skarphedin is wandering far from home on the tundra. Lost and in need of food and shelter, Skarphedin needs a successful Natural World (Tundra) check, but he lacks the specialization. Skarphedin's player asks if he can use Natural World (Forest) instead. The Keeper allows the roll at an increased level of difficulty. A Regular success was required when using Natural World (Tundra), so a Hard success is required when using Natural World (Forest) in its place.

## SKILL POINTS: WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Use this table to gauge a person's standard of ability with a skill:

Skill Percentage	Standard of Ability
01%–05%	<b>Novice.</b>
06%–19%	<b>Neophyte:</b> beginner with a small amount of knowledge.
20%–49%	<b>Amateur:</b> possesses some talent or rudimentary training.
50%–74%	<b>Professional:</b> may eke out a living from the skill. Perhaps renowned through several villages.
75%–89%	<b>Expert:</b> renowned professional. Word has spread to the local lord and possibly beyond about the skill level attained.
90%+	<b>Master:</b> among the world's best in the skill.

## SKILL LIST

Accounting (10%)  
 Animal Handling (15%)  
 Appraise (05%)  
 Art/Craft (05%): [Specializations]  
 Charm (15%)  
 Climb (20%)  
 Cthulhu Mythos (00%)  
 Dodge (Half DEX%)  
 Drive Horses or Oxen\* (20%)



## TABLE: BARTER AND ASSETS

Status	Barter	Assets	Spending Level
Penniless (Status 0 or less)	Increase difficulty by one level (or penalty die)	None	1d
Poor (Status 1–9)	Increase difficulty by one level (or penalty die)	Status x 10 (10d–90d)	2d
Average (Status 10–49)	Regular	Status x 50 (500d–2450d)	4d
Wealthy (Status 50–89)	Regular	Status x 500 (25,000d–44,500d)	8d
Lordly (Status 90–98)	Regular	Status x 2000 (180,000d–196,000d)	16d
Imperial (Status 99)	Lower difficulty by one level (or bonus die)	197,000d+	32d

**Key:**

**Barter:** The default difficulty for an investigator to barter for goods with someone else. This doesn't represent how silver-tongued the investigator is. Instead, it represents how many disposable goods the investigator can call upon to work out a deal.

**Assets:** Assets are the things that your investigator owns at the start of the game, and the rough value of those items in pennies (d). The player should note down the value and decide the form it takes, usually property or investments, perhaps shares in a business. If your occupation is likely to include a house, horse, or weapons, those things constitute part of your asset value.

**Spending Level:** This is an arbitrary amount, listed in pennies (d), below which, for ease of play, no record keeping is required. A character can spend up to his or her spending level in one day without needing to worry about tracking the money.

Fast Talk (05%)  
 Fighting (varies%): [Specializations]  
 First Aid (30%)  
 Insight\* (05%)  
 Intimidate (15%)  
 Jump (25%)  
 Library Use (05%)  
 Listen (25%)  
 Medicine (01%)  
 Natural World\* (20%) [Specializations]  
 Navigate (10%)  
 Occult (05%)  
 Other Kingdoms\* (10%) [Specializations]  
 Other Language (01%) [Specializations]  
 Own Kingdom\* (20%)  
 Own Language (EDU%)  
 Persuade (15%)

Pilot (Boat) (01%)  
 Ranged Weapons\* (varies%) [Specializations]  
 Read and Write (Language)\* (01%) [Specializations]  
 Repair/Devise\* (20%)  
 Religion\* (20%)  
 Ride Horse (05%)  
 Science (01%) [Specializations]  
 Sleight of Hand (25%)  
 Spot Hidden (25%)  
 Status\* (00%)  
 Stealth (20%)  
 Swim (25%)  
 Throw (25%)  
 Track (10%)

**Key:**

\* Denotes a new or significantly modified skill.



## Accounting (10%)

Basic knowledge of arithmetic, calculus, and the ability to use an abacus to understand and manage inventories, accounts, and crop registers.

## Animal Handling (15%)

The ability to command and train animals to perform simple tasks. The skill is most commonly applied to dogs but may include birds, cats, squirrels, and so on (at the Keeper's discretion). For riding animals, such as horses or camels, the Ride skill is used for breaking in and controlling such mounts.

## Appraise (05%)

Used to estimate the value of a particular item, including the quality, material used, and workmanship. Where relevant, the skill-user could pinpoint the age of the item, assess its historical relevance, and detect forgeries.

## Art/Craft [Specializations] (05%):

The investigator sheet contains blank spaces for specializations of this skill. Dark Age examples include:

Apiarist (bee keeper)	Bone and Horn Worker
Bowyer	Brewer
Carpenter	Cartographer
Cobbler	Cook
Cooper	Dancer
Farmer	Fletcher
Jeweler	Leather Worker
Musician *	Metal Worker
Orate	Painter
Potions	Potter
Sculptor	Singer
Smith	Stonemason
Weaver	Woodworker

\*Choose instrument.

## ART/CRAFT (POTIONS)

With this skill, the investigator can recognize, compound, and dispense the infusions, poisons, antidotes, and hallucinogens of the Dark Ages. See **Potions** (page 108) for further information.

### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

- **Regular difficulty:** identify the correct ingredients and brew a salable potion.
- **Hard difficulty:** create a particularly difficult potion, or where time is in short supply.

**Pushing examples:** substituting ingredients; brewing the potion for twice as long; focusing so intently you ignore the need for food or water, necessitating a CON roll to prevent passing out.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** an explosion that causes 1D6 damage to everybody in the vicinity; the potion has the opposite effect of what was intended; the potion releases an odorless, colorless gas that deals 1D6 hit points damage, or is hallucinogenic.

## ART/CRAFT (ORATE)

The ability to craft, as well as relay, a compelling story orally to another or group of people. The oral tradition of storytelling is strong in the Dark Ages, as the majority of people cannot read or write. Information, such as news and learned practices, is passed to others through stories.

### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

- **Regular difficulty:** tell a compelling tale without rambling or forgetting key facts.
- **Hard difficulty:** compose an epic (long) story and memorize it, which imparts useful information (possibly allowing another the possibility of a skill increase or a one-use bonus die if the listener makes a successful POW roll\*)—see **Oral Tradition**, page 99, for further information.

*\*Of course, the storytelling must "know" the information to impart—a skill increase in First Aid should not be awarded if the storyteller's First Aid skill is below that of the listeners.*

**Pushing examples:** re-telling or re-phrasing the story to make it more understandable.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** the information is misunderstood, causing the listener to pass on the information incorrectly or have a mishap when they try to apply the knowledge practically.



Many of these examples are skills directly linked to a profession, but the skill may just be a leisure pursuit. Points are spent to purchase any skill specialization. The generic Art/Craft skill cannot be purchased.

Ability with this skill may enable the making or repair of an item—something typically requiring equipment and time, to be determined by the Keeper, if necessary. In a situation where graduations of success might be appropriate, a higher level of success indicates the item made is of high quality and/or precision. The skill might also be used to make a duplicate or fake item. In such a case, the difficulty level would depend on the intricacy and distinctiveness of the original to be copied.

A successful roll might provide information about an item, such as where or when it might have been made, some point of history or technique concerning it, or who might have made it. The holder of a specialty would have a breadth of knowledge within a particular field—an acquaintance of the subject, its history, and contemporary practitioners, as well as the ability to perform it.

## Charm (15%)

Charm takes many forms, including physical attraction, seduction, flattery, or simply warmth of personality. Charm may be used to compel someone to act in a certain way, but not in a manner completely contrary to that person's normal behavior. Charm is opposed by the Charm or Insight skills. Charm may also be used to barter for goods or services (see **Barter**, page 98).

## Climb (20%)

Allows a character to climb trees, walls, and other vertical surfaces with or without ropes and climbing gear. Conditions such as firmness of surface, available handholds, wind, visibility, rain, etc., may all affect the difficulty level.

Failing this skill on the first roll indicates that the climb is perhaps beyond the investigator's capability. Failing a pushed roll is likely to indicate a fall with resultant damage. One successful Climb roll should allow the investigator to complete the climb in almost all cases (rather than requiring repeated rolls). A challenging or longer climb should have an increased difficulty level.

## Cthulhu Mythos (00%)

This skill differs from others in the game. No starting investigator may allot occupation or personal interest skill points to Cthulhu Mythos unless otherwise directed to by the Keeper. Successful use of the skill does not increase the investigator's percentiles in the skill; hence no checkbox on the investigator sheet. Points in Cthulhu Mythos are gained by Mythos encounters that result in the loss of Sanity points—insights into the true nature of the universe,

meeting horrific monsters, and by reading forbidden books. A successful D100 roll against Cthulhu Mythos allows the investigator to identify an entity or to deduce something about its behavior. The skill might also allow an investigator to remember some fact concerning the Mythos, identify a spell by seeing it cast, remember that a particular spell or piece of information may be found in a particular Mythos tome, and so on.

## Dodge (Half DEX%)

With this skill, an investigator can instinctively evade blows, thrown missiles, surprise attacks, and so forth. A character may attempt to use dodge any number of times in a combat round in response to an attack. If an attack can be seen, a character can try to dodge it; however, an unseen attack (from the rear, by an invisible attacker, in the dark, etc.) cannot be dodged.

**Note:** as a combat skill, this cannot be pushed.

## Drive Horses or Oxen (20%)

The user is able to harness a horse or ox and to drive an animal-drawn cart or wagon, as well as to provide care for the animal. Unless the character is a free trader, someone else most probably owns the animals.

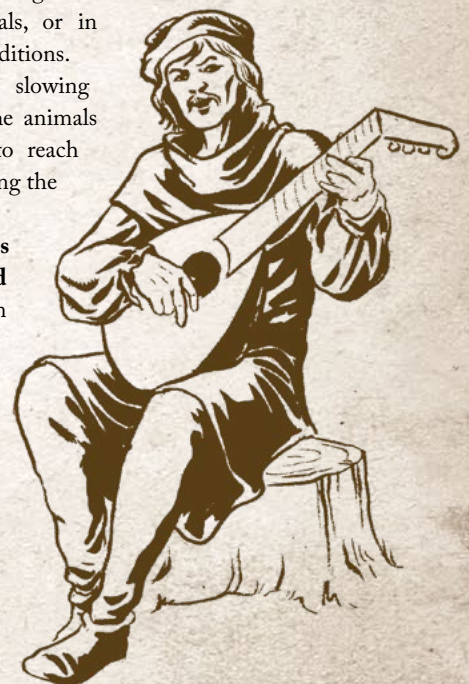
### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

**Regular difficulty:** drive a wagon in poor conditions without causing injury to the animals.

**Hard difficulty:** drive a wagon with injured or ill animals, or in exceedingly poor conditions.

**Pushing examples:** slowing down the pace of the animals and taking longer to reach the destination; leading the animals on foot.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** cart or wagon is damaged (e.g. wheel comes loose); animal is injured or perhaps breaks free of its reins; passengers are thrown and possibly injured.



Minstrel



### Fast Talk (05%)

Fast Talk is specifically limited to verbal trickery, deception and misdirection. Flattering words cause the target to agree with the fast-talker for a short time. Without reflecting, the target allows the trespass, hands over a fine ripe apple for nothing, believes the gossip, and so on. Given a little time to think, the victim comes to his or her senses and the Fast Talk loses all effect. The effect is always temporary, though it will last longer if a Hard success is achieved. The skill is opposed by Insight or Fast Talk. Fast Talk may also be used to barter for goods and services (see **Barter**, page 98).

### Fighting [Specializations] (varies%):

The Fighting skill denotes a character's skill in melee combat. Points are spent to purchase any skill specialization. The generic Fighting skill cannot be purchased. Choose fighting specializations appropriate to your investigator's occupation and history.

If a weapon is designed to be thrown, such as a spear, hatchet, or knife, use the investigator's skill in the weapon, not the Throw skill. These weapons were designed to be used in that manner, so training in the weapon includes training in throwing it.

**Note:** as a combat skill, Fighting cannot be pushed.

#### Fighting specializations:

This list contains some of the fighting specializations available. Refer to **Weapons and Equipment**, page 88, for a complete list of weapons. Each weapon category is its own specialization.

**Axe (15%):** use this skill for larger wood axes, as well as purpose-built combat axes. This skill encompasses throwing an axe.

**Brawl (25%):** includes all unarmed fighting and basic weapons that anyone could pick up and use such as clubs, knives, and improvised weapons. To determine the damage done with an improvised weapon, the Keeper should refer to the weapon chart and pick something comparable.

**Flail (10%):** the defining characteristic of a flail is that the striking head is connected to the handle by flexible rope or chain.

**Garrote (15%):** any length of material used to strangle. Requires the victim to make a Fighting Maneuver to escape, or suffer 1D6 damage per round.

**Lance (15%):** used by mounted warriors, lances are stouter and heavier than spears and don't have tips designed to break off. During the Dark Ages, riders gripped lances overhead instead of couching them.

**Mace (25%):** bludgeoning weapons, usually with flanged or spiked heads, includes hammers.

**Shield (15%):** the ability to use a shield to defend against blows and also attack. Improvised shields require Hard skill rolls (see **Shields**, page 95).

**Spear (15%):** javelins and spears. This skill is used for both thrusting with the weapon and throwing it.

**Staff (25%):** a two-handed weapon carved from a single block of wood. Some have hardened or metal sheathed tips. A favorite of travelers as it can double as a handy walking stick.

**Sword (20%):** all blades over two feet in length.

### First Aid (30%)

The user is able to provide emergency medical care. This might include: apply a splint to a broken leg, stem bleeding, treat a burn, resuscitate a drowning victim, clean and dress a wound, etc. First Aid cannot be used to treat diseases (where the Medicine skill is required). To be effective, First Aid must be delivered soon after a wound is received (ideally, within one hour) in which case it grants 1 hit point recovery (an Extreme success may heal 1D3 hit points at the Keeper's discretion). It may be attempted once, with subsequent attempts constituting a pushed roll. Two people can work together to administer First Aid, with a success granted if either one of them rolls a success. Successful use of First Aid can also rouse an unconscious person to consciousness.

When treating a dying character, successful First Aid stabilizes him or her for one hour and grants 1 temporary hit point. At the end of the hour, and each hour thereafter, the character must make a successful CON roll to remain stabilized, otherwise (with a failed CON roll) the character is dying and loses the temporary hit point and must now make a CON roll per round thereafter to stave-off death. If the character survives until the following round, First Aid can be attempted again (by up to two individuals). This can be continued (without constituting a pushed roll) until stabilization or death. First Aid (and only First Aid) can save the life of a dying character, after which they must receive a successful Medicine roll or be hospitalized.

A character is limited to one successful treatment of First Aid (and Medicine) until further damage is taken.

### Insight (05%)

A perception skill common to all humans, it allows the user to study an individual and form an idea of another person's motives and character. Insight is the Dark Ages equivalent of the Psychology skill in standard *Call of Cthulhu*. Insight may be countered with a successful opposed Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, Persuade, or Insight roll. Skilled deceivers (with 50+% in an appropriate skill) may only be detected with a Hard or Extreme success. Insight may also be used to oppose bartering attempts (see **Barter**, page 98).



## Intimidate (15%)

Intimidation can take many forms, including physical force, psychological manipulation, or threats. It is used to frighten or compel a person to act in a certain way. Intimidate is opposed by Insight, Intimidate, or Status. Intimidate may also be used to barter for goods or services (see **Barter**, page 98).

Backing up intimidation with a weapon or some other powerful threat or incentive may reduce the difficulty level. When pushing an Intimidation roll, one possible consequence of failure is carrying out one's threat, perhaps beyond the level of that which was intended.

## Jump (25%)

With success, the investigator may leap up or down vertically, or jump horizontally from a standing or running start. When falling, Jump may be used to lessen the potential fall damage, reducing the damage by half.

Judgment must be exercised as to what constitutes a regular jump, a difficult jump, or an extreme jump (respectively requiring Regular success, Hard success, or Extreme success). As a guide, a regular success would be required for an investigator to safely leap down vertically to his or her own height, jump horizontally from a standing start across a gap for a distance equal to the jumper's own height, or run and then jump horizontally to a distance of twice the jumper's own height. One might achieve double this distance with an Extreme success.

## Language, Other [Specializations] (01%)

This skill represents the user's chance to speak and understand a particular language.

## Language, Own (EDU%)

This is the character's grasp of the nuances of his or her native tongue.

## Library Use (05%)

Allows the user to find pertinent clues and information in a collection of printed material. The reader must be able to read at least one language, and must have access to a source of books. Each use of the skill represents four hours of continuous research. Most people in the Dark Ages are not educated enough to apply this skill.

## Listen (25%)

Measures the ability of a character to interpret and understand sounds, including overheard conversations, mutterings behind closed doors, or words whispered during a noisy dance or festival. The Keeper may use it to determine the course of an impending encounter: was your investigator awakened by that cracking twig?

## Medicine (01%)

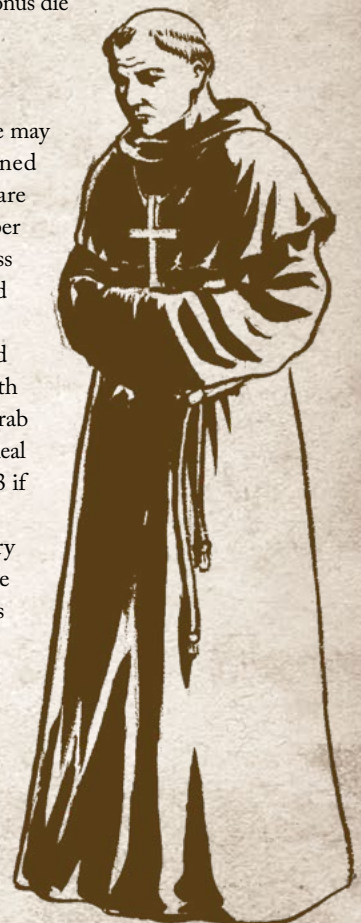
Medical science is rudimentary in the Dark Ages, especially in Northern and Western Europe. To exercise this skill, monks, healers, and scholars rely on profane books written a thousand years ago (e.g. Aesculapius, the Church fathers, and some recent Arabic authorities like Avicenna). Common treatments for illness consist of bleeding or a special diet, meant to re-establish the fragile equilibrium of fluids within the body, but usually offering patients little advantage.

Treatment for injuries using the Medicine skill usually takes a minimum of one hour and can be delivered any time after damage is taken, but if this is not performed on the same day, the difficulty level is increased (requiring a Hard success). A person treated successfully with Medicine recovers 1D3 hit points (in addition to any First Aid they have received), except in the case of a dying character, who must initially receive successful First Aid to stabilize their condition, after which they must be treated using Medicine.

A character is limited to one successful treatment of both First Aid and Medicine until further damage is taken. Successful use of Medicine can rouse an unconscious person to consciousness. In treating major wounds, successful use of the Medicine skill provides the patient a bonus die on their weekly recovery roll.

### In the Dark Ages:

- Successful application of Medicine may require an additional or combined Art/Craft (Potions) roll to prepare beneficial infusions, etc. The Keeper may rule that a fumble causes a loss of 1D3 hit points as a result of bad treatment.
- Arabian doctors are more skilled in Medicine. If an investigator with a major wound is treated by an Arab physician in an Arab hospital, they heal 1D4+1 hit points per week (1D4+3 if an Extreme success).
- Medicine also covers rudimentary surgery, but since anesthetics are unknown, treat every operation as a wound inflicted by a small knife (1D3 damage or more); a fumble doubles the damage, while an Extreme success negates it. The Keeper may rule that an amputation (inc. torture), calls for a Sanity roll, with a potential loss of 0/1D3 to 0/1D8 Sanity points.





For more about Dark Ages medical practices, see **Treatment** (page 122). If death approaches, most people would want to see a priest to hear their last confession, since death without absolution means eternal damnation.

## Natural World [Specializations] (20%)

Compared to Science, the focus of this skill is on personal experience and hearsay. It encompasses general knowledge concerning animals, plants, sea life, and climate in an environment familiar to the investigator.

Suggested specializations include Aquatic, Desert, Forest, Temperate, Tropical, and Tundra. Unless the investigator is a traveler, the initial specialization should be consistent with the environment around his or her home community.

## Navigate (10%)

Allows the user to find the way to a place he or she has been to before or has been told about—in daylight, by land or sea, in good weather. But at night, in low clouds, in fog, a Navigate roll is Hard.

## Occult (05%)

This skill's purview is folk magic, signs, and spirits, which does not concern or necessarily relate to the Cthulhu Mythos. The user recognizes occult symbols and paraphernalia, is able to prepare folk charms, and provides knowledge of alchemical and astrological concepts. With a successful Occult roll, the investigator is able to recognize occult content and context.

## Other Kingdoms [Specializations] (20%)

This skill represents what the investigator knows about the peoples, places, and legends of other kingdoms beyond their own. Such information usually comes from gossip, but may also come from books and other learned sources. Points are spent to purchase specialization

of a particular kingdom. The generic Other Kingdoms skill is not purchased.

### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

**Regular difficulty:** recall geographical information; understand local customs; know local news of import.

**Hard difficulty:** recall a title or position; recognize simple/common words; remember an obscure fact or piece of lore.

**Pushing examples:** spending further time conducting research; asking questions.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** information is misremembered; offense is caused; you get lost or get into trouble.

## Own Kingdom (20%)

This skill represents what the investigator knows about the peoples, lands, and legends of their native kingdom. This information usually comes from experience and tradition. This skill is particularly useful for knowing the folklore and superstitions of one's own people. Use this skill to identify the place and significance of a dialect, which lord governs the land, and local superstitions.

### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

**Regular difficulty:** recall information about local folklore; understand local customs and laws.

**Hard difficulty:** remember a very obscure fact or piece of lore.

**Pushing examples:** spending much longer (forgetful of the time) thinking or observing; talking further with the locals in the village.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** information is misremembered; offense is caused; you get lost or get into trouble.

## Persuade (15%)

Use Persuade to convince a target about a particular idea, concept, or belief through reasoned argument. Persuade may be employed without reference to truth. The successful application of Persuade takes time. If you want to persuade someone quickly, you should use Fast Talk.

Unlike Fast Talk, the effects of Persuade linger indefinitely, until events or another Persuade roll turn the target's mind. Persuade can also be used to barter for goods or services (see **Barter**, page 98).

## Pilot (Boat) (01%)

The character understands the behavior of water craft, understands tides, and can read wave and wind action that suggest reefs and other hidden obstacles.





## Ranged Weapons [Specializations] (varies%)

This skill represents a character's ability with ranged weapons such as bows, crossbows, and slings. Points are spent to purchase specializations. The generic Ranged Weapons skill is not purchased.

**Note:** as a combat skill, this cannot be pushed.

**Bow (10%):** could be a Welsh longbow or a shortbow.

**Crossbow (10%):** crossbows are essentially bows mounted to stocks that have a torsion engine for engaging the bow.

**Sling (20%):** usually a leather strap held either in the hand or attached to a staff, used to fling rocks and other small projectiles.

**War Engine (10%):** trained in the operation of large siege engines, including ballista, catapult, and trebuchet.

## Read and Write (Language) [Specializations] (01%)

In the Dark Ages, reading and writing is a different skill from speaking a language. This skill gives the user the ability to read and write a specific language, provided the language has a written form. A character must have 25% in the skill before he or she can write more than his own name and basic sentences.

In the realm of the Dark Ages, the principal languages with written forms are: Arabic, Old English, Old French, Old German, Hebrew, Latin, Old Norse, Occitan, Slavonic, and Syriac.

## OPTIONAL: ONE SKILL IS TOO EASY

If the Keeper wants greater historical accuracy, have Read and Write (Language) as separate skills. Both Read and Write start at 01% and must be taken individually for each language the character wants to be able to read or write. A character must have at least 25% in Read before he or she can Write the language.

If an occupation includes the Read and Write (Language) skill, and Read and Write are separate skills, the player gains the Read skill. They can choose to invest skill points into a Write skill as they so desire.

## Repair/Devise (20%)

Every investigator can fix or devise simple equipment, boats, roofs, and so forth. This is not a replacement for a dedicated Art/Craft skill; for example, a skilled woodworker can easily make items that will be much better than anything made with the Repair/Devise skill (i.e. longer lasting, better built, durable, and saleable).

The skill allows for simple repairs, although it cannot be used to repair shields or weapons. With Repair/Devise, an investigator can create pitfalls, snares, and other clever traps to catch animals or humans. Tools and special materials may be needed.

### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

**Regular difficulty:** repair simple items; create simple traps.

**Hard difficulty:** use foreign materials (i.e. unusual or lesser quality) to make repairs; devise complex traps.

**Pushing examples:** using items not intended for the task; spending more time to work on the task.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** the item breaks, ruining all of the supplies; the item looks functional, but breaks at the worst possible moment; the trap backfires on you or someone you know.

## Religion (20%)

Religion represents what an investigator knows about their own religion, as well as other religions. The skill may be used to ascertain the proper feast days, recite the saints, and know proper behavior when in a church. Likewise, the user may identify Pagan charms, ceremonial sites, or local gods and spirits.

### Opposing skill/Difficulty level:

**Regular difficulty:** know the proper actions during a ceremony or feast; name the saints.

**Hard difficulty:** know the proper actions during a ceremony or feast you've never attended; name all the saints—even the lesser known ones from Mercia.

**Pushing examples:** asking questions; obviously observing others; touching items that were not meant to be touched.

**Sample Consequences of failing a pushed roll:** you make a blunder and lose 1D10 Status; you spout off the wrong information and anger the bishop; somebody you're copying deliberately makes a mistake to embarrass you.

## Ride Horse (05%)

The rider of horses can care for the animal and the riding gear, can control a steed at a gallop or on difficult terrain, and can remain seated as it jumps an obstacle. Make a skill roll



should a steed rear, stumble, or fall. If an investigator tumbles from a mount because the animal has failed a jump, they've been wounded, or because a Ride roll failed, the rider loses 1D6 hit points in the accident (however, a successful Jump roll reduces the damage by half). Unless otherwise directed by the Keeper, Ride Horse also covers mules, donkeys, camels, and other mounts.

To effectively wield a weapon from horseback requires Ride 50% or better. Riders with a weapon skill of less than 50% take a penalty die to all mounted attack rolls.

At 50% skill, the rider is a proficient trainer and appraiser of horses.

## Science [Specializations] (01%)

Of all the occupations, monks, clerics, and scholars (and possibly a few nobles) may be trained in one of the "seven liberal arts"—the science of the Dark Ages. When choosing this skill, specify: music, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, grammar, dialectic, or rhetoric. From the point of view of the church, these sciences exist merely to reveal the perfection of the God given order in the world.

## Sleight of Hand (10%)

Allows the visual covering-up, secreting or masking of an object or objects, perhaps with debris, cloth, or other intervening or illusion-promoting materials, perhaps by using a secret panel or false compartment. Larger objects of any sort should be increasingly hard to conceal. This skill includes pick-pocketing and palming a small object.

## Spot Hidden (25%)

The user may be able to spot a secret door or compartment, notice a hidden intruder, become aware of a bulging purse,

and so on. When an investigator is searching for a character who is hiding, the opponent's Stealth skill is used to set the difficulty level for the roll.

If a character has only a fleeting chance to spot something, perhaps while running past it, the Keeper may raise the level of difficulty. If the character is conducting a thorough search, the Keeper might award an automatic success. The difficulty level might also be adapted to reflect the environment, it being harder to spot something in a darkened room using only candle light.

## Status (00%)

Status is the *Cthulhu Dark Ages* equivalent of Credit Rating. Each occupation has a listed range for starting Status that players can assign occupation points to during character creation.

An investigator in the Dark Ages is only as good as their reputation. Without that, they are no one; probably considered an outlaw by the rest of society. Status tracks an investigator's ability to move through society. Within the insular communities of the Dark Ages, Status is an index of personal reputation and rank. It's also indicative of bartering power, but the important matter is that the investigator has personal connections that give him or her access to important people. See the example in **Optional Multiple Statuses** for an example of applying Status modifications.

## OPTIONAL: MULTIPLE STATUSES

Depending on how gritty the Keeper wants the game to become, an investigator could have a single Status skill for all encounters, or the player can have and track separate statuses for different groups, organizations, and communities. Naturally this requires a lot more bookkeeping so it is only recommended for longer campaign play where multiple groups and organizations are key to the story.

**For example:** *Skarphedin (Status 50%) runs afoul of Harold Bluetooth, King of Denmark, so he flees to England where he heads to Totburh. While in Totburh, Skarphedin feels guilty for some of his past deeds and donates a sizable amount to the parish church. The Keeper rules that Skarphedin's indiscretion in Denmark reduces his Status (Denmark) to 20% (−30); Skarphedin gains Status (Hearthweru) at 25% (the Keeper decides to halve his starting Status for this new community), and his donation to the church starts his Status (Church) at 35% (25+10).*

## RHETORIC

In *The Art of Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." The science focuses on persuasive language and delivery techniques.

In game terms, Science (Rhetoric) might be used in place of an Insight roll to judge another person's language to determine their motivations. In addition, a successful Rhetoric roll might lower the difficulty level or provide a bonus die to a Persuade roll.



**For example:** *Andreas, the bastard son of Frederik V, has little money and indifferent looks; however, he cuts a mighty swathe through society because he knows many influential people. This skill can represent the chance to get a loan from a moneylender or to bluff past the Count's guards for a private audience. Andreas' status may ebb and flow because of scandal or heroic action. In special situations, the Keeper might call for a Status roll instead of Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade.*

Status is not so much a skill as a gauge of bartering power, and should not be ticked as other skills are. A high Status can be a useful resource in play and so should be paid for with skill points when creating an investigator. Each occupation has a starting range for Status, and skill points should be spent to achieve a rating therein.

The Dark Ages are a time where hard currency isn't used in most transactions, barter is; however, it is useful to know the bounds of an investigator's financial reach—for example, can the investigator afford to hire a group of guards to protect him on his pilgrimage to Exham Priory?

An investigator's Status can change over time. Investigators of the Cthulhu Mythos are prone to insanity, and this may lead to odd behavior at inappropriate times and thus a lowering of the investigator's Status. The default Status modification for perceived good or bad behavior is +/-10%.

## Stealth (20%)

Stealth is the ability to move quietly and to remain in hiding without alerting anyone. To avoid detection, a player should attempt a Stealth roll. Ability with the skill suggests that the character is adept at moving quietly, skilled in camouflage, or both. The skill also represents an investigator's ability to maintain a level of patience and cool-headedness in order to remain still and unseen for long periods.

## Swim (25%)

The ability to float in and to self-propel through water. Roll Swim only in times of crisis or danger. Halve movement rates for humans and horses while swimming. Failing a pushed Swim roll can result in loss of hit points; it may also lead to the person being washed away downstream, partially or completely drowned.

## Throw (25%)

Various items can be thrown with a variety of intentions. A palm-sized object designed to be thrown in play, such as a ball or a water-smoothed rock, can be hurled up to STR in yards. If the Throw roll fails, the object lands at some random distance from the target. The Keeper should compare the closeness of the die roll result to the highest number which would have indicated success, and choose a distance between target and thrown object that feels comparable.

If a weapon can be thrown, such as an axe, knife, spear, or javelin, use the investigator's skill in the weapon, not the investigator's Throw skill to determine success or failure.

## Track (10%)

With Track, an investigator can visually follow the trail of a person or animal over soft earth, through leaves, across broken ground, and so on. Factors, such as time passed since the tracks were made, rain, and the type of ground covered, may affect the difficulty level.

A being cannot be visually tracked across water or at night, except in very unusual circumstances. The scent of a passing animal may cling to the protected underside of leaves, even after considerable rainfall. People of ghoulish temperament are often expert trackers, able to rely on both visual and scent trails.



Scholar



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# INVESTIGATOR ORGANIZATIONS

When people think of medieval organizations, the first images to spring to mind are knightly orders, far-reaching religious orders, and mercantile guilds. Feel free to introduce them into a game, but know that those types of organizations won't take a hold on Medieval Europe until the 12th century or even later. For the most part, the world still revolves around small communities and the interstices between them, without a lot of awareness of the past; and this selection of organizations represents that.

Use these organizations as presented or use them as inspiration for new groups for your own version of 10th and 11th century England.

## CONGREGANTS

### History

Monastic reforms (begun at Cluny Abbey on the continent) came to England in 959 CE. This reformation sought to not only unify religious worship in a newly unified kingdom, but also enhance the prestige of the king as a patron of art and learning. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and Oswald, Archbishop of York lead the movement in response to corruption in the Church. Simony (the act of selling church offices and roles) and concubinage (relationships outside of marriage) are rampant, and many wealthy, secular powers have their hands in the Church. Since a monastery needs land, it is often beholden to a local lord. With the reforms, abbots are directly responsible to the Pope, and therefore hold their lands from the Pope instead of local lords.

Another issue for the reforms is that many feel some monasteries, usually because of corruption, are drifting away from the Benedictine Rule and so need to be brought back into the fold. The reformed monasteries in England go one step further, with the king urging all monasteries to practice one rule in the same manner. To accomplish this, the Bishop of Winchester, Æthelwold, creates the Congregants, a group of Benedictine monks and lay brothers who travel from monastery to monastery ensuring that there is uniformity. Despite the reforms, the Congregants find anything but unity—in some monasteries the Congregants find much worse. Instead of monks following lax abbots, they find apostasy. The monks worship other gods and practice foul rites.

Once such event happened in 960 CE, just as the reforms were taking hold. A group of Congregants entered the

Monastery of St. Genesius, located at the border with Cymru. As the Congregants poured over the ledgers and observed rituals, one of the Congregants noticed that the monks had hired numerous local builders, yet the abbey remained in a state of disrepair. Thinking they had found evidence of fraud, the Congregants began digging. From speaking with the people of the nearby village, the Congregants discovered that the monks had built a secret chamber beneath the monastery. Eventually, the Congregants found a trap door hidden under the pews leading to the secret chamber. Inside, a large stone cistern filled with a roiling black liquid was beheld by the Congregants. At that very moment, the abbot and several monks entered the chamber, pushing one of the Congregants into the cistern. The liquid suddenly formed multitudinous mouths and proceeded to tear the screaming man to shreds. The remaining Congregants met the same fate, almost to a man. One lay brother, Wighelm, managed to escape screaming into the night. By the time he returned to Winchester, his mind and body were broken beyond repair. However, Æthelwold, heeded Wighelm's story to be a stark warning of the evil in his domain. The bishop calls upon Congregants to seek out such devilry, but to take care lest they meet the same fate as Wighelm's companions.

### Influence

Within a monastery that they're investigating, the word of a Congregant is law, bound by the Benedictine Rule. Outside of their investigative duties, a member has no more authority than any other religious or lay Benedictine.

### Becoming A Congregant

To join, a person should have Status (Benedictine Order) 35% and two or more of the following skills at 60% or higher: Accounting, Intimidate, Library Use, Religion, or Spot Hidden. The applicant must also be a professed, baptized Christian, and have three people provide testimony as to the person's good behavior.

Use the conditions above when creating investigators who will be Congregants, otherwise investigators may be approached to join after they have gained a reputation (and necessary skill levels) for their good works and ability to deal with evidence of devilry and heresy.

### Structure

There are numerous groups of Congregants, with the Bishop of Winchester at the head. Each group is equal to the others in terms of power and influence. Each "Congregant" is comprised of six members, who can be either members of the Church or laypersons (i.e. a non-ordained member of a church).



## TITHING OF EAWULF

### History

A scant five years ago, Eawulf was a moderately successful priest. He had a loyal flock that provided for his needs and hung on his every word. His church, although isolated from the world at large by a dense forest, served the needs of the small community at his doorstep. Then, it all fell apart. A traveling priest, Forstes, swept through Eawulf's tiny congregation one day and quickly had everyone believing his eschatological pronouncements. Even Eawulf fell for the

man's subtle tweaks of Christian doctrine, and soon started following the man's teachings. The longer the congregations followed Forstes, the more divergent his teachings became. And everyone went along willingly, reveling in the worship.

During a sermon by the new priest, as Eawulf hoisted the screaming sacrifice to the rafters of the church, he caught a glimpse of the priest's true form: a misshapen, hunched man surrounded by roiling black smoke. Eawulf quickly turned his gaze back to the howling woman who was to soon be eviscerated; however, when he looked back to the pulpit, Forstes appeared as his normal self, a knowing smirk on his

## CONGREGANTS: NOTABLE MEMBERS

### ÆTHELWOLD, *age 55, Bishop of Winchester*

**STR** 40   **CON** 60   **SIZ** 50   **DEX** 70   **INT** 95  
**APP** 60   **POW** 80   **EDU** 95   **SAN** 80   **HP** 11  
**Damage Bonus:** 0   **Build:** 0   **Move:** 6   **MP:** 16

#### Combat

Brawl   30% (15/6), damage 1D3  
Dodge   35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Illuminate) 40%, Charm 55%, First Aid 55%, Insight 85%, Intimidate 75%, Language (English) 85%, Language (Latin) 80%, Library Use 70%, Natural World 50%, Occult 25%, Own Kingdom 70%, Persuade 80%, Read/Write (English) 75%, Read/Write (Latin) 80%, Religion 95%, Spot Hidden 35%, Status (The Church) 75%, Status (Congregants) 80%.

#### Backstory

- **Description:** Dark and piercing eyes; full, dark brown beard
- **Traits:** Learned, curious, and zealous.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Be as terrible as a lion to the rebellious and corrupt.
- **Significant People:** King Edgar, also King Æthelstan (his original patron).

### AVERAGE LAY CONGREGANT

**STR** 50   **CON** 65   **SIZ** 75   **DEX** 80   **INT** 85  
**APP** 40   **POW** 70   **EDU** 70   **SAN** 70   **HP** 14  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4   **Build:** 1   **Move:** 8   **MP:** 14

#### Combat

Brawl   50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear   35% (17/7), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge   40% (20/8)

#### Skills

Accounting 65%, Insight 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 40%, Navigate 55%, Persuade 45%, Religion 65%, Status (Church) 40%, Status (Congregants) 40%.

**Armor:** Heavy leather clothes (1D3-1).

### AVERAGE RELIGIOUS CONGREGANT

**STR** 55   **CON** 70   **SIZ** 60   **DEX** 50   **INT** 85  
**APP** 60   **POW** 65   **EDU** 80   **SAN** 65   **HP** 13  
**Damage Bonus:** 0   **Build:** 0   **Move:** 7   **MP:** 13

#### Combat

Brawl   35% (17/7), damage 1D3  
Dodge   25% (12/5)

#### Skills

Accounting 45%, Insight 65%, Language (Latin) 55%, Library Use 65%, Persuade 50%, Religion 65%, Read/Write (English) 35%, Read/Write (Latin) 35%, Status (Church) 45%, Status (Congregants) 40%.

**Armor:** None



## CHAPTER 3

face. Albeit fallen, Eawulf was once a man of God and knew the devil's face when he saw it.

Eawulf screamed and fled into the forest. At first he had to avoid search parties during the day and strange, mocking birds at night. As the weeks turned into months, attempts to find him faded away and Eawulf hatched a plan. One night he stole back to his former church under the cover of fog. The sermon of Forstes, preaching of the coming of his great God, reverberated through the clearing. Making sure none of the ugly birds were perched on the roof, Eawulf barred the doors from the outside and set the building on fire. The pitiful screams of his former community rocked Eawulf to his soul, but what frightened him most was the calm voice of Forstes continuing his litany even as the voices of the congregation faltered one by one.

Within hours, the building had burned to the ground. Standing at the center was Forstes, in his true form. He held Eawulf's gaze for a long minute, the same smirk on his face, before turning and walking into the woods, slowly reforming into a new guise. When he tried to follow, a guttering brand still grasped tightly, Eawulf found himself rooted to the spot. Eawulf was forced to stand amid the carnage he had wrought, watching the bodies of his former congregants burn, the odor of their charred flesh lingering long after the fire subsided. When morning came, whatever bonds held Eawulf loosened and he fell to the earth, sobbing.

Eawulf spent the next year and a day as a wandering lunatic. He relied on the kindness of other for his daily sustenance. One day, while seeking refuge in a town, he saw Forstes talking to the thane. Eawulf's mind snapped into action. He grabbed a rock and charged Forstes. The thane's hearthwaru stopped Eawulf and ejected him from the town, only the kind words of Forstes saving Eawulf from exile and outlawry.

Eawulf once again resumed wandering, this time with a purpose. He sought out those who believed his claims that the devil walked among them. Eawulf formed a tithing of nine like-minded men and women. Now, those ten people hunt Forstes, believing him to be the Christian Devil, unaware that in fact Forstes may be actually something much, much worse.

Eawulf and many of his people take a hard line against anything they view as diabolical. They won't hesitate to subject someone to an ordeal or outright kill them if they believe the person has a connection to the Devil. Eawulf doesn't share the Church's opinion that heretics should be given every chance to reform and repent.

### Influence

The Tithing of Eawulf is very localized. It has little influence outside the community in which Eawulf operates from (which is left to the Keeper to determine). Within that community, however, Eawulf and his tithing can be influential in swaying some opinions.

Eawulf and his tithing are frequently viewed as extremists by members of the Church. Eawulf is considered to be a man who has lost everything and who isn't adequately coping with that loss. Among the common folk, though, Eawulf and his group are sometimes viewed as heroes, struggling to rid the world of the Devil. That is, until Eawulf decides that one of the common folk is subject to diabolical leanings and proceeds to inflict punishment on the allegedly evil person. Then, the community turns on Eawulf and he moves to another region in search of his nemesis, Forstes.

### Joining

Whenever the group has less than ten members, new ones are recruited. Members are lost through death, insanity, or disloyalty. Someone has to prove their worth to the organization and take a pledge to be responsible for the actions and responsibilities of the other members.

It is possible that Eawulf has persuaded others to join his cause. Consequently, at the Keeper's discretion, investigators could be members of another splinter group of ten members who operate independently, while remaining loyal to the beliefs and practices of Eawulf. At certain times, the groups meet and exchange information, as well as determine where next to cast their eye.

### Structure

Each *tithingman*, a term used irrespective of the person's gender, is equal to all others, although Eawulf is the current *headborough* (leader). He guides the decisions of the Tithing, but can be outvoted by the other members. As such, the structure is very flat. Anyone with Status (Tithing of Eawulf) 75% or higher can make a case to be headborough. If a majority of the other members agree, that claimant becomes headborough and the former headborough becomes a tithingman.

If the headborough is ever killed, driven insane, or leaves the Tithing, anyone with Status (Tithing of Eawulf) 75% or higher can make a claim to be headborough. If the majority of the tithingmen agree, the title is conferred to the claimant. If there's dissent, the matter is settled through a *holmgang* (ritual duel)—something Eawulf learned from some Scandinavian travelers.



## Resources

The Tithing of Eawulf has few resources to offer investigators other than the safety of the homesteads of its members. Eawulf believes he is fighting the Christian Devil, so he's accumulated no Mythos lore or artifacts.

However, Eawulf and his fellow members have stockpiled a large cache of spears, knives, and shields. The homesteads also stock bags of salt and various herbs, both believed to be proof against the Devil.



## TITHING OF EAWULF: NOTABLE MEMBERS

### EAWULF, age 34, Headborough

STR 60   CON 60   SIZ 70   DEX 70   INT 75  
 APP 60   POW 80   EDU 45   SAN 46   HP 13  
 Damage Bonus: +1D4   Build: 1   Move: 8   MP: 16

#### Combat

Brawl      30% (15/6), damage 1D3+1D4  
 Spear      70% (35/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
 Dodge      35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Woodworking) 65%, Charm 40%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Natural World 25%, Navigate 50%, Religion 65%, Spot Hidden 65%, Status (Tithing of Eawulf) 85%, Status (Totburh) 10%, Stealth 65%.

#### Backstory

- **Description:** Scarred face and hands (burns), light brown beard and sinewy musculature.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Seeks vengeance on Forstes (the Devil). Sometimes, it's necessary to spill blood.
- **Significant People:** Forstes, his nemesis.
- **Treasured Possession:** Wooden shield crafted from the burned timbers of his former church.
- **Traits:** Stoic, passionate in his hatred of the Devil.
- **Injuries/Scars:** Scars from burns and numerous fights cover his body.

**Armor:** Leather and rings (1D6+1), wooden round shield (1D3).

### AVERAGE TITHING MEMBER

STR 80   CON 85   SIZ 80   DEX 60   INT 60  
 APP 45   POW 65   EDU 45   SAN 65   HP 16  
 Damage Bonus: +1D4   Build: 1   Move: 8   MP: 13

#### Combat

Brawl      50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4  
 Spear      55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D4  
 Dodge      30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Climb 40%, Insight 40%, Intimidate 50%, Jump 40%, Navigate 25%, Persuade 30%, Ride 45%, Status (Tithing of Eawulf) 50%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Leather (1D6).





# WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

*Cthulhu Dark Ages* isn't really a game about who has the flashiest equipment, but investigators will need the tools of the trade if they're to survive. This section contains information not only on weapons and armor, but the mundane equipment that every investigator forgets until that critical moment. Keepers and players should refer to the rules for **Barter** (page 98) to determine the most efficient method of acquiring to new gear during play.

## Costs, Equipment, and Services

Listed prices are for new goods and should be compared to an investigator's spending limit as determined by his Status. Two factors that influence the price of an item are availability and quality.

Although prices are listed in pennies (d), the primary means for conducting any transaction is barter. Currency, in the form of coins exists, but relatively few people have them and use them. Barter isn't about getting a set group of items for another set group of items. It's about a transaction involving goods or services where both sides believe they're getting a good deal.

You won't find lists saying that three swords are equivalent to a horse; a fancy brooch will get you two spears, a shield, and a pair of shoes; or six days of reaping wheat will get you a peek at the *Necronomicon* for four hours. Fair offers should be considered. Charm, Intimidate, Fast Talk, or Persuade can help in the transaction, but if the other party believes they were hoodwinked, the silver-tongued trader better be careful the next time because word of dubious traders spreads far and fast.

## DARK AGE CURRENCY

The silver d (penny) forms the basis of the Anglo-Saxon economy.

Number of Pence	Stated Value
240 pence	Pound
120 pence	Half-pound
30 pence	Mancus
12 pence	Shilling

## Animals

Cow	24 d
Farm dog	12 d
Horse	240+ d
Horse, War Steed	600 d
Mule	36 d
Ox	24–108 d
Sheep	12–15 d
Sow	12–54 d

## Boats

Rowboat	120 d
Raft	12 d
Norse Longboat	9000 d
Norse Knorr	3000 d
Merchant boat (rowboat/pump optional)	12000 d
Byzantine merchant ship (incl. rowboat)	24000 d

## Buildings

Commoner's hut	72 d
Commoner's house	360 d
Short wooden bridge	420 d
Fishery	480 d
Timber hall	720 d
Water mill	810 d
Small farm with land	4800 d
Earth and timber castle	36000 d

## Clothing

Blanket, felt	5 d
Blanket, wolf	200 d
Blanket, woolen	20 d
Boots, leather	120 d
Cloak, long (superior)	240 d
Cloak, short (superior)	120 d
Cloak, hooded	60 d
Cloak, marten (noble)	360 d
Double cloak, hooded (winter)	140 d
Dress, woolen	12 d
Dress, linen (superior)	120 d
Leggings	20 d
Leggings, leather (winter)	50 d
Linen cloth (bolt)	20 d
Outerwear (rain resistant)	100 d
Robe	40 d
Robe, hooded	60 d
Silk thread (foot)	18 d
Shoes, leather	25 d
Slouch cap	3 d
Tunic, short woolen	12 d
Tunic, long linen	50 d



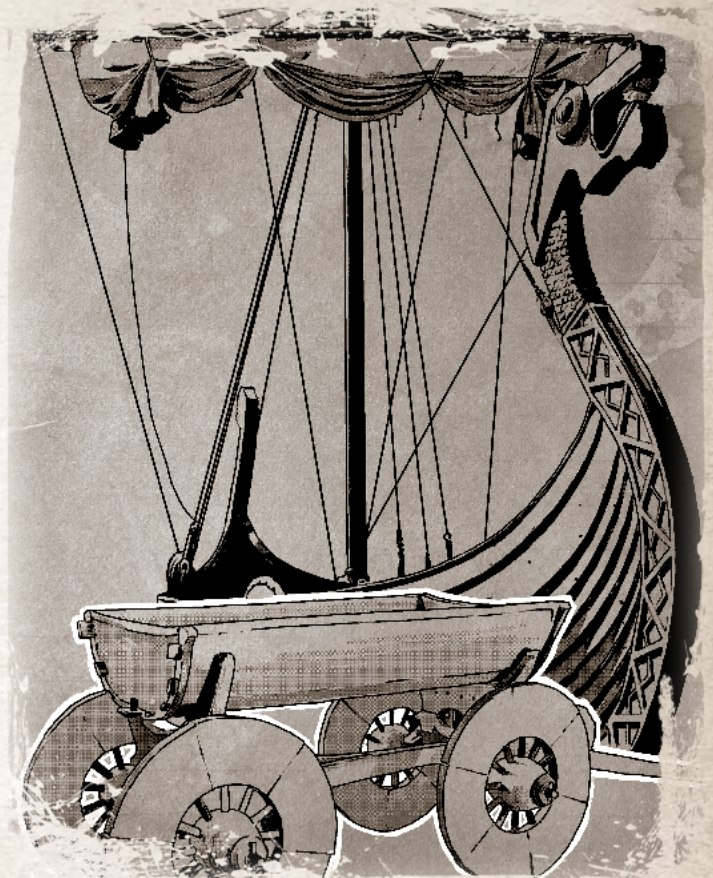
Plain cloth (bolt) . . . . .	10 d
Woolen pelisse—cheap . . . . .	12 d

## Food

Ale (1 mug) . . . . .	1 d
Beer (2 mugs) . . . . .	1 d
Bread (2 lbs.) . . . . .	1 d
Cheese (2 lbs.) . . . . .	1 d
Eggs (3 doz.) . . . . .	1 d
Food and lodging, 1 day . . . . .	1–5 d
Honey (8 oz.) . . . . .	5 d
Horse fodder, 1 day . . . . .	3–6 d
Mead (1 mug) . . . . .	1 d
Meat, high quality (1 lb.) . . . . .	50 d
Meat, middling quality (1 lb.) . . . . .	25 d
Meat, poor quality (1 lb.) . . . . .	10 d
Meat? (1 lb.) . . . . .	5 d

## Musical Instruments

Adufe . . . . .	5 d
Bell . . . . .	1 d
Bagpipe . . . . .	40 d
Ciðera . . . . .	40 d
Crumhorn . . . . .	15 d
Crwth . . . . .	30 d
Drum . . . . .	10 d
Harp, triangular frame . . . . .	150 d
Horn . . . . .	10 d
Langhalslaute . . . . .	25 d



## TABLE: VESSELS

Vessel	Size	Crew	Cargo	Draft <sup>1</sup>
Byzantine Merchant	72 feet long, 20 feet wide	12 sailors	100 tons	12 feet
Merchant Boat (Kogge)	50 feet long, 15 feet wide	6 sailors	50 tons	10 feet
Norse Knorr	36 feet long, 10 feet wide	4 sailors	8 tons	3 feet
Raft/Barge	15 feet long, 10 feet wide	1 poleman	2 tons	1 foot
Rowboat	10 feet long, 4 feet wide	1 rower	1/2 ton	1 foot
Viking Longboat	72 feet long, 15 feet wide	40 rowers	16 tons	3 feet

### Key:

1—The draft of a ship's hull is the vertical distance between the waterline and the lowest point (bottom) of the vessel. Draft determines the minimum depth of water a ship or boat can safely navigate.

*A wagon and a viking warship*



## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Many of the listed musical instruments, or at least their names, might be unfamiliar to some people. Here are descriptions of many of the instruments.

**Adufe:** A square tambourine with goatskin mounted over a wooden frame.

**Bagpipe:** A reed instrument consisting of a melody pipe and one or more accompanying dronepipes protruding from a windbag into which the air is blown by the mouth or a bellows.

**Bell:** The same bell hung around animal necks is used for musical accompaniment.

**Cíðera:** A four-stringed instrument with a holly-leaf shaped body.

**Crumhorn:** A capped reed member of the woodwind family. The instrument is curved similar to a crook. Finger holes along the length are used to control the pitch.

**Crwth:** A type of lyre with a flat, fretless fingerboard and six strings.

**Drum:** The traditional Dark Ages drum is either a two-ended drum held on a rope, or a frame drum, such as the bohrán.

**Harp, triangular frame:** A multi-stringed instrument where the strings are perpendicular to the soundboard.

**Horn:** Usually made from wood or animal horn and without finger holes. Often referred to as a blasting horn.

**Langhalslaute:** A long-necked variant of the lute.

**Lyra:** A wooden instrument with three to five strings. Roughly pear-shaped, the performer stops the strings on the neck with the sides of his nails instead of the flesh of his fingers.

**Lyre:** A six-stringed instrument that could have been hand-plucked or played with a bow.

**Organ, church:** A traditional organ. Usually only found in cathedrals. The typical manor church wouldn't have one.

**Organ, portable:** Usually consists of one rank of pipes, often in two rows. The performer wears the instrument strapped to his side and manipulates the bellows with one hand and the keys with the other.

**Pibgorn:** A single-reed cut from a single piece of elder. It has six finger holes and a thumbhole.

**Rebec:** A three-stringed instrument played with a bow.

**Sangpipe:** The panpipes.

**Shawm:** A woodwind turned from a single piece of wood with a flared end similar to a trumpet. The predecessor to the modern oboe.

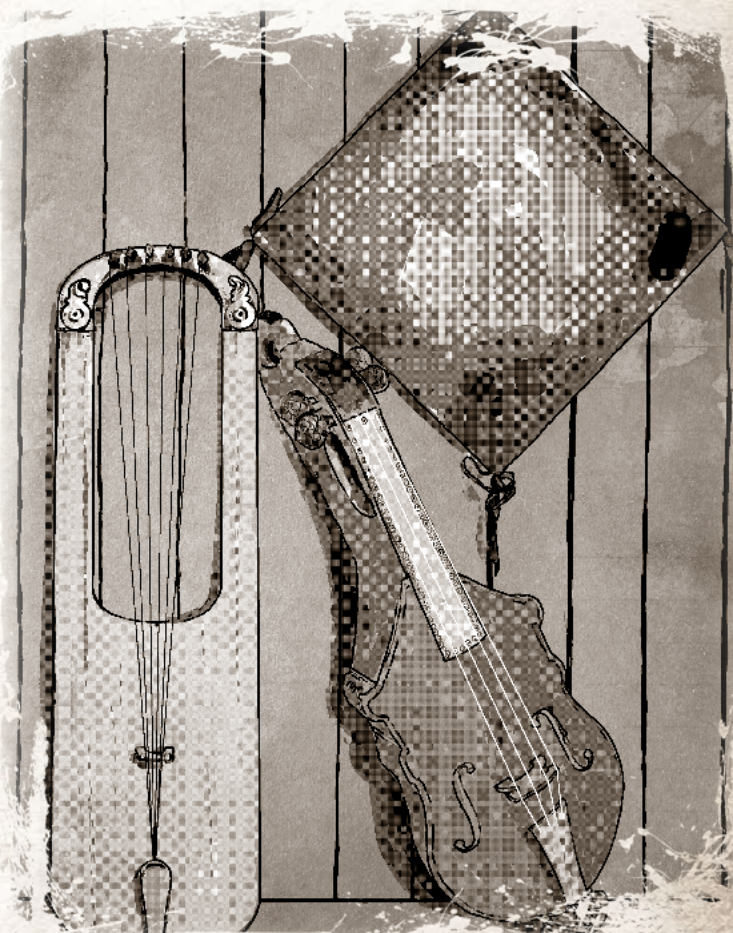
**Whistle:** Usually made of bone or wood and blown into like a modern penny whistle.

Lyra . . . . .	30 d
Lyre . . . . .	25 d
Organ, church . . . . .	2000 d
Organ, portable . . . . .	150 d
Pibgorn . . . . .	20 d
Rebec . . . . .	50 d
Sangpipe . . . . .	15 d
Shawm . . . . .	20 d
Whistle . . . . .	1 d

*All these instruments are basic. Highly decorated and elaborate versions can cost up to ten times more.*

## Scriptorium

Boards (2 oak or beech) . . . . .	10 d
Chalk (1 oz.) . . . . .	3 d
Ink, iron gall (1 oz.) . . . . .	50 d
Ink, pigmented (1 oz.) . . . . .	100 d
Parchment (4 sheets) . . . . .	100 d
Pen . . . . .	2 d
Thread/Cord (1 ft.) . . . . .	5 d
Vellum (4 sheets) . . . . .	300 d





## Tools

Set of tools . . . . .	4–24 d
Bucket, big enough to sit on . . . . .	24 d
Bucket, wooden . . . . .	12 d
Fishing line and hook . . . . .	10 d
Flintstone and iron . . . . .	50 d
Glass, finely ground (1 oz.) . . . . .	200 d
Grater . . . . .	10 d
Horn, drinking . . . . .	5 d
Horn, ornate drinking . . . . .	100 d
Lancet, bone . . . . .	5 d
Lancet, iron . . . . .	10 d
Lancet, steel . . . . .	75 d
Jug . . . . .	3 d
Jug, lidded . . . . .	10 d
Kettle . . . . .	20 d
Leech's kit: (see <b>Doctor's Toolkit</b> page 34) . . . . .	500 d
Light (resin torch, oil, or candle (2 hours light)) . . . . .	1 d
Mortar and pestle . . . . .	30 d
Mug, wooden . . . . .	5 d
Mug, ceramic . . . . .	25 d

Plow (iron plowshare and colter) . . . . .	140 d
Pot, copper . . . . .	75 d
Pot, crockery . . . . .	10 d
Pot, iron . . . . .	15 d
Rope, creeper (30 ft.) . . . . .	2 d
Rope, fiber (30 ft.) . . . . .	12 d
Sack . . . . .	5 d
Saucer, copper . . . . .	10 d
Sickle, hand axe, pick axe, spade . . . . .	24 d
Sieve, small . . . . .	50 d
Sieve, large . . . . .	100 d
Swing plow . . . . .	72 d
Tally sticks (used for accounting) . . . . .	50 d
Tent (6 person), incl. two 10 ft. poles . . . . .	360 d
Traveler's pack* . . . . .	240 d
<i>*water-skin, knife, fishing line &amp; hook, felt blanket, sack, flintstone &amp; iron, whetstone.</i>	
Vessel, brass . . . . .	50 d
Vessel, copper . . . . .	75 d
Warrior gear* . . . . .	2400 d
<i>*war-horse, saddle, horn, helm, sword, spear, chainmail, shield (round, wooden).</i>	
Water skin . . . . .	1 d
Whetstone . . . . .	100 d

## Weapons, Shields, and Armor

*For full list, refer to the weapon tables on pages 92–93.*

24 arrows or 12 bolts . . . . .	12 d
Fine scabbard . . . . .	48 d
Helm . . . . .	100 d

## Vehicles

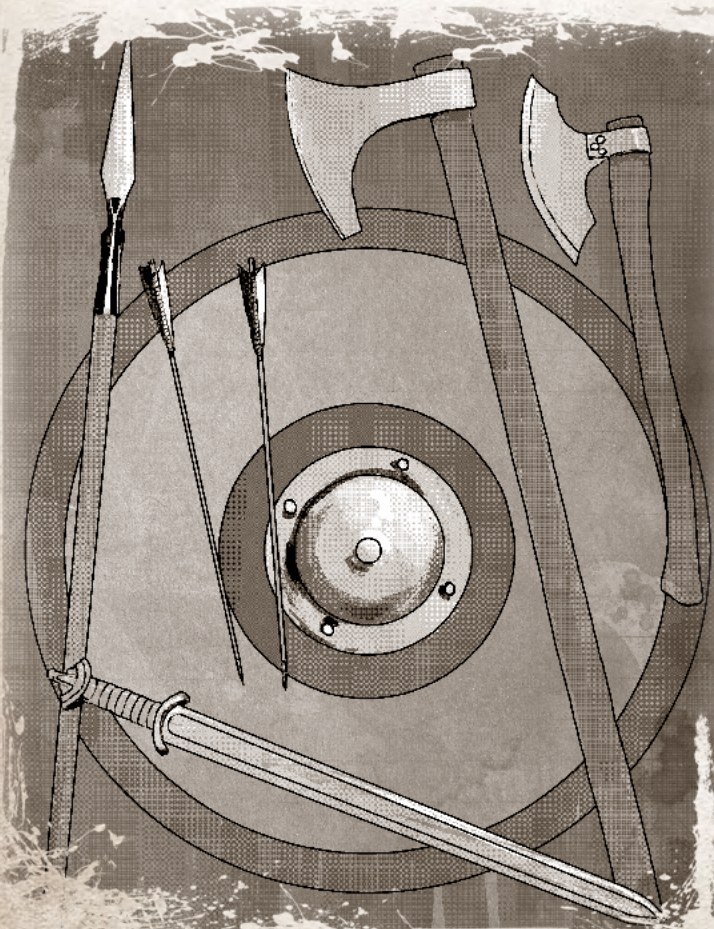
Wheelbarrow . . . . .	12 d
Two-wheeled cart . . . . .	120 d
Four-wheeled wagon* . . . . .	240 d
Four wheeled cart* (leathered) . . . . .	360 d

*\*Four-wheeled carts in the Dark Ages lacked a pivoting beam. Ox carts covered with leather are watertight.*

## Weekly Wages (sample)

*These values represent either equivalent earnings or hiring wages.*

Craftsman, sailor . . . . .	3–6 d
Farmer, priest, servant . . . . .	1–3 d
Guard, cleric, mercenary . . . . .	4–8 d
Warrior, merchant . . . . .	20–40 d





## TABLE: HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

Weapon	Skill	Base%	Damage	Uses per Round	1 or 2 Hands	Length	Impale	Min STR/DEX <sup>1</sup>	Cost <sup>2</sup>
Unarmed	Brawl	25	1D4	1	1H or 2H	-	No	-	-
Axe	Axe	15	1D6	1	1H	Medium	Yes	40/45	80
Axe, Great	Axe	15	2D6	1	2H	Long	Yes	55/45	100
Axe, Pick	Axe	15	2D6	1	2H	Medium	Yes	55/45	90
Club	Brawl	25	1D6	1	1H	Medium	No	-	-
Hammer, Quarry	Mace	25	2D6	1	1H	Medium	No	55/45	80
Flail	Flail	10	1D6	1	1H	Medium	No	45/35	90
Knife, Small	Brawl	25	1D4	1	1H	Short	Yes	-	10
Knife, Large	Brawl	25	1D6	1	1H	Short	Yes	-	15
Lance	Lance	15	1D8 <sup>3</sup>	1	1H	Long	Yes	45/40	80
Mace	Mace	25	1D6	1	1H	Medium	No	35/35	60
Scimitar	Sword	20	1D8	1	1H	Medium	Yes	40/40	Rare
Spear, Short	Spear	15	1D6	1	1H	Long	Yes	35/40	40
Spear, Long	Spear	15	1D10	1	2H	Long	Yes	55/45	50
Staff	Staff	25	1D6	1	2H	Long	No	40/30	-
Sword, Short	Sword	20	1D6	1	1H	Medium	Yes	25/25	150
Sword, Long	Sword	20	1D8	1	2H	Long	Yes	40/35	210

### Key:

1—Minimum STR/DEX required to use weapon effectively; if less than minimum, the character can still fight but takes a penalty die when using the weapon.

2—Price in pennies (d). Price varies depending on availability and quality.

3—If riding a horse, apply the horse's damage bonus.





## TABLE: MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Skill	Base%	Damage	Base Range	Uses per Round	Impale	Min STR/DEX <sup>2</sup>	Cost <sup>3</sup>
Axe	Axe	15	1D6 <sup>1</sup>	5 yards	1	Yes	30/30	80
Axe, Frankish	Axe	15	1D6+1 <sup>1</sup>	STR/5 yards	1	Yes	30/30	100
Bow	Bow	10	1D6 <sup>1</sup>	30 yards	1	Yes	30/40	60
Crossbow	Crossbow	10	1D8+2	50 yards	1/2	Yes	30/20	Rare
Knife	Brawl	25	1D4 <sup>1</sup>	STR/5 yards	1	Yes	-	10
Rock	Throw	25	1D2 <sup>1</sup>	STR/5 yards	1	No	-	-
Sling	Sling	20	1D4 <sup>1</sup>	60 yards	1	No	-	5
Spear, Short	Spear	15	1D8 <sup>1</sup>	STR/5 yards	1	Yes	35/40	40
Spear, Long	Spear	15	1D10 <sup>1</sup>	STR/5 yards	1	Yes	40/40	50

**Key:**

1—Add half damage bonus to weapon's damage.

2—Minimum STR/DEX required to use weapon effectively; if less than minimum, the character can still fight but takes a penalty die when using the weapon.

3—Price in pennies (d). Price varies depending on availability and quality.

## TABLE: WAR ENGINES

Siege engines are bulky constructs and it can take up to an hour to aim one. Siege engines can only hit objects in their line of sight. The ballista shoots missiles along a more or less straight path like a crossbow, whereas the catapult and the trebuchet fling their payload (for these, range is a question of projectile weight: the lighter, the farther; damage remains the same).

Weapon	Skill	Base% <sup>1</sup>	Damage <sup>2</sup>	Base Range <sup>3</sup>	Reload <sup>4</sup>	Impale	Crew <sup>5</sup>	Cost <sup>6</sup>
Ballista	War Engine	10	6D6 (18)	150 yards	2 mins	Yes	3	400
Catapult	War Engine	10	30D6 (90)	100 yards	5 mins	No	3	900
Trebuchet*, Traction	War Engine	10	4D6 (12)	75 yards	2 rounds	No	50	300
Trebuchet*, Hybrid	War Engine	10	50D6 (150)	50 yards	10 mins	No	10	1500

**Key:**

1—Chance to hit assumes targets of SIZ 30 or more. Increase difficulty of roll if SIZ is less than 30.

2—Average damage indicated within brackets. Damage bonus does not apply. The ballista shoots missiles resembling spear-sized bolts. The catapult launches 60 lb. rocks. The traction trebuchet can lob 10 lb. heavy stones. The hybrid trebuchet flings anything weighing up to 200 pounds!

3—When using war engines, the crew may attempt to hit a target at up to double the base range—increase the difficulty level by one level.

4—Time taken to reload and prepare the engine for use, either in minutes or rounds.

5—Number of people required to operate the engine.

6—Cost in pennies.

*\* Note that the trebuchet was not used in the Occident until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Byzantines and the Arabs, however, had been using the engine for three centuries already.*



### Damascus Weapons

Each Damascus weapon is the result of weeks of superior craftsmanship and knowledge. The iron of the core, imported from India, is almost pure, while the edges contain some carbon (but not too much to enable welding). To harden the edges further, nitrogen is worked into the steel via bird excrement.

Damascus weapons are lighter than their ordinary counterparts, yet resist flexing three times better, and they are strong enough to cut through metal armor.

Unsurprisingly, Damascus weapons are rare and more expensive than regular ones. The knowledge to craft these fine weapons is known to only a few master smiths in the Orient. Very few of the weapons are found in the Occident. For an Occidental investigator to acquire such a weapon requires a long journey and the expenditure of a lot of money or barter goods.

Damascus weapons are a symbol of great pride to those warriors able to carry them into battle.

Swords, axes, spears, and knives can all be made as Damascus weapons. A Damascus weapon confers +2 damage and ignores 1 point of armor. Note that if the optional wear and tear rule is being used, a Damascus weapon only breaks on a “00” fumbled Luck roll (see **Weapon Wear and Tear**, page 116). A Damascus weapon is not a magic weapon.

### WHERE ARE THE MAGICAL WEAPONS?

Players looking for magical weapons to even the odds with the Mythos are out of luck. Magical weapons are exceedingly rare in *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. Keep in mind the magical weapons found in medieval folklore, such as Excalibur. An entire campaign should be dedicated to recovering the great sword of an ancestor. Then, when the investigator acquires the sword, he learns that it doesn’t give him any martial superiority, but it does allow him to be named king.

If investigators have magical weapons, the struggle to survive is lessened and it’s easier for the players to adopt a “kill the monsters and take their stuff” mentality, which is not the focus or scope of *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. Keepers are encouraged to avoid introducing magical weapons, but if they must, they should do so sparingly and in the tradition of medieval folklore.

Magical weapons won’t confer a bonus to hit or to damage. Instead, a magical weapon, if it confers any martial bonus at all, allows a player to potentially strike and damage a creature immune to physical attacks. Then, to compound matters, the wondrous weapons in most medieval tales carry a drawback, usually in the form of the bearer suffering a great loss or a curse.



## TABLE: SHIELDS

A shield provides additional armor to the person using it. When hit by an attacker, the shield gives protection equal to the shield's Armor value. Shields may also be used as weapons in their own right using the Fighting (Shield) skill.

Shields listed are reinforced with iron. Wooden shields cost 25% of listed price, but deduct 1 armor point.

Shield	Armor <sup>1</sup>	Damage <sup>2</sup>	STR/DEX <sup>3</sup>	Cost <sup>4</sup>
Improvised*	1D2 to 1D4	1D2+DB	-	-
Buckler	1D2	1D2+DB	-	40
Round, Wooden	1D3	1D3+DB	30/30	60
Round, Viking	1D4	1D4+DB	40/40	80
Kite	1D4+1	1D4+1+DB	40/40	80
Tower	1D6	1D4+1+DB	45/30	100

**Key:**

1—Amount of damage stopped by the shield. Damage in excess of the armor goes through as hit point damage to shield user (but may be stopped if personal armor is also being worn).

2—The damage caused by using the shield as a weapon.

3—Minimum STR/DEX required to use shield effectively; if less than minimum, the character can still use the shield but can do nothing else save hide beneath it.

4—Price in pennies (d). Price varies depending on availability and quality.

## TABLE: ARMOR

Dark Ages armor is not machine made, so it has a variable value determined after every hit. For each hit taken, roll the appropriate dice to determine effectiveness of the armor.

Armor fitted for one person may fit another: allow +/- 10% SIZ to determine if a certain person's armor may fit another character.

Armor & Helm	Armor <sup>1</sup>	Rounds <sup>2</sup>	Cost <sup>3</sup>
Normal Clothes	0	-	-
Heavy Clothes	1D2-1	1	-
Leather, Quilted/Soft	1D2	2	50
Leather, Heavy Quilted	1D3	2	60
Leather, Boiled	1D6	2	100
Leather and Rings	1D6+1	2	400
Leather and Scales	1D6+1	2	600
Chainmail	1D8	4	800

**Key:**

1—Amount of damage stopped by the armor. If not wearing a helm, decrease the armor by 1 point.

2—Number of rounds required to put the armor on (assumes some degree of experience, otherwise increase the time).

3—Price in pennies (d). Price varies depending on availability and quality.







# GAME SYSTEM



*Cthulhu Dark Ages* uses the standard rules as found in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* supplemented by some specific rules designed to emulate the Dark Ages period. Core *Call of Cthulhu* rules are not repeated here unless they have been modified to suit the setting.

## The Keeper's Decision Is Final

The *Cthulhu Dark Ages* rules are designed to be as clear and flexible as possible. However, from time to time you may encounter a situation in the game for which the rules do not provide a solution. In such circumstances the Keeper's decision is final. Players are encouraged to offer suggestions and ideas; however, the players should respect the Keeper's decision and move on with the game.

## When To Roll Dice

There is no need to roll dice for everything. For example, there is a Ride Horse skill but dice do not need to be rolled every time an investigator mounts up—that would be just dull! If you say your investigator is riding to the mead hall, unless someone takes issue with you, then it's done. Simply move on with the story. Normal day-to-day stuff that everyone “just does” should be just that—no dice needed.

Dice rolls are made when there is a dramatic moment, a point of tension or conflict. The story has reached a moment that requires a definite outcome. Time to reach for the dice!

## Skill Ratings Above 100%

It is possible, if unlikely, to raise an investigator's skill ratings above 100%. Skills higher than 100% offer better odds of achieving success at Hard or Extreme tasks, although a roll of 100 (“00”) is still a failure.

Once an investigator has reached 100% in a skill, the only way to increase that skill is with experience checks. This means the investigator will have to roll a 00 during the investigator development phase to increase the skill.

## Status And Investigator Expenditure

Attempting to track personal finances in a manner similar to real life within the game would introduce unnecessary complexity. However, using a slightly abstracted method, a gauge of an investigator's living standard and spending power becomes possible.

An investigator's starting Status is determined during character creation, based upon the investigator's chosen profession.

## Day-To-Day Expenses and General Living Standards

There's no need to account for every transaction, such as food or incidental travel expenses, so long as an investigator's expenditure falls within the bounds of his living standard (see **Status**, page 80). In addition, a character can spend up to his or her Spending Level on any given day. Bear in mind that in the Dark Ages, the spending limit doesn't necessarily represent paying for things with cold, hard cash. A character's spending limit represents the amount of readily available barter items, including silver pennies, which he or she has to trade.

It's likely that money will only occasionally become an issue in play, when large amounts are being spent. This may include preparing for a major trip, purchasing expensive items, such as a horse or farmland, or hiring extra staff.

The combination of being allowed to spend freely within the bounds of their living standard and the freedom of not being required to record expenditure below a certain spending level is intended to minimize bookkeeping. The use of this system may lead to uncertainty as to exactly what is within the bounds of an individual's living standard and whether an investigator has exceeded his or her spending level. As always, the Keeper is the arbiter of such matters and is advised to intervene only when an investigator has clearly exceeded the spending level.



*"Surely you can give a better offer than that!"*

## Barter

In the Dark Ages, barter was how the majority of purchases were made. Because most things didn't have a set value, even cash, usually in the form of coinage, was acceptable as barter. Instead of taking the time to liquidate several items into cash, a Dark Ages investigator would simply barter them away for what he or she needed.

The important thing to bear in mind with barter-based economies is that many things don't have a fixed value. Instead, what's a fair trade is determined not only by what the giver thinks it's worth, but what the receiver thinks it's worth. And, to complicate things, a person's individual Status in society plays a role. A more powerful person can often get more with less. It's also not uncommon for goods to be exchanged for tasks. If an investigator wants King Harald's sword, Harald might ask the investigator to bring him the head of a legendary stag or raid a Viking camp for supplies.

In *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, bartering is handled with either an opposed Status, Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade roll: success means the investigator gets what they want in trade, while failure means they don't. Following a failure, the

investigator could try again, but they will have to increase their offer or accept less than they wanted—otherwise the deal is over. If an investigator is asking for too much in return for too little, such as wanting to trade a shiny rock for a horse, the Keeper is justified in declining the barter altogether or imposing penalty dice.

## Money Coming In

During the game a character may receive a large sum of money, perhaps as a reward. Such a sum can be added to cash in the short term or be converted into a long-term asset, such as a sword, horse, or property.

## Training

Given enough money, someone will teach anything. The existence of training makes game sense only in campaigns, where the same investigators meet regularly to engage in an ongoing mystery.

If an investigator retains a mentor or enters a monastic school, he or she can learn 1D10 points in a single skill for each four months of dedicated study and practice. An experience check comes automatically upon successfully completing training. Missing too much training due to adventures or other duties prevents an experience check from being earned.

At the Keeper's option, the learning rate for a skill might be increased or the learning interval shortened if the investigator has access to a renowned teacher. Such access should come as a reward for an outstanding deed, or after great perseverance, since many compete for the favor of the famous.

## Investigator Development Phase: Perception and Status

Remember that Status, and therefore bartering power, is an indicator of how well an investigator fits into his or her community. Physical and mental health or long absences can have a deleterious effect on how the community views an investigator.

Where an investigator's financial situation has undergone a significant change, the Keeper should decide on one of the following options. The following list of conditions ranges from good to bad, and should generally be applied during the investigator development phase.

During the investigator development phase, following the review of Status, check to see if assets change. Assets can change in one of two ways. First, the investigator's Status can rise or fall (as a result of joining or leaving a warband, for example), in which case their asset value should be recalculated to fit the revised Status score. Second, an investigator can spend or accrue a large sum of money that will affect their asset value and, if sufficient, also alter their Status score. The Keeper





should change the Status and asset value of each investigator in a way that feels appropriate to events in the story. Continuing with the status quo is of course the default, and Keepers should only seek to make needed changes.

## THE ORAL TRADITION

One of the key elements in many *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios is the exploration of forbidden knowledge and lore, traditionally contained in ancient tomes. The average person in the Dark Ages isn't literate and most of the character choices available for players don't include literacy as a skill. Many could read or write their name and perhaps a single scripture verse, but how many farmers or soldiers are literate enough to read a text in a foreign language? Instead, many people learn their history and lore through the oral tradition. People with long memories and a penchant for telling a good story remember old histories, genealogies, and legends to recite, both in private and at public gatherings. It stands to reason that darker, forbidden knowledge is also stored in the storyteller's brain. The oral tradition consists of two equally important parts, the storyteller and the listener.

Much like a book, the story must be understandable. As such, only certain people have the skill necessary to tell the story. If the person rambles, confuses the facts, or stammers, the story is of no use. To properly tell a story, the storyteller must succeed at an Art/Craft (Orate) skill. This represents the storyteller getting the facts right and presenting the story in a coherent, entertaining fashion. If the storyteller succeeds in the Art/Craft (Orate) skill roll, the investigators may earn the related benefits if they succeed in a POW roll (failure means no benefits are gained and no Sanity is lost, at the Keeper's discretion). If the Art/Craft (Orate) roll is failed, they learn only one of the benefits with a successful POW roll—the Keeper decides which benefit is gained from the pieces of the story they were able to comprehend.

The investigators can still discern the clues from a bungled story and Sanity points are still lost if the tale has a Mythos element. The storyteller could also lose Sanity points from reciting a Mythos story, however the rules for **Getting Used To The Awfulness** (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 169) should be applied. Once a storyteller loses the maximum Sanity for a given story, he or she can lose no more. Investigators who hear the story but do not otherwise gain any further benefits can still act on any clues contained within; they just don't gain mechanical benefits and/or penalties.

Keepers should bear in mind that not every tome is a Mythos book, so not every wise woman, skald, or storyteller knows Mythos tales. The oral tradition should be used as sparingly as Mythos tomes.



### TABLE: INCOME AND STATUS

Income	Status
<b>I'm rich!</b>	The investigator has come in to money. Check to see if their assets are now equal to those of a higher living standard bracket. If this is the case, increase the investigator's Status in steps of 1D10 until their Status is within the new bracket.
<b>Things are looking up</b>	The investigator has fallen in with a powerful crowd; their Status should rise accordingly (add 1D6 to Status).
<b>Life goes on as usual</b>	Nothing much has changed to affect the investigator's income, thus Status does not alter.
<b>Tightening one's belt</b>	The investigator has been away (from work), or has bartered away much of their possessions; decrease Status by 1D10.
<b>Lost the horse</b>	The investigator has spent the vast majority of their assets. If the investigator's total worth (cash plus assets) now equals the asset value of a lower income level, decrease Status by 1D10.
<b>Bad luck and troubles</b>	The investigator loses their main source of income (usually a job), or is frowned upon by the community at large; decrease Status by 2D10.
<b>Enslaved or outlawed!</b>	The investigator suddenly loses all sources of income and all their debts are called in, or they have been exiled; reduce Status to zero. Unless the investigator has friends who can bail them out, their choice is either slavery or outlawry. If slavery, the investigator becomes the thrall of another. If outlawry, he or she can be killed without justification by anyone. In fact, it's a person's duty to eliminate outlaws. See <b>Outlawry</b> (page 23) and <b>Slavery</b> (page 53).





## SPOT RULES

### Breaking Up The Scenery

On occasion, the investigators may have to dig up a corpse, a mysterious treasure, or burrow their way out of a dark pit or prison. The following digging rates assume one average person equipped with a shovel or similar piece of equipment, and wheelbarrow. With more people, decrease the time required.

For large-scale mining or quarrying, additional workers may be hired to dispose of the rubble. Under adverse conditions or with improvised tools, the Keeper should increase the time required. Conversely, and at the Keeper's discretion, workers skilled in special mining techniques may process raw material at substantially higher rates than listed.

### Obstacles

In other situations an investigator may be required to break through obstacles, like doors or walls. Normally, such things can simply call for a STR roll, or given hit points—for simple wooden doors and the like, when half or more of these have been reduced, the object is no longer an obstacle. However, certain obstacles may be reinforced, such as wooden doors reinforced with iron. For these the Keeper may apply the armor rules and give such obstacles an armor rating.

Each time the damage exceeds the armor rating of the obstacle, subtract the points of damage in excess of the rating from the obstacle's hit points.

### Demolition Of Obstacles

Taking down a palisade or a yards-thick castle is probably beyond the scope of a single human using only a hand tool. In such cases, special siege or demolition techniques (battering rams, fire, etc.) are more efficient.

### TABLE: DIGGING AND QUARRYING

1 Cubic Yard of:	Requires:
Loose Soil	1/2 hour of sustained effort
Normal Soil	1 hour of sustained effort
Compact Clay	2 hours of sustained effort
Limestone or Sandstone	25 hours of sustained effort
Granite	40 hours of sustained effort

### Appropriate Tools

Obstacle	Tool
Wood	Timber axe (15% base chance, damage 2D6)
Stone walls (less than six inches thick)	Quarry hammer (25% base chance, damage 2D6)
Stone walls (thicker than six inches)	Pick axe (15% base chance, 2D6 damage)

Lacking such tools, the Keeper may allow characters to use regular weapons, such as a battle axe or a long sword. However, inappropriate tools may break on a roll of 99-00.

The pick axe and timber axe can impale—and get stuck—on a roll of 01 (double damage, ignore armor) and require a successful STR roll to pull the tool free.

Reducing the hit points of a section of an obstacle to zero makes a hole wide enough (roughly half a square yard) for a person of SIZ 65 (or less) to squeeze through. Thin supporting structures may collapse when weakened.

### TABLE: MAN-MADE OBSTACLES

Obstacle	Armor	HP <sup>1</sup>	Time <sup>2</sup>
Hut walls and door	0	5	3 rounds
Pinewood boards	1	10	5 rounds
Wattle and daub wall	1	15	10 rounds
Stout oak door	1	15	10 rounds
Timber stockade	2	60	10 minutes
Foot-thick masonry wall	6	300	100 minutes

#### Key:

1—Hit points, but not armor, are proportional to thickness. Adjust as needed.

2—Time to demolish in minutes (assuming a single average person with an appropriate tool).



## NATURAL OBSTACLES AND DISTANCES

At this time in Europe, forests cover 40% to 60% of the land. A group on a road travels 15 miles per day with ox carts, 20 miles on foot, and 40 miles on horseback. For off-road travel, halve the movement rate, and if traversing hills or mountains, halve the rate again. If crossing marshlands or tracts of drifted snow, quarter the movement rate. Crossing a major river (unless bridged or fordable) takes an entire day, and may require Animal Handling, DEX and/or Swim rolls if the water is particularly troublesome.

These movement rates can be sustained indefinitely with adequate food, drink, and nightly rest. Desperate people can move twice as fast, but need one full day (24 hours) of rest for every day of sustained effort.

Under these circumstances it seems obvious why the waterways are used much more frequently than the roads, for they provide the fastest and cheapest way of traveling—especially across huge distances. By daylight and under favorable conditions, a coasting ship can sail about 60 miles in 10 hours.

## COMBAT

*Cthulhu Dark Ages* follows the standard game combat rules (refer to **Chapter 6: Combat**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*), however a number of additions have been made to accommodate fighting with shields and mounted combat, as well as other factors appropriate to the setting. A number of optional combat and healing rules also appear at the end of the chapter.

## ACTIONS IN A COMBAT ROUND

On their turn in the DEX order (highest to lowest) each character may use their action to:

- Initiate an attack using a Fighting or Ranged skill.
- Perform a combat maneuver.
- Forego attacking in favor of all out defense using the Fighting (Shield) skill.
- Flee from the combat.
- Cast a spell.
- Perform some other action requiring time and perhaps a dice roll, such as picking a lock while others fight.

Note that some monsters are capable of multiple attacks in one round: these all take place on the monster's turn.

A character may elect to delay acting until another character has acted. If this leads to more than one character wishing to act simultaneously, the one with the highest DEX takes

priority. If both insist on waiting for the other, the round may end with neither of them acting and therefore losing their action, after which play will continue with the usual order of combat next round.

## USING SHIELDS

Shields may also be used as weapons in their own right, using the Fighting (Shield) skill. With a successful attack, a shield deals the damage indicated under the damage column see **Shields** (page 95). If a shield is equipped with a spike, it deals an additional 1D3 damage.

Of course, the main reason for using a shield is protection. A shield may provide additional armor to the person using it in the following cases: in place of dodging an attack, or if unsuccessful in fighting back.

When the shield user elects to dodge in response to an attack, they can use their Fighting (Shield) skill instead of their Dodge skill and so gain the value of the shield's armor even if they fail to succeed with their Fighting (Shield) roll. Note that if a shield user elects to use their Dodge skill instead of their Shield skill when trying to avoid being struck, they gain no armor protection from the shield if they lose the fight.



Combat in the Dark Ages was common and deadly



## CHAPTER 4

Where the shield user elects to fight back rather than dodge an attack, if both combatants achieve the same level of success (a draw) then the shield user also benefits from their shield's armor value. See the **Combat Outcomes for Shield Users** table (following).

**Example:** *Eric is using a shield and is attacked by Hathor. Eric decides to dodge the attack (comparing his Shield skill roll versus Hathor's Fighting roll). Hathor rolls a regular success, while Eric rolls a fail. Hathor strikes home and inflicts 6 points of damage to Eric. Even though he failed to avoid the blow, Eric's shield still provides its armor value of 1D3. Eric's player rolls 1D3 for the shield's armor, getting a 2. Hathor's attack inflicts 4 hit points damage to Eric (6-2 = 4), which may be further reduced by Eric's leather armor.*

*If Eric had elected to fight back instead of dodging, Hathor's successful attack would have caused 6 hit points of damage as Eric is placing himself in a riskier position, rather than fighting defensively. In this case, Hathor was the better fighter, able to strike past the shield.*

*During the next round of combat, Hathor attacks again and Eric fights back. This time both achieve Hard levels of success (a draw). This time Eric deducts his shield's armor value from Hathor's weapon damage.*

### All Out Defense

A shield user may also, at the start of the combat round, announce that they are only defending this round (they forego all other actions and will attempt to avoid/block every attack). In this situation the shield user gains a bonus die to each of his

or her Fighting (Shield) rolls for that single round of combat. In terms of being outnumbered, the shield user may oppose two attacks before they are outnumbered. This is particularly effective if the shield user is trying to defend something or someone (as opposed to attempting to damage foes).

## MOUNTED COMBAT

In certain parts of Dark Age Europe, horses were used in combat. While the age of the heavily armored knight is still a ways off, warriors did engage in mounted combat, usually as skirmishers. Mounted combat requires three things to be truly successful: good skill at riding a horse and in fighting, and a battle-hardened mount, one that's been trained not to shy away from the cacophony and bloody smells of battle.

Mounted combat involves a combined skill roll (page 92, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*) using both the Ride Horse skill and the chosen fighting specialization. The roll must be equal to or under both of these skills in order to be a success (compare each skill in turn to the roll).

An investigator's skill in Ride Horse determines whether or not he or she has bonus or penalty dice applied to their Fighting roll in combat, see the **Mounted Combat** table.

Fighting from horseback gives a skilled rider a considerable advantage. It's in the best interest of opponents to use a fighting maneuver to dismount the rider as quickly as possible in order to level the playing field. It's also for this reason that the horse is the favored target for most attackers. Not only is it a larger target but a wounded horse can cause chaos and confusion in the ranks.

### TABLE: COMBAT OUTCOMES FOR SHIELD USERS

Attacker:	Defender uses a shield and is:		
	Avoiding blow using Shield skill	Avoiding blow using Dodge skill	Fighting Back
Wins the combat	Shield armor subtracted from attacker's damage	Attacker scores hit on target (shield provides no armor)	Shield armor subtracted from attacker's damage
Draws	Defender wins combat (attacker causes no damage)	Defender wins (attacker causes no damage)	Attacker wins combat, but shield armor is subtracted from the attacker's damage.
Fails to win combat	Attacker causes no damage.	Attacker causes no damage.	Attacker causes no damage.



A trained war steed is very expensive and bartering for one should require the investigator to give up a substantial amount of either resources or time.

## Dodging while on Horseback

If an investigator wants to dodge while on horseback, the rider makes a combined Dodge and Ride Horse roll. This represents not only moving the horse out of the path of danger but staying mounted while shifting around on the mount.

**For example:** *Hengist is riding a horse and has been attacked by another mounted rider. Rather than fight back, Hengist attempts to dodge; he rolls 35, which is under his Dodge 55 and under his Ride skill of 40. Thus, Hengist is able to turn his mount and himself away from the attack.*

## Bolting

There's always the risk that a mount, even a battle-hardened, trained war steed, will bolt in the middle of combat. That's not a situation anyone wants to be in.

- A war steed will bolt if a fumble is rolled on a combined Ride and Fighting skill roll. It will also bolt if it takes half its hit points in damage in a single attack.
- A non-war steed will bolt if a failure is rolled on the combined Ride and Fighting skill roll. It will also bolt the first time it takes damage in combat.

Once a horse bolts, the investigator has three options: try to regain control of the horse, abandon the horse, or ride it out.

- **Regain control of a war steed:** the investigator must succeed at a Ride Horse skill roll. To regain control of a non-war steed is a Hard Ride Horse skill roll.
- **Jumping from a bolting horse:** requires a successful Jump roll. With a success, an investigator can take another action that round (if they have any actions left to take). With a failure, they are off balance and can only regain his or her footing and do nothing further this round. With a fumble, they have fallen prone, taking falling damage that's not mitigated by armor.
- **Ride a horse out of combat:** make a Hard Ride skill roll to stay mounted. The horse flees from combat by the most direct route away from the perceived threat, even if that means going through pockets of enemies.

## Mounts and the Supernatural

Even the best-trained war steeds can be frightened by the supernatural, whether that be Mythos or folkloric in nature.

A Hard Ride Horse roll is necessary to force a horse to get close enough to a supernatural creature for an investigator to make a Fighting roll against the creature, attempt a fighting maneuver, or anything else in close proximity. Once engaged, the standard bolting rules apply.

If an investigator suffers a bout of insanity while mounted, the horse picks up on the rider's fear and instantly bolts. The investigator might not be in any state to do anything about it, but should make a Ride roll to see if they remain mounted (the Keeper may increase the difficulty level of the roll as desired).

## TABLE: MOUNTED COMBAT

An investigator fighting from the back of a trained war steed gains a bonus die to their Fighting roll based on their Ride Horse skill, while the converse is true when using a mount untrained for war.

Ride Horse Skill:	Trained War Steed: Bonus Die?		Non-Trained War Steed: Penalty Die?	
	Dismounted Foe	Mounted Foe	Dismounted Foe	Mounted Foe
01-49%	No	No	Yes	Yes
50-89%	Yes	No	No	Yes
90+	Yes	Yes	No	No



### Training a War Steed

If an investigator can't acquire a trained war steed, they may try to train a horse themselves. Training is a time-consuming and risky undertaking though. Not just any steed can become a war steed. There are certain characteristics, such as size, strength, and aggression that are sought after and further developed. A successful Ride Horse roll can pick the appropriate candidates out of a herd.

Once a horse has been selected, it takes at least six months to train. Although the rider doesn't need to do all the training, they must be present for at least half of the training period. If requiring someone else to handle fifty percent of the training, the Keeper should determine a cost for this service.

Each month, the trainer makes a Ride Horse skill roll (this roll cannot be pushed). A success means the training went well and the horse is developing. A failure means the horse suffered a setback and an additional month of training is required. A critical success adds 1D2 hit points to the horse's total, representing a development of musculature and stamina. A fumble means the horse is lame and is no longer a candidate for training.



At the completion of six successful months of training the warhorse is ready.

Sometimes the only training available is through direct exposure to combat. This is a very risky proposition given how unsteady non-war horses are in combat. Once a non-trained warhorse has survived ten combat encounters where it didn't bolt, it has become used to the chaos of battle and can be considered a trained war steed.

### Attack the Mount or the Rider

In most combat situations, the attacker is assumed to be going after his or her fellow combatant. However, attacking the mount might be the preferred or only possible course of action. If an attacker on foot tries to attack a mounted rider and doesn't want to hit the horse, they take one penalty die. There is no penalty die for trying to attack the horse. There are no penalty dice for mounted attackers trying to attack the rider as opposed to the horse.

### Major Wounds while on Horseback

A rider becomes dismounted if a major wound is taken while on horseback, in addition to any other effects related to the major wound.

### Long Weapons vs. Riders

Long weapons, such as spears and lances, can be very effective against a mounted rider, provided they're clustered together. A horseman can easily ride around a single man with a planted spear. A wall of men with spears, however, can prove a formidable opponent.

An investigator on foot, armed with a long weapon gains one bonus die against a mounted foe. If the foe can circumvent the investigator in some way, no bonus die is given.

## RANGED AND THROWN WEAPONS

Ranged missile attacks, such as bows, can't be dodged in the normal sense—the target has the chance to **Dive for Cover** (see page 113, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*), or use a shield as cover. However, thrown weapons, such as knives, may be opposed with the Dodge skill in the same way as Fighting attacks.

A character may not choose the option of fighting back against a ranged (missile) or thrown weapon attack unless they are already within close physical proximity to the attacker (i.e. within a fifth of their DEX in feet).

If using a shield for cover, the defender is assumed to have crouched behind the shield (akin to hiding behind a small wall) providing a penalty to the attacker's roll.



Half the attacker's damage bonus is applied to thrown weapons and missile weapons that rely directly on the user's strength. Thus this applies to bows and slings, but not to crossbows.

- **To resolve a ranged missile attack:** the Keeper should set a difficulty level based on range and then apply bonus or penalty dice modifiers as appropriate. The target may attempt to dive for cover (if successful, apply penalty to the attacker's roll to hit). See **Range Difficulty Levels**, following.
- **To resolve a thrown weapon attack:** if the target is attempting to dodge or fight back, the roll is opposed (both roll to determine who has the better level of success); if the target is not (or cannot) dodge, the attacker simply rolls to determine success (the roll is unopposed, apply bonus or penalty dice modifiers if appropriate).

## Range Difficulty Levels

The difficulty level of a ranged missile (or unopposed thrown) weapon skill roll is always set according to range. Each doubling of range above the weapon's listed base range on the weapons' tables increases the difficulty level by one step.

- **Within the base range:** Regular difficulty level.
- **Long range (up to twice the base range):** Hard difficulty level.
- **Very long range (up to four times the base range):** Extreme difficulty level.
- Any further modifiers use bonus or penalty dice.

At very long range, when only an Extreme success will hit the target, an impale only occurs with a critical hit (a roll of 01).

## Ranged Weapons and the DEX Order

It takes less time to loose a readied arrow than to swing a club or sword, therefore readied missile weapons may shoot at DEX + 50 in the DEX order. In this case, a readied weapon means the arrow has already been nocked and is ready to shoot before the start of the current combat round.

## Diving for Cover when Mounted

If diving for cover from a mount, the rider has purposely thrown himself or herself down from the mount. Whether their Dodge roll is successful or not, they will take 1D6 damage from the fall impact.

## COVER AND CONCEALMENT WITH A SHIELD

Crouching behind a shield obscures the target (obviously the size of the shield plays a factor, a person cannot hide behind a buckler shield). The shield user must be able to anticipate the attack and have time to get in to a defensive position (thus impossible to do if the shield user is engaged in melee)—note that this penalty does not stack with being prone (see page 107).

Concealment of at least half of the target (e.g. a tower shield) adds one penalty die to a ranged attack, otherwise the shield provides armor if the attacker's weapon hits (an Extreme success bypass the shield's armor).

A target that breaks cover, even briefly, may be targeted by another character—if that character is holding their action.

## Point-Blank Range

If the target is at point-blank range—within a fifth of the shooter's DEX in feet—the attacker gains a bonus die. An



## TABLE: SUMMARY OF RANGE MODIFIERS: BONUS AND PENALTY DICE

1. Determine Difficulty Level	2. Apply Bonus Die	3. Apply Penalty Die
Regular: Normal range	Aiming for 1 round	Target diving for cover
Hard: Long range (base x 2)	Point blank (within 1/5 DEX)	Fast-moving target (MOV 8+)
Extreme: Very long range (base x 4)	Large target (Build 4+)	Partial concealment (50%+)
		Small target (Build -2)
		Firing into melee





attacker using a bow at point-blank range may be targeted by melee attacks and could be disarmed with a successful fighting maneuver on his or her opponent's turn.

## Aiming

The intention to take careful aim must be declared on the character's turn in the order of combat. The shot is taken on the same turn in the order of combat on the following round. If no other actions are taken before the attack is made, the attacker gains one bonus die. If the aiming character takes damage or moves while aiming, the advantage of aiming is lost. Only one bonus die may be gained by aiming.

## Fast-Moving Targets

A target that is moving at high speed (MOV 8 or more) is hard to hit; apply one penalty die.

## Target Size

Smaller targets are harder to hit. If the target is Build -2 or smaller, apply one penalty die. Larger targets are easier to hit. If the target is Build 4 or larger, apply one bonus die.

## Firing Into Melee

Combatants in melee combat are constantly on the move and may obscure one another. One penalty die is applied when targeting a combatant involved in melee combat. A fumble indicates an ally has been hit. If multiple allies are in the line of fire, the one with the lowest Luck score is hit.

## Shields as Thrown Weapons

A thrown shield counts as an improvised weapon with a range of 5 meters. Use the Throw skill to determine success.

## ARMOR

In the Dark Ages armor crafting was an art, not a science. Because of that, not all pieces of armor are created equal. Instead, armor has a range of value, which is rolled whenever an attack causes damage. The armor value is rolled and subtracted from the damage received. Armor value is rolled separately for each attack landing on the character.

## MOVEMENT DURING A COMBAT ROUND

As combat is usually described narratively, the distance between combatants is rarely measured precisely. It is more often expressed in approximate and subjective terms such as "arm's reach," "close," "across the room," "away down the alley," etc. If it seems that distance should be an issue in a particular fight, the following rules can be used.

The maximum distance a character can move in one combat round is equal to their MOV rating multiplied by 5 in yards.

In the case of melee attacks, the attacker must get in to melee range before attacking.

- A character can move a number of yards equal to their MOV rate and attack in their normal DEX order (melee or ranged).
- If the attacker moves a number of yards greater than their MOV rate but less than their MOV rate multiplied by 5, they may make one melee attack at the end of the round.
- If using a shield and fighting defensively, the user loses their bonus die if they move beyond their MOV rate.
- To take advantage of the +50 DEX for using a readied missile, the missile must be used before any movement is made.
- If the attacker moves further than their MOV rate in yards, they must shoot while running and so lack sufficient time to take a steady position, taking a penalty die to their attack roll. The shots will normally be taken on their usual turn in the DEX order, but may be delayed if significant distance must be covered to reach a suitable position (at the Keeper's discretion).

### TABLE: SAMPLE ARMOR

Armor	Damage Stopped
Normal clothes	0 hit points
Heavy clothes	1D2-1 hit points
Quilted leather	1D2 hit points
Heavy quilted leather	1D3 hit points
Boiled leather	1D6 hit points
Leather and rings	1D6+1 hit points
Leather and scales	1D6+1 hit points
Chainmail	1D8 hit points
1 inch oak door*	2 or 2D3 hit points
Ordinary masonry wall*	4 or 1D6 hit points
Thick granite wall*	12 or 2D6 hit points

*\*Keeper chooses a fixed or value or random armor value dependent on the situation and construction.*



## PRONE

A prone character is assumed to be lying flat on the ground.

- Kicking someone when they are down is easier; fighting attacks made against a prone character gain one bonus die.
- A prone character may stand up when they successfully dodge or fight back against an opponent. Alternatively, when it comes to their turn in the round, they may stand up and then take their action.
- By lying flat on the floor a smaller target is presented; those targeting a prone character with a ranged weapon get one penalty die (ignore this if at point blank-range).

## SPIRIT ATTACKS AND POSSESSION

Spirit attacks consist of a POW vs. POW opposed roll. To onlookers, this will appear as a spirit clawing at, enveloping, or otherwise physically attacking the target (if it can be seen at all).

- **If the attacking spirit overcomes the target's POW:** The target loses 1D10 magic points and makes a Sanity roll (1/1D4 loss).
- **If the target overcomes the attacking spirit:** The spirit loses 1D10 magic points.

If the target runs out of magic points they immediately fall unconscious or become possessed (if that's the will of the spirit).

Very powerful spirits may drain 2D10 magic points from a target in a single combat round, but will only lose 1D10 magic points if they are overcome by the intended target.

Mental combat continues each round until the target is unconscious, possessed, or either side has fled. A spirit will usually flee before it reaches 0 magic points.

Those possessed may be controlled for a period of time, acting in accordance with the will of the possessing spirit. Usually this may take the form of performing a certain action, harming another person, or perhaps harming themselves. Possession usually lasts for 1D10 hours, but may be longer at the Keeper's discretion. Those possessed for longer periods may attempt a new POW vs. POW roll every 8 hours in order to throw out the possessing spirit.

Some spirits who lose spirit combat are obliged to provide the victor a boon, which could be answering a single question, giving a direction, or some other piece of information, before departing.

A possessing spirit can only be dislodged by either the possessed host winning a later opposed POW roll, magical

spells, or the loss of all magic points. The spirit may, of course, leave the host whenever it wishes, but must win a new opposed POW roll if it wants to reclaim the host's body.

## WOUNDS

There is more drama telling an investigator that an arrow pierced his lung and the wound is gushing blood, than in saying, "You lost 4 hit points, 6 to go." How much more satisfying for a player to hear that his blow not only killed the brutish ghoul, but also wrecked its skull beyond recognition!

The fraction of hit points lost should always be measured against the maximum amount, not against the current number of hit points. Also bear in mind that light weapons may actually hit several times in a single bout (round) of combat, so that the damage done in one round is distributed over several small injuries rather than a big one.

*Spirit attacks can lead to possession, be cautious of friendly people!*





## TABLE: HIT POINT LOSS

% HP*	Damage Stopped
10%	Regular damage: light cut or bruise.
25%	Regular damage: deep cuts, heavy bruising, possible minor fracture.
50%	Major wound: severe cuts, broken bones, crushed limbs.
101%	Fatal wound: bone crushed, mutilated flesh, gaping injuries. Dead.
250%	Splat!

\*Hit points lost.

## Major Wounds and Minor NPCs

To speed up combat, the Keeper may rule that any unimportant NPC, such as “Viking #2,” is removed from combat if he receives a major wound. This rule should only be applied to minor human foes. Major foes and Mythos monsters should never be taken out so easily.

## POISONS

All manner of poisons exist in the Dark Ages and those skilled in the differing varieties of poisonous plants, fungi, or beasts are able to concoct deadly recipes. A poison is normally introduced into the bloodstream by either ingestion or directly (a wound). Poisons may cause a variety of additional symptoms including: stomach pains, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, sweats, cramps, jaundice, altered heart rate, impaired vision, convulsions, unconsciousness, and paralysis. It is up to the Keeper whether the symptoms permit the victim to act or not, or to act with a penalty die, or at an increased level of difficulty.

The person poisoned should make a CON roll: a roll equal to or less than one-fifth of CON will halve the poison damage. A critical success may mean the poison has had no or very limited effect (at the Keeper's discretion).

A range of poisons can be found on the **Poisons** table.

## Poisoned Weapons

It is possible to prepare poisons using infectious agents. Infectious poisons take 2 weeks to prepare and a successful Art/Crafts (Potions) roll. They are applied to sharp weapon edges to infect wounded victims. A person hit with a poisoned blade should make a Luck roll to determine if the poison has been absorbed into the bloodstream.

For a standard weapon poison the victim should make a CON roll: if a success, reduce the poison's damage by half; if an Extreme success, the poison's effects are ignored and infection has been avoided; if failed, the victim suffers blood poisoning and loses 1D3 hit points every day for 1D3 days. A quickly applied First Aid or Medicine roll may cleanse the wound and draw out the poison, reducing damage to 1 hit point.

Other poisons exist, their effects noted on the **Poisons** table..

## POTIONS

Potions are another means for a person to affect the world around them. The use of potions is often aligned to folk remedies and witchcraft, however, when couched properly in Christian terms, the Church might turn a blind eye to their use.





TABLE: POISONS

Poison <sup>1</sup>	Dose	Severity <sup>2</sup>	Onset	Duration	Symptoms
Adder, Aspic	1 bite	Lethal (4D10)	Minutes	Hours	Pain, anguish, necrosis, edema
Bees/Wasps	50 stings <sup>3</sup>	Mild (1D10)	Minutes	2 days	Pain, shock, lung edema
Belladonna	1 fruit	Mild (1D10)	Minutes	Varies	Excitation, spasms, phobia of light, thirst
Bittersweet	1 fruit	Mild (1D10)	Instant	Varies	Sickness, diarrhea, agoraphobia, cold
Death Cap	1 cap	Lethal (4D10)	8-16 hours	2-5 days	Sickness, colic
Hemlock	2-3 grams	Lethal (4D10)	Minutes	Varies	Vision loss, sickness, diarrhea, paralysis
Yellow Scorpion	1 sting	Strong (2D10)	Minutes	10 hours	Pain, anguish, lung edema
Spurge	Contact	Mild (1D10)	Instant	2-3 days	Anguish, fever, paralysis; blindness if sprayed in the eyes. Used by Spanish crossbowmen.
Wolfsbane	Contact	Lethal (4D10)	10-20 minutes	Varies	Cold sweat, pain, vomiting

**Key:**

1—Preparation time is 1 day for animal poisons, 1-3 days for vegetable poisons.

2—Severity is the strength of the poison. Damage is given brackets. Prepared poisons, as opposed to fresh ones, generally work at one severity level lower. See **Table III: Other Forms of Damage**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 124, for further information on severity. An Extreme CON roll reduces the poison's effect, halving damage; a Critical success may mean the poison's effects are completely avoided.

3—The number of stings delivered each round to a single victim depends on the size of the wasp nest or the beehive: count 25 wasp stings per round for very large wasp nests, and 50 bee stings for very large beehives.



The process of creating a potion is as follows:

1. **Find ingredients:** If ingredients must be obtained, usually half a day's foraging and a successful Natural World roll will be required to find the correct ingredients. With a success, proceed with the brewing. If failed, alternative ingredients almost, but not quite, as good are found (note the potion as "lesser," reduce the potion's effects by half). If the roll is pushed and failed, the ingredients have most likely been picked in error, which may result in either an ineffectual potion or a poisonous one at the Keeper's discretion.  
If the ingredients cannot be foraged (failed roll or otherwise) other avenues to acquire them may be sought; purchasing, trading, or stealing are possible (applying an appropriate roll as necessary).
2. **Brew:** Work at least one day (unless an antidote, which can be brewed within hours rather than days) and make an Art/Craft (Potions) roll. Success means the potion has been concocted to perform the desired effect.
3. **Complete:** Determine the efficacy of the potion.

Roll Outcome	Efficacy
Fumble	Ineffective (possibly poisonous)
Fail	Lesser (reduce effects by half or a quarter)
Success	Standard (performs as expected)
Extreme Success	Improved (may perform more quickly or its effects are increased)

The Keeper and player should determine the exact performance of the potion depending on the outcome of the Art/Craft (Potions) roll; in most cases this will mean increasing or decreasing the time of the potion's onset or its effects by one-half or by one-quarter. Note that ingredients can rarely be kept for any length of time without losing their effectiveness (reduce efficacy by half per week they have been retained).

Following are some suggested concoctions that can be made with the Art/Craft (Potions) skill. Some are to be ingested, while others can be smeared over the body or applied to a weapon.

A potion takes one round to drink; applying an ointment to a weapon or to an unarmored person takes 1D6+1 rounds. Applying either to a non-restrained opponent is out of the question.

**Poison:** Either ingested or injected (e.g. a weapon cut); use the **Poisons** table (page 109) for suggested toxins and their severity.

For standard poisons applied to bladed weapons, see **Poisoned Weapons**, page 108.

For those worried about the impact of poison use on the game, it should be noted that people in the Dark Ages (and most pre-modern societies) draw few distinctions between poisoning and witchcraft. Keepers should feel free to indulge this confusion to make characters' lives quite interesting.

**Antidote:** Ingested; potion makers are trained to concoct antidotes in a matter of hours (rather than days) as such things can be a matter of life and death. A successfully brewed antidote stops further hit point loss and suffering once applied; for lesser antidotes, reduce their effectiveness by half (halving hit point loss and reducing duration of the poison by half). Onset time is seconds to minutes. A separate antidote must be produced for each type of poison.

## UNGUENT OF BEAST ANTIPATHY

With some work on the part of the Keeper and players other sorts of potions may be created. Here is one example.

The potion-maker must state at the time of creation what sort of beast will be affected (wolves, bears, snakes, dogs, etc.) Humans, supernatural creatures, and Mythos beings cannot be affected. This substance, when smeared on a person's body, will aid in warding off attacks by that particular type of creature.

When a creature attempts to come into contact with the wearer, it must make a POW roll: a failure means it cannot approach the person while the ointment remains potent (this may be a fear reaction).

This substance, once applied, has a pungent smell. This odor penalizes the person's social skills (Charm, Fast Talk, and Persuade) increasing the difficulty level (or applying a penalty die) to any such attempts with these skills. The unguent loses its power after twenty-four hours. Penalties to skills will remain until the character bathes.



**Hallucinogen:** Either ingested or paste applied to the skin; onset time is one hour. Make a CON roll: if an Extreme success, the hallucinogen effects are reduced by half, otherwise the effects are as expected, normally lasting for one hour with the exact nature of the visions chosen by the Keeper. The paste version may be used by witches who desire to have visions of the Sabbat.

**Remedy:** Used to fight disease; either ingested or paste applied to the skin; onset time is one hour. Once applied, the remedy stops the disease's progress (reduce damage as appropriate), allowing natural healing to commence. Note that certain diseases, such as rabies, are incurable and the best a remedy can do in these circumstances is to slow the disease and/or make the patient more comfortable.

**Numbing Ointment:** When this paste is applied, the subject makes a CON roll: if failed, the subject goes into shock for 1D3 hours. Otherwise, for the next hour the subject has immunity to pain. This may prevent the user from falling unconscious from a major wound but, consequently, may cause further damage leading to death if the subject persists in strenuous activity.

**Love Potion:** This potion is ingested and should only be used at the Keeper's discretion; it inspires feelings of desire toward a person in the immediate area. The drinker makes a POW roll: if failed, they will behave as if they had a strong natural attraction toward the person, though they will not go beyond their normal bounds of behavior. After a few hours, the effect wears off, and the drinker may make an INT roll to realize that his or her feelings were not natural.

**Fury Potion:** The love potion's dark twin. The drinker makes a POW roll: if failed, they fall under the effects of the Fury spell (page 163). Unlike that spell, they have no control over whom they attack.

## DISEASE

Illness might be interpreted as the outer sign of a sick soul or a godly punishment, and so called for intensified prayers. In the absence of proper medication all diseases are debilitating and many are deadly enough to kill investigators within weeks. Keepers should think carefully before introducing deadly diseases into their games—after all, losing an investigator to a Mythos horror or madness can be fun, losing a character to a disease usually is not. Keepers are advised to use diseases to embellish plots and stories rather than employing them as active threats to the investigators. Reserve fatal, incurable diseases for non-player characters.

A minor disease, such as a bad cold or a mild flu, could be contracted after a failed CON roll. It should merely cost a hit point or two over a few days. A major disease, like leprosy or the holy fire, might also attack characteristics and affect the difficulty of skill rolls, typically raising the difficulty by one level (or imposing one penalty die) for the duration of the disease. Serious diseases like rabies and lockjaw are powerful and can kill (requiring Hard or Extreme CON rolls to avoid death).

Bed rest, potions, and the successful use of the Medicine skill are the best treatments against disease.

## OPTIONAL RULES

Here is a collection of optional rules from which you can mix and match as you please. You are not compelled to use them just because they are here. Some people prefer to make spontaneous judgments about each new situation based on its unique merits, while others prefer to have a strongly defined set of rules to play by. You and your group should decide which you prefer.

*Disease is a common occurrence in the Dark Ages.*





## TABLE: DISEASES

Disease <sup>1</sup>	Cause <sup>2</sup>	CON Roll <sup>3</sup>	Onset	Duration	Damage <sup>4</sup>	Symptoms
Blood poisoning (septicemia)	Unclean wound	Regular	4-16 hours	1D3 days	1D3 per day	Spiking fever, chills, feeling of doom, shock, confusion, rash, gangrene, death.
Flux (epidemic dysentery)	Unclean food/water	Regular	Days	1D4 weeks	1 per day	Diarrhea, abdominal cramps, fatigue, weight loss, fever, vomiting, death by dehydration.
Frenzy (typhoid fever)	Unclean food/drink	Regular	1-2 weeks	1D4+2 weeks	1D4 per week	Headache, fever, rash, bloody stools, hallucinations, intestinal bleeding, death.
Holy fire (ergotism)	Unclean food <sup>5</sup>	Regular	1-2 days	1D4 weeks	1D3 per week + reduce APP by 5	Rash, fever, scarring, gross deformations (mainly legs, some facial), gangrene, death.
Leprosy	Leper	Regular	6-10 years	Indefinite	Permanently reduce APP to 10 and DEX by half	Skin lesions, disfigurement, hand and feet numbness, and muscle weakness.
Lock jaw (tetanus)	Wound	Hard	5-15 weeks	1D8 days	1D3 per day	Spasms, stiffness, seizures, fever, death.
Phthisis (tuberculosis)	Unclean air	Hard	Weeks-years	Indefinite	Permanently reduce CON by 30	Chronic sweating, fatigue, malaise, weight loss, cough, fever, respiratory failure, death.
Pocks (smallpox)	Unclean air	Regular	10-17 days	2 weeks	1 per day	High fever, fatigue, headache, malaise, pustules and lesions, delirium, vomiting, diarrhea, death.
Rabies	Rabid animal bite	Extreme	3-7 weeks	7 days	1D4 per day	Fever, hydrophobia, confusion, numbness, drooling, insanity, asphyxia, death.



TABLE: DISEASES

Disease <sup>1</sup>	Cause <sup>2</sup>	CON Roll <sup>3</sup>	Onset	Duration	Damage <sup>4</sup>	Symptoms
Spotted/ship fever (typhus)	Cold unclean place	Hard	2 weeks	3 weeks	1D6 per week	Headache, high fever, muscle pain, chills, stupor, delirium, rash, light phobia, death.
Swamp fever (malaria)	Swamp, river	Regular	2–4 weeks	4 weeks	1D6 per week	Chills, fever, headache, nausea, bloody stools, yellow skin, convulsion, coma, death.

**Key:**

- 1—Disease names vary greatly with location, time, and circumstances. The modern name is given within parentheses.
- 2—This is the most accurate cause of the disease that can be inferred by observant people lacking modern medical knowledge.
- 3—Once exposed, a failed CON roll at the specified level indicates that the disease will follow its course to the end unless the infected receives successful Medicine treatment before the end of the incubation period (Onset column). A successful CON roll means that after incurring the least severe symptoms the infected victim recovers and natural healing begins.
- 4—Hit points lost to the disease, also characteristic damage. Natural healing does not start until the disease has run its course, a successful Medicine roll is made, and/or an antidote/remedy is successfully administered. Equating hit point loss with disease is not an exact science; the Keeper is at liberty to adjust these indicators.
- 5—The holy fire “disease” functions in game terms like a poison. The “disease” is caused by the ingestion of fungus-contaminated rye end products like bread and porridge, sometimes ale. The poison severity is left to the Keeper’s discretion: it depends on the level of rye contamination and the quantity of contaminated products ingested.

**Rolling for Initiative**

If you prefer more variation in combat, ask everyone to make a DEX roll to determine the initiative order. Those who rolled an Extreme success will be first to act, followed by those who rolled a Hard success, then those with a Regular success, and finally those who failed the roll. If more than one character achieves the same level of success, give priority to those with the higher DEX value. If characters are still tied, use combat skill value to prioritize.

Those that roll 01 (critical) on their DEX roll should gain a tactical advantage or bonus die on their first attack. Those that roll a fumble should forgo their first attack, perhaps dropping their weapon or tripping. Once the initiative order has been determined, stick with it for the duration of that combat.

Note down each combatant in order, along with their level of success (for example “Brian, Fail”). That way if additional combatants join, they can make a DEX roll and be placed in the existing initiative order.

**Multiple Attacks with Skills over 100%**

The Keeper may allow an investigator to have skills in excess of 100%. While this might seem like overkill (how much better do you need to be than “99% always successful?”) it allows for greater chances of Hard and Extreme successes, and also provides for the option of allowing a human character to have multiple attacks in a round. If a character has increased a combat skill rating to over 100%, they may



make two attacks per combat round with that particular combat skill. Both attacks occur at the same point in the character's DEX order, although one attack (only) may be held until the end of the round (if the combat round ends and they have not used their held attack, it is lost).

**For example:** *Artur has a Fighting (Sword) skill of 101% and gets two attacks per round. During combat with a ghoul, Artur acts on DEX 60 and rolls 80% (a Regular hit) and 00% (a fumbled miss!). As the Keeper is using the optional **Wear and Tear** rules (see page 116), he asks Artur's player to make a Luck roll to see if Artur's sword is damaged by the fumble—it is! Without his sword, Artur must rely on his dagger for the rest of the combat. Artur's Fighting (Brawl) skill is 80%—good, but only allows him a single attack with this type of weapon.*

Note that a character with two attacks is not outnumbered (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 108) until they have reacted two times in the same combat round—those with multiple attacks per round and have an equal number of fight backs and dodges before they are outnumbered.

## Deadly Combat

Sometimes during melee combat, both sides simultaneously fail their Fighting skill rolls and nothing happens. One way to view this is that both sides are being equally ineffective at inflicting harm. An alternative point of view it is that dealing harm is relatively easy, and that the real skill lies in protecting oneself from harm during a fight. When taking the latter approach, failing a Fighting skill roll means that you have failed to protect yourself during the combat. Narratively you may have missed your target and punched a wall or moved the wrong way and into your opponent's blow. There are many ways to get hurt during combat; your opponent's fist is only one of them.

### There are three options available:

- First, use the standard rule by which nothing happens when both sides fail.
- Second, resolve the situation by breaking the tie in favor of the higher skill.
- Third, the deadly option, allow both sides to inflict damage as if for a successful attack. The two sides have clashed during combat and wounded each other.

This rule is not applicable to ranged attacks.

**For example:** *Hengist is fighting a deep one. Hengist throws a punch and the deep one fights back with its clawed hand. Both roll a failure for their Fighting (Brawl) skill. They have clashed, both failing to avoid each other's blows. Hengist inflicts 1D3 damage and the deep one inflicts 1D6+1D4.*

## Dodging Benefits

If an investigator tries to Dodge, the outcome of their die roll could have an impact on the subsequent combat round; perhaps the dodge was fumbled, meaning the investigator is now at a disadvantage, and so on. Note that this optional rule will add a further level of complexity to the combat round.

### Dodge Outcome\* Result

Fumble	Out of position: take a penalty die on the character's next action.
Critical	Prime position: add one bonus die to the character's next action.

*\*Substitute Ride Horse for Dodge if investigator is mounted.*

## Escaping Close Combat

To make extricating a character from melee more difficult, the character must make a successful Dodge roll on their action in the combat round (opposed by their attacker's Fighting skill). If the character attempting to flee wins the combat they have successfully stepped away from the melee. If they fail to win the combat, their opponent has pressed the fight and maintained the melee. The fleeing character will have to make a further attempt next round.

## Shield Options

If the shield user is being attacked with a bladed weapon and wins the combat with an Extreme success with their Fighting (Shield), the attacker's weapon has become stuck in the shield. The attacker may immediately attempt one STR roll to get the weapon unstuck, otherwise he or she loses grip of the weapon. Change the success level to a Critical success instead of an Extreme success if you wish to further limit the likelihood of this happening too often.

When attacking with a shield, the user may attempt a shield bash. If the attacker wins the combat with an Extreme success, the target is pushed back one yard and the shield using attacker also gets a bonus die to their next attack.

## Knock-Out Blows

The standard rules already allow for a target to be knocked unconscious. When an attack inflicts a major wound, the target must make a CON roll to remain conscious. Also a target that is reduced to zero hit points will fall unconscious automatically. This optional rule suggests that you treat the knock-out attempt as a fighting maneuver using blunt attacks (punch, club, etc.) If the maneuver is successful, the opponent is rendered unconsciousness and suffers only 1 hit point of damage.







### Optional Effects of Major Wounds

Some players and Keepers will prefer more verisimilitude or at least some gory details when a major wound is inflicted. The following table can help the Keeper flesh out major wounds.

When a major wound occurs the Keeper may simply state its effects or may roll on the **Optional Effects of Major Wounds** table. Each of the injury descriptions has multiple causes or specifics, allowing the Keeper to select the most appropriate to the situation.

Note that major wounds are a common outcome of combat in *Cthulhu Dark Ages*, and so this optional table of effects may radically affect investigators who suffer from multiple major wounds over time. To prevent this, a further option is to only use this table to determine the effects of “almost” dying. Thus, if an investigator has taken a major wound and is also on zero hit points (dying) but then survives, roll on the table for the lasting effects of their near death plight.

Choose as appropriate, or roll for the result (picking the most relevant outcome).

### Major Wounds and Shock

A character receiving a major wound goes into shock and, even if they successfully make a CON roll, can fight on only for a number of combat rounds equal to their current hit points. The unconsciousness provoked by a major wound offers a secure way for non-player characters to capture an investigator rather than killing them outright, or perhaps even to abandon them for dead. It's also a way for investigators to do the same to non-player characters.

*For example: Hengist has taken a major wound and has 3 hit points remaining. He succeeds in making a CON to remain conscious at the point of taking the wound, but he'll still drop unconscious in three rounds' time.*

### Spending Luck to Remain Conscious

If you are using the optional rule for spending Luck points to alter rolls (page 99, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*), Luck may be spent to remain conscious for a few extra rounds. Remaining conscious until the end of the current round costs 1 point of Luck. The cost doubles on successive rounds—2, 4, 8, and so on—and should be spent at the start of each round. This is a mixed blessing, as an active character may present a more attractive target for further damage.

*For example: Hengist takes a major wound and fails his CON roll. He automatically falls prone, and should become unconscious, but he spends 1 point of Luck to remain conscious to the end of the present round. At the start of the following round he spends 2 Luck points. At the start of the third round he spends 4 Luck points. A total of 7 Luck points have been spent, at which point Hengist has reached safety. At the start of the fourth round Hengist doesn't spend Luck points, and automatically falls unconscious.*

### Concealed Damage

When you take an injury, do you know how close you are to death? This sense of uncertainty can be simulated if the Keeper notes down the points of damage an investigator receives without revealing the number to the player. Instead, the Keeper only describes the injury to the player. Of course this is subjective and can be misleading; sometimes a minor injury can seem far worse than it is, and vice versa. A cut to the head can look terrible; a little blood goes a long way, but it may only represent one or two points of damage. The Keeper can reveal the actual number of points of damage after the event.

### Weapon Wear and Tear

As *Call of Cthulhu* is not essentially a combat heavy game, the standard rules do not cover weapon breakages. This optional rule allows for weapons and shields to break during combat.

When attacking with a weapon, if the user rolls “00” (a fumble) the weapon is usually considered to have been dropped or mishandled. However, Keepers wishing to simulate weapons breaking can call for the weapon user to make a Luck roll; if failed, the weapon has broken. Note that some Keepers may prefer to reduce this chance even further, thus only if the Luck roll is also fumbled with a “00” result does the weapon actually break. Keepers wishing to impose even further hurt may add the broken weapon has injured its wielder for 1D4 damage.

Likewise, a shield may become damaged. If a shield user's dodge or attack roll is fumbled, the user should make a Luck roll to determine if the shield is still usable. If the Luck roll is failed, then the shield no longer provides any armor bonus and must be repaired. In this case, the shield has become damaged (the holding straps have snapped or the shield itself has had a large piece broken off, and so on).

Weapons and shields broken in this manner must be repaired, taking both time and a successful Art/Craft (Blacksmith or Carpenter) roll. A kindly Keeper might allow a Hard Repair/Devise roll if the situation is desperate (Repair/Devise is not normally used for weapon/armor repair).



## TABLE: OPTIONAL EFFECTS OF MAJOR WOUNDS

1D100	Result
01-10	Severed leg tendons cause limping; fused ankle bones cause limping; back muscles or spinal nerve damage bend the torso to the left or right; a shattered knee cannot bend. Lose 2D6 DEX. The maximum MOV is now reduced by 1.
11-20	Much of the nose has been sliced away; multiple scars deface both hands; an ear has been cut off; a livid scar lends an evil cast to the character's appearance. Lose 2D6 APP. The visible and unappealing deformity cannot easily be disguised and may affect social skills.
21-30	Wrist or hand damage; a slab of arm or shoulder muscle has been cut away; a chunk was hewn from thigh or calf muscles; spinal nerves are damaged; several fingers or toes are severed. Lose 2D6 STR; this loss may effect what weapons can be used and the character's damage bonus. Character is still able to fight with a weapon, but not with a shield.
31-40	A punctured lung leads to a weakened respiratory system; deep stomach wounds become chronically re-infected or belly wounds weaken digestion and general health; kidneys and liver are damaged. Lose 2D6 CON; MOV is reduced by 1, and adjust maximum hit points.
41-50	Concussion damages hearing and limits Listen and Insight skills to maximums of 65%; injury to the head thereafter requires Hard rolls for using mental skills; blows or cuts that affect depth perception leave ranged weapon skill value(s) at a maximum of 65%; multiple wounds to the face and neck limit social skills to maximum of 65%. Lose 2D6 INT.
51-60	Refer to 01-10 for what happened, which now expands to the loss an arm or leg. Lose 4D6 DEX; (MOV is halved if leg is affected). Character is unable to fight.
61-70	Refer to 11-20 for what happened, though the major wound now includes worse mutilations. Lose 4D6 APP; it creates one or more visible deformities that cannot be disguised; all social skills (except Intimidate) are made at one difficulty level higher than normal (or with a penalty die).
71-80	Refer to 21-30 for examples of mutilating cuts and losses. Lose 4D6 STR (adjust damage bonus as necessary).
81-90	Refer to 31-40 for various wounds to the vitals. Lose 4D6 CON (adjust hit points as necessary); reduce MOV by half.
91-92	Bad facial and vocal-cord injuries. Lose 4D6 APP; all social skills (except Intimidate) are made at one difficulty level higher than normal (or with a penalty die).
93-94	Broken bones and severed ganglia causing one arm to become permanently limp (roll 1D6: result of 1-3 is the left arm, 4-6 is the right arm). Lose 4D6 DEX; from now on the character can only use one-handed melee weapons.
95-98	Nerve damage to left or right arm (roll 1D6: result of 1-3 is the left arm, 4-6 is the right arm). Lose 4D6 DEX; hereafter the character can only use one-handed melee weapons.
99	Mutilated with vicious wounds. Lose 2D6 points each from APP, DEX, and CON (adjust hit points, damage bonus and MOV as necessary); may affect difficulty of social skill rolls (except Intimidate).
00	Character is horrendously mutilated and mauled. Remove 3D6 points each from any of four characteristics (Keeper's discretion as to which) and describe the results.





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## SANITY

In the course of play the investigators must confront knowledge and entities of alien horror and terrifying implication. Such experiences shake and then shatter their belief in the normal world, progressively damaging their sanity. They also may shake belief in the Holy Church.

In the Dark Ages, words like psychoanalysis, paranoia, schizophrenia, and paraphilia are not part of the lexicon. Also, the Dark Age mindset is more inclined to believe that the supernatural is real and takes an active part in daily life.

The following provides a few tweaks to the standard *Call of Cthulhu* sanity rules. In addition, an optional Sanity mechanic is presented at the end of the chapter.

## IDIOCY AND LUNACY

In the Dark Ages, there were two categories of the mentally ill: the "idiot" and the "lunatic". All of the rigidly defined ailments of the modern world were unknown to the Dark Ages, even though people might have suffered from them. Although the words idiot and lunatic are of later medieval origin, they are useful here because they are widely known and help evoke a certain feel. In the Dark Ages, an idiot was born that way. A lunatic on the other hand becomes one during his or her life. Causes vary, and the lunatic might only suffer from lunacy for short periods of times, hence the reference to "luna," the moon.

The popular modern day conception of Dark Ages mental health is that when a person fell ill, the surrounding populace immediately shouted "sinner," "witchcraft," or "possessed by demons!" That's far from the truth. Yes, some elements of society did believe that some mentally ill people were possessed, punished by God, or the victim of the evil eye. However, the works of Galen and other academics were known in cities and common sense reigned in both urban and rural communities. If a man had been drinking heavily and then acted odd, the alcohol was the most likely cause. If a woman started speaking strangely, she would be asked questions to determine what happened. She might have fallen and hit her head or recently lost a child. For those without an obvious environmental cause, humoral imbalance, as discussed by Galen, was often cited.

It's important to remember that attitudes toward mental health, like many facets of life, are inseparable from religious belief and doctrine. Even if alcohol is to blame for a man's temporary lunacy, the road to recovery includes less drinking and better spiritual care. If a physician recommends wine to combat an overabundance of phlegm, he also encourages the patient to seek confession.

When an investigator loses Sanity points and suffers temporary or permanent insanity, he or she suffers from lunacy. There is no further breakdown into a specific affliction (such as agoraphobia, paranoia, or schizophrenia). Those specific designators are unknown in the Dark Ages. The people in the community know about his or her illness and might attempt a cure, but more likely they will just provide what support they can for the person and their family. How the lunacy manifests is up to the Keeper and player. Common Dark Age manifestations of lunacy include: visions, speaking in tongues, seizures, catatonia, and wanderlust.

## The Humors

An important element of Dark Ages medicine is the humors. Based on ancient texts, the humors theory states that there are four fluids in the human body, each associated with an organ: yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood. If they're in balance the person is healthy.

If a person falls sick, it might be because the humors are out of balance. The necessary balance is maintained through diet, medicine, and the occasional bloodletting. Keeping them in balance is difficult and many people have their personalities defined by the humor that's out of balance.

Keepers who want to inject more description can attribute lunacy to a humoral imbalance. The player and Keeper should decide which humor is surging in the investigator's body or roll on the **Random Humors** table.

TABLE: RANDOM HUMORS

Roll	Humor	Manifestation
1	Black Bile	Despondency
2	Blood	Impulsiveness
3	Phlegm	Laziness
4	Yellow Bile	Manic Depressive



## Lingua Franca

A Keeper looking to inject some linguistic verisimilitude into the game can make use of the following words used in the Dark Ages to describe lunatics and idiots.

Word	Language
Idiote	Old French
Idiota	Late Latin
Monadseocnes	Old English
Lunaticus	Late Latin
Lunatique	Old French

## Everyday Violence

Because the Dark Ages world is more violent, some things that are shocking in the 1920s wouldn't upset someone in the Dark Ages. Sanity should never be lost to these things:

- Surprised to find mangled animal carcass.
- Surprised to find corpse.
- Surprised to find body part.
- Surprised to find mangled human corpse.

Some suggested Sanity losses with religious overtones, such as seeing a river flowing with blood or seeing someone known to be dead, can be explained by the more scripturally literal people of the Dark Ages. To them, it's a sign from God. It's still unsettling, but they believe they know the origin. With a successful Religion roll, the Sanity loss for seeing such an event is reduced by half (to a minimum of one).



TABLE: THE HUMORS

Humor	Organ	Personality	Symptoms
Black Bile	Spleen	Melancholic	Generally depressed, introverted, and thoughtful, but can be seized by bursts of creative energy. They are very self-reliant.
Blood	Head	Sanguine	Impulsive, shameless, and hedonistic. They're boisterous and very charismatic, but prone to daydream.
Phlegm	Lungs	Phlegmatic	Relaxed and quiet, possibly even lazy. They are accepting and affectionate toward others, and prefer stability over change.
Yellow Bile	Gall Bladder	Choleric	Ambitious, full of aggression, energy, and passion, but balanced by cycles of deep depression. They tend to be either highly organized or disorganized with no middle ground.

Leeching was used for curing sanguine diseases.



# INSANITY

Follow the standard rules for investigator insanity as per the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, however the following Bouts of Madness tables, as well as sections on healing and recovery are adjusted for the Dark Ages setting.

## BOUTS OF MADNESS

When an investigator goes insane, they suffer an initial bout of madness. If the investigator is in the company of other investigators, the bout happens in real time—pick or roll from **Table: Bouts of Madness—Real Time**. If the investigator is alone, the bout is summarized—pick or roll from **Table: Bouts of Madness—Summary**.

## TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Treatment is fundamentally “common sense” applied with religious underpinnings. Even though some texts do advise the use of spells for healing, those suggestions are

accompanied with medical treatment. In the Dark Ages, the most common treatments are: rest, diet, herbal, and in some advanced cities (such as Constantinople), surgical. The treatment fits the culture.

*For example: surgery isn't the first choice in rural Wessex, but might be in Constantinople or Rheims. On the other hand, an herbal treatment might be the first recourse for the treatment of lunacy in Wessex. Religious undertones to healing occur everywhere equally. A scholar in Byzantium is no less likely to suggest a spiritual remedy than a scylding in Wessex.*

### Self-Help

At any suitable time, an investigator may choose to spend time with something listed in their backstory. This may be done during quiet periods, downtime between adventures, or during the investigator development phase.

The player should go in to some detail about what their investigator is doing to seek healing (and possibly redemption). The actions should be thematically appropriate to their backstory. If the investigator is going on a pilgrimage or spending time with a relic, refer to those sections following.

TABLE: BOUTS OF MADNESS—REAL TIME (ROLL ID10)

Roll	Bout of Madness
1	<b>Amnesia:</b> The investigator has no memory of events that have taken place since they were last in a place of safety. This lasts for 1D10 rounds.
2	<b>Psychosomatic disability:</b> The investigator suffers psychosomatic blindness, deafness, or loss of the use of a limb or limbs for 1D10 rounds.
3	<b>Outburst:</b> The investigator can do nothing but scream, laugh, cry, as their emotions pour out uncontrollably for 1D10 rounds.
4	<b>Violence:</b> A red mist descends on the investigator and they explode in a spree of uncontrolled violence and destruction directed at their surroundings, allies, or foes alike for 1D10 rounds.
5	<b>Paranoia:</b> The investigator suffers severe paranoia for 1D10 rounds; everyone is out to get them; no one can be trusted; they are being spied on; someone has betrayed them; what they are seeing is a trick.
6	<b>Delusion:</b> The investigator sees things that are not real, but is unable to tell truth from hallucination for 1D10 rounds.
7	<b>Faint:</b> The investigator faints. They recover after 1D10 rounds.
8	<b>Flee in panic:</b> The investigator is compelled to get as far away as possible for 1D10 rounds.
9	<b>Phobia:</b> Investigator gains a new phobia. Roll 1D100 on <b>Table IX: Sample Phobias</b> in the <i>Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook</i> (or choose one). Even if the source of the phobia is not present, the investigator imagines it is there for the next 1D10 rounds.
10	<b>Mania:</b> The investigator gains a new mania. Roll 1D100 on <b>Table X: Sample Manias</b> in the <i>Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook</i> (or choose one). The investigator seeks to indulge in their new mania for the next 1D10 rounds.



## GAME SYSTEM

The player then makes a Sanity roll (if the investigator's key connection is chosen, they gain a bonus die on the roll). Keeper and players are encouraged to roleplay the scene to the point where it comes to a head, and then make the Sanity roll, roleplaying the outcome. If the roll is successful, the investigator gains 1D6 Sanity points. If it is unsuccessful, 1 Sanity point is lost and the Keeper and player should revise that aspect of the investigator's backstory in some way to reflect the failure. If the roll is "00" the investigator becomes a wanderer (see page 125).

If the key connection was used, and the roll is a success, the investigator also recovers from any indefinite insanity. However,

if the roll is a failure, that aspect of the investigator's backstory is revised, and the investigator no longer has a key connection.

In time the investigator may form a new key connection. During a future investigator development phase, a background aspect may be converted into a new key connection if the player successfully uses the self-help option to regain Sanity points via that connection. Alternatively, any Sanity roll of 01 (critical success) allows for the immediate nomination of a new key connection to replace the one that was lost.

**Note:** Current Sanity points can never increase above an investigator's maximum Sanity (99—Cthulhu Mythos skill).

### TABLE: BOUTS OF MADNESS—SUMMARY (ROLL ID10)

Roll	Bout of Madness
1	<b>Amnesia:</b> The investigator comes to their senses in some unfamiliar place with no memory of who they are. Their memories will slowly return to them over the next few hours.
2	<b>Battered:</b> The investigator comes to their senses 1D10 hours later to find themselves battered and bruised. Hit points are reduced to half of what they were before going insane, though this does not cause a major wound. How the damage was sustained is up to the Keeper.
3	<b>Violence:</b> The investigator explodes in a spree of violence and destruction. When the investigator comes to their senses, their actions may or may not be apparent or remembered. Who or what the investigator has inflicted violence upon and whether they have killed or simply inflicted harm is up to the Keeper.
4	<b>Ideology/Beliefs:</b> Review the investigator's backstory entry for Ideology and Beliefs. The investigator manifests one of these in an extreme, crazed, and demonstrative manner. Perhaps the experience further deepens their belief or radically changes it.
5	<b>Significant People:</b> Consult the investigator's backstory entry for Significant People and why the relationship is so important. In the time that passes (1D10 hours or more) the investigator has done their best to get close to that person and act upon their relationship in some way.
6	<b>Delusion:</b> The investigator has been profoundly affected by a hallucination, causing them to undertake some form action. Perhaps they have dug a deep pit and are now hiding in it, or barricaded themselves within a hut.
7	<b>Flee in panic:</b> When the investigator comes to their senses they are far away, perhaps lost in the wilderness or hammering on the castle door demanding to let inside.
8	<b>Shackled:</b> The investigator, raving and talking in strange tongues, has been captured and put in shackles or imprisoned in some manner, as it is believed he or she is possessed by the devil.
9	<b>Phobia:</b> The investigator gains a new phobia. Roll 1D100 on <b>Table IX: Sample Phobias</b> in the <i>Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook</i> (or choose one). The investigator comes to their senses 1D10 hours later, having taken every precaution to avoid their new phobia.
10	<b>Mania:</b> The investigator gains a new mania. Roll 1D100 on <b>Table X: Sample Manias</b> , in the <i>Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook</i> (or choose one). The investigator comes to their senses 1D10 hours later. During this bout of madness, the investigator will have been fully indulging in their new mania. Whether this is apparent to other people is up to the Keeper and player.



## CHAPTER 4

### Home Care

The most common method of treatment during the Dark Ages is home care. An insane investigator's immediate and extended family may provide care as best they can. A local priest may also visit to pray over the unfortunate soul.

After each month of treatment of an indefinitely insane character, safe from further trauma, the player makes a dice roll (see following) for recovery. Alternatively, at the Keeper's discretion, indefinite insanity lasts until the next investigator development phase at the end of the present game chapter (in a campaign) or scenario.

#### Home Recovery, roll 1D100:

- **01–95:** success; gain 1D3 Sanity points. This is followed by a Sanity roll for the investigator; if the roll is successful, the investigator is cured of their insanity; if the roll is unsuccessful then a further Sanity roll may be attempted in one month's time.

- **96–100:** failure; the character rebels, further deepening their madness. 1D6 Sanity points are lost and no further progress can be made during the next game month.

### MONASTERIES

There are no mental institutions in Dark Ages Europe. Instead, some of the mentally ill are sent to monasteries, particularly those run by the Benedictine Order. Investigators with indefinite insanity can be sent to a monastery for a regimen of diet, rest, and spiritual guidance. The monks and nuns attempt to heal those who are ill, or at least provide palliative care. For each month spent in Benedictine care, the player makes a Sanity roll. If successful, he or she gains 1D6 Sanity points and recovers from any indefinite insanity. If the roll is a failure, lose 1D4 Sanity points. If the result is "00" the investigator is exiled from the monastery, becoming a wanderer (see following).

## PILGRIMAGE SITES

This table lists popular pilgrimage sites in the Dark Ages and the associated religion. Santiago de Compostela is included even though it is rarely visited in the Dark Ages. Although St. Cuthbert's relics moved periodically, they were in Concestra (Chester-le-Street) for most of the Dark Ages.

Pagan sites are limited to standing stones and ancient forest groves, the most well known being Stonehenge in England.

TABLE: SELECTED PILGRIMAGE SITES OF THE DARK AGES

Holy Site	Location	Religion
Birthplace of Jesus	Nazareth	Christianity
Cave of the Patriarchs	Hebron	Christianity, Islam, Judaism
Church of the Holy Sepulcher	Jerusalem	Christianity
Church of St. Peter	Antioch	Christianity
Kaaba	Mecca	Islam
Mother Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin	Armenia	Christianity
Saint Albans	Saint Albans, England	Christianity
Saint Cuthbert's Church	Concestra, England	Christianity
Saint Oswald's Priory	Gloucester, England	Christianity
Saint Peter's Basilica (Old)	Rome	Christianity
Shrine of Saint James	Santiago de Compostela	Christianity
Site of Jesus' Ministry	Sea of Galilee	Christianity
Western Wall	Jerusalem	Judaism



## PILGRIMAGE

Belief in the healing power of locations can have curative powers. If an investigator undertakes a pilgrimage to a sacred site recognized by his or her religion and succeeds in a Sanity roll while there, 1D10 Sanity points are gained, and the character also recovers from any indefinite insanity. However, to be meaningful, the pilgrim must traverse over 100 miles from their starting point.

Remaining in the holy city or site and only participating in religious rites recovers 1D3 Sanity points per month with a successful Sanity roll made each month. A failed Sanity roll results in the investigator losing 1D6 Sanity points. A roll of "00" means the investigator becomes a wanderer (see following).

For Pagans, the "pilgrimage" is somewhat different. Pagans must travel to an ancient grove or stone circle (which may be less than 100 miles distant), but must spend time (at least a month) there, living and sleeping under the stars, and unable to do anything other than devote their time to attuning themselves to the healing nature of the site. Once per month a Sanity roll may be made; if successful, 1D6 Sanity points

are gained. If failed, 1D4+1 are lost. A roll of "00" means the investigator becomes a wanderer (see following).

If the pilgrimage site (whatever the religion) is ever revealed to be the worship site of a Mythos entity or the site is somehow destroyed by the Mythos, any investigator who received Sanity points there loses 1D10 Sanity points immediately upon hearing the truth.

## RELICS

Most parish churches have a religious relic, and for people of faith, access to a saint's relic can be a powerful tool for healing. Anyone who spends time with a relic appropriate to his or her faith can regain Sanity points.

One month of quiet contemplation and a successful Sanity roll in the presence of the relic restores 1D6 Sanity points. An investigator can draw strength from only one relic at a time. A failed Sanity roll means the investigator loses 1D3 Sanity points. If the Sanity roll is "00" the investigator becomes a wanderer (see following)—it is up to the player and Keeper whether the investigator steals or smashes the relic.

If the relic is ever destroyed or is proven to be a tool of the Mythos, any investigator who used the relic to restore sanity loses 1D10 Sanity points.

## WANDERERS

Some mentally ill are abandoned by their community and are left to wander. Investigators cast out from their community face disease, privation, and random violence from passersby.

In order to begin recuperating, an investigator must find an ally by attempting a Hard POW roll each month. If successful, the investigator finds succor with someone and regains 1D3 Sanity points per month in which they remain with the friend. Once an investigator regains 10 Sanity points, he or she is able to return to society.

Because of the difficulties of life in the Dark Ages world, the player should make a Hard Survival roll each month of wandering. If the investigator doesn't have the correct Survival specialization, the roll's difficulty is Extreme. On a failure, the investigator falls prey to disease, exposure, or outlaws.



*The end of a pilgrimage*



## OPTIONAL RULES

Here are some optional rules to consider using in your Dark Ages games. The first presents an adjusted Sanity mechanic based upon a character's worldview, while the second somewhat strengthens an investigator's resolve in the face of unspeakable monsters.

### OPTIONAL RULE: EASIER RECOVERY

For Self-Help, Home Care, Monasteries, Pilgrimage, and Relics, each calls for a Sanity roll to determine whether Sanity points are gained (or lost). As investigators in such situations probably already have quite a low current Sanity, making such rolls can be all the more difficult. If you prefer to have your investigators regain Sanity a little more easily, one option is to allow a bonus die for such rolls (if using a key connection, the investigator gains two bonus dice). Likewise,

indefinite insanity can be removed if a successful Sanity roll is made, or simply removed at the close of a campaign chapter or scenario (given that enough time elapses for the character to have "worked through" their illness).

### OPTIONAL RULE: ALTERNATIVE SANITY CHECK

The standard Sanity rules are fully functional for playing games in the Dark Ages. The rules presented here are an optional replacement for the Sanity system; they're designed to add a more Dark Ages feel to madness triggers.

Start by changing the starting values of the Natural World and Religion skills to 100 minus POW. Players can still add occupation and personal interest skill points to Natural World and Religion. All that changes is the starting base value.

*For example: Eric's POW is 70, his modified base value for Natural World and Religion is now 30 ( $100 - 70 = 30$ ). If he opts to spend 20 skill points on his Religion skill during character creation, his Religion skill becomes 50.*

Although people in the Dark Ages had a strong grasp of the natural world as it pertained to them, belief in legendary creatures such as dragons, fairies, angels, and sea monsters was commonplace and didn't conflict with the average person's worldview. Even the most educated weren't afraid to put "here be dragons" on a map. To reflect this unscientific worldview, an investigator should not make a Sanity roll when faced with a sanity blasting situation. Instead, he or she should make either a Natural World or Religion skill roll instead. The Keeper and player should work together to decide which of the two skills is most appropriate to the character and the situation at hand.

*For example: if an investigator sees blood running down the walls of a church, a Religion roll is appropriate. On the other hand, if an investigator encounters a deep one on the beach, a Natural World roll might be more appropriate.*

If the Religion or Natural World roll is successful, the character is unable to slot the entity or situation into a neatly ordered place in his or her worldview, which quickly begins to unravel and Sanity is lost (at the amount specified for a failed Sanity roll). If the roll is a failure the character either shakes-off the situation or is only a little disturbed by it (taking the minimal amount of Sanity loss as if for a successful Sanity roll, which could be zero in some cases).





The investigator also receives a skill check for succeeding at the Religion or Natural World roll. Unlike other experience checks, this one is made immediately and any resultant additional skill points (+1D10) applied immediately. As a result, Religion or Natural World can increase several times in a single game session and experience checks for these skills are not made during the investigator development phase.

Note that the character may only attempt one skill roll, Natural World or Religion, per encounter. If he or she succeeds with a Religion check, a Natural World roll cannot also be made. The effects (Sanity loss) are applied immediately.

## OPTIONAL RULE: SEEING MONSTERS

People of the Dark Ages are accustomed to the belief that devils, demons, angels, and spirits are real. Creatures like fairies, dragons, and sea monsters also lurk out in the darkness and are an ever-present threat. Most notably, such beliefs will come to the fore when investigators encounter Mythos monsters. Upon seeing a deep one, a Dark Age investigator is likely to declare it “sea demon” and run to the local priest for protection and to confess his sins.

In game terms, once Sanity loss has been negated or taken for seeing a particular species of Mythos monster, then that character is immune from suffering further Sanity loss from seeing another of the same species in the future. Such monsters should be recorded in the investigator’s backstory under “Encounters with Strange Entities.” This optional rule essentially removes the **Getting Used to the Awfulness** rule (page 169) in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*.

Of course, this optional rule only applies only to lesser races of the Mythos and not to the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods, whose presence always calls for a Sanity roll! Such beings are anathema to humanity.

## PLAYTEST NOTES

Some Keepers might be worried about rapidly rising Natural World and Religion skills and what impact those higher skills will have on their games. Bear in mind that the higher the Natural World and Religion skills rise, the greater the chance the character will lose Sanity. The character mentally searches through their knowledge only to find the situation at hand does not neatly fall into one of their beliefs.

In one playtest session, one investigator accidentally encountered too much Mythos too quickly and his Natural World skill rose to 80% before the end of the first session. At that point, the investigator, a woodsman named Aelfric, was afraid to leave the monastery because of the evils that lurked behind every tree, tempting his soul to damnation. Not long thereafter, Aelfric chose to join the monastery and secluded himself away in the scriptorium. You can imagine how that ended.



Horses can also be affected by SAN loss







# INVESTIGATIVE HORROR IN THE DARK AGES



One of the hallmarks of *Call of Cthulhu* is investigation. In a traditional game, set in the Victorian, Classic, or Modern era, a group of investigators delve into arcane mysteries, discover clues, and slowly piece together the truth. In the Dark Ages, things are a little different.

This brief guide is to help Keepers build effective investigative scenarios and campaigns in a pre-literate world. The Dark Ages world is ripe for many different types of adventures. Investigators can explore centuries' old libraries in Rome and Byzantium. They can encounter the worshippers of old gods in the dark forests along the Rhine. Ruins of the decadent Roman Empire and its Pagan gods linger on the frontiers, refusing to be ground to dust by the passage of time or more sinister reasons. The mountains are home to the remnants of Voormis and Hyperboreans, as well as the Cold Ones who herald the return of Rlim Shaikorth.

The following are just guidelines. The Keeper should not feel constrained by any of them and be ready to jettison them the second they get in the way of the fun.

## GETTING THE GROUP TOGETHER

One of the biggest challenges in any roleplaying game is finding a plausible way for the group of player characters to meet, establish common goals, and set out on their way. While they could meet in an inn, that would get unduly predictable after a while, stretching the boundaries of plausibility. Consider some of the following options in addition to the two investigator groups presented on page 84:

- The investigators are all residents of the same village or city; their first encounter with the Mythos happens there and drives them together.
- The investigators are all part of the same war band. While out seeking spoils, they encounter their first Mythos event.



## PLAYTEST EXAMPLE

For one playtest the players created investigators on their own to bring to the game session. This was both to test the character creation rules and maximize game time. When they arrived, they had one bailiff, two woodsmen, and two heretics. At first, I stumbled on how to bring the characters together. Then it occurred to me, have them all start together. The bailiff for St. Swithun's monastery is charged with collecting annual dues from tenants and keeping the peace. This particular season, he hired two woodsmen to accompany him so that he could bring in two heretics who had not been paying their rent.

As the game started, the bailiff and his woodsmen had corralled the heretics, and were in the process of bringing them to St. Swithun's. They only had one more stop to make on the route...

What initially seemed a difficult combination of investigator occupations actually melded together smoothly and created some interesting party dynamics that lasted throughout the game. It was actually touching when, at the end of the game, one of the heretics attempted to save the bailiff after the bailiff lost his leg to an attack.

- The investigators are all attached to the same monastery, or are just visiting, when the Mythos reveals itself. Not all players need have religious occupations. There are both lay members and hired workers at a monastery.
- The investigators all have a dream that leads them to each other. In less skeptical times, the power of dreams and what they mean aren't easily ignored. Alternatively, each of them



is presented with an omen, portent, or premonition which brings them together in an uneasy alliance to discover the meaning behind the shared prophecy.

- The investigators are all escaped slaves. They were captured by the Vikings, Rus, Magyars, Anglo-Saxons, Cambrians, or another society, and sold into slavery. They have since escaped. Perhaps they encounter the Mythos after they escape, or a Mythos event is the reason for their escape.

## KEEP THE GAME MOVING

As Keeper, you share the majority of the burden of keeping the game going. After all, you know the background of the mystery and potentially the ending. If the players get bogged down, you should get them moving again. Offer up another clue if they're foundering, throw an adversary in their path if they're moving too slow, whatever it takes. Don't call for unimportant skill rolls—only ask for rolls when dramatic and important events are happening. Remember, you don't want the investigators' lives to be boring.

## SAY "YES"

The most powerful word in a Keeper's arsenal is "Yes." Whenever a player asks to do something outrageous, don't be afraid to say "Yes," while in the back of your mind thinking, "but at what cost?" Remember that you are not an adversary to the players. You're an arbiter of the rules and facilitator of the action. The emergent narrative is as much the players' as it is yours. After all, you're there as much for a good story as the players are, and crazy, off-cuff plans that surprisingly work make for great stories and gaming sessions. If a player comes up with a wild plan, don't immediately shoot it down as impossible. Instead, use the tools at your disposal, such as skill difficulties and bonus or penalty dice, to figure out how the character can try to achieve this action. Then, tell the player, *"Yes, you can do that, but..."*

Saying, "Yes," does not mean the character automatically succeeds at a given course of action. It just means they can attempt it. That not only keeps the players engaged in the story but opens up whole new avenues of excitement and possibility.

Another aspect of saying, "Yes," is allowing the players to add to the world. If an investigator says he rides into Totburh to talk to the priest's brother Eorhelm, and you, as the Keeper, have never established a character named Eorhelm, don't shoot it down unless you have an excellent reason for doing so. Not only is the player driving the action forward but he is helping to build the world. From now on, the priest's brother in Totburh is named Eorhelm, and you can bet the player will remember it.

## BRING THE WORLD TO LIFE

In most games the players each take on the role of one investigator. You, as the Keeper, are responsible for the rest of the world. That's a pretty big responsibility. There are a few ways you can simplify the task at hand.

First, keep a list of names you can draw from for those unexpected encounters. Need the name of a bandit? Pick one from the list and move on.

Second, keep a list of personality traits and motivating factors. Remember everybody wants something. Once you've picked a name, pick a personality trait from the list. These should be short, snappy concepts. The list could have words like happy, melancholy, paranoid, angry, jealous, afraid of dogs, looking for revenge, lost her lover, out to steal sheep, etc. Pick one or two of these and apply them to the name you've just chosen. Use the lists provided on pages 68-69 for inspiration. You can work up the lists on paper and start at the top and work your way down or assign numbers to each line and use dice to roll for random names and traits. Some of these randomly and quickly gathered together characters might in time become important non-player characters, or possibly replacement investigators.

### Describe the Scene

For the players, your descriptions serve as all five senses. Don't just describe what the characters see. Allow the players to take-in your descriptions of what their investigators can smell; the earthy odor of decaying leaves, the taste of smoke on the air, and so on. Paint a picture for their senses; they feel the cold air freeze their nostrils, they can hear something creaking up in the trees. The more senses you can engage, the more engaged the players will be.

But don't over do it. Don't spend thirty minutes chewing the scenery describing a privy. Be just descriptive enough to paint the scene in broad strokes. Let things lurk in the shadows and outside of the senses too. The players' imaginations will fill in the details and help bring them that much more into the game. If the players want to add details, let them. If they ask if there is a table in the room, it's a good chance they have a plan that involves a table. Unless you can think of a very good reason why not, go ahead and let there be a table in the room.

### Keep the World Moving

Portray a living, breathing world. The investigators are important to that world because they are the protagonists, but the world doesn't stop moving while they're away. If you have set up a scene where the investigators have to choose between going to fight the Mythos or fending off a Viking incursion and the investigators decide to fight the Mythos because they see it as the bigger threat, make sure they see the fall-out from the Viking incursion. When the



## INVESTIGATIVE HORROR IN THE DARK AGES

investigators return to their community, buildings will be destroyed, family and friends killed or sold into slavery, and many people will be wondering why the investigators chose to run rather than help the community.

Smaller changes in the world can have big impacts, too. Perhaps one of the investigators has a sister and she becomes pregnant. Or a younger brother enters a monastery. While these might seem trivial events, they help make the world seem whole and provide you with a never-ending supply of plot hooks and character motivations.

Keeping track of all this can seem daunting, so why not recruit the players? As an investigation winds down, ask each player to contribute one detail about what happened to a non-player character (NPC) family member while the investigator was away. This detail should be small; an investigator's mother joins a convent, a brother goes off to battle, a niece is born. Small things like this may not seem like much, but they can help pull the players in further and give the investigators more to fight for. Such details also help to develop and form new backstory entries for the investigators that might be called upon in the future to help them regain lost Sanity points.

### Caring For Those Back Home

Investigating horror usually means long absences from home. In the Dark Ages, that can mean privation or perhaps even death through starvation for the investigator's family—if the investigator was primarily responsible for bringing in food. The following ideas can help the Keeper maintain verisimilitude:

- The community steps in. Dark Ages communities are close-knit groups and members will assist others in need, but not without a cost. This will often require reciprocation when the investigator returns.
- A lord steps in. Perhaps the local lord is aware of the Mythos threat and agrees to maintain the investigators' land while they're away. However, this won't come without a cost. The investigator will owe the local lord more than he does already.
- The entire family goes along. This might seem unmanageable at first, but it opens new realms to horror. Not only does an investigator have to ensure his own safety, but now his family's safety as well. Does he allow his family to see the Mythos horrors or does he try to keep the blinders on?
- Send them to a monastery. The investigator has the option of signing his family over to a monastery for support. The wife becomes either a lay servant or a nun, and the children become servants. The monastery gains the investigator's lands.
- Do nothing. An investigator's extended family is particularly capable of taking care of itself. Hopefully.

### HOW MUCH HISTORY IS ENOUGH?

One of the hallmarks of *Call of Cthulhu* is that it's a historical game. By default it's not set in a fantasy world. It's set on our Earth in our history. *Cthulhu Dark Ages* is no different. It's set in the 10th and 11th centuries of our world. When you sit down to begin playing *Cthulhu Dark Ages* take a moment to think about how historical you want the game to be. Then ask your players the same question. It's possible to run the game as a simulation of early medieval history with added monsters. It's also possible to run the game in a pulp style where characters can beat up on walking squids. Neither one is right or wrong. Just make sure you and your players are on the same page.

If you go the heavy history route, make sure history doesn't get in the way of the fun. It can inform the fun and deepen the fun, but the instant a player's idea is shot down "because it didn't happen that way!" it's time to reassess how much fun everybody is really having. Don't forget it's called the Dark Ages because there is less recorded history than that of other eras. Don't sweat the details, just try to be consistent.

"I'm telling you... we need to stick together!"



chuland



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ΗΛΛ

ΗΕΥΣ





## INVESTIGATIVE HORROR IN THE DARK AGES

### Dealing with Class

During the 10th and 11th centuries, the class system is not as rigid as it was during the Roman Empire or will be during the High Middle Ages. Yes, there are the haves and the have-nots, and the haves are well on the way to cementing their power over the have-nots. The occupations provided in character creation don't cover the uppermost or lowest tiers of society. There are no occupations given for kings, ealdormen, or slaves. If the Keeper allows for characters of varying ranks, he or she should determine plausible reasons for the group to stay together and handle players trying to exert power over other players.

#### Some suggestions include:

- The characters all fight the Mythos on behalf of the same lord, who is also a character. Unfortunately, the investigator lord has problems with his own lord and has been stripped of his title.
- An investigator slave has served the family for years and is treated more as a trusted confidant than property.

### CLUES

One of the tropes of *Call of Cthulhu* is learning about the Mythos from musty tomes, fractured papyri, and decayed incunabula. Almost no peasants are going to be able to read their own language. Fewer still are going to be able to read the *Necronomicon* in Arabic. Even fewer can read the *Scrolls of Thoth* in Hieratic. There are numerous ways a Keeper can run investigative scenarios, keeping the horror and mystery, while ensuring that manuscripts are rare.

All the Keeper needs to do is move the clues around. Rather than choosing just one of these options, the Keeper should mix and match to create a varied world where the investigators are never sure where their next clue is coming from.

- Use the **Oral Tradition** (page 99). The rules draw on the pre-literate oral tradition of Europe. During the Dark Ages, people receive their news from a traveler, not from a paper. History is passed on the same way. Yes, monks are codifying histories, poetry, riddles, and sagas in scriptoria throughout Europe, but the average person still learns aurally. If the Mythos is a part of the world, albeit a secret part, it stands to reason that tidbits and teasers of Mythos lore will be intertwined with the narrative. It could be a historical event in a recounting of a settlement's history, or a veiled reference in the *Chanson de Roland*. Folklore, myths, and legends are excellent ways to use the oral tradition to spread Mythos information.
  - *Beowulf* is just a heroic saga until the first time the investigators encounter a large deep one.

- *The Ruin* is an eschatological poem. At least until the investigators witness a chthonian's tremors knock down a tower.
- *Kveldulf* is just a shapeshifter in the Egla. The investigators could learn a more sinister truth if the investigators encounter a proto-shoggoth later.

It's important that the Keeper not turn every folktale, myth, and legend into a Mythos parable. To do that not only undermines human agency in the world, but takes the Mythos from being a secret and mysterious feature of the game into an everyday occurrence. Just like every book in the Classic era isn't a Mythos tome, not every story in the Dark Ages should be a Mythos story.

- Use observation. The Mythos doesn't exist in a vacuum. The world around it will be changed by its very presence. Given the mutable nature of the Mythos, the Keeper should avoid being consistent in how the Mythos affects nature. It's better to let the investigators try to piece together what they observe into a rational whole, only to have it torn down by later events. The changes the investigators notice aren't because of conscious actions by the Mythos. Instead, the Mythos has strange effects on the world around it. It's easy to imagine how animals react to the Mythos. Examples include:
  - Dogs barking at the darkness, trying to scare away the nightgaunt lurking in the eaves.
  - Horses refusing to cross a patch of earth, afraid to walk over a chthonian.
  - Frogs clawing their eyes out from the presence of Zuchequon.
  - Mice driven into a frenzy and attacking everything around them because a lloigor is nearby.
  - Worms and other insects fleeing the ground to escape the putrefying effects of ghouls.
  - Birds crashing into trees for no reason, their trigeminal systems blasted by the appearance of Daoloth.

However, the Mythos can affect non-animals as well. Careful observation through Spot Hidden, Natural World, Navigate, or Track can reveal clues in flora and even geology that in a Classic-era game are the purview of tomes:

- Crops withering and dying from the presence of the men of Leng.
- A thegn's hall slowly warping from the worship of Hastur.
- A river suddenly flowing backward from the approach of Ghroth.
- Ice covering a forest in July from the passing of cold ones.
- The blasted heath left over from a colour out of space.

Opposite: A monk doing research on recent unexplained phenomena



- Strange tree growths after a dark young passes by.
- The core of every fruit in an orchard rots when Lilith is nearby.
- Tomes and Other Written Material. Use books, but use them sparingly. This will make each one much more unique and powerful. The world isn't completely illiterate. There are people who can read and write. These people are usually associated with monasteries, churches, business, and the government. Instead of having every library possess Mythos tomes, the tomes need to be much harder to find. Theodorus Philetas has only just finished his translation of the *Al-Azif*; copies haven't had the chance to be made let alone circulate across the continent. Finding and deciphering a tome will probably be reliant upon building good relationships with monks and their monasteries. Perhaps a monk knows of a tome but only by hearsay from a visitor from another monastery.
- Human customs. Even people who don't realize they face the Mythos can have reactions to it that can provide clues to investigators:
  - When a sorcerer is buried alive as punishment for his crimes, he's buried face down. A grave containing a face down corpse is the grave of a sorcerer.
  - Paths and settlements avoid certain locations, such as a rocky hill. Instinctively, people might have always avoided the hill because it was used in ancient times as an altar to Azathoth.
  - The unusual May Day celebrations in a village hint at older and darker sacrifices.
  - Why do the villagers in a certain community hang poisonous toadstools from their windows at night?

### DON'T HIDE THE IMPORTANT CLUES

If a clue is critical to the continuation of the story, the Keeper should make the clue an obvious one (see **Chapter 10**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*). In some circumstances, the Keeper might get the players to roll against the appropriate skill to identify an obvious clue, but the success or failure of the roll doesn't determine if the clue is found. Instead, success means the clue is found as normal. Failure means the clue is found, but there are complications. These complications should never stymie the investigators, they should simply add to the drama of the story. Sample complications include:

- The investigators took too long finding the clue and now have to contend with the Vikings who are now on their trail.
- The investigators managed to translate the gist of the tome, but missed numerous references to the ghouls that are guarding the crypt.
- The investigator negotiated a settlement with the thegn, but has to pay twice as much in taxes.
- The investigator breaks down the door, but it causes so much noise that the monks heard him and hid the profane tome.

Another method to deal with players failing to find clues is to move clues around as needed. If the players miss a clue in one spot, the Keeper need only move it a different location in the game where the players can try again later. The Keeper is encouraged to modify the clue, though. If the players missed the original clue of deep gouges on a wall indicating a deep one attack, they can stumble across a soggy, kelpy offal pile a few minutes later. This type of illusionism can, however, lead to the players feeling like they aren't interacting with a real world, and are following a prepared script instead. Try to plan out the clues in the scenario, determining the likelihood of the players finding them. Break clues up and arrange them in more places, so if they are not all found, the pieces that are gathered are enough to send the investigators in the right direction.

If, despite your best efforts, the players do become stuck and don't know what to do, use the **Idea** roll (page 199, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*) to put them back on track.

### USING THE ORAL TRADITION

Songs, poems, and folk tales can contain important information for investigators. In some cases, this can take the form of a specific clue, such as where to find a witch's grave or the safest way to approach a treacherous marsh. Some poems, however, include actual knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, often encoded behind multiple layers of allusion and poetic language. Learning Mythos secrets from a poem is covered on page 155. Note that, simply having heard a tale doesn't mean that a character can repeat the story again.

Memorizing a poem, song, or tale is much like studying a Mythos tome. It takes a variable amount of time, depending on the length and complexity of the piece, and requires a successful Art/Craft (Orate) roll. Characters who fail the Art/Craft (Orate) test may still learn the secrets contained within the poem or song but they won't be able to repeat the tale in such a way that other listeners can do the same. Although it may still be an entertaining story, even a slight mistake in the complex metaphors of a Dark Age poem can erase its hidden meaning.

Most poems don't have titles—names like “Beowulf” or “The Ruin” are modern additions—and listeners will simply ask for “the one about Helgi killing Hunding” or “the story of Weland the Smith.” Unlike tomes, poems can't be skimmed; a simple recitation produces no Mythos knowledge at all without deeper analysis.



## INVESTIGATIVE HORROR IN THE DARK AGES

### AVOIDING HACK AND SLASH

Some Keepers and players believe that violence has little place in a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario and the only way to properly solve a mystery is to riddle it out mentally. The difficult part of that with the Dark Ages setting is that institutionalized violence is an ingrained part of the culture. Blood feuds, where one social group claims the right of vengeance against another for a perceived wrong, are common throughout the Dark Ages. Therefore, if a sharpened blade is sufficient to deal with a murderer, it should be sufficient to deal with a deep one. At least on the first try.

Keepers who want to minimize the swordplay and guide players toward cerebral mysteries should keep the following in mind:

- Ensure that the scenario allows for non-martial solutions. It might be necessary to edit or substantially revise a scenario to add in other paths to the conclusion.
- Major wounds are a pause for thought. Combined with variable armor, receiving a major wound may be enough to deter bloodthirsty investigators and NPCs from pursuing combat.
- Ask the players. Make sure the players want the same kind of game you expect they want.
- Ask players to create investigators who are unlikely to pursue combat as a solution, such as monks.
- Set the scenario in a location that doesn't lend itself to combat:
  - Monasteries are excellent settings for non-combat scenarios. The investigators are members of the monasteries, visitors, or lay workers investigating problems at the monastery or its environs.
  - Ships and other confined spaces can help stoke tense, interpersonal dramas that heighten the horror without the need for combat.

### MAXIMIZING THE HORROR

Horror can be tough to pull off; historical horror more so. The Keeper needs to remember two things. First, you are scaring the players, not the investigators. Second, regardless of how "into" a character a player gets, he or she is still going to be more scared by something that scares a modern day person than a Dark Ages person. The fear of not having enough food on a daily basis or running afoul of a pooka (a fairy creature) are unlikely to affect as many people today as they did in the Dark Ages. Here are some ideas to help increase the horror at your table:

**Read and watch:** Read horror stories and watch horror films, as well as mystery and suspense films and stories. More importantly, read and watch anything that interests you. Anything you enjoy that can be translated to a tabletop setting can help increase everyone's fun. Pay careful attention to what works and what doesn't in those mediums as far as pacing and plot development. Usually there are, typically, two to three scenes of increasing dread, followed by a humorous scene, aimed to put the audience off its guard right before the big reveal. Try to implement a similar pacing in your games.

**Cultivate your own fears:** What books, movies, or situations really scare you? Ask yourself why and how, and whether the same situations and artifices could be used in the game. Perhaps discuss horror themes with your players in advance of a game to understand what scares them, as well as agreeing if anything in particular is off the table (some people might prefer not to have certain things happen or be referenced in a game—check with the players and ensure everyone is up for the kind of horror you envisage happening in the game).

“YAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!”





**Stoke your love for the uncanny:** Uncanny events (as lead-ups to horrifying ones) can be accounted for by reason, but at the same time hint at a far more terrible reality. Dim the investigators' senses and surround them with odd occurrences, and troubling coincidences. Perhaps old Hunwulf saw an angel rise out of the smoke of the granary after the building was struck by lightning, and Hereswith started speaking in palindromes. Sure, both could be explained logically—the first is just a trick of the flickering flame, the second is either a prank played by young Hereswith or maybe she was kicked in the head—but when the byakhee swoops out of the trees two days hence and steals Hereswith's younger sister but leaves Hereswith alone, maybe creative players will start putting two and two together.

**Minimize the players' comfort zone:** Help the players to forget about the real world and to identify themselves with the investigators. Avoid, for instance, game jargon like "hit points." Play by dim or candle light in a dark room. Periodically put investigators in situations of guilt, failure, isolation, and weakness. The Dark Ages are a dirty world and each victory should be hard fought. The good guys should never go without consequences to their actions, even if it's just feeling guilty over the people they could not save.

**Make use of the setting:** The Dark Ages was a time when the nights were dark; there was no ambient lighting permeating every corner of the world. Without a torch, investigators cannot see far. With a torch, they can see a short distance, but others can easily spot them. Don't forget that the flickering light causes shadows to jump and play, creating interstices where something could be hidden. Especially something that doesn't play by the normal definitions of space and time.

Long distance communication is difficult. Getting a message from one settlement to another takes time. The cavalry can't ride in at the last second if an investigator has no way of getting the message out in time.

Most of the known world is still covered in forest. The dark expanse serves to not only hide creatures of darkness from the prying eyes of man; it also separates communities from one another. If a community is in trouble, someone has to brave the forest just to get help. It's even worse if the forest is an entity unto itself looking to swallow unsuspecting villagers whole.

Community cuts both ways. In most small communities, everybody knows each other, at least by sight, and when someone starts doing strange things, talking about religions that aren't Christianity, and disappearing for days at a time, word will spread. And, as word spreads, the investigators' support network in the community will slowly erode.

**Leave the players in the dark:** The worst kind of fear is the fear imagined by the player, not the Keeper. Fear resides not in the things the Keeper describes to the players, but hides in what is left out or only hinted at. Make players hesitate about the nature of the threat: mundane or supernatural? Keep players in a perpetual state of doubt and tension. You know you're on the right track when players start imagining threats that aren't there. Take a cue from Lovecraft and only vaguely describe the physical characteristics of the threat. Heighten other characteristics of the creature instead, such as its horrible odor or unearthly sounds.

Another technique is found in medieval sagas and legends. Give specific creatures specific names. Grendel wasn't a deep one or martense kin. He was Grendel. Sigurd didn't slay a dragon, he slew Fafnir. Giving the creature a specific name does two things. First, the specificity of the name helps cement the creature in the world. Rather than being apart from the world, it is now a part of it. On the other hand, the specificity of the name also adds some mystery to future encounters. The investigators know the creature by its given name, not by its species, so they cannot necessarily extrapolate from the singular to the group, and if they do, that's the Keeper's license to change things up.

**Surprise players:** Veteran *Call of Cthulhu* players can be a challenge for Keepers. To them, deep ones, ghouls, and mi-go, have simply become another aspect of reality. Prove them wrong! Change rules, modify creatures in terrifyingly interesting ways, add creepy side effects to spells, and turn the world on its ear. Avoid standardization and templates like the plague. The monsters described in this book and the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* are meant to be tampered with by the Keeper—go with it!

Another way to surprise players is to take a well-known story and give it a Mythos slant. Consider the tale of *Beowulf*. He defeats Grendel, who could easily be representative of a large deep one; Grendel's overbearing mother could be Hydra; and the dragon could be a stand-in for a star spawn or even Great Cthulhu. However, even that's an obvious change. What if the story was twisted even more? Instead of the story's monsters being elements of the Mythos, what if Unferth was a sorcerer or even Freawaru a witch? Are Grendel and his kin merely another community that's angered the mighty sorcerers at Hrothgar's mead hall? Through Mythos magic the evil residents of Herot compel the investigators to commit a massive blood sacrifice. Can the investigators find out the truth before they go too far? And what happens when the investigators realize what really happened?



## INVESTIGATIVE HORROR IN THE DARK AGES

**Draw from myth and legend:** Lovecraft and his circle weren't afraid to mix legend, myths, and history into their stories and you shouldn't be either. Again, approach this from the "less is more" philosophy. Don't turn every medieval myth and legend into a Mythos tale. If you do that, they'll lose their uniqueness. Pick and choose which ones you think will have the most impact and mull them over. Think of ways you can twist and contort them. Then mull over your new version of the myth and then subvert that even more.

**Minimize the use of monsters and cultists:** The fewer obviously evil elements that appear in a scenario help increase the tension when something truly horrible does appear. Having only one or two monsters allows the Keeper to develop the mythology and plot in their game world much more easily than throwing a large number of unrelated monsters at the investigators. The more effort the Keeper puts into verisimilitude with the creatures, the easier it is to stoke the horror and prevent the game from becoming a "monster of the hour" session.

Likewise, make cultists real people, not cardboard villains. Some are aware of what they do and whom they serve, others are simply misguided, acting on impulse, or are coerced. There should not be a cultist under every bed. Use them sparingly but make them truly wicked.

**Know when to stop:** At times, all of the above can become too frustrating or stressful for the players. If the players feel manipulated, they will quickly lose interest in the game. Always allow for moments of rest and score settling; offer a temporary safe haven, an acceptable (yet potentially wrong) explanation for what happened.

*After all, the most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.*

### CHIPPING AWAY AT SANITY

Over the course of an adventure or campaign, investigators will encounter things that chip away at their sense of the world. What damages the worldview of an 11th century person might not be the same as that which would affect a modern person.

For instance, a modern person who encountered a gnoph-keh amid Greenland's snowy wastes would be horrified because he or she would know that no such animal exists. The monster violates all manner of known scientific laws. But a medieval person knows that the fringes of the world are full of strange creatures; the gnoph-keh is frightening but it doesn't challenge their worldview in the same way it does for the modern investigator.

Even the presence of an obviously demonic creature might not necessarily shatter a Dark Age investigator's sense of reality; after all, medieval Christians believe in the existence of demons, even if they hope never to see one. But when that "demon" slaughters someone in a church—because a church is, after all, nothing more than a building to a Nightgaunt—a Dark Age person's mind might start to rebel.

This doesn't only apply to Christians; Pagan faiths rely on a consistent understanding of the world's natural and spiritual forces. Anything that violates these rules will likely be terrifying.

**There are many things that could chip away at a Dark Ages investigator's sense of spiritual certainty. Some examples include:**

- A revered saint turning out to be a myth or, worse, a monster.
- Prayer turning out to be ineffective against unearthly creatures.
- Supernatural entities rejecting a religious identification.
- The words of sacred texts changing before their eyes.
- Monstrous creatures impersonating sacred figures of the character's religion.

Like modern characters, Dark Age investigators will begin to lose their grip on reality when something threatens their sense of identity, suggesting to them that their perceptions are unreliable, their memories are false, or that they simply aren't who they thought they were. Dark Age society was very community-oriented; individuals define their identities not just by their own personalities but by the tribes, nations, or villages they belong to. Attacking an investigator's group identity can be an effective source of horror. If your community isn't what you thought it was, then you might not be who you thought you were, either.

**Things that could damage an investigator's sense of belonging to a community might include:**

- Discovering that his or her home village has been interbreeding with inhuman creatures.
- Realizing that certain religious education includes deeply heretical teachings.
- Being forced to keep the nature of their investigations secret from their friends and family.
- Learning that the hero they were raised to revere was actually a fraud or a murderer.
- Gradually being excluded as the community falls under the sway of a new leader.

These experiences don't have to cost the investigators Sanity loss (although they might, under the right circumstances at the Keeper's discretion). They merely serve to increase a sense of suspicion and isolation—a very uncomfortable feeling for Dark Age characters.







# THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

**A**ccording to Lovecraft, the truly alien is genuinely unknowable. The Mythos becomes not just mysterious, but protean and contradictory: not only do we not know it, we never can know it. Whatever is known of the Mythos in the Dark Ages is completely misunderstood and reinterpreted under the rubric of a Christian universe—characters (investigators and non-player characters) should reflect this. Keepers may need to remind their players that the very nature of the world, and even the night sky, is understood very differently in this time.

This chapter firstly explores the Mythos in the Dark Ages then details a number of monsters and beasts. Only a few Mythos creatures are presented here, alongside a range of other creatures suitable for the setting. Keepers are encouraged to utilize other *Call of Cthulhu* resources, but especially look to books of folklore.

Remember that there is no reason to use the monsters exactly as presented here. Mix and match powers and shapes to create new variants on old creatures. Give a deep one the Ilogor's debilitating psychic drain, or have Shub-Niggurath's baleful gaze cover everything in a hoary frost as if she were a cold one. Refer to multiple creatures by the same name. The Dark Ages wasn't famous for strict codification of beliefs. One peasant sees a deep one and tells his friend. That friend then sees a ghoul and thinks it's the same thing that his friend saw. Also, remember to invent names for the monsters in keeping with the setting. A Dark Ages farmer might very well describe a Mythos entity as a "devil" or "demon," perhaps attributing a locale or made-up name when telling the story of his experience. For example, "T'was the Devil of Chicken Hill," or "in the moonlight I saw the winged horror: Black Rok, the demon eagle of Stonepit Wood." Keeping the players on their toes this way is always a good thing.

## THE MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

People aware of the Mythos in the modern day come to understand that much of it exists beyond space and time. It invalidates what modern man accepts for truth in science and history, and shatters the bedrock of many religions. This can make it easy for Keepers to present the non-Euclidean horrors of the Mythos. Most people in the modern day, or even the 1920s and the Victorian era, possess a scientific enough worldview that when something shreds that worldview, insanity ensues. Portraying a person before that scientific worldview came into existence can be more difficult for players.

During the Dark Ages, the supposedly immutable laws of science aren't as solidified and religion is the guideline by which a worldview is structured. This isn't to say that people in the Dark Ages are stupid. They have a thorough understanding of their world, gained through experience, discussion, and learning. However, the Mythos does not fit into that world in the same way. Instead of chipping away at reason, the Mythos digs and claws at a man's faith until it crumbles into doubt and disbelief.

The Keeper has numerous options when integrating the Mythos into a Dark Ages world. Several options are included here to help get the game going. Keepers are encouraged to combine two or more of these ideas to create a Mythos unique to their game. Bear in mind, these suggestions are not positing the true nature of the Mythos but instead are providing avenues through which Dark Ages denizens might acknowledge them.

*Opposite: Imagery of the four evangelists*



### The Traditional Method

Nothing is changed. The Mythos represents a conglomeration of alien intelligences, degenerate breeding, and truly unknowable entities from beyond space and time. In this scenario, there's little changed from the modern or Classic era, except that the investigators don't understand the full import of what they're encountering. A Wessex peasant isn't likely to grasp the significance of Daoloth rendering the work of Arabic astronomers moot. He will, however, be terrified by the alien shape and the being's otherworldliness.

### Creatures of Folklore and Legend

When a Dark Ages person encounters a creature of the Mythos, they try to slot it within their knowledge of their culture's folklore and legends. It's not uncommon to recount tales of strange creatures from "the East" or other faraway places outside the worldview of the investigator. The horror emerges when we realize how wrong our assumptions are: a deep one becomes one of the many monsters that live under the waves, a hound of Tindalos is "Black Shuck," and a lloigor is a dragon. If the Keeper uses this option, any legends about defeating the creature are usually contained in a parable about the creature.

To further extend this idea some creatures of the Mythos can be viewed, especially by Church officials, as remnants of the Pagan Ways. It is necessary to stomp out these heretical beliefs, whether they are real or imagined.

A variant of this idea is that some creatures of folklore exist as they do in legends. However, some, just like humans, have become corrupted by the Mythos. Maybe their physical form changes slightly or they gain an ability the non-corrupted version lacks. Regardless, it's an excellent way to keep investigators guessing.

### Examples of folkloric creatures that might mask Mythos horrors include:

- Wyrmas: a loosely-defined group of creatures in Anglo-Saxon folklore. A wyrm can be a grub or maggot, a serpent, an insect, or even a huge dragon. What they have in common is sharp teeth, poison, and a menacing spiritual uncleanness.
- The Quinotaur: a legendary sea creature, part-bull and part-fish, believed to be the ancestor of the Merovingian kings of Frankia.
- Cynocephali: a race of dog-headed humans who live in Africa or on a distant island, said to be so fierce that if they can't find enemies to eat they will drink their own blood. On the other hand, Saint Christopher was said to be a cynocephalus.
- Troll or Thurs: (in Scandinavian folklore) is a fierce creature who lives in an isolated place, preying on travelers. Exceptionally large or strong humans are sometimes nicknamed "half-trolls."
- Maere: a spirit or goblin that "rides" people, horses, and even trees; when it rides a human, the victim wakes sweating and terrified (thus, "night-mare"). Maere or similar legends exist in England, Scandinavia, Poland, Germany, and elsewhere.

### The Book of the Watchers

One of the non-canonical Biblical texts, "The Book of the Watchers," is the first section of the *Book of Enoch*. It describes how when the angels fell to Hell, 199 stayed on earth. These fallen angels hid among the humans, disguising their true forms. Gods and servitors of the Mythos are these demons in their native forms, both awe-inspiring and horrible to behold. The number 199 can be an absolute limit, or just a metaphorical representation of "a lot." It's up to the Keeper to decide.

### Limbo

Limbo has many names depending on each system of belief: Hell, Hades, the primordial Chaos or Void, Sheol, Niflheim, etc. Limbo is an extension outside of time and of our material world, and borders many times and places of our world. The Nameless Mist permeates Limbo, making it "the land of gloom and chaos, where light is like darkness" (Job 10:22).

It is a living yet mindless entity that may have originally spawned Yog-Sothoth and serves as a playground for creatures of the Mythos and their entry point into this world.





## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

### The Devil

*"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."*

—Revelation 20:2.

To most denizens of the Dark Ages, the Devil, Satan, The Great Destroyer, was behind the ills that befall mankind. If God is the healing agent, then it stands to reason that his antithesis is the bringer of harm.

In this view, no one element of the Mythos is Satan. Instead, *all* Mythos elements are Satan, merely appearing in one of his different guises.

The Dark Man avatar of Nyarlathotep is the Devil, luring men and women away from God and to witchery. Deep ones aren't just aquatic humanoids, they're lustfulness unbound; a symbol of man's fall from grace and fecund ways. The Ilogor is the Great Seducer, coming to men and women in their sleep, draining their energy but imparting searing dreams.

To the medieval mind, all of these are Satan, or one of his agents, tempting and playing with mankind.

A variant of this, as seen in *Beowulf*, is that monsters are the children of Cain, cast out of Eden and forced to roam the earth.

### From Styles of Mythos to Styles of Play

Some players and Keepers like to keep the Mythos in the background, while others prefer a more hands-on game, taking the fight to the Mythos. Most groups probably alternate between the two, shifting play style as the story dictates. Who's right? Everybody. *Call of Cthulhu* has developed since its initial publication and incorporated many voices and styles, just like Mythos fiction. There's no one right way or wrong way to incorporate the Mythos into your game. It's just a question of which way is fun for you and your group.

## HERE BE MYTHOS

Even though many of the stories by the masters of the Cthulhu Mythos were contemporaneous with the life spans of the authors, they often reached far back into history, both real and imagined, to create the context for their stories. Many stories, such as Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls" draw upon events that happened in the Dark Ages.

Dark Ages Europe is littered with places that wise women fear, skalds love to sing about, and investigators often find themselves entering. What follows is a gazetteer of Mythos Europe, detailing some of the locales from the Mythos as they existed around the year 1,000 CE. This list is far from exhaustive, but casts a geographically wide net, with the intent of giving Keepers something they can use to liven up their campaign world.

The purpose of this section is not to provide fully detailed locations for Keepers to set their games, but rather the descriptions are left somewhat vague, much as they were described in the original works. This allows Keepers to take a locale and develop it for their specific campaign, as opposed to feeling shoehorned into using the material as printed.

The Keeper should also feel free to move locations around. For example, if running a game set along the Rhine and you want a rat filled church, then grab Exham Priory and rename it Mäuseturm (Mouse Tower), a building from the folklore of the Rhine region that some scholars think partially inspired "The Rats in the Walls."



### PLAYTEST EXAMPLE

Here's an example of mixing and matching monsters to come up with something new. I wanted to have a monster that fit within the Anglo-Saxon milieu, but also really wanted to throw a dark young of Shub-Niggurath at the investigators. Just grabbing a dark young off the shelf didn't accomplish my goals. It would have just been more of the same (and my experienced players would know what to expect). So, I thought about what scared Anglo-Saxons. There was night. There was being without community. There were the Vikings. There were wolves. Wolves scared the Anglo-Saxons because successful wolves meant the community might have to go without food.

So, in one hand, I had the dark young—giant, tentacled, tree-like critters. In the other hand, I had wolves. My first step was to turn the wolf from something common into an antediluvian wolf, something much larger than a normal wolf. Right, that can be scary. But I could do better. Dark young have tentacles, so what if I added some of those to the wolf? That was getting closer, but a little obvious. Borrowing a page from a shoggoth, I gave the wolf the ability to form the tentacles out of its mass. Now, we're talking! An eight-foot high wolf that can create tentacles out of its own flesh. All it needed was a name. I settled on *wæl-wulf*, which is an Old English idiom for war-wolf. That seemed like something the Anglo-Saxons would call their enemy.

There you have it. Tossing monsters in the blender and creating something different and exciting to keep the players on their toes. Granted the *wæl-wulf* underwent several revisions before he was ready for prime time, but the bones were there and ready to be put to the test.





**Aul-Lu-got**

When Atlantis sank beneath the waves, two islands remained inhabitable: Poseidonis and Aul-Lu-got. By the dawn of the eleventh century, only Aul-Lu-got remains above the water. This tropical island is home to a race of strange humans who worship Gol-Goroth.

The island is home to numerous beasts never before seen by human eyes, such as the bird-god, Groth-golka. Most of the beasts, like the huge apes that live on the jungle floor, are harmless unless attacked. Near the center of the island, surrounded by the dense jungles, is the city of Aul-Lu-got, home to powerful wizards and mighty warriors. The city dwarfs anything in the known world. Investigators who have seen the glory of Constantinople or Baghdad will be overwhelmed by the wide streets, marble walls, ornate gates, and towers.

The residents are a tall people who wear the finest silks on their bodies and weave feathers into their hair. They have been known to worship stranded sailors as gods alongside their deity. They do not worship such foreigners out of ignorance but rather because one of their prophecies says that curious people will come from across the sea and destroy Aul-Lu-got. To ensure their power, the local priests (the true source of

power in the city), sacrifice enough people to ensure a beating heart is constantly kept on the altar to their dark god.

Investigators who find themselves on the island will be admired by the common residents but feared and hunted by the priests—led by Al-morn, whose sorcery has kept him alive for centuries. The natives may offer sacrifices to the investigators, believing them to be gods, and bedeck them with gold and jewels; however, while the investigators are lapping-up the attention, the city's priests will be scheming to poison their drinks and stab them in the dark.

**Shrike Moor**

The mountainous wetlands of the north are home to numerous moors but none is more sinister than Shrike Moor. It is on this moor that a Pictish king made an unholy alliance with dark creatures to defeat a Roman army. Although this king is long dead by the year 1,000 (killed by Roman treachery), the worms of the earth (see page 177) and what remains of the Romans can still be found in the moor.

Several small villages dot Shrike Moor, many along the coast of Shrike Mere, the nearest body of water. The inhabitants proudly trace their heritage back to the Picts. They make their living hunting, fishing, and trading with communities outside the moor, but for the most part they avoid outsiders. A foul beast, much more powerful than the natives, or the worms of the earth, is said to live in the depths of Shrike Mere. Investigators brave enough to enter the murky waters may find themselves face to face with an ancient evil.

Caverns also abound, home to the worms of the earth: degenerate serpent people, more like massive slugs than the civilized serpent people found elsewhere. An uneasy truce exists between the human denizens of the moor and the worms. The local folk propitiate the worms with animal and human sacrifices, leaving the bodies crucified at the entrance to the worms' caverns. As long as the worms are well fed, they leave the humans alone. The worms rarely leave their caverns, now, but anyone who ventures down into their depths will face a terrible foe.

To the west of Shrike Mere is the ruin of a Roman garrison. The worms destroyed this garrison long ago and it is just a pile of stones now; all the trappings of the Roman lifestyle either rotted away or scavenged. Yet, the stone remains are quiet. The ghosts of many of the Roman legionaries still patrol at night, returning to their garrison before the sun rises. It is said that the ghostly soldiers attack the unwary, unless they identify themselves in Latin, as friends of the Empire.

**Exham Priory**

About three miles from the town of Antchester stands a substantial stone construct, known as Exham Priory. The priory's history reaches far into antediluvian times





## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

when a cult, worshipping an unknown deity, practiced human sacrifice and was wont to keep their human and sub-human sacrifices locked in subterranean stone pens. When the Romans arrived on British shores, the Legio II Augusta set up camp at the site that would become the town of Antchester, and thus the followers of Cybele first encountered the incumbent cult. The Roman worshipers assimilated many beliefs and practices of the existing cult, building a large temple to Cybele over the entrance to the cult's subterranean cavern. Over the centuries, as Roman power waned and Saxon influence grew, the temple was slowly transformed into its current form.

By the year 1,000, Exham Priory is home to a powerful monastic order that espouses Christianity, yet still practices the orgiastic rites of those who came before. A massive garden surrounds the priory, which few locals dare to enter. Those brave few who do enter, are never seen again.

Inside the priory, inscriptions to the Phrygian goddess Cybele and her Roman analogue, Magna Mater, are carved into the walls. A secret entrance under the altar gives the monks access to the underground vaults. The floor of the grotto is littered with bones, both recent and centuries old. The monks go about their daily business, tending to the garden, transcribing and translating ancient works, and praying. On the nights of the full moon, however, the monks pass beyond the wooden door and into the subterranean complex, pull a captive from his cell and sacrifice him to Shub-Niggurath.

The priory is entirely self-sufficient, growing enough vegetables, dairy, and livestock to sustain itself on a day-to-day basis. The only time they deal with outsiders is when they need to capture a sacrifice or when Norse slavers are traveling through, looking to sell captives. Even the fearsome Norse are loathe to set foot in the gardens; the thought of sacking the priory is far from their minds, even though they have seen the valuables the monks use to pay for the slaves.

It will be a few hundred years before the priory comes under the control of the de la Poer bloodline. In 1000, the current abbot is Ranulf de la Poer, an aged Saxon, better with the sacrificial knife than he is with vespers. When investigators meet the abbot and his monks, they will find them reserved and hesitant to talk. Should an investigator engage one in a religious debate, it may quickly become apparent that the monk only has a superficial knowledge of traditional Christianity.

### Bula-Shess

Bula-Shess, an abandoned fortress deep within the Persian desert, holds many dark secrets. Among the most mysterious of these is the tales of the Heartlight, a priceless gem lost, some would say deliberately, within its sandy streets. The nomads who wander the desert know of the city and refuse to even pass within sight of the ruins. Numerous foolish men

have tried and failed to find the gem and most fail to even find the city; indeed, the city is buried so completely in the sand that it appears as a hill until the traveler gets close.

Also known as the City of Demons, this fortress was built by Assyrians fleeing invaders. A wide boulevard bordered by columns surmounted by the "Bulls of Nineveh" (human headed bulls), runs through the center of the city and confirms its Assyrian origins. At the center of the city is the Temple of Baal, where writhing sacrifices were offered up to the dark god.

Those who know of the city believe in its curse. Anyone who molests the fabled Heartlight unleashes the demon that guards the stone, and the demon will not rest until the city is clean of invaders (see **Demon of Bula-Shess**, page 170).

### Mons Fractus

A broken mountain, Mons Fractus, stands near the border of the Kingdom of Burgundy and the Holy Roman Empire. At its peak, investigators will find a small, unnamed village and a large lake. The villagers are a sullen, xenophobic sort, like many isolated people, but love to tell stories about the dragons that live within the mountain and of a powerful magus who once visited their town to battle a demon. Some also tell tales that the treasures of a fallen empire lay deep within the mountain, carefully guarded by dragons.

Deep within the caverns that bisect the mountain, highly evolved serpent men maintain a laboratory. They can be encountered outside their lair in the guise of wise men, however they only make their presence known when they feel it necessary. They realize that their time on Earth is limited and that they are relics of a forgotten empire. If investigators are injured or in need of grave assistance while on the mountain, the serpent men may emerge cloaked as humans to lend their assistance for a price (some form of service perhaps).

The demon mentioned in the villagers' tales is Pontius Pilate, former governor of Judea, who lives on eternally as a vampire. In the first century CE, Pilate was tracked to Mons Fractus by Simon of Gitta and, as the legend goes, permanently slain by the Samaritan. That story of Pilate's second death, however, is a fabrication created by the vampire so that he can slowly expand his power base. Pilate is very careful to only draw his sustenance from travelers, particularly those who become lost in the caverns. Roughly a third of the village is currently under his control and it is this element that spread the rumors about the treasure in an attempt to lead food to their master.

### The Nameless City

Not all the haunted locations are in Europe. One of the most intimidating can be found deep within the Arabian sands. Some speculate that the Nameless City, as it is known, is the geographic center of the Rub' al Khali (ريال خالي), or Empty Quarter. Those few who make the journey must do



so by camel and at great peril to their lives. Not only is the desert hostile but nomads prowl the Empty Quarter, killing or enslaving all they encounter.

All that remains of the once great city are ruins covered in the shifting sands. An investigator who gazes upon these walls is awestruck with the realization that far greater beings than his fellow humans must have constructed this ancient city. Investigators who persist in venturing further into the ruins will meet the city's current inhabitants, quadrapedal lizard men. The lizard men will eagerly capture any interlopers and sacrifice them to their god, Hastur.

### Xuthltan

Deep within the pine forest covered mountains of the Kingdom of Hungary is a small village called Xuthltan. Even though King Stephen has converted to Christianity and has become an agent of the Pope, the residents of this tiny hamlet still follow older and darker gods. The town is home to a witch-cult that predates the Celtic migrations of over 2000 years ago. The cult practices its rites at the base of

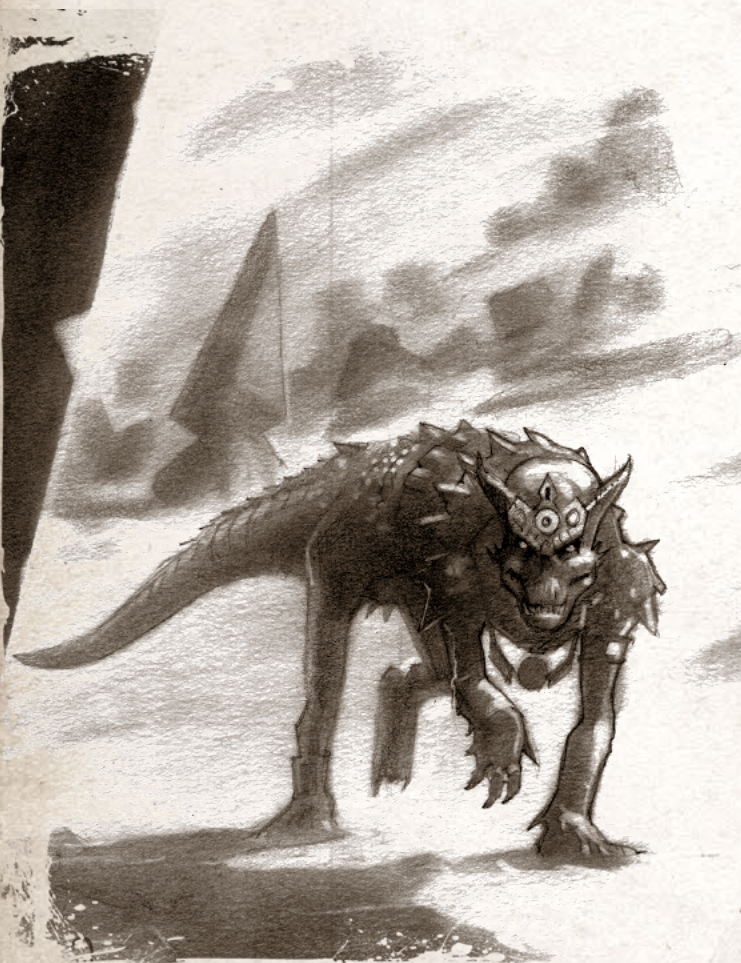
a massive black monolith a short walk from the village. If an investigator visits the monolith on any night other than Mid-Summer he will find the stone to be curiosity inscribed with figures that look to be squat, ugly humans. Observant investigators will also notice that the residents of the town, almost to a man, are covered in scars. An investigator sneaking a closer look at the scars may determine that they seem to be bite and scratch marks.

On Mid-Summer's Eve, however, everything is different. Any investigator within sight of monolith will find that they are unable to stay awake during the minutes leading up to midnight. At the stroke of midnight he will awaken, unable to move his extremities, yet able to look around, seeing the monolith surrounded by the people of Xuthltan and another race; squat, low-browed humanoids dressed in animal skins—the worms of the earth. Any investigator who has looked upon the monolith in the daylight instantly recognizes the newcomers as the race depicted in the carvings on the monolith. The investigator may also see a strange trinity: man in a mask made of a goat's skull, a newborn babe, and a naked woman. The crowd chants and sways as the woman begins to dance. The participants' actions become more frenzied and the man in the mask begins to whip the woman, tearing flesh from her body. At the height of the frenzied dancing the dancers, both human and sub-human, tear into each other scratching and biting flesh. The officiate grabs the babe and hurls its at the base of the stature. In an instant the babe squawks and the massive toad-like deity, Tsathogghua, appears atop the monolith. It reaches down into the crowd with a tentacle and pulls the broken body of the naked dancer into its maw. The crowd falls to their knees and prays to the loathsome entity, which merely lounges upon the stone, blinking. By morning the monstrosity has disappeared, as have the worms, who simply disappear back into the forest.

### Yikilth

Yikilth is the great iceberg home to Rlim Shaikorth, the Great White Worm. It is recorded in the *Book of Eibon* that the sorcerer Evagh slew the White Worm and Hyperborean merchants watched as the iceberg collapsed into the sea. Just as Evagh slew the horror, Rlim Shaikorth slew Evagh, so Eibon's knowledge, cajoled from the ghost of Evagh, is woefully incomplete.

What Evagh, and by extension, Eibon, did not know was that Rlim Shaikorth rose from the depths of the ocean years later and rebuilt Yikilth, which is now above the Arctic Circle, between Greenland and Iceland, moving slowly toward Iceland. Its movement is far slower than in the Hyperborean age as Rlim Shaikorth lacks the assistance of mighty sorcerers, such as Ux Loddhan and Dooni, who as thralls to the White Worm, aided the entity's progress.





The Floating Mountain, as Yikilth is known, glides toward Iceland at the behest of its master who seeks the aid of powerful sorcerers who call to him. These sorcerers, known to the Icelanders as *Papar*, were attacked by the Vikings upon their arrival in Iceland. However, the *Papar* survived, finding refuge in Vatnajökull, a large glacier in the south. Since that time, the *Papar* sacrifice captured Icelanders in the hopes of speeding their god's arrival.

As Yikilth approaches Iceland, the island will grow colder, the winters will last longer, and the coastline will freeze. If the iceberg makes landfall, the servants of Rlim Shaikorth will emerge from the caverns of Yikilth and terrorize the island. These servants, the *skræling* (page 175), are degenerate Hyperboreans who ventured aboard Yikilth when it visited that ancient kingdom. Trapped on the iceberg, they began to worship the White Worm, who in turn corrupted them, transforming them into foul humanoid beasts.

If investigators reach Yikilth, either by sail or, should it reach land, by simply walking onto it, they will find a mountain taller than any mountain in Europe. Caverns and ice covered staircases dot the mountainside, with one staircase winding around the mountain from base to peak, ending in front of a large, gaping cavern. Inside that cavern is where Rlim Shaikorth dwells. Any investigator foolish enough to enter that cavern will find himself face to face with the White Worm and will most surely die or become a thrall.

The climate on Yikilth is so cold that even those dressed for the winter will be chilled to the bone and subject to frostbite. For every hour on the island investigators must succeed with a CON roll or begin to suffer the effects of the icy cold. At first, the ears and nose will be affected and all Spot Hidden and Listen rolls are made at a Hard difficulty level. Every hour thereafter, if still exposed to the cold, calls for another CON roll. A second failure means that the extremities succumb: any skill requiring the use of their hands, including combat, grows more difficult (difficulty is increased to Hard and combat rolls suffer penalty dice); movement is reduced to one quarter. A third failed CON roll causes 1D4 points of damage—this is repeated for each failed CON roll thereafter. Investigators who look at their body or the body of another suffering this unnatural frostbite sees a pallid, ice-like skin tone, and hears the call of Rlim Shaikorth, requiring a Sanity roll (1/1D4 loss). When an investigator reaches zero hit points, he is effectively encased in ice. The only way to stop the slow progression is to accept Rlim Shaikorth as god and master, who will then heal his new acolyte. Those who accept Rlim Shaikorth become his thralls, while the rest are frozen. A “lucky” few seem to survive, slowly devolve into *skræling*. Leaving Yikilth stops the progression but the damage they suffered remains until healed.

## HERE BE TROUBLE

The gods and creatures of the Mythos are powerful entities but one aspect of what makes them truly frightening are the ways in which they twist humans to their every whim. Herein are cults and secret societies meant to bedevil unsuspecting investigators. These cults range across the face of Europe from the Baltic to Byzantium, providing Keepers with plot seeds wherever he or she chooses to set their games.

### Beag Ma Aisus

In *Pharsalia*, Lucan spoke of “Hesus’ horrid shrines,” a description well deserved. God of the Esuvii, the Atesuii, and countless other tribes throughout Gaul, Britannia, and Germania Magna, Esus demanded bloodshed in his name. His priests hung sacrificial victims from trees in sacred groves and carved ritualistic symbols into their flesh. As blood ran down their bodies and pooled on the ground below, the priests read portents in the patterns it formed. If Esus was particularly pleased with the offering, he would grant them

*Mid-Summer's Eve in Xuthlan*





glimpses of the future; visions as clear as if they stood on a hill and watched the events unfold.

Centuries after Lucan, “Beag ma Aisus” still haunts the forests of Northern Europe as a disorganized cult. Individual tribes who worship Esus have little contact with—or even knowledge of—each other. Some questions remain about how the cult spreads, even among the adherents themselves; a new cult will simply appear in a previously uninitiated region, despite having no contact with any other, performing the same ritualistic sacrifices. The common folk of the surrounding areas know little about Beag ma Aisus other than whispers of a barbaric god and rituals too horrible to mention.

### Cult of Magna Mater

Thousands of years ago the family of a young girl, named Cybele, left her to die in the Phrygian steppes because they could not afford to keep her. Nature intervened, with leopards and lions raising her. When she was full grown, Cybele met a shepherd named Attis and fell in love. Tragically, her love was too strong for Attis and he fell into insanity, first castrating himself and then committing suicide. Since then, according to her cult, Cybele wanders the earth looking for Attis, whose castration and death represent the land’s fertility.

In 205 BCE, the black stone of the Phrygian goddess Cybele was transported to Rome and the goddess transformed into Magna Mater, the Great Mother. Ostensibly a symbol of the earth and all life that flows from it; Magna Mater is worshipped primarily by women.

Her ancient evil reaches into the Dark Ages. Remnants of the once powerful cult linger everywhere that Rome had a presence. A particularly powerful splinter of the cult can be found in Exham Priory. The cult typically builds its temples near caves; places holy to the goddess. Women sleep in the temples hoping to be touched by Magna Mater and invigorated with healing powers. Priestesses consecrated in the Megalesia also hold several other festivals that are open only to them. The doors to the temple are locked and no one is permitted entrance. It’s believed that during these times the priestesses truly commune with the Magna Mater.

### Magna Mater and the Brothers of Chrysostom

The Great Mother, the fertile goat from which a thousand young spring, Cybele—Shub-Niggurath. The fortunes of the followers of this fecund beast have waxed and waned throughout the history of Constantinople, but never as powerful as during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries CE. The first crushing blow came at the hands of John Chrysostom who, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century with the Patriarch’s blessing, led bands of killers throughout Phrygia slaying any followers of Magna Mater he found. Later, when Chrysostom became a

Bishop, he funded similarly minded monks who roamed the Phoenician hillsides, destroying any remnant of the worship of Magna Mater.

As warfare swept the Empire between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the monks and their mission were forgotten. The translation of the *Kitab al-Azif* by Theodorus Philetas into Greek brought Shub-Niggurath back into the minds of those who read the newly titled *Necronomicon*, even if the goddess is only mentioned in passing. Worship of the Great Mother is slowly twining its tentacles through some of the learned of Constantinople, integrating itself with worship of the Virgin Mary. Most Orthodox Christians view the concept of a fecund Mary as heresy and the Patriarch, Sergius II, has excommunicated any who espouse this view.

Although forgotten, the remnants of Chrysostom’s monks still exist, living in an ascetic commune deep within the Goreme Valley of Cappadocia. They live in a monastery hollowed out of the soft volcanic rock, worshipping the Christian God as one of anger and vengeance, particularly against women, who they view as embodiments of Magna Mater. In fact, many members view the charismatic and fiery Chrysostom as a savior and his exile from Constantinople as the defining factor in their decision to remain in the mountains.

As the centuries between the death of Chrysostom and the resurgence of Magna Mater grow, Chrysostom has taken on a greater Christ-like image in the minds of his monks. Their numbers dwindle yearly, but the order still tenaciously clings to this world. Recruits are typically drawn from the ranks of village misogynists and the member’s own efforts to grow their number by kidnapping male children, as well as women to serve as vessels for bearing male children. Should the need ever arise for the followers of Chrysostom to take up the sword in the name of the almighty Father again, it’s not clear whether they would be any better than those they are fighting.

As a resource for investigators, the followers of Chrysostom can lend a strong arm and an impressive library. The library is unlike any most investigators would have seen before. There is no scroll, parchment, or vellum. The history of the monks, their beliefs, and knowledge regarding Magna Mater has been carved over the centuries into the walls of their monastery. Each monk adds to the library as his knowledge grows. Dedication, earthquakes, time, and the innate ability of people to add detail when none is needed have led to a massive living history that is fragmented, circuitous, and in some places, downright confusing. The carvings cover the walls and ceilings of roughly a quarter of the monastery and without a guide an investigator will be hard pressed to know where to begin.



## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

### The People

The People, as they call themselves, are rarely encountered. A few dozen families live within the Severn Valley, across the Eseweald (a massive forest within the valley). They subsist mainly by hunting and foraging, and consequently, draw little attention. They are most frequently encountered by lost travelers; those few who do encounter the People and escape with their lives refer to them as witches or pagans.

If their stories are to be believed, the People came from the sky with their god, to serve as its attendants. In truth, the families are those who encountered Horig (page 172) and fell victim to his song.

To the People, Horig is tripartite: it is vengeance, disease, and wrath. It is a god to be appeased so that it might bestow more power on its worshippers. The People appease Horig by luring the unwary into the Eseweald and lashing them to trees so that Horig can feed at his leisure. A favorite trick is to slip soporific herbs into stews they feed to hungry travelers.

The People also work in concert with the pucel (page 174), appearing to “save” travelers from the creatures only to turn around and deliver the victims to Horig themselves.

Over the centuries, various people have fallen prey to Horig’s songs and joined its worship. The extended families of the People are frequently comprised of different cultures, so the cosmopolitan composition of each family might strike some travelers as odd. The People have no different statistics from other denizens of the Severn Valley.

### The Naglgitor

Centuries ago several Norse longboats sailed into the west; they were never heard from again, presumed lost at sea. The ships wandered far off course and put aground on the icy shore of what seemed to be a frozen spit of land abutting a mountain. It was actually Rlim Shaikorth.

The Norsemen explored the mountain, hoping to find natives they could barter with or steal from in order to resupply their ships and head home. One of the Norse, a bearded old blade named Oddvarr, found a tunnel and ventured within, exploring the glacier. It wasn’t long before he was captured by the fell sorcerers who propitiate Rlim Shaikorth, who proceeded to toss him into the white worm’s maw. Oddvarr emerged days later, his skin covered in overlapping cartilaginous scales and exuding an aura of cold. Anything he touched felt the cold burn of frostbite within minutes. The changed man trekked back down the mountain to his peoples’ camp. Some fled, others tried to kill him. Oddvarr bested those who challenged him, tearing them limb from limb and declared himself leader. His first decisive action was to burn all but one of the longboats, placing the sole survivor under constant guard from his loyal followers. His second action was to hunt down and feast upon those who had fled. Those



### THE ORDER OF THE SWORD OF ST. JEROME

This Mythos-fighting organization claims its heritage stretches back to the Dark Ages and beyond. Like so many stories told to comfort those who face the darkness, this one is also a lie. The Order wasn’t founded until the 12th century, when fighting monastic orders were much more common. While this shouldn’t stop Keepers from having the organization in their games, bear in mind that crusading orders are a little ways into the future for a historically themed game set in the 10th and 11th centuries.



who bowed down before him were led to Rlim Shaikorth where they were tossed inside. If they were deemed worthy, they emerged, changed. If unworthy, they were merely food for the worm.

Oddvarr’s remaining longboat now ranges out from Rlim Shaikorth, leaving a swathe of destruction wherever it makes landfall.

### The Pastores

The Pastores are but the most recent incarnation of a pre-Roman (and indeed pre-Celtic) fertility cult. In prehistoric times they had commerce with the subterranean civilizations of K’n-Yan (or their European equivalent) from whom they gained several kinds of initial breeding stock and shared in the worship of Shub-Niggurath, Yig, and Tsathoggua. They adopted these gods as their own, retaining their worship long after K’n-Yan had faded into myth. Over the millennia, many differing peoples invaded their fertile patch of Europe but the cult survived, intermarrying with each invading group. In times of strength they bred their herds openly; in times of weakness, they hid them beneath the earth and pretended to succumb to the incursions of their enemies.

The Roman conquest brought them under a stronger rule than any that they had previously experienced and, after the appalled Romans exterminated much of their breeding stock and purged their leadership, they were once again forced to hide their true practices. Yet they found a niche of sorts within the Empire, for the Magna Mater and kindred goddess religions were well established throughout the Roman world. Once memory of their more blasphemous practices had faded, their priests and matrons joined the Roman religious



establishment and their nobility intermarried with the Roman aristocracy.

The collapse of Roman authority in the 3rd century permitted the revival of open breeding on the cult's slave-worked plantations for several decades; however, the restored Empire of Diocletian brought this to a halt. Constantine and his successors eventually forced the cult members to feign conversion to Christianity. They developed a cryptic Latin terminology to hide their activities and took the name Pastores (shepherds) to mask their true nature. The 5th century turmoil made the cult nearly free from supervision and they grew too bold. The resultant purge under Clovis and his newly Catholic Franks nearly broke them; only a few branches of the family escaped, along with a small portion of their breeding stock.

The Pastores were left to slowly regain their power by infiltrating the Frankish nobility. As central power waned under the Merovingian kings, they once again operated nearly openly, but as the mayors of the Palace grew strong and then supplanted the Merovingian kings, the Pastores hid from persecution. In recent decades, following the collapse of

central Carolingian authority, the main families of the cult have decided to push for open power, hoping in the chaos to overthrow Clovis's hated faith once and for all and mold society into their fecund paradise.

Starting in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century a noble Pastores family of the Carolingian castellan class, the Adoné, began its open bid for influence and power in south central France. With the aid of magic and unnatural steeds they became formidable conquerors and raiders, with many rivals capitulating or marrying into their line rather than face extermination. In this way the Adoné rapidly expanded their holdings throughout the counties of Begon, Rodez, and Toulouse. In 937 they gained control of the city of Begon and, in 942, installed one of their own line as its bishop. Although life in Begon and along the major roads remains relatively unchanged, the Adoné's more isolated holdings already began to sport changes to the liturgy and strange disappearances among the farmers. Each of their conquests or acquisitions in turn leads to a new wave of refugees unable to stomach their new rulers, even as the Adonés' generous concession of land and privilege to new tenets attracts the dissatisfied from nearby regions. Against the general chaos of the 10th century, such disruption has gone mostly unnoticed.

### The Polyphemoi

Deep within the spider web of Roman catacombs in Constantinople is a cult to Polyphemus, the Cyclops from the voyages of Odysseus. The cult firmly believes in the greatness of Troy and holds that the ancient city will again rise to the greatness it held before the coming of the Greeks. Although many are Greeks by birth, they despise the heritage the Greeks have left behind. If asked, they refer to themselves as Trojans, emphasizing the fact that they are Trojans from before the Greek conquest of the city.

The members gain access to the catacombs through the various cisterns and forgotten entries that litter the upper city of Constantinople, meeting for the seven days surrounding the full moon. Their rituals include sacrifice of both riches and living creatures. Symbols of earthly wealth, such as coins and clothing, are defaced so as to no longer be useful, while living creatures, humans included, are horribly scarred before being killed on the altar in front of the idol's glaring eye.

Each member must be free of any type of physical imperfection and any member who falls below exemplary physical stature, whether it be through age, battle scars, or other accident, becomes the next sacrifice to the idol hidden in the catacombs. Because of this limitation it is usually only the wealthy who join, as the poor have typically been ravaged by disease and are too unclean to be worthy of membership. The poor, however, make excellent sacrifices. Some members





## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

of the cult wear white thaubs (long garments with long sleeves, similar to robes) with a black or blue circle on the face covering. This dress has led many Byzantines to erroneously label the cultists as Muslims.

What the members do not realize, however, is that their dedication is not to Polyphemus but to an avatar of the Crawling Chaos. The trials faced by Odysseus were machinations of Nyarlathotep, testing the great warrior; each challenge the Greek faced was brought on by the Crawling Chaos. When the Polyphemoi began worshipping Polyphemus, they were actually worshipping that mask of Nyarlathotep. Whether Nyarlathotep cares one way or another for these worshippers is unknown, but the Polyphemoi believe that their worship will bring back Polyphemus and the other Cyclops, whom the cultists refer to as Askali. The cultists firmly believe that the Askali were the original inhabitants of Rome before the arrival of the Greeks. Once the Askali return, the cultists' hope their dedication will be remembered and when the world of the Greeks is destroyed the faithful of the Askali will ascend to positions of grandeur.

### The Teutates

In *Pharsalia*, Lucan writes about savage tribes who drown people in vats of an unknown liquid, sacrificing them to a god they call Teutates (see page 177). Like so many others who came to a new land and feared that they did not understand, Lucan got it wrong. These people were not sacrificing to a god named Teutates, they were the Teutates, followers of Gla'aki and protectors of their tribes.

The Teutates once ranged across the known world. Then the spread of the Romans, and later the Christians, pushed the Teutates back into the Severn Valley, the home of their god. The Teutates are usually men and almost exclusively warriors. Upon deciding to make the ultimate sacrifice to defend his family and his tribe, the warrior travels to Gla'aki's lake in the Severn Valley. There, he fills an ancient vat with water and then returns home. If he survives the journey the other Teutates in his tribe tie a rope in intricate knots around his ankles and suspend him, headfirst, from a tree. As the initiate proclaims his devotion both to his tribe and to Gla'aki, he is lowered into the vat of water, there to remain until the sun rises at dawn. Human nature will drive even the bravest man to struggle as water fills his lungs, but if the initiate is worthy, he will soon hear Gla'aki's call and it will calm him as he drowns. In the morning, the head of the tribe pierces the initiate with one of Gla'aki's spines. Resurrected as an undead slave to the Great Old One, he becomes a tireless guardian of his tribe, although he must remain within the bounds of the tribe lest he succumb to the Green Decay.

## HERE BE DRAGONS

A selection of the gods of the Mythos—as perceived by people of the Dark Ages.

### Ancient Ones

- The Ancient Ones are the twelve angels guarding the twelve gates of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The Ancient Ones are the twelve attendants at the feast in Valhalla when Loki killed Baldur.

### Atlach-Nacha

- Atlach-Nacha is the demon weaver of men's destinies. To resist one's fate is to be pulled deeper into its web.
- Atlach-Nacha guards one of the portals to Hell. While pure souls may pass through its web, dark souls become entangled and must spend agonizing centuries trapped within its sticky strands.

### Azathoth

- Azathoth is the vengeance of the Christian God. He manifests as floods, blasted lands, and other areas of death and destruction.
- Azathoth is the voice of Heaven. To hear its horrible, yet beautiful tones drives men to madness and insight.

### Cthugha

- Cthugha is one of Satan's chosen, a fallen angel wreathed in fire.
- Bringer of destruction and death. Within the heart of every flame is Cthugha the fire devil who must never be released.

### Daoloth

- Daoloth is the zero in Arabic mathematics.
- In the year 1,000 Daoloth will rend the veils and open the way for the rapture.

### Gla'aki

- Gla'aki is the water maiden who lures men to abandon their family, community, and duties, ultimately leading them to their doom.
- Gla'aki is the fouler of water, the beast that makes water unsafe to drink.

### Hastur the Unspeakable

- Hastur is among the supreme masters of Hell who offers to trade knowledge in return for your immortal soul.
- Hastur is decay; the festering rot and the maggot that feeds upon both life and death.



### Ithaqua

- Ithaqua is a demon of the ninth circle of Hell where traitors are dropped repeatedly into icy waters and frozen to relive their sins for all eternity.
- Ithaqua is the chill wind that brings ill tidings, the onset of winter and death for the weak and sick.

### Lilith

- Lilith is the consort and murderess. She is the incubus and the succubus. She gives every man his deepest desires and then slaughters the offspring.
- Lilith is a vampire, draining the life and spirit from men while they sleep. She fills their dreams with beautiful, but unspeakable horrors.

### Nyarlatotep

- Nyarlathotep is the Black Man, the being who tempts men and women to forsake the ways of the Christian God and practice witchcraft.
- Nyarlathotep is the heresies. Not a being to be found, but an idea to be imagined. One that infests a pious man's mind and drives him to create his own future—one that will shatter communities.
- Nyarlathotep is the Angelic Host. Horrible to behold, but a messenger of the Apocalypse to come. If properly approached, the host can provide visions of what is to come.

### Rlim Shaikorth

- Winter is coming. Slowly and inexorably, it will drive man to madness and death. Rlim Shaikorth is the slow descent of man into the final days.
- Something other than fury and rapine is driving the sea wolves from their home. Rlim Shaikorth is the devil, urging the Vikings to attack.

### Shub-Niggurath

- Shub-Niggurath is the Magna Mater, the great mother. The bountiful fruit that sprouts from her loins is diseased and foul at its heart.
- Shub-Niggurath is the rot and fungus that blights crops and drives men mad. Burning the fields does nothing to stop the spread.
- Shub-Niggurath is Mary, mother of the Christ child, and the Magdalene. She is virtuous and debased, promising greatness for all of mankind while slowly rotting away the core.
- As the bringer of fecundity and fertility, Shub-Niggurath is also the spoiler in the shed, and that which rots food and sickens children.

### Tawil at'Umr

- Tawil at'Umr is the Angel of the Abyss, Abaddon, Apollyon, the leader of the demonic host.
- He is the dogs of war. He brings death and destruction while whispering of greatness. He steals the souls of the fallen, taking them to a promised land that is anything but.

### Tsathoggua

- Tsathoggua is Baal, lurker in the dark under the hill, who whispers secrets and lies.
- He is sloth, greed, and gluttony. He is the gnawing sense of inaction and self-preservation.

## BOOKS OF THE MYTHOS

Following are a few of the tomes that might be found in Dark Ages. Such books should be exceedingly rare and, when a book is found, it will most likely be incomplete. Monks copy codices by hand and it stands to reason that repeated copying of insanity inducing tomes results in madness, especially when the monk is translating the work and therefore has to put thought into his effort. Most books of this period are codices: bound quires of paper, written on recto and verso, and given covers and a spine. In a monastery, many of the tomes being copied in the scriptorium are unbound.

Specific spells that may be found in the listed tomes are left to the Keeper's discretion; listed spells are merely meant as guidelines; not all spells listed are presented in this work and are derived from the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*.



### WHITHER CTHULHU?

Cthulhu is slumbering under the waves in sunken R'lyeh. It is highly unlikely that European Dark Ages investigators will ever stumble upon the sunken city and encounter the Great Old One. However, it is possible he (it?) might send dreams to investigators wherever they are in the world. His dreams are the incubi and succubi that haunt monks. They are the ergot-induced ravings that plague wetlands.

Cthulhu's dream sending drives people to great feats of artistry, scholasticism, and politics, while driving them over the edge into madness. Hildegard von Bingen, Gerbert d'Aurillac, Ibn Sina, and William the Bastard might be some of those driven insane by Great Cthulhu's dreams.





## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

### al-Azif

*In Arabic, by Abd al-Azrad, c. 730 CE.* Original form unknown but numerous manuscript versions circulated among scholars. Immense compendium on nearly every aspect of the Mythos. Sanity loss 2D20; CMI +6/CMF +12 percentiles; MR 54; 68 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Call/Dismiss Hastur, Call/Dismiss Nyogtha, Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth, Contact Ghoul, Contact Sand-Dweller, Contact Deity (Nyarlathotep), Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Resurrection, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Voorish Sign.

### The Annals of the Monks of John Chrysostom

*In Greek, by Divers Hands, c.400 CE to present.* This tome covers everything from the monks' eating and sleeping habits to detailed accounts of Shub-Niggurath worship in Phrygia. It pulls no punches and names the names of powerful men and women who have worshipped the dark goddess throughout the centuries. Unfortunately, damage has rendered portions unreadable, as have the actions of monks who had personal vendettas against the author of a given section. The legibility ranges from excellent to very poor and some sections seem to wander into complete nonsense. Sanity Loss 1D8; CMI +3/CMF +7 percentiles; MR 30; 49 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

### Black Rites

*In Greek, by Egyptian High Priest Luveh-Keraph, trans. unknown, Thirteenth Dynasty (c. 1786–1633 BCE).* Rare Greek translation of scrolls concerning secret worship of Bast and other Egyptian gods. Contains a cautionary note on the Dark Pharaoh. Sanity loss 2D6; CMI +3/CMF +8 percentiles; MR 33; 41 weeks to study and comprehend.

### KEY

- **CMI:** Cthulhu Mythos Initial (for initial (skim) reading).
- **CMF:** Cthulhu Mythos Full (for full reading).
- **MR:** Mythos Rating.

**Spells:** Bring Forth the Faceless Master of the Sands (Contact Nyarlathotep, Faceless God Form), Call the Black Pharaoh (Contact Nyarlathotep, Black Pharaoh Form), Call Forth the Terrible Lord of the Riverbanks (Contact Sebek), Contact the Goddess of Cats (Contact Bast), Summon/Bind Cat, Summon and Abjure the Children of the Riverbanks (Summon/Bind Crocodile), Summon the Carrion-Feasters of the Desert (Contact Ghoul).

### The Black Tome

*In Latin, by Alsophocus of Erongill, trans. unknown, c. 200 CE.* Includes the secret of the Shining Trapezohedron and the dream visions of Great Cthulhu. Sanity loss 2D6; CMI +3/CMF +7 percentiles; MR 30; 37 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

### Cabala of Saboth

*In Hebrew, author or authors unknown, c. 100 BCE.* Esoteric book of angel lore. Sanity loss 1D6; CMI +1/CMF +2 percentiles; MR 9; 16 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

### Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus

*In Latin, by Clithanus, c. 400 CE.* Contains formulas for calling a Cthulhu-spawn, sending it back, and protecting against its wrath. Also relates how Slavonic priests battled against a large number of star-spawn. Sanity loss 2D6; CMI +3/CMF +6 percentiles; MR 27; 29 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Bring Forth and Return Follower of Mad Cthulhu (Summon/Bind Star Spawn of Cthulhu), Warding Mark (Elder Sign), others at the Keeper's discretion.

### Cthaat Aquadingen

*In Latin, author unknown, c. 11th century CE.* Extremely rare study of the deep ones. Bound in human skin. Sanity loss 2D8; CMI +4/CMF +9 percentiles; MR 39; 46 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Bring Forth the Great One (Call Bugg-Shash), Call to the Drowner (Call/Dismiss Yibb-Tstll), Dreams from God (Contact Cthulhu), Dreams from Zattoqua (Contact Tsathoggua), Dreams of the Drowner (Contact Yibb-Tstll), Elder Sign, Nyhargo Dirge, Speak with Father Dagon (Contact Dagon), Speak with God-Child (Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu), Speak with Mother Hydra (Contact Hydra), Speak with Sea Children (Contact Deep Ones).



Below: Some monasteries carry blasphemous tomes.  
Opposite: Gospel summaries of Matthew

## Daemonolorum

*In Latin, author unknown, c. 200 CE.* Account of an Egyptian sect which preached that its gods could take on human form. Sanity loss 1D8; CMI +2/CMF +6 percentiles; MR 24; 28 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

## Hieron Aigypton

*In Greek, author unknown (Ieron of Egypt?), c. 200 CE.* Scrolls describing the fearsome rites of the dark folk; there is also mention of the Pharaoh Nephren-Ka and of prodigious ruins, "where the sun rises." Sanity loss 1D3; CMI +0/CMF +2 percentiles; MR 6; 6 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

## Liber Ivonis

*In Latin, trans. Caius Phillipus Faber, 9th century CE.* Presumed original author: Eibon, wizard of Hyperborea. Bound manuscript version. Sanity loss 2D4; CMI +4/CMF +9 percentiles; MR 39; 36 weeks to study.

**Spells:** Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Call/Dismiss Rlim Shaikorth, Contact Formless Spawn of Zhothaqquah (Tsathoggua), Contact Kthulhut (Contact Cthulhu), Contact Yok-Zothoth (Contact Yog-Sothoth), Contact Zhothaqquah (Contact Tsathoggua), Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Create Gate, Create Mist of Releh, Deflect Harm, Eibon's Wheel of Mist, Enchant Brazier, Enchant Knife, Voorish Sign, Wither Limb.

## Necronomicon

*In Greek, trans. of the Al-Azif by Theodorus Philetas, c. 950 CE.* Hand-written copies circulated until 1050, when the Patriarch, Michael of Constantinople, condemned the blasphemous tome. Many copies were confiscated and burned. Sanity loss 1D20; CMI +5/CMF +12 percentiles; MR 51; 68 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Call/Dismiss Hastur, Call/Dismiss Nyogtha, Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Call/Dismiss Yog Sothoth, Contact Ghoul, Contact Sand-Dweller, Contact Deity (Nyarlathotep), Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Powder of Ibn- Ghazi, Resurrection, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Voorish Sign.

## Pnakotica

*In Greek, author, trans. and date unknown.* Disparate collection of pre-human stories, myths, and legends contained on papyrus. Sanity loss 1D20; CMI +5/CMF +12 percentiles; MR 51; 60 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Contact Winged One (Contact Elder Thing), Contact Walker in the Waste (Contact Gnoph-keh).

## Praesidia Finium

*In Latin, by Lollius Urbicus, 155 CE.* Parchment rolls relating the mysterious events that took place during the Roman occupation of Britain, including the killing of a faceless winged being (in which over 50 soldiers lost their lives). Sanity Loss 1D2; CMI +0/CMF +1 percentile; MR 3; 2 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** none.

## Rasul al-Albarin

*In Arabic, by Ibn el-Badarwi, c. 900 CE.* Book dealing with the Great Old Ones and the entity known as Huitloxopetl. Sanity loss 2D6; CMI +3/CMF +8 percentiles; MR 33; 36 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.







Natiuitas xpi in bethleem huius  
et in fante in x. fante



## Reflections

*In Arabic, by scholar Ibn Shacabao, date unknown.* Conversations with the Jinn (Old Ones). Sanity loss 1D8; CMI +2/CMF +6 percentiles; MR 24; 27 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

## Sapientia Maglorum

*In Latin and Greek, by the Persian fire-mage Ostanos, date unknown but no later than 1st century CE.* Rare volume containing rituals to raise Hastur and Shub-Niggurath, and a possible formula of immortality. Sanity loss 2D6; CMI +3/CMF +7 percentiles; MR 30; 40 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Call Shub-Niggurath, Call Hastur, others at the Keeper's discretion.

## Sibylline Oracles

*In Greek by Heraclitus c. 7th century BCE.* Includes information about contacting Hermes (Greek manifestation of Nyarlathotep). These scrolls, comprising a total of twelve books, are a detailed description of the prophecies of the oracle at Cumae. They are disjointed and hard to understand, even for those with knowledge of the oracles. Sanity Loss 1D8; CMI +1/CMF +4 percentiles; Occult +8 percentiles; MR 15; 30 weeks to study.

**Spells:** Contact Hermes (Nyarlathept), Create Scrying Window, Nightmare, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror.

## Song of Yste

*In Greek, trans. by the Dirka magicians, date unknown.* Among other things, discusses the adumbrali entities. Sanity loss 1D6; CMI +1/CMF +4 percentiles; MR 15; 11 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.

## Testament of Carnamagos

*In Greek, trans. by anonymous monk, c. 935 CE.* Presumed original author was Carnamagos, a Cimmerian oracle. Testament of events past and future, and an invocation to Quachil Utaus. The book purportedly distorts the reader's passing of time. Sanity loss 1D6; CMI +2/CMF +4 percentiles; MR 18; 23 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Apportion Ka, Call Slithering Shadows (Summon/Bind Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua), Call Unseen Horror (Summon/Bind Star Vampire), Touch of Quachil Utaus (Wither Limb).

## The Three Codices

*In Latin, authors and trans. unknown, c. 400 CE.* Three books: *Leprous Book*, *Codex Maleficium*, and *Codex Dagonensis*. Each volume contains at least one set of summonings and wardings of the Sathlatae series, related to Ubbo-Sathla. Sanity loss 2D8; CMI +4/CMF +9 percentiles; MR 39; 46 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Dreams from God (Contact Cthulhu), Dreams from Zattoqua (Contact Tsathoggua), Dreams of the Drowner (Contact Yibb-Tstll), Elder Sign, Nyhargo Dirge, Speak with Father Dagon (Contact Dagon), Speak with God-Child (Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu), Speak with Mother Hydra (Contact Hydra), Speak with Sea Children (Contact Deep Ones).

## Tablets of Destiny

*Written in a dead language, author, trans. and date unknown.* The Tablets of Destiny were, in Mesopotamian myth, said to belong to the Babylonian Serpent Tiamat, although conflicting sections suggest Nabu. The tablets are allegedly older than Earth and contain formidable power. Two near inaccessible copies are said to exist on Earth. It is rumored that the tablets, sometimes known as the Elder Keys, constitute the single most important source for many later Mythos texts. Sanity loss 1D20; CMI +6/CMF +14 percentiles; MR 60; 75 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Call/Dismiss Hastur, Call/Dismiss Nyogtha, Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth, Contact Ghoul, Contact Sand-Dweller, Contact Deity (Nyarlathept), Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Resurrection, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Voorish Sign, plus any others at the Keeper's discretion.

## Tuscan Rituals

*In Latin, author unknown, date unknown but no later than 1st century CE.* Rites of the Great Old One Summamus. Sanity loss 1D3; CMI +0/CMF +2 percentiles; MR 6; 3 weeks to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** at the Keeper's discretion.



## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

### POEMS

#### EIRÍKSDRÁPA

*In Old Norse, by an unknown author, c. 950 CE.* Formal Old Norse drápa or praise-poem addressed to the Viking king Erik Bloodaxe (d. 954). Although most of the poem is merely the usual lavish extolling of Erik's courage and generosity, one section, possibly inserted later, contains a series of complex kennings that refer to prehuman ruins in Ireland and the mysterious sights associated with them. Sanity loss 1D2; Cthulhu Mythos +2 percentiles; MR 6; 2 weeks to learn and memorize.

**Spells:** none.

#### THE SOUL'S JOURNEY

*In Old English, attributed to Saint Amphibalus, date unknown.* Religious allegory, based on a dream, of a soul wandering in a terrifying landscape, tormented by various demons until finally redeemed by virtuous conduct and the love of God. The demon descriptions are grotesque and strange, and provide information about several different extra-dimensional creatures. Written versions of this poem may exist. Sanity loss 1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; MR 15; 1 month to study and comprehend.

**Spells:** Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Voorish Sign.

### OCCULT BOOKS

#### Beatus Methodivo

*In Latin, attributed to St. Methodius of Olympus, c. 300 CE.* Relatively short prophetic apocalypse. No Sanity loss; Occult +2 percentiles. No spells.

#### Canon Episcopi

*In Latin, by Reginon of Prüm, abbot of Treves, c. 900 CE.* Part of a guide to ecclesiastic discipline intended for bishops. The *Canon* discusses flying women, witch cults, and witchcraft. Interestingly enough, it downplays the existence of witches and witchcraft. Will be used in later centuries by the Inquisition to justify its merciless witch-hunts. No Sanity loss; Occult +1 percentile. No spells.

#### Kitab al-Kimya

*In Arabic, by Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan (c. 750–803); also known in the Occident as Geber.* One of Geber's 22 monumental treatises of alchemy, which together are simply known as *The Book of Alchemy*. Remarkable for what seems to be pages of gibberish writing. No Sanity loss; Occult +3 percentiles. No spells.

#### Tabula Smaragdina

*Aramaic or Greek original, author unknown, c. 200 CE.* The *Emerald Tablet* is part of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the central alchemical text for medieval Europe. Attributed to Hermes the Great III (aka Hermes Trismegistus). No Sanity loss; Occult +1 percentile. No spells.

#### Testament of Solomon

*In Greek, by King Solomon, c. 400 CE.* Transcribed from an oral tradition dating back over a thousand years, it details Solomon's ability to bend demons to his will. 1D3 Sanity loss; Occult +4 percentiles. Exorcism spells.

### MAGIC IN THE DARK AGES

Magic in the Dark Ages is a means to affect an end, using powers beyond man's normal ken. Historically, a great deal of magic revolved around healing, as well as divination and astrology. Seers, mediums, and lot casters are also common. Even when a sorcerer summons demons or angels, it's usually to extract information—not to create a war machine. Essentially, people are interested in what the future holds as with that knowledge comes power: the power to shape the future. Some folkloric magic also centers on predicting the future but which can also be used to negatively impact someone, typically through curses.

Verbal charms, amulets, and the manipulation of objects are the norm. Talismans based on astrological timing or rituals of what in the modern day we'd call ceremonial magic might be found in Arabia or Constantinople, respectively.

*Cthulhu Dark Ages*, keeping with the tradition of *Call of Cthulhu* games, has spells for numerous outcomes other than predicting the future or healing a snakebite. There are, in the main, Mythos spells bringing forth strange entities, malign effects, and strange workings. Keepers wanting a more historical game should omit spells that don't deal with: Calling, Contacting, or Summoning deities, discerning the future, damaging a person's livelihood. Spells that directly deal damage to a target should be omitted.

The Keeper also needs to take into consideration how magic is perceived in the Dark Ages. Opinions vary among authorities as to what is acceptable and what isn't.



Investigators will find that opinion can vary in one parish, let alone between kingdoms. Is herbalism fine? What if it is accompanied by a whispered prayer? What if a prayer includes strange, incomprehensible words? The Church continually debates these questions and the answer frequently shifts. Investigators can be fine using herbalism to help someone only to return a month later and be accused of witchcraft because the sentiment has changed.

The various faiths have their own traditions of magic as well, but those are often viewed as miracles. So as long as the caster is a good-standing member of the appropriate faith and hasn't made any powerful enemies, then blessings shouldn't be an issue with the authorities.

### Magus, Magi

In the Dark Ages there remain very few practitioners of old magic. The Church fought Pagan rituals and beliefs for centuries and is slowly winning the battle. Magi, witches, and healers of the Dark Ages lead a precarious life on the fringes of society; although they are not yet openly hunted down, they are often feared and ostracized. Magi, for instance, constitute an outcast elite, cast off precisely because of their knowledge of the occult history of the world, their magic, and their familiarity with the true nature of spirits.

### KEEPER'S DILEMMAS

Acquiring magical powers should never be bland or routine. A new spell should come as the reward for some outstanding deed or after great perseverance. Learning a spell from a supernatural entity should require sacrifice (perhaps an eye, an arm, some other disfigurement, or even a soul). Introduce spells into your campaign carefully and with forethought. The Keeper should be aware that pursuing arcane powers eventually leads investigators to madness, exclusion, and premature doom. It's up to the Keeper to decide whether investigators have access to supernatural powers and at what cost.

An interesting way to temper power-craving players not deterred by the sanity-reducing hazards of spell casting is to improvise malicious side effects. Side effects may be passing, or they may develop into full-blown subplots. Here are a few examples:

- The caster is plagued by a disturbing disease, a malformation or growth, unnatural aging, nightmares, or hallucinations.
- The magic liberates an unseen creature that stalks the caster and perpetrates terrible crimes in their community.
- The caster's perceived reality undergoes an alienating change—people don't know him or her anymore, or recently visited locals change somehow.

- The caster is accused of witchcraft, subjected to trial, and either run out of town or executed.
- Using magic or requesting that others perform magic for the benefit of the investigators should always come with a price.

### FOLK MAGIC

Folk magic is that which does not outwardly appear as Mythos magic but works to perform curses or blessings (minor or otherwise). Folk magic can be viewed in two ways: watered-down Mythos magic (learnt through misunderstanding and passed-down the generations)—which, while a pale reflection of true magic, can still perform minor feats; or, simply the trappings and staging of learned healers, witches, and cunning folk (often whose high First Aid and Medicine skills have been learnt through practice and the passing-down of learned information). Also look at Charms (page 29) for further advice.





## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

### RITUAL MAGIC

Routinely, spells are cast by a single caster. If a caster wants to cast a spell whose magic point cost exceeds his or her resources, then the magical energy is drawn directly from their hit points (on a one for one basis). If the spell caster has a Cthulhu Mythos skill of 20% or greater (at the Keeper's discretion), they have the knowledge to sustain the ritual, spending additional hours in its casting, reducing or removing the need to draw upon their hit points by continuing the ritual until they have regenerated enough magic points to conclude the casting. The caster may also join forces with others who know the spell, or who can add to the energy of the spell. This is ritual magic.

### Rituals

Humans naturally regenerate all their magic points in twenty-four hours (returning at one magic point per hour until they are back at their normal maximum). Through ritual magic, a magician can prolong the casting of a powerful spell until he or she generates the magic points

needed to complete casting—the generated magic points must go to casting the spell and to no other purpose. The caster must be undisturbed during this process and must maintain concentration. There is no allowance for eating, drinking, or dodging blows. Should anything threaten the caster's concentration, a successful Hard INT roll ignores the distraction. Note that damage suffered from an attacker's blow requires the caster to make an Extreme INT roll to ignore the wound and continue the ritual.

***For example:** Mirabel, a witch with a Power of 60 and 12 Magic Points, casts a 15-point spell (normally taking an hour to cast) in four hours by using the 12 she began with and the 3 she generates during the ritual ( $12 + 3 = 15$  magic points). The ritual demands exclusive use of these generated magic points. At its conclusion the spell is cast but poor Mirabel collapses, unconscious for a further hour, until at least one more magic point is recovered.*



### THE PRIEST, THE WITCH, AND THE HEALER

The first two entries below are occupations accessible to new investigators. The last two entries are the province of the Keeper:

- **Healers:** also known as “cunning folk,” and “wise men or women,” have a fixed role in rural society. They perpetuate the belief in spirits and ancestors, may secretly or openly follow Pagan ways or adhere to Christian beliefs—often revering a saint who has been conflated with a fertility deity. It is unlikely they will know Mythos magic but may know some folk magic, being more able to dress and heal a wound than summon a ghoul.
- **Hermits and “exorcist” priests:** sometimes able to perform Mythos and/or folk magic, albeit under a religious guise. They may be orthodox or heretical in outlook.
- **Magi:** secret practitioners of the “eight disciplines” after the Quadrivium and the Trivium, usually under the elusive patronage of some “magician king.” Possibly able to perform Mythos and ritual magic. They know the names of many demons, real and imagined.
- **Witches and sorcerers:** cultists worshipping the Black Man (Nyarlathotep) and able to perform Mythos and folk magic, as well as ritual magic.

*A Priest, a Witch, and a Healer. Which is which?*



## GRIMOIRE OF DARK AGES SPELLS

Note that magic points are of no use for spells that demand POW expenditure; the only way to cast a spell with a higher POW cost than the caster can sacrifice is to share the POW cost with others or somehow steal it.

A group of people can help power spells. The caster acts as the focus for the group. Each member of the group who knows the spell may expend magic points or POW points. The remaining members of the group aid the ritual by forming an outer circle around the casters—chanting, holding candles or lanterns, burning incense, or whatever is appropriate to the spell. The outer circle may prevent interruptions or distractions to the casters. Each caster is subject to the full Sanity loss for the spell. Because lengthy rituals carry a greater risk of interruption, it is wise to perform them in a place of relative calm, like a remote clearing in the woods.

Note that certain spells have “folk” in parentheses in their title, denoting that the spell could be considered a distillation of Mythos magic, reduced over the centuries from what were once mighty spells to lesser, more limited versions usable by humans and learned through diverse means. Certain spells, like Healing, appear a world away from Mythos magic, but are presented here as options for the Keeper. If you prefer darker, grittier games where magical practice is only feebly understood by mankind and where oft-times the result of magic is pain, misery, insanity, and death, then ignore folk spells completely.

### Alter Weather

- **Cost:** 10+ magic points; 1 Sanity point
- **Casting time:** 3+ minutes

Moderates or exacerbates weather conditions. Large groups may cast the spell to achieve greater meteorological effects. The Keeper establishes the base conditions. Every 10 magic points sacrificed effects one level of change (see **Weather Components** table). The caster may expend as many magic points as they are able, as can any participant who knows the spell. Those ignorant of the spell may contribute 1 magic point only.

Casting the spell costs every participant 1 Sanity point, and requires a song-like chant to be uttered for three minutes per level of weather change. The effective radius of the base spell is two miles; this area can be widened at a cost of +10 magic points for each additional mile. The change in the weather lasts 30 minutes for every 10 magic points of the total contributed, but violent weather, such as a tornado, lasts a much shorter time.

Five weather components can be changed, in varying levels of effect. One level costs 10 magic points to change, thus to change the two levels from “partly cloudy” to “heavy clouds” takes 20 magic points. For snow to fall the temperature must be 30 degrees Fahrenheit or lower; otherwise, the precipitation is rain, not snow.

### Augur (Folk)

- **Cost:** 4 magic points; 1D2 sanity points
- **Casting time:** 5+ minutes

Casting grants portents of the future if the caster is enlightened enough to understand them. The tools for scrying vary and could be anything from animal entrails to the casting of runes.

The chance of understanding an augury is a roll equal to or less than the augur’s POW. A portent may be vague, subtle, and come as a misty vision, an otherworldly murmur, an overpowering

*A group of druidic cultists perform a ritual at Beltane*



*clunlam*



## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

emotion, or a sudden insight—the future is not a book to be read, but rather a message or impression upon the caster's mind.

Successful use of the spell should provide at least one useful piece of information to the investigators. The Keeper should prepare the portent with care. Revealing too much can easily rob players of their sense of free will and can limit the Keeper's freedom of action. Revealing too little is pointless and frustrating. A well-balanced portent can add meaningful thrills and chills to the game when the Keeper stages future events which seem to correlate with the portent.

### Become Spectral

- **Cost:** 1 magic point per round of duration; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 round

This spell hides the caster from mundane observers by shifting his or her body into a parallel dimension, termed as "Limbo." The caster and their personal possessions become invisible to all but spirit senses.

The caster's sight and hearing remain attuned to the material plane but with a distant, less distinct character, as if a cold mist surrounds them. The caster can move normally.

### SPELL COMPONENTS

Most spells do not provide a precise list of ingredients, leaving their material requirements to the Keeper (who may hand-wave such levels of detail as necessary). Here are a few examples to draw upon:

- **Organic:** ashes, blood, bones, corpse, eyeball, flowers, flesh, hair, herbs (coltsfoot, lavender, vervain, etc.), intestines, liquids, small animal, toenail clipping, wax, etc.
- **Mineral:** celestine, copper, diamond, gold dust, gypsum, ice, iron, jasper, mercury, saltpeter, salt water, silver, sulfur, umber, etc.
- **Crafted:** brazier, bronze disk, copper bowl, leaden seal, monolith, painted or drawn lines, pipes, small figurine, stone arrangements, weapons, wooden boxes, etc.

### TABLE: WEATHER COMPONENTS

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Cloud Cover	Clear	Foggy	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Heavy Clouds	—	—	—
Wind Direction	North	Northeast	East	Southeast	South	Southwest	West	Northwest
Wind Speed	Calm	Breezy	Gusty	Strong Steady	Gale	Hurricane	Tornado	—
Temp.	One level raises or lowers the temperature in the area of effect by five degrees Fahrenheit.							
Precipitation	Dry	Drizzle or Mist	Rain [Snow]	Hail [Snow]	Heavy Rain [Heavy Snow]	Thunderstorm [Blizzard]	—	—



Becoming spectral carries an inherent danger: Limbo creatures can sense the presence of a spectral body and engage in spirit or magical attack. Generally, failing a Luck roll, the spectral character may come to attention of a spirit who may elect to attack—suggest a spirit of (2D6+4) ×5 POW. Keepers may, of course, use this opportunity to present more powerful opponents.

### Bind Soul

- **Cost:** 10 magic points; 5 POW; 3 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 3+ days

Allows the caster to imprison a human soul and thereby control or murder the body from which the soul came. The caster must be able to find the soul before it can be imprisoned.

The caster and target engage in spirit combat, driving the opponent spirit to zero magic points and then casting this spell. If the soul is trapped, the victim's body begins to die, at the rate of 10 CON per day. When CON reaches zero the body dies.

A special vessel for the soul must have been prepared (a ritual taking three days and costing 5 POW). Anything that can be closed (a jar, a box, a bottle, etc.) will do as a vessel. If the vessel can be found, the soul can be released by opening or breaking the vessel (it can then do as it will).

The Powder of Ibn-Ghazi and similar magic can trace the link between body and soul. The location of the vessel can be calculated by triangulation or by expending considerable powder and simply following the spider-web-like link left tangible by the powder.

### Bless Blade

- **Cost:** 5 POW; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 hour

Creates a weapon capable of harming entities that cannot be harmed by ordinary weapons. This spell requires the blood sacrifice of an animal of at least SIZ 50. The blade of the weapon must be forged of an elemental metal, such as iron or silver. Once made, the weapon is invested with 5 POW points by the spell caster.

If the blade is broken, melted, or otherwise damaged it permanently loses its magical ability.

### Blight/Bless Crop (Folk)

- **Cost:** 6 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 hour

As the caster chooses, the spell causes one acre of vegetation to wither and die slowly as if parched, or to blossom and grow with vigor. The caster must plant a small animal's skeleton (such as a cat or dog) within the area of land to be blessed or blighted.

"Bleeding" the caster (striking the face hard enough to draw blood) breaks the spell, allowing the crop to return to health if conditions are preferable (if winter is coming then there will not be enough time for the crop to mature).

### Body Warping

- **Cost:** 6+ magic points; 5 POW per week; 2D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1D6+4 minutes

Allows the caster to change his or her physical form. The sorcerer can change to any shape and appearance, though retains personal abilities. The form is fleshly, but can appear to be made of stone, wood, a rug, etc. Once changed into a new shape, the caster has the mobility of that shape. The caster's STR, CON, INT, POW, and DEX do not change. If emulating a person, the sorcerer's APP becomes that of the individual emulated. The caster can take on only a form known to them.

The caster invokes Nyarlathotep and repeats the phrases of the spell while expending 6 magic points and an additional magic point for each 5 points of SIZ to be gained or lost in the body warping. Only one alteration per casting is possible and the effect is permanent until the spell is recast to change back again. This spell cannot be cast on another being.

### Cast out the Devil

- **Cost:** 10 magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 day

Frees the target of possession by alien entities. This elaborate spell takes a full day to cast, requiring many components of tribal magic. A contribution of 10 magic points energizes the spell. For the spell to take effect the caster must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the entity. Willing assistants who also know the spell may spend 10 magic points to support the caster, adding a bonus die to the roll. This spell is seldom attempted without such help.

Forms of this spell exist in different cultures, such as African, Celtic, or Arabic societies. The material components will reflect the culture of the caster.

The spell may be used against many foes—to help a person possessed by Y'gononac or by a mind from the Great Race of Yith, as well as to expel the brood of Eihort. If the creature that emerges from the victim is visible, all those present for the exorcism must make the appropriate Sanity roll.

### Circle of Nausea

- **Cost:** 4 magic points; 2 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 5 minutes

Creates a powerful protective circle around the caster that will cause nausea and pain in humans approaching it. The caster



## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

must inscribe a circle on the ground in chalk and then fortify the circle with four enchanted opal stones—one at each of the four cardinal points of the compass. Enchanting the stones requires the sacrifice of 2 magic points into each (8 total), which may be performed in advance of casting the spell. 4 further magic points are sacrificed when the spell is enacted.

Breaching the circle requires an opposed POW roll between the caster and the character wishing entry. Anyone who touches the circle and who fails the POW struggle vomits for the next five minutes or until he or she retreats at least 100 yards away. If anyone successfully breaches the circle, the spell collapses.

### Command Animal (Folk)

- **Cost:** 1 magic point; 1D3 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 round

The caster commands one animal of a specified species to obey a single command. Each version of this spell is specific to the creature called and commanded; thus, "Command Raven" would only concern members of the *Corvus* genus, and so on). Each such spell must be learned separately. Command spells for any natural animal may exist, known by witch doctors, shamans, and wizards. Known versions include: Cat, Dog, Snake, Spider, and so on.

The target is compelled to obey one order by the caster, even to attacking its own kind. Upon completion of the command the target is freed and cannot be compelled again for one day. The caster's command must be simple, specific, visualized, and limited in duration. It must be stated while the caster is within line-of-sight of the target. The target will begin to act in the round following the spell casting.

The command must be something that the creature could naturally accomplish and comprehend. "Protect me from harm forever," would not be a valid command, but "slay that human," would be. Orders might include carrying something somewhere, presiding at some ceremony, attacking, or going to a specific location to appear as a warning.

### Command Ghost (Folk)

- **Cost:** 10+ magic points; 1D3 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 10 minutes

Compels a ghost to come forth to answer specific questions. The casting must be performed at night. Blood is poured upon the grave or ashes of the dead person whom the caster wishes to contact. The spirit will refuse to re-enter this world, so for the spell to take effect the caster must make an opposed POW roll in order to force it to appear (this may result in spirit combat if appropriate). Sanity loss for viewing the ghost varies with the ghost, which appears in its form at death.

The ghost summoned by this spell responds to questions about events occurring while the spirit lived. Each question costs the caster one magic point (and possibly another opposed POW roll if appropriate). When the caster loses an opposed POW roll or when an hour elapses, the spirit departs.

### Compel Flesh

- **Cost:** 5+ magic points; 3 Sanity points.
- **Casting time:** 1 round

The caster targets an individual, who becomes a living zombie, capable only of following simple, understandable, spoken instructions. The spell costs 5 magic points to cast plus an additional magic point for every ten rounds that the spell is to remain in effect.

First the soul of the target must be bound (see **Bind Soul**), and then the caster can use this spell to force the body of the target to perform actions. The body will follow instructions until a task is completed, the body is killed, or the spell ends.

### Create Limbo Gate

- **Cost:** 5 POW; 1 Sanity point.
- **Casting time:** 1 round

A Limbo Gate does not lead to another land, but instead to a parallel dimension, known as "Limbo." Entering this dimension costs 0/1D4 Sanity points. Visible as far as the traveler cares to go are glowing geometric diagrams suspended at various angles. Using the Gate into or out of Limbo costs 3 magic points.

Limbo is coterminous with many times and spaces, and is inhabited by ghastly things and many spirits of the dead who lost their way traveling to the "eternal reward" promised by whatever religion they practiced while living. Explorers who do not understand the pathways through the various dimensions can also become lost. Limbo gates have an inherent danger: they work both ways. Ghastly Limbo creatures may discover the gate's existence and step through to our world.

A Limbo Gate remains in operation until the caster closes it or after 100 days.

### Curse (Folk)

- **Cost:** 1D3 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points.
- **Casting time:** 1 round

The caster mutters a curse (which must be heard by the target) causing physical or mental harm. The caster must overcome the target's POW in an opposed roll. If successful, the target loses 10 characteristic points (chosen by the caster from STR, DEX, CON, APP, INT, or POW) for 1 day (until the following dawn). The characteristic may not go below 1 point.



Variations of this spell may target specific senses, like hearing, eyesight, and smell, or bring bad Luck (all Luck rolls are made with a penalty die).

### Death's Breath

- **Cost:** 2+ magic points; 1 Sanity point.
- **Casting time:** 1+ round

Over the course of 3 rounds, a dense shadowy mist exudes from the caster's mouth to fill an area of  $3 \times 3 \times 3$  cubic yards per 2 magic points invested; each measure of volume requiring one game round to secrete. It is believed that the mist flows directly out of Limbo and sometimes hides ghastly things.

The mist obscures vision and can douse small lights, such as candles, and only the strongest light penetrates at all. The senses of touch and hearing are benumbed, freezing air blunts the sense of smell, and it unnaturally withstands even the force of wind.

Once the caster has finished breathing out the mist, it remains in place for  $1D10+5$  rounds and then evaporates without trace.

### Demon Senses

- **Cost:** 5 magic points; 1D4 Sanity points.
- **Casting time:** 30 minutes

The spell effectively doubles the caster's hearing sensitivity or visual acuity, bringing sounds twice as close and also granting a bonus dice to Listen or Spot Hidden rolls for 1 hour.

At the time of casting the caster can increase the magic point expenditure: for each 3 additional magic points, increase the spell's duration by 1 hour.

### Disembodiment

- **Cost:** 15 magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 10 minutes

Frees the target's soul of its material envelope. If cast at another person the caster must win an opposed POW roll. The target makes an immediate Sanity roll (1/1D6 loss).

While disembodied, the target's body remains unconscious and the spirit and body maintain a magical connection (commonly imagined as a silvery filament) over any distance. The spirit will know if its body suffers damage and the body reacts if the spirit loses magic points or POW. If the spirit is destroyed, the body also dies.

A disembodied spirit can sense the mundane world as if viewed through a mist or gauze, can sense other spirits—embodied or not—and can initiate spirit combat with either an embodied or disembodied spirit.

The spell allows the caster to sense if two or more spirits inhabit the same body and the caster may choose which

spirit it targeted. If the spirit resists, spirit combat may be initiated; if the caster wins such a combat, the spirit can be driven out of the body. The caster runs the risk of the hostile spirit possessing them if they should lose the spirit combat.

The disembodied spirit may cast spells but can't otherwise physically interact with the mundane world.

### Dowsing (Folk)

- **Cost:** 1 magic point; 1 Sanity point
- **Casting time:** 1 round

The caster crafts a fetish (investing 4 magic points) used as a location indicator and must define the substance to be found. The substance may be anything familiar to the caster and of a clear and definable nature: water, silver, deep one spoor, and so forth. The fetish may be a peculiarly bent twig, a bauble on a string, a sliver of wood floating on water, or other device (perhaps appropriate to the nature of the substance sought). The effects of the spell penetrate up to 6 feet of intervening material and lasts for 30 minutes, allowing the caster to track down the substance (if the fetish is moveable).

### Eibon's Wheel of Mist

- **Cost:** 1 magic point per foot of height; 1 Sanity point
- **Casting time:** 1D3 minutes

Evokes a whirling cylinder within which one or more persons can hide from certain Mythos creatures. A small bronze disk etched with a strange symbol resembling a three-legged swastika is required. The caster lays the disk on the floor, stands atop it, intones the words of the spell and expends the magic points and sanity point. This generates a 5-foot-diameter wheel of spinning blue mist around the caster. Everything within the wheeling cylinder of mist is totally obscured. The desired wheel takes 1D3 minutes to form completely and lasts for  $1D20+10$  minutes, then dissolves.

The mist hides people from creatures summoned by Nyarlathotep or in the name of Nyarlathotep. Such a creature acts as if the mist and those obscured by it are not present. The creature will not move through the wheel's position, even by accident. If the wheel blocks a path, the creature stops where it is or goes backward without knowing why. The wheel only affects summoned minions, never Nyarlathotep.

As many people as can crowd into the mist can be obscured by the wheel; however, if one's feet, head, etc., stick out then the illusion is ruined for all. To hide a group of normal height investigators, 7 magic points are needed, unless players specifically indicate that they are crouching, bending, etc.

Creatures present before the wheel of mist is cast or creatures called up by power other than that of Nyarlathotep,



## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

can see the wheel and move into it. The wheel can be stepped out of, but this ruins the illusion if the stepper is spotted, as does passing anything through the mist, such as an arrow or a sword. Anything passing from the outside of the wheel to the inside immediately gives away the illusion. Once the creature's attention is caught and it realizes that an illusion might be in progress, the protection of the spell is lost.

### Enchant Brazier

- **Cost:** 5 POW; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 3 hours

On the night of a full moon between the Autumnal Equinox and the Winter Solstice, the caster must sacrifice a small animal while intoning a formula and performing certain gestures. The chosen brazier is soaked in the animal's blood and sprinkled with a handful of gold dust, silver, or mercury. The enchanter must then burn a piece of wood at least 500 years old, holding the brazier in its smoke. Upon completion, the brazier is enchanted and ready to use. The empowered brazier may assist in the performance of other spells, such as Call/Dismiss spells, providing a bonus die to certain casting rolls, or reducing spell costs at the Keeper's discretion.

### Enchant Knife

- **Cost:** variable POW; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 2 hours

An enchanted knife increases the success chance for other spells, as well as becoming a magical weapon able to inflict harm on Mythos entities who would otherwise be unaffected by mundane weapons. The spell enchants a knife or dagger made of a pure metal, such as gold or iron. With the knife blade an intricate diagram is drawn on a flat surface and then the blade is used to kill an animal of at least SIZ 20. The creature's blood is then traced out to follow the lines of the drawn diagram and the enchantment is complete.

Such a knife is suitable for use in certain Summoning spells. Every point of POW placed into it adds 1 percentile to the chance for success in casting such spell.

### Enchant Pipes (variant)

- **Cost:** variable POW; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 3+ hours

Augments the chance for success in casting particular spells. The spell enchants a pipe or flute. A ritual is performed over the musical instrument. For each point of POW sacrificed, the pipes must be steeped in warm blood for two hours. For each point of POW invested, the finished instrument gains +1 magic point (thus, 10 POW imbues the instrument with

10 magic points), with each multiple of 5 POW granting +2 percentiles to the chance of successfully casting certain Summon/Bind spells. Such enchanted pipes may be required by other spells, such as Soul Singing.

### Fury (Folk)

- **Cost:** 5 magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 round

This spell induces a furious, berserk rage in the target, making him or her fight recklessly and with savage abandon. The caster may direct the spell's effect upon himself or another target, requiring an opposed POW roll if the target is unwilling.

The spell increases the number of attacks to 2 (assuming they normally have 1 attack per round); the second attack is performed on the character's normal DEX value.

This spell lowers the natural instinct for self-preservation. The furious character ignores any unconsciousness stemming from a major wound. A fatal wound is still fatal to the enraged character but he or she attacks until the end of the round of their death, striking blows while technically dead, and then finally keeling over at the end of the round. During the fury, the character can only take actions directly related to the most immediate form of combat (no magic, no healing, etc.) The Keeper decides whether an action qualifies as a combat action or otherwise. If there are no viable enemies left, the berserk character will attack allies unless they can make a Hard INT roll to come out of the fury.

The fury lasts for 5 rounds although the caster may invest multiples of 5 magic points when casting to increase the length of the berserk rage for an equal number of rounds. Once cast, the caster cannot add additional magic points unless the spell is recast (requiring being able to touch the furious person).

### Healing (Folk)

- **Cost:** 12 magic points; 1 Sanity point (plus optional POW)
- **Casting time:** 2D6 rounds

This spell provides healing to physical injuries. The caster must touch the injured person while repeating a short phrase. In some variations of the spell, preparation of certain ingredients (healing herbs, oils, etc.) must also be applied.

Once the spell has been invoked, the healing process is accelerated and after 2D6 rounds the injured person is healed for 2D6 hit points (up to the maximum hit points). This healing is only permanent if the caster also spends 1 POW per hit point healed; otherwise the healing is only temporary and the wounds reopen after a day.

Note that the spell cannot bring the dead back to life.



## Ill Luck (Folk)

- **Cost:** 4 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points.
- **Casting time:** 1 round

The caster mutters a curse or passes a cursed item to the target, causing the target to experience bad luck for 24 hours. The caster sacrifices 4 magic points and 1D6 Sanity points, and must overcome the target's POW in an opposed roll. If successful, the target has bad luck (must take a penalty die on all Luck rolls).

## Levitate

- **Cost:** variable magic points; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** instantaneous

Causes the caster or a chosen target to float slowly through the air. The caster must be able to touch the target. Costing 1 magic point per 5 points SIZ, the spell levitates the target 3 to 5 feet off the ground or floor for 1D6 minutes. If falling from a height, the target falls in slow motion and halts several feet off the ground.

Each extra magic point expended after the spell is cast allows the user to move the target one yard horizontally or vertically. The target floats as the caster wills, helpless to stop moving except by grabbing a tree limb or similar brace. In that case, an opposed roll is made; the target's STR against the caster's POW. If the target wins, the spell is broken—the target falling to the ground.

## Nyhargo Dirge

- **Cost:** 6 magic points; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 round

A modified version of the Resurrection spell used to destroy corporeal undead, such as skeletons, zombies, vampires, and servants of Gla'aki (among others). The caster sings an eerie, droning chant. If the undead fails an opposed POW roll, it immediately turns to dust.

## Poison Blood (Folk)

- **Cost:** 2 magic points per day; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 2 weeks

This spell exposes the target to an infectious agent. Following two weeks of preparation, the caster must then touch the victim. Symptoms start after a 12-hour incubation period and cost the target 1D3 hit points per day plus the discomfort of fever, chills, nausea, a feeling of dread, rashes in uncomfortable places, and so forth. For each additional 2 magic points invested, the spell's effects last for another day.

## Power Drain

- **Cost:** 1D8 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 2 rounds

The caster is able to drain magic points from a target. For the spell to take effect the caster must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the target. If the caster wins, the target loses 1D6 magic points and the caster gains them. If the caster fails to overcome the target, the caster loses 1D6 magic points to the target. If all magic points are drained, the caster then begins to drain hit points. When all hit points are drained the target falls unconscious (this spell lacks the power to kill).

## Siren's Song (Folk)

- **Cost:** 6 magic point; 5 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 2 rounds

Through an enchanting song or melody the caster beguiles a target into believing that the caster is all that his or her heart desires. For the spell to take effect the caster must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the target. If successful, the target acts as if completely charmed by the caster—willing to act and say as the caster desires. If the target is compelled to undertake an action that would cause self-harm, or harm to someone else the target loves, a second opposed POW roll may be called for.

The spell affects all who hear the song, with each person affected needing to win an opposed POW roll with the caster to be unaffected. The spell lasts for 1D10 hours.

## Soul Singing (Folk)

- **Cost:** 8 magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 2 rounds

Causes a single target to see and hear only that which the caster desires. The caster must play through a piece of music using enchanted bone pipes (invested with 10 magic points and 1 POW). For the spell to take effect the caster must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the target.

Soul Singing is aimed at a single victim who, seeing what the piper wishes, is led entranced to some doom or destruction. Others present cannot hear the tune unless they succeed in rolling equal to or under half their POW, whereupon a faint, non-directional piping of strange melodies is heard.

## Winds of Desolation (Folk)

- **Cost:** 4+ magic points; 1D8 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 2 rounds

Causes winds to increase with great intensity. Cast at sea, this spell causes waves to break at the caster's direction. Such



## THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE DARK AGES

winds could also cause fires to spread at the caster's direction. Needless to say, people swallowed up by powerful waves or caught in a large firestorm take the appropriate damage. It is believed that such winds of desolation blow from Limbo, often carrying raging spirits with them.

To determine the spell's cost see the chart nearby for examples of wind STR and the number of magic points required, taking into account the present weather situation. For example, if the wind is (naturally) blowing a gale (STR 61 to 100) then the caster, wishing to turn it into a hurricane, need only spend 32 magic points (64-32=32). The change in weather lasts for approximately 20 minutes.

### Recommended Spells

While any of the spells to be found the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* are usable for Dark Ages games, the following are particularly suited to the setting.

Binding Spells	264-265
Bless Blade	246
Call Deity	248
Cause/Cure Blindness	249
Cloud Memory	250
Contact Spells	250-253
Create Barrier of Naach-Tith	253
Create Gate	256
Death Spell	254
Dismiss Deity	249

Dominate	254
Dread Curse of Azathoth	254
Elder Sign	255
Evil Eye	259
Flesh Ward	259
Graveyard Kiss	244
Green Decay	259
Grey Binding	244
Implant Fear	259
Melt Flesh	259
Mental Suggestion	260
Mindblast	260
Mind Exchange	260
Mind Transfer	260
Mirror of Tarkhun Atep	261
Powder of Ibn-Ghazi	261
Prinn's Crux Ansata	261
Red Sign of Shudde M'ell	261
Resurrection	262
Shrivelling	262
Song of Hastur	263
Summoning Spells	263-264
Voorish Sign	265
Warding	265
Wave of Oblivion	265
Wither Limb	265
Words of Power	265
Wrack	265

### TABLE: WINDS OF DESOLATION

Wind STR	MP	Description	Effect on Land	Effect at Sea
5-10	4	Light Air	Leaves rustle	Choppy seas
11-30	8	Breeze	Branches wave	Full sail
31-60	16	Wind	Branches snap	Sails strain
61-100	32	Gale	Structural damage	Masts snap
101-150+	64	Hurricane	Widespread damage	Ship capsizes

The best winds for sailing are breezes. Gales may knock down average humans. Hurricanes are a great menace to ships and boats: poor ship handling may cause the vessel to capsize.







## BESTIARY

**T**his chapter covers both Mythos monsters, strange creatures of folklore, and mundane animals. Interjecting non-Mythos animals and creatures into campaigns will make the world seem more dynamic and add to the verisimilitude. If every foe is the Mythos, a game can quickly descend into a Mythos hoedown and the horror may be lost.

Some entries contain alternate names. Astute readers will notice overlap between creatures. This represents the less than codified worldview of the Dark Ages. Some creatures can use magic or have magic-like abilities; for example, the werewolf's ability to change shape is a magic-like ability.

The list presented is not exhaustive. Monsters to be found in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* are not repeated here, although their appearance in the Dark Ages is encouraged.

## MYTHOS MONSTERS

## Cold Ones

The cold ones are semi-corporeal entities who seem associated with the polar Great Old Ones, Aphoom Zhah and Rlim Shaikorth, but may appear in any cold wastes. They appear as ghostly, wailing, humanoid silhouettes of swirling snow and vapors. Cold ones (also known as ylidheem) are encountered only in areas of bitter cold. They appear or disappear into snowy skies or drifts of snow and ice much like ghosts. Being only partially immaterial they may not pass through solid matter; however, they may seep through the tiniest crack or thinnest opening. Often their tortured wailing is the only warning of their presence. Strangely, they appear to have little or nothing to do with Ithaqua and his minions.

**Combat:** The cold ones attack by manifesting near or around a victim and inflicting freezing damage. An attack by a cold one is like frostbite. No actual wounds are inflicted but tissue,

bones, and organs suffer severe damage from the intense cold. Each successful attack by a cold one causes its victim to lose 1D10 points of CON and 1D2 hit points. For every 5 combined points of CON and HP lost, the victim also suffers the loss of 5 points of APP and 5 points of STR. Victims who survive an attack require immediate and prolonged medical attention. A successful First Aid roll heals a single point of lost CON, STR, and 1 hit point, but no APP. A successful Medicine roll returns 1D3 points each to CON, APP, STR, and 1D3 hit points. Only one such successful skill roll may be made; beyond that the investigator requires one week of "professional" medical treatment per 5 attribute points lost.



Opposite: Serpentine beasts  
Left: Cold One



## COLD ONES, *Ylidbeem*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	-	N/A
CON	-	N/A
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) ×5
DEX	105	(2D10+10) ×5
INT	65	(2D6+6) ×5
POW	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5

**Move:** 50 flying

**Hit Points:** 16-17 (equal to one-fifth of its POW)

**Av. Damage Bonus:** N/A

**Av. Build:** N/A

**Av. Magic Points:** 16

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1

Freezing Touch	30% (15/6), damage special (see above)
Dodge	50% (25/10)

### Skills

Stealth (in Snow) 90%.

**Armor:** none, however, cold ones are immune to all physical attacks. Fire harms them at a rate of 2D6 points of damage per successful strike with a torch, or as per fire-producing weapon/attack.

**Spells:** a cold one with an INT of 80 or higher knows 1D3 spells, usually dealing with contacting its masters (Aphoom Zhah and Rlim Shaikorth), cold, weather, etc.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a cold one; 0/1D3 Sanity points to hear the tortured shriek of a cold one.

## Cu Sith

Servants of the Lords of Tindalos, the cu sith prowl the forests of Fife and the eastern coast of Britain. These fierce warriors wear the skulls and pelts of wolves, dyed green, to strike fear in their enemies' hearts and honor their predacious masters.

The cu sith first encountered the Lords of Tindalos when they raided a village worshipping Yog-Sothoth. Impressed by their skill and pleased by the blow the cu sith dealt their ancient foe, the Lords of Tindalos visited each of the clan's members that night with an offer: do the Lords' bidding and receive great power with which to fight their

enemies, or refuse and die. A proud people, most of the cu sith made a brave stand against the Lords of Tindalos. Those who accepted the Lords' offer buried the others the next day. They and their descendants have followed the Lords of Tindalos ever since, each generation becoming more adept with the powers the Lords bestowed upon them. The cu sith can now truly assume wolf form instead of only wearing hides and can use Gates to teleport throughout their domain. Their legend has grown over time, even the Norse invaders enters their lands with trepidation, and all fear the appearance of the ghostly green wolves at their gates.

## CU SITH, *human form*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
CON	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
SIZ	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
DEX	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 13-14

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Av. Build:** 1

**Av. Magic Points:** 10

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (by weapon)

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+DB
Sword	60% (30/12), damage 1D6+DB
Spear, short	50% (25/10), damage 1D6+DB
Dodge:	35% (17/7)

**Armor:** 2-point leather armor.

**Spells:** Contact Lord of Tindalos, Create Gate, any other the Keeper desires.

**Sanity Loss:** No Sanity points are lost to see a Cu Sith in human form.

## CU SITH, *wolf form*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
CON	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
SIZ	80	(4D6+2) ×5
DEX	80	(4D6+2) ×5
INT	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 16

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Av. Build:** 1

**Av. Magic Points:** 10

Cu Sith





## BESTIARY

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (1 × teeth, 2 × claws, or maul)  
**Fighting** 70% (35/14), damage 1D8+DB  
**Dodge** 45% (22/9)

**Armor:** 4-point thick, green, fur.

**Spells:** May only cast spells while in human form.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D3 Sanity points to see the ghostly green wolf.

### Dveorg

The dveorg are a race of "dwarfs" (Germanic "zwerg," Norse "dverg," old English "dveorg"; original meaning "twisted" or "bent") that serve the Magnum Innominandum. Twice a year the dveorg follow barbarous rites, lighting pale bonfires on remote hilltops, beating drums, and fetching humans to feed the Magnum Innominandum and "what lies within." The dveorgs are generally encountered in groups of ten or more.

Legend says the dveorg originally lived off the corpses of dead gods (possibly Mythos beings). The dveorgs' true shape remains a mystery as they only survive by living as parasites inside dead bodies (some texts—like the *Apocalypse of Paul*—suggest their true form is that of an oversized, two-headed maggot, probably 1 to 3 feet long). Although the host remains dead and continues to rot, a dveorg can animate it into a parody of the living. Before the host decays into incapacity, the dveorg will find another body, even if currently occupied. The dveorgs are effectively shape-shifters and despite customary belief, they are not small.

On earth, dveorg often seek the corpses of dead humans that were mummified before burial. They consequently hide in the cool and dark underworld of burial mounds, tombs, and caverns that preserve their bodies best (legend wrongly assumes that daylight turns dwarves into stone). Otherwise, dveorg can be found in peat bogs or near glaciers. The dveorg have an unexplained bond with horses and can apparently ride them.

Lacking POW, and with it any recognizable form of emotion, fear, or sanity, the dveorg cannot perform magic. Instead, the dark folk seem to be able to forge all kinds of ominous artifacts, allowing them to open Gates without spells, to animate lifeless machines, and to modify living beings in terrifying ways. To Dark Ages humans, the science of the dveorg appears as magical and utterly frightening. How the dveorgs' inferior intelligence can account for such rarities is yet another mystery, unless one adds Nyarlathotep in the balance—the dveorg may very well be among his Million Favored Ones.

The myth of Germanic and Norse dwarves living under the hills and hoarding treasures can easily be explained by the modus operandi of the dveorg. Still older myths seem to suggest that the dark folk and the old ones (or the tomb-herd) may be related or even complementary. "Ancestor," "He-who-

enters-the-tomb," "Buried-under-the-cairn," and "Dead-man-of-the-mound" are typical names given to dveorgs.

### Dveorg, the strange dark folk

Dveorg parasites inhabiting corpses, use the dead host's statistics as defaults, with INT 0 and POW 0, and add the dveorg's following characteristic points and hit points:

char.	averages	rolls
STR	host's STR+5	5
CON	host's CON+50-55	3D6 ×5
SIZ	host's SIZ+5 (weight)	5
DEX	host's DEX+5	5
INT	35	2D6 ×5
POW	N/A	N/A

**Move:** as host +1

**Hit Points:** as host +6\*

**Av. Damage Bonus:** as host + modified

**Av. Build:** as host + modified

**Av. Magic Points:** 0

\*The Keeper may rule that the decay reduces the host's characteristics over time, forcing the dveorg to find another host.

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1

**Fighting** 75% (37/15), damage as per weapon.

**Dodge** host's skill

### Skills

Ride 75%, Stealth 90%, and any number of appropriate skills.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** none, but may possess non-magical artifacts to open Gates, to contact Mythos creatures, to invoke mist, winds, etc., at the Keeper's discretion.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D2 Sanity points to see a dveorg, unless it has inhabited the body of someone the investigator knows to be dead, in which case Sanity loss is 1/1D6+1 points. Host bodies in latter stages of decomposition may call for Sanity loss of 1/1D8 or 1/1D10 points.







## Demon of Bula-Shess (Unique Being)

This monstrous entity serves one purpose, to guard the Heartlight against all those who would take it. The demon has guarded the stone since the beginning of days. During the days of Nineveh, the mighty wizard Xuhlтан defeated the demon, forcing him to sleep, and stole the stone. All those who laid eye on the stone coveted it, and Xuhlтан was forced to flee from Nineveh to Bula-Shess. In that Assyrian city, Xuhlтан was tortured to death by the king for the stone. With his dying breath, Xuhlтан revoked the spell that bound the demon. The creature roared to life and destroyed everything it found in the city of Bula-Shess. Those who could flee, left the city forever, and did everything within their power to make sure people forgot about the cursed place.

The demon is a large, tentacled beast, able to manifest any time the Heartlight is touched. When it attacks, tentacles appear from thin air, lashing out, grasping enemies, and crushing them.

### Demon of Bula-Shess

STR	175
CON	135
SIZ	125
DEX	125
INT	80
POW	110
Move:	12

**Hit Points:** 26

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6

**Build:** 4

**Magic Points:** 22

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 4 (tentacles, bite)

Fighting	85% (42/17), damage tentacle crush 1D10+DB or bite 1D6+DB
Dodge	60% (30/12)

**Armor:** 6-point leathery hide.

**Spells:** Any desired by the Keeper.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D4/1D6 Sanity points to see the Demon of Bula-Shess.

## Goff'nn Hupadgh (Goblin and Satyr)

In the ancient world, scholars believed that goblins are the "Goff'nn Hupadgh Shub-Niggurath," favored worshippers of the Black Goat of the Forest that have been ritualistically devoured by the goddess and then disgorged transformed. Although that knowledge is lost, the creatures are still around. Goblins (from the Greek *kobalos*, "rogue") are considered short creatures, but they can grow and take on the nature of an animal or even of a breeze. They have fluctuating forms, shiny black skin, clawed hands, and are given various names depending on the region in which they are found. Goblins usually live in haunted forests and ruins. They sometimes appear in large groups. They steal children, cook poisoned food that they try to sell to unwary humans, raid hapless travelers, and are prone to unspeakable depravity. Such creatures are the source of many myths and folklore.

The creatures have some semblance to satyrs, with goatish features, hooved feet, and small horns. Some appear more horribly mutated and are monstrous to behold. The goff'nn hupadgh have many different names: dusii (demons), sylvani (forest spirits), schrats (shouters), fauns, satyrs, pilosi (hairy ones), incubi, and so on.

The goblins know group rituals called "Scarlet Circles" that tear the fabric of space like a form of temporary Gate, allowing them to travel between distant places. They have been known to encourage the hounds of Tindalos through in order to wreak havoc.

## GOBLINS, among the thousand young

char.	averages	rolls
STR	50-55	3D6 ×5
CON	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) ×5
DEX	50-55	3D6 ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5



## BESTIARY



**Move:** 8  
**Hit Points:** 14-15  
**Damage Bonus:** 0  
**Av. Build:** 0  
**Av. Magic Points:** 16

**Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1 (usually by weapon, those with horns or claw may gore)

Fighting 40% (20/8), damage 1D3 to 1D6,  
 or by weapon  
 Dodge 25% (12/5)

**Skills**

Climb 70%, Stealth 80%, Track 80%.

**Armor:** none (some are able to naturally heal 1D3 to 1D6 HP per round until dead).

**Spells:** most goblins know a few spells, including Become Spectral, Body Warping, Call Shub-Niggurath, and Create Gate ("Scarlet Circles"), more as the Keeper desires.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see most goblins. An especially vile specimen might cost more.

**Gotii**

The gotii are degenerate humans; Shub-Niggurath worshippers who live in a small village centered on an artifact known as the moon-lens. They're short, averaging 4'-5' tall, reek of goat, and have vaguely goat-like visages. Heavily influenced by the Romans, the gotii speak a mélange of Latin, Cymric, and Old English. They're very insular and if

met on the road do their best to keep moving without being disturbed.

Gotii rituals are horrible to behold. In one of their many dark rites, they lash a victim to a table beneath the moon lens and dance around with wild abandon. Once the primus, or tribal leader, gives the word, the gotii fall upon the victim as a chaotic horde, ripping and tearing the victim with their teeth and hands, offering pieces to their god.

If the gotii attack, usually in self-defense or to subdue a sacrificial victim, they do so with their fists and clubs. They also use spears, but never to subdue a victim, as that would spoil the fun for later.



Gotii

**GOTII, enthusiastic cultists**

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
<b>STR</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5
<b>CON</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5
<b>SIZ</b>	65	(2D6+6) ×5
<b>DEX</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5
<b>INT</b>	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
<b>POW</b>	35*	2D6 ×5
<b>APP</b>	15-20	1D6 ×5

\*One in ten Gotii have 3D6 ×5 POW and serve as primus to their tribe.

**Move:** 8  
**Hit Points:** 11-12  
**Av. Damage Bonus:** 0  
**Av. Build:** 0  
**Av. Magic Points:** 7

**Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1

Fighting 50% (25/10), damage 1D4,  
 or by weapon  
 Dodge 25% (12/5)

**Skills**

Climb 50%, Stealth 60%, Track 40%.

**Armor:** 2-point leather armor.

**Spells:** those with an INT of 70 or higher know 1D4 spells.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D3 Sanity points to see the Gotii.



## Green God, Children of the

The children of the Green God are a degenerate, mutated lot. The children are covered in coarse hair, have elongated ears, and sharp rodent-like teeth. They move in a hopping gait and seem to shun light. Typically, they live under the ground in complex warrens. They are all that remain of the Varenii tribe, a group of Britons that worshipped the Green God. They're pitiful and mostly harmless, so long as their lairs are avoided and they're left to their own ways.

The creatures are quick and agile, capable of outmaneuvering men and beasts. If confronted, single or outnumbered children will flee. If encountered in large groups they may attack. These creatures seldom stray far from their own, so they are typically encountered in groups. Members of the tribe that can pass for human take their putrid, accursed produce to nearby settlements, ostensibly to sell, but actually to gain converts.

## CHILDREN OF THE GREEN GOD, degenerate mutants

char.	averages	rolls
STR	65-70	(3D6+3) × 5
CON	80-85	(3D6+6) × 5
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) × 5
DEX	95	(2D6+12) × 5
INT	65	(2D6+6) × 5
POW	65	(2D6+6) × 5

Move: 9

Hit Points: 14-15

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4

Av. Build: 1

Av. Magic Points: 13

### Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw or bite)

Fighting 40% (20/8), damage: claw  
1D4+DB; bite 1D3+DB

Dodge 45% (22/9)

### Skills

Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%,  
Stealth 60%.

Armor: none.

Spells: those with a POW of 80 or  
higher know Contact the Green  
God (Shub-Niggurath) and  
1D6 other spells.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4  
Sanity points to see a  
child of the Green God.



## Horig (Unique Being)

Horig lies below an ancient forest, called the Eseweald, along the Severn River. It fell to Earth millennia ago and took root; the forest and the very earth upon which the trees of the Eseweald stand is an extension of Horig. The ancient monstrosity can move the trees, rocks, and streams within the Eseweald at will, creating a baffling maze that slowly leads victims to a grove containing a mushroom ring and a bubbling spring—Horig's clearing at the forest's center. Horig is buried several hundred feet below the central mushroom ring. If someone were to ever dig Horig up, all they would find is a strange stone, no larger than a man's head, which continually oozes black pus.

**Cult:** Horig is propitiated by a handful of families called **The People** (page 147) that live within the greater forest that surrounds the Eseweald. The cultists lure unsuspecting travelers to their doom.

**The Ring:** Horig uses a toadstool ring to lure victims, like some carnivorous plants lure insects. Every breeze that wafts across the mushrooms' caps spreads a warm and earthy, inviting scent. The fungi appear normal from a distance, but up close, anyone who looks upon their strange coloration and inhales their odor must make a POW roll: if successful, nothing happens; if failed, the victim is driven into a frenzied dance around the mushroom ring. While dancing, the investigator must make a Hard CON roll: if successful, he or she snaps out of the dance; if failed, the victim collapses unconscious within the ring and also becomes a carrier for Horig's virulent plague (cumulative 5% chance per 5 minutes spent in the ring). The Keeper should pick a suitable disease from the **Diseases** table (page 112). There is also a 5% chance that anyone who falls asleep in the mushroom ring, whether through Horig's machinations or not, will awaken in Limbo, the Dreamlands, or somewhere much, much worse at the Keeper's discretion.

**The Spring:** Although Horig is buried beneath the mushroom ring, the essence of its being permeates every drop of water that gurgles up from the fissure in the ground. The water looks, smells, and tastes clean, but anyone who drinks it must make a Hard CON roll: if successful, nothing happens; if failed, the victim become a carrier for Horig's virulent plague. While the carrier is immune, everyone he or she comes in contact with must make a CON check or contract disease from the **Diseases** table (page 112). The disease should be chosen by the Keeper.

### Possible Dark Ages Interpretations:

- Horig is visited upon men for their impure ways. Repent and you will be cleansed.
- Horig is the cleansing fire of righteousness. After Horig has swept the world only the true believers will remain.



*Horig, the unclean*



## **HORIG, the unclean**

**STR** N/A

**CON** 120

**SIZ** 5

**DEX** N/A

**INT** 100

**POW** 200

**Move:** 0

**Hit Points:** 12

**Damage Bonus** N/A

**Build** -2

**Magic Points:** 40

### **Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1

Black Pus 100%, damage 1D10, plus the investigator contracts 1D4 diseases

Dodge N/A

**Armor:** 6-point rock.

**Spells:** Any spell the Keeper desires.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D6/1D8 Sanity points to see Horig.

## **Nameless Mist (Unique Being)**

The Nameless Mist (also known as the Magnum Innominandum) was created by Azathoth to fill the interstices between the spheres that compose the universe, and to spawn Yog-Sothoth.

The Nameless Mist is served by the gugs and worshipped by the dveorg, and may intrude into the material world when certain conditions are met. These emanations of otherworldly

*Nameless Mist*



mist are preceded by icy winds. Living beings engulfed by the Nameless Mist lose all senses except touch (modify skill rolls appropriately). Cognitive skills function normally. The outlandish experience costs 0/1D4 Sanity points.

The Nameless Mist sometimes carries with it unwholesome creatures, lost within its icy and misty tendrils. When moving through the Nameless Mist the unwary may come across all manner of horrors at the Keeper's discretion, such as: dimensional shamblers, gugs, old ones, and dveorg.

## **NAMELESS MIST, milk of the void**

**STR** N/A

**CON** N/A

**SIZ** infinite

**DEX** N/A

**INT** 0

**POW** 120

**Move:** 24

**Hit Points:** N/A

**Damage Bonus:** N/A

**Build:** infinite

**Magic Points:** 24

### **Combat**

**Attacks per round:** none, but possible attacks by "what lies within" (see corresponding creature entries).

**Armor:** N/A.

**Spells:** N/A.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4 Sanity points to be engulfed by the Nameless Mist.



## Old Ones

Most myths of mankind mention the existence of a race of intermediary beings between men and gods. Despite the many names given to this race, most descriptions draw a disturbingly consistent image of what the *Necronomicon* calls, "the Old Ones." Don't confuse them with the Great Old Ones. As the *Necronomicon* writes, "Great Cthulhu is Their cousin, yet can he spy Them only dimly."

The old ones are spirit-like entities serving Yog-Sothoth. They are naturally invisible but often manifest as a halo of light that makes them shine like stars. In fact these beings can appear in all sorts of ominous ghostly shapes, from beautiful maidens to dreadful things with golden wings and bronze talons. Some accounts also allude to the unwholesome smell that accompanies them. Old ones have the gift of being able to move very quickly, and even, some say, to be everywhere at once.

The old ones are innumerable, they know neither good nor evil, and they walked the earth long before mankind. Now they wander forever, "not in the spheres we know, but between them"—the ultimate abyss filled by Yog-Sothoth.

Old ones may meddle in human affairs from time to time. Many tales relate how they breed with the daughters of men and spawn monstrous offspring, like werewolves, and also how they teach men forbidden knowledge. Yog-

Sothoth sometimes sends the old ones to take part in battles, stirring up disorder, and seizing the souls of the slain. Old ones usually intrude into our world after sunset, under the cover of darkness, and seem to favor deserted places.

Greek and Babylonian demons, the Arabic *shayatin* and *jinn*, angels of the Old Testament, Scandinavian elves, Celtic and Germanic messengers of the Otherworld, all match the above definition of old ones. They go by various names: demons, elves ("shining ones"), jinn ("hidden ones"), angels (e.g. *seraphs*—"burning ones," "fallen ones," "watchers"), *w o e l c y r g e s* (valkyries), bird-women, siren-birds, the Fates (fairies), furies, gorgons, harpies, *d r o w n e r s*, etc. Old ones

themselves are sometimes worshipped by humans but they usually possess only small cults, and typically only for propitiation. Old ones have secret "true names" by which they may be summoned.

## OLD ONES, *ancient meddlers*

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	N/A	N/A
CON	N/A	N/A
SIZ	N/A	N/A
DEX	N/A	N/A
INT	80	(4D6+2) ×5
POW	80	(4D6+2) ×5

**Move:** 12 flying

**Hit Points:** N/A

**Av. Damage Bonus:** N/A

**Av. Build:** N/A

**Av. Magic Points:** 16

## Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (spirit combat or curse)

Curse: opposed POW roll, if successful the victim loses 1D10 POW permanently.

**Armor:** none, physical weapons cannot harm an old one, although magical weapons may do so.

**Spells:** each knows at least 1D10 spells, always including Soul Singing and Fury.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D10 Sanity points to witness the insanely beautiful, dazzling radiance of an old one, or to hear its ghastly ululation. Insanity usually takes the form of paralysis and catatonia.

## Pucel

Commonly called "Will-o-Wisp," "Devil's Eye," and "Friar's Lanterns," these creatures are also known to the Anglo-Saxons as "Pucel" and to the Cymri as "Pwka" or "Pooka." These foul creatures are manifestations of the fell being, Horig, formed from the remains of creatures Horig has feasted upon.

Most times, a pucel only appears as a bobbing light, late in the darkest hours of the night. If someone sneaks closer, a small, dusky figure can be discerned, wearing a hooded robe and holding a light aloft. Under the hood, the pucel is a disfigured little man with a wide mouth of broken teeth, red hate-filled eyes, and wisps of scraggly hair.

**Mesmerizing Light:** Anyone who sees a pucel's light must make an opposed POW versus the pucel's POW: if failed, the individual feels compelled to follow the light, wherever it might lead. The pucel try to lead travelers to Horig's grove





## BESTIARY

Pucel



where the god can feast upon the unlucky victim(s). If an investigator doesn't fall prey to the pucel's light trick, he or she is safe for the night.

**Child-like appearance:** Pucel have the ability to appear as a human child for a number of minutes equal to their POW. They run, joke, and laugh, trying to lure travelers from their friends.

**Infection:** Being a spawn of Horig, a pucel can spread the entity's disease. When a pucel is killed, it explodes into its component pieces; an investigator might see bits of human, wolf, bat, or bear in the remains. The explosion itself can cause 1D3 damage from bone shrapnel to any within 10-feet of the dying pucel. If the damage is sufficient to overcome any armor, the investigator is infected with Horig's disease (see Horig, page 172).

### PUCEL, a light in the dark

char.	averages	rolls
STR	50-55	3D6 x5
CON	50-55	3D6 x5
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) x5
DEX	85-90	5D6 x5
INT	80-85	(3D6+6) x5
POW	85-90	5D6 x5
APP	15-20	1D6 x5

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 11-12

**Av. Damage Bonus:** 0

**Av. Build:** 0

**Av. Magic Points:** 17

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (by weapon)

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D4+DB, or knife (1D6+DB)

Brandish Torch 60%, (30/12), damage 1D6+1+DB, plus 1D4 fire damage

Dodge 40% (20/8)

**Armor:** 2-points of heavy robes and ropy skin. If killed, investigators within 10-feet must make a Dodge roll to avoid being struck by the pucel's exploding remains (causing 1D3 damage and the risk of infection).

**Spell-like Abilities:** Pucel may appear as human children for a number of minutes equal to their POW.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D3 to see a pucel. 1D3/1D6 to see them explode into component parts.

### Skræling

Skræling are humans who live in small, domed caves dug into the hillsides of snow-covered lands. Unless someone knows what to look for, the mounds forming their homes are indistinguishable from the surrounding hills. Should humans begin exploring or colonizing the areas around skræling hills, the skræling will attack with force to drive the humans from their territory.

Although most skræling don't worship Ithaqua, they do live in fear of the Wind Walker and propitiate him with sacrifices of foxes, sheep, and humans. The skræling language is a series of growls, velar vocalizations, and chirps.

Millennia ago, the skrælings waged war on the Hyperboreans, instigating the downfall of that society.

### SKRÆLING, wintry marauders

char.	averages	rolls
STR	50-55	3D6 x5
CON	50-55	3D6 x5
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) x5
DEX	50-55	3D6 x5
INT	65	(2D6+6) x5
POW	35*	2D6 x5
APP	35	2D6 x5

\*One in ten skræling have 3D6 x5 POW and serve as shamans to their tribe.



**Move:** 8  
**Hit Points:** 11-12  
**Av. Damage Bonus:** 0  
**Av. Build:** 0  
**Av. Magic Points:** 7

## Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (by weapon)  
 Fighting 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+DB,  
 or by weapon (spear, 1D8+DB)  
 Dodge 25% (12/5)

## Skills

Climb 50%, Navigate 60%, Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

**Armor:** 3-point heavy leather armor and furs.  
**Spells:** Skräling with a POW of 65 or higher know 1D4 spells.  
**Sanity Loss:** none.

## Spawn of the Abyss

Spawn of the Abyss inhabit seas and oceans. While similar to shoggoths, the spawn are highly evolved and intelligent, appearing as a bluish slime with various and shifting features. They create limbs and sensory organs as needed, usually with rudimentary mouths. Spawn are capable of speech and can learn languages.

**Hypnotic Song:** A spawn can sing alien songs that influence those who hear them. A target failing an opposed POW roll with the spawn is overcome and falls under the creature's spell, obeying its every command. The victim can attempt to break the spell each round thereafter by rolling equal to or under their POW.

## SPAWN OF THE ABYSS, *sirens of the deep*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	175	10D6 ×5
CON	120-125	7D6 ×5
SIZ	245	14D6 ×5
DEX	15-20	1D6 ×5
INT	85	(2D6+10) ×5
POW	85-90	5D6 ×5

**Move:** 10 rolling  
**Hit Points:** 36-37  
**Av. Damage Bonus:** +4D6  
**Av. Build:** 5  
**Av. Magic Points:** 17

## Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 crush (rolling over target) or 3 pseudopods (range equal to one-fifth SIZ in yards)  
 Fighting 70% (35/14), damage as DB (crush); ½ DB (pseudopod)  
 Dodge 10% (5/2)

Skræling



Spawn of the Abyss





## BESTIARY

**Armor:** none, but immune to normal weapons. Spells, fire, and chemicals can harm them. Regenerates 1D3 hit points per round until dead.

**Spells:** chance equal to INT on 1D100 to know 1D6 spells.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see a spawn of the Abyss.

### Teutates

The teutates are the chosen defenders of their tribe, living on the fringes of an ever-advancing, ever-developing world. Once human warriors, the Teutates are now intelligent undead.

The tribes which "birth" teutates are known to worship Gla'aki, the Watcher in the Water, presenting him with their finest warriors so that he may bestow unlives upon them. This gift of unlives is limited; the undead warriors can be slain and, should they leave the boundaries of the tribe's domain, they succumb to the Green Decay that slowly eats them completely away.



### TEUTATES, *undead protectors of their tribe*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	80	(4D6+2) ×5
CON	100-110	3D6 ×10
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) ×5
DEX	50-55	3D6 ×5
INT	65	(2D6+6) ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 7

**Hit Points:** 16-17

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Av. Build:** 1

**Av. Magic Points:** 10

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage by weapon (sword 1D8+DB)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

### Skills

Stealth 65%, Track 60%.

**Armor:** 2-point leather armor.

**Spells:** retains any known when alive, plus any new spells taught by Gla'aki.

**Sanity Loss:** no Sanity point loss if human-seeming. 1/1D8 Sanity points if in living-corpse aspect; if dead from Green Decay, 1/1D10 Sanity points to see the teutates.

### Worms of the Earth

Worms of the earth average 3½ foot in height with shortened arms and legs. They have stunted and deformed bodies, a "broad, strangely flattened head" and wide face, almond eyes, and yellowish mottled skin that is covered with a kind of sticky slime. The worms wear crude animal hides and stink of decay. This degenerate race is encountered in barrows and subterranean tunnels, the network of which is said to connect the burial grounds of many worlds. They shun light, even that of the moon and stars, spending their unlives under the ground in darkness. They are known by a few names, including: dwarves (*draugr*), the walking dead (*aptrgangr*), and barrow-wights.

According to Vikings, the draugr are only destroyed for good by cutting the head off, burning the remains, and burying the ashes or throwing them out at sea. The worms communicate with each other in a horrible hissing speech and with crude carvings, and are capable of primitive magic. Humans easily mistake them for vampires or ghouls.

The worms worship an artifact of obscure origins, called the Black Stone, inscribed with symbols of terror. It is said



that anybody succeeding in stealing the Black Stone may be granted a service in return, although in the end he or she will still incur the wrath of the worms. The worms attack in swarms and they eat up the bodies of anything they kill (or any dead flesh for that matter; their hunger is insatiable).

**Nightmare Cloak:** The worms have a special ability that allows them to alter reality. By expending magic points, a worm can either alter its shape to appear more human or bring about a cloak of darkness. In either case, the effect lasts for fifteen minutes for every magic point expended. Seeing through a worm's disguise requires a Hard POW roll.

**Undermine Attack:** The worms can undermine any building by hollowing out the earth underneath it and digging its foundations away. Residents might hear dim scratching and clawing sounds. The time taken before a building comes crashing down is determined by the SIZ of the building: every hour, a single worm can undermine the equivalent of SIZ 1 of rock and SIZ 30 of unconsolidated material (e.g. clay). For example, a stone tower typically weighs a few thousand metric tons. Assuming SIZ 300, a hundred worms of the earth need 3 hours to sap the tower's foundations. The same attack can also target a single human sleeping on the ground: the human will be swallowed by a hole in the ground and carried away by the worms of the earth.



## WORMS OF THE EARTH, *the walking dead*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	65	(2D6+6) ×5
CON	35	2D6 ×5
SIZ	25	2D4 ×5
DEX	65	(2D6+6) ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 7

**Hit Points:** 6

**Av. Damage Bonus:** 0

**Av. Build:** 0

**Av. Magic Points:** 10

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (claw or by weapon)

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D3, or by weapon (flint dagger 1D3; spear 1D6)
Dodge	30% (15/6)

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** none.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see the worms of the earth.

## MONSTERS OF FOLKLORE

Here's a small selection of traditional folkloric monsters to be used in games. There's no reason these creatures can't be servants of the Mythos if it fits your purpose. During the Dark Ages most supernatural creatures were humanoid in shape. It wasn't until the Crusades and subsequent High Middle Ages that non-humanoid supernatural creatures, many inspired by stories from the Orient, became common among all ranks of society.

Note that some of the following entries provide a variation to those found in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*.

### Basilisk

The basilisk serpent (meaning "kinglet") is a 2-to-3 yard long snake so venomous that the creature dwells in a self-created desert. Pliny wrote in his *Natural History* that the basilisk is, "adorned with a bright white marking on the head like a sort of diadem . . . and does not move its body forward in manifold coils like the other snakes but advancing with its middle raised high."

Basilisks are the personification of venom: if a basilisk bites a victim, that individual dies after one round. There is little chance to resist the poison, except maybe by immediate amputation of the bitten limb to prevent the venom from reaching the heart. Legend says that the basilisk's breath is also venomous, a misinterpretation of the fact that the basilisk can spit its venom a distance of up to 6 yards. The attack is aimed at the target's eyes!



## BESTIARY

Basilisks are native to Cyrenaica to the west of Egypt. It is likely the serpent people originally created these creatures.

### BASILISK, also kinglet, cockatrice

STR 5  
CON 5  
SIZ 5  
DEX 50  
INT 15  
POW 5

Move: 6

Hit Points: 1

Av. Damage Bonus: N/A

Av. Build: -2

Av. Magic Points: 1

#### Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite)

Fighting 30% (15/6), damage 1D4 + poison\*

Virulent Spit 30% (15/6), damage poison\*\* (base range 3 yards)

Dodge 30% (15/6)

\*Poison: if skin is penetrated victim makes a CON roll: fail, automatic death after one round; success, lose 4D10 damage; Extreme success, lose 2D10 damage.

\*\*An Extreme success means the venomous spit hits the target's eyes, causing blindness!

#### Skills

Stealth 60%.

Armor: 4-point scales.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: none.



### Dragon

"Dragon" from the Greek *drakon* ("large serpent") could be the Dark Ages name for "star-spawn of Cthulhu." In Dark Ages symbolism, dragons are the enemies of man and terror inspiring manifestations of the Serpent—the archetype of all evil, alias Leviathan.

Dragons are said to reside in underground or underwater megalithic chambers, there to guard the secret of immortality. This representation disturbingly resembles living-dead Cthulhu and his minions, entombed in the stone vaults of R'lyeh. The description of dragons confirms this match: their huge bodies are clawed and winged, some appear to be poison-blowing or exhibit numerous serpent heads.

Manifestations of "worms" (dholes, flying polyps, and hunting horrors), shantaks, and lloigors have contributed to the myths of the dragon and the sea serpent. The names given to many dragons suggest that they are considered to be devourers of corpses. A dragon that lives underwater is called a nicor. Whether or not dragons are analogous to Mythos entities, have a weak spot over their heart, or horde gold is up to the discretion of the Keeper.





## DRAGON, as inspired by Beowulf

char.	averages	rolls
STR	350	20D6 ×5
CON	175	10D6 ×5
SIZ	350	20D6 ×5
DEX	70	4D6 ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	100	(4D6+6) ×5

Move: 7 (10 flying)

Hit Points: 52†

Av. Damage Bonus: +8D6

Av. Build: 9

Av. Magic Points: 20

†At 0 HP it will thrash for 1D10 rounds, during which there is a 50% (attack) chance per round to strike a random investigator with its tail for 1D6+½ DB damage.

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 or 3 (claw and tail, or 1 bite, or 1 breathe flame)

Fighting 65% (32/13), damage: bite 3D6+DB+poison\*; claw 1D6+DB; tail 1D6+½ DB

Breathe Flame 75% (37/15), 4D6+special\*\*

Dodge 40% (20/8)

\*Poison: 4D10 damage—make a CON roll; an Extreme success will halve the poison damage.

\*\*Dragons frequently fight by flying overhead and blasting fire down upon their targets. A dragon must expend 1D6 magic points to belch forth flame, which covers an area 3 meters/yards in diameter with a range equal to the dragon's POW in meters/yards. Armor will protect against this damage, although the target may be set on fire.

### Skills

Dodge 35%, Fly 100%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 60%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** 12-point scales.

**Spells:** none.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D10 Sanity points to see a full size dragon.

## Scucca

A creature of Anglo-Saxon folklore, the scucca is a shambling, bloated corpse that sheds maggots as it walks. Its skin is mottled with bruises and coagulated blood. If found wandering the countryside, it's considered a *death-scucca*. If it haunts barrows and graveyards, it's a *beorg-scucca*. The unavenged, as well as victims slain by a scucca are said to rise again, although it is believed that decapitating the dead can prevent a corpse from rising as a scucca.

## SCUCCA, also draugr, ghoul, revenant, wight

char.	averages	rolls
STR	50-55	3D6 ×5
CON	50-55	3D6 ×5
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) ×5
DEX	50-55	3D6 ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

Move: 6

Hit Points: 11-12

Av. Damage Bonus: 0

Av. Build: 0

Av. Magic Points: 10

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1

Fighting 50% (25/10), damage 1D6+DB  
Dodge N/A

### Skills

Stealth 50%.

**Armor:** 2-point mottled flesh. If dealt damage, maggots erupt from the wound.

**Spells:** none.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a scucca.



Scucca



## BESTIARY

### Thyrs, also troll, ent, ghoul

The thyrs is a man-like troll, covered in lank hair with black eyes and tusks that jut from its mouth. Larger than a man, it walks stooped-over, its hands nearly reaching the ground. Its claws are sharp enough to shred both leather and metal armor.

Despite its ungainly appearance, the thyrs is fast, capable of killing a man before he knows what he's facing. Thyrs prefer human flesh but will raid livestock when necessary. During the day the monster hides in caves or underwater.

### THYRS, also troll, ent, ghoul

char.	averages	rolls
STR	100-105	(3D6+10) ×5
CON	65	(3D6+6) ×5
SIZ	100-105	(3D6+10) ×5
DEX	100-105	(3D6+10) ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

Move: 10

Hit Points: 16-17

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6

Av. Build: 2

Av. Magic Points: 10



### Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claws, fists, kicks)

Fighting 70% (35/14), damage 1D6+DB, attack ignores armor.

Dodge 50% (25/10)

### Skills

Climb 70%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 60%, Swim 50%.

Armor: 4-point sinew.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D3 Sanity points to see a thyrs.

### Vampire, also lilu, revenant, ghoul, strigae, succubae, lamia

Vampires are the dead who crawl out of their tombs at night to quaff the body fluids of the living or sup on the flesh of the dead. They are related to the Arabic ghûl (ghoul) who are part human, part dog. The strigae or striges of the Old World were half woman, half owl. In the Dark Ages monks believed these creatures to be the lilim—depraved daughters of Lilith the she-devil. In many cultures, vampires are capable of constantly changing form and may appear as humans, wolves, birds, or even insects. Vampires are quite common in central Europe, Russia, the Balkans, and Arabia.

It is said that these creatures become invisible by standing still and can move in complete silence. Only blows to the skull or to the heart can harm a vampire.

Vampires are incomplete creatures; they cannot naturally regenerate lost magic points and must consume blood to replenish magic points. Some vampires are animated by grim magic.

Vampires gain 1 magic point for every SIZ point of corpse that they devour, or for every hit point of body fluids (usually blood) they drink. They must expend a magic point at daybreak; for each hour in the sun vampires must spend an extra magic point. This process represents the corpse's decay: at 0 magic points a vampire falls into torpor until blood revives them; if at 0 magic points and exposed to daylight, the vampire rots into incapacity and is destroyed.

### VAMPIRE, the undead

char.	averages	rolls
STR	100-110	3D6 ×10
CON	65	(2D6+6) ×5
SIZ	65	(2D6+6) ×5
DEX	65	(2D6+6) ×5
INT	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	65	(2D6+6) ×5

Move: 10

Hit Points: 13

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6





**Av. Build:** 2

**Av. Magic Points:** 13

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (claw, bite)

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D6
Bite	60% (30/12), damage 1D4; 2D10 STR; automatic worry*
Gaze	Opposed POW roll**
Dodge	35% (17/7)

*\*Bite: if the vampire strikes home, it hangs on and worries its victim with its fangs, continuing to drain 2D10 STR points and 1D4 damage automatically per round thereafter. A successful opposed STR roll will dislodge the beast.*

*\*\*Gaze: If the target fails an opposed POW roll the target is hypnotized and can be made to follow simple instructions. If these instructions are self-destructive, at the start of a round the target's player may attempt an INT roll to snap out of it.*

### Skills

Burrow 75%, Climb 80%, Listen 70%, Scent Blood/Decay 75%, Stealth 80%.

**Armor:** impaling (Extreme) attacks inflict normal damage to a vampire; other attacks are reduced to half of rolled damage. Vampires usually reform when reduced to zero hit points.

**Spells:** at the discretion of the Keeper, one or more appropriate spells and Body Warping (variant spell, cost 12 MP, one night's duration) and Become Spectral.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a vampire, depending on its state of decay.



### Pontius Pilate (Unique Being)

Pontius Pilate is anything but a traditional vampire, dwelling at the bottom of the lake on Mons Fractus. Insanely strong, Pilate is able to toss most humans around like toys. Much to the dismay of investigators, the cross, a symbol of the man he persecuted, has no effect. Pilate is also not affected by daylight and can summon storms to aid him. He still wears the robes of his office, although it has been a thousand years since he officially held a title and they now hang in tatters.

Rumors say the serpent people of Mons Fractus are in possession of a dragon stone that allows the possessor to overcome Pilate's ability to reform. Pilate maintains a group of thralls deep within the caverns beneath the lake in order to maintain his magic points.

### PONTIUS PILATE, vampiric lord of Mons Fractus

STR	150
CON	70
SIZ	80
DEX	105
INT	90
POW	180

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 15

**Magic Points:** 36

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Build:** 3

**Magic Points:** 36



## BESTIARY

### Combat

#### Attacks per round: 1

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D4+DB
Bite	70% (35/14), damage 1D6; 2D10+2 STR; automatic worry*
Gaze	Opposed POW roll**
Dodge	45% (22/9)

\*Bite: +1D6 blood and +2D10+2 STR drain per round thereafter (Pilate gains +1 magic point per STR point consumed). Opposed STR roll to dislodge the fiend.

\*\*Gaze: Oppose POW roll; if Pilate is successful, the target is hypnotized and will follow simple, non self-destructive commands. If a self-destructive command is given, the victim is allowed an INT roll to break the hypnosis.

**Armor:** Impaling (Extreme) attacks inflict normal damage to a vampire; other attacks are reduced to half of rolled damage. Pilate reforms when reduced to zero hit points. Means to permanently kill Pilate are left to the Keeper's discretion.

**Spells:** Pilate knows Alter Weather and 1D4 more spells at the Keeper's discretion.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4 to see Pilate flash his fangs.

### Werewolves, also *versipellis* (turnskins), *hundigas*, *berserks*

Werewolves are humans possessed by a bestial spirit. Such cursed creatures have been around for a very long time; both Virgil and Saint Augustine mentioned them within their works.

The Vikings consider wolf-men (*berserks*) to be elite warriors of Odin awaiting the final battle against the forces of Chaos on the Last Evening. Berserks—who dye their bodies black—are known to have formed the household guard of Norway's King Harald I Fairhair (872–930). Berserk warriors wear wolf skins into battle or fight naked, and are in the habit of pillaging and murdering at will. Two anonymous texts written around 1000 CE, *The Dialogue of Solomon and Saturn* and *The Poem of Widsith*, attest the existence of a mythical nation of wolf-men—the *hundigas* (“those-of-the-dog”). They appear to be ruled by an enigmatic giant sorcerer named Marculfus, “The raging wolf known in the whole world,” messenger of an ambiguous god whose kingdom is beyond the reach of humans and animals (Yog-Sothoth?)

### WEREWOLF, *dog soldiers* (wolf form)

char.	averages	rolls
STR	105	6D6 ×5
CON	65	(2D6+6) ×5
SIZ	50-55	3D6 ×5
DEX	65	(2D6+6) ×5
INT	5	-
POW	65 (120)*	(2D6+6) ×5



Werewolf

\*The possessing spirit's POW 55 is added to the human's POW, thus forming a common pool of magic points.

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 11-12

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Av. Build:** 1

**Av. Magic Points:** 13 (24)

### Combat

#### Attacks per round: 2 (bite, claw, maul)

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 1D8+DB (in wolf-form).
Dodge	40% (20/8)

### Skills

Stealth 60%, Track (Smell) 90%.

**Armor:** 1-point hide.

**Spell-like Abilities:** Fury (page 163), Body Warping (variant, 12 MP, one night duration).

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D3 Sanity points to see a werewolf.

### Wights, also *striges*, *dokkalfar* (dark elves), *mara* (nightmare)

Wights haunt the barrows, ancient forests, and secluded regions of many northern lands. Their attributes are reminiscent of those of the Old Ones in the *Necronomicon*. Wights are hunting spirits associated to the Death God who is known under many names, including Gwynn ap Nudd,



Cernunos, or Tawil at'Umr. They are usually found in the regions where the veil is thin between worlds. Wights intrude into the world of the living in places of darkness. Wights are dispelled by direct light.

Humans easily mistake wights for ghosts (Vikings call them "vaettirs"). Some Wights do bear secret names, with which they can be summoned.

## WIGHTS, *creeping horrors*

char.	averages	rolls
STR	140-145	(3D6+18) ×5
CON	105	6D6 ×5
SIZ	50-55	3D6 ×5
DEX	70	4D6 ×5
INT	85-90	5D6 ×5
POW	105	6D6 ×5

Move: 8/30 (flying)

Hit Points: 15-16

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6

Av. Build: 2

Av. Magic Points: 21

### Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claws or grab)

Fighting 65% (32/13), damage 1D6+DB  
Grab (mnvr.) used to drag their victim into the air and away for the kill (requires opposed STR roll to break loose).

Armor: none, but only cutting weapons (e.g. swords) can harm a wight's semi-liquid substance and impaling attacks only inflict regular damage.

Spells: Death's Breath, Winds of Desolation.  
Sanity loss: 1/1D10 Sanity points to see a wight.

## ANIMALS

Following are just a few of the animals commonly encountered in the wild or in domestic settings.

### Aurochs

Aurochs are large, wild animals, and the ancestors of modern cattle. As tall at the shoulder as it is long due to long slender legs, aurochs are massive animals with powerful horns atop a large head.

### Aurochs

char.	averages	rolls
STR	175-180	(5D6+18) ×5
CON	100-105	(3D6+10) ×5
SIZ	170	(4D6+20) ×5
DEX	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	35	2D6 ×5

Move: 12

Hit Points: 27

Av. Damage Bonus: +3D6

Av. Build: 4

### Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (gore, trample)

Fighting 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+DB  
Trample 50%, (25/10), damage 2D6+DB  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Armor: 3-point muscle and hide.

### Bear

The black bear is the most commonly found bear in Europe. Particularly adventurous Norsemen might encounter polar bears.

### Black Bear

char.	averages	rolls
STR	100-105	(3D6+10) ×5
CON	85	(2D6+10) ×5
SIZ	100-105	(3D6+10) ×5
DEX	50-55	3D6 ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

Move: 14 (8 swimming)

Hit Points: 18

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6-+2D6

Av. Build: 2-3

### Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (claws, bite)

Fighting 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+DB  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Armor: 3-point fur and gristle.





## BESTIARY

### *Polar Bear*

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	135-140	(5D6+10) ×5
CON	90-95	(3D6+8) ×5
SIZ	135-140	(5D6+10)×5
DEX	50-55	3D6×5
POW	50-55	3D6×5

**Move:** 12 (10 swimming)

**Hit Points:** 22-23

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Av. Build:** 3

### *Combat*

**Attacks per round:** 2 (claws, bite)

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage 1D8+DB

Dodge 25% (12/5)

**Armor:** 6-point fur and gristle.

### *Deer*

Deer are herbivores, usually gathered together in large herds. They instinctively flee from conflict but will use their antlers and hooves to defend themselves when cornered or during rutting season.

### *Deer*

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	50-55	3D6 ×5
CON	65	(2D6+6) ×5
SIZ	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
DEX	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
POW	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 13

**Hit Points:** 13

**Av. Damage Bonus:** 0-+1D4

**Av. Build:** 0-1

### *Combat*

**Attacks per round:** 1 (gore, kick)

Fighting 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+DB  
(stags only, except reindeer)

Dodge 50% (25/10)

**Armor:** 1-point hide.

### *Dog*

Dogs are prized for loyalty and affection, as well as used for security. Whether domesticated or wild, dogs are pack-oriented creatures. In the wild, they often form packs of 1D8+3 or more. These statistics represent a standard dog of no specific breed suitable for guard duty (increase STR,

CON, and SIZ for larger variations). Very large dogs should use the statistics for wolves (page 187).

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	35	2D6 ×5
CON	50-55	3D6 ×5
SIZ	20-25	(1D6+1) ×5
DEX	65	(2D6+6) ×5
POW	35	2D6 ×5

**Move:** 12 (6 swimming)

**Hit Points:** 7-8

**Av. Damage Bonus:** -2

**Av. Build:** -2

### *Combat*

**Attacks per round:** 1 (bite)

Fighting 40% (20/8), 1D6-DB

Dodge 30% (15/6)

**Armor:** none.

### *Hawk*

Hawks are predatory birds, sometimes trained by humans as hunting animals. The statistics below are for a large hawk but can also be used for an owl, vulture or other raptor, such as a falcon.

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	10	1D3 ×5
CON	25	2D4 ×5
SIZ	5-10	1D2 ×5
DEX	140-145	(3D6+18) ×5
POW	35	2D6 ×5

**Move:** 1 (12 flying)

**Hit Points:** 3

**Av. Damage Bonus:** -2

**Av. Build:** -2

### *Combat*

**Attacks per round:** 2 (claws, bite)

Fighting 60% (30/12), 1D4-DB

Dodge 70% (35/14)

**Armor:** none.

### *Horse*

One of the most common domesticated animals in Europe, horses are used for transportation, combat, and labor. Warhorses are exceedingly rare during the Dark Ages. Most of the quality breeding stock from the Roman Empire was diluted through uncontrolled breeding. Spanish horse



breeding centers, such as Andalusia, are the most likely places to acquire warhorses, other than taking one from a downed foe.

Horses tend to panic at supernatural presences and those not trained for combat will flee when encountering the blood, fire, gunfire, and screams of warfare. Warhorses are trained for violent situations and hold ground if the rider succeeds with a Ride roll.

## Riding Horse

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	140-145	(3D6+18) x5
CON	65	(2D6+6) x5
SIZ	130	(4D6+12) x5
DEX	50-55	3D6 x5
POW	50-55	3D6 x5

Move: 12

Hit Points: 19

Av. Damage Bonus: +2D6

Av. Build: 3

## Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (kick, bite)

Fighting 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+DB

Dodge 25% (12/5)

Armor: 1-point muscle and hide + armor.

## War Horse

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	150-155	(3D6+20) x5
CON	75	(2D6+8) x5
SIZ	140	(4D6+14) x5
DEX	50-55	3D6x5
POW	50-55	3D6x5

Move: 12

Hit Points: 21

Av. Damage Bonus: +3D6

Av. Build: 4

## Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (kick, bite, trample)

Fighting 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+DB

Trample 35% (17/7), damage 2D6+DB  
(war horses only)

Dodge 25% (12/5)

Armor: 1-point muscle and hide + armor.

## Wisent

The European wood bison, the wisent, is a large, shaggy herd animal, known to Anglo-Saxons as "weosend," and the Germans as "wisunt." During the Dark Ages it ranges from the south of England to the Ligurian Appenines, and from the Pyrenees to the Caucasus, although they are very rare in France, having been hunted to near extinction. Wisent are even found in the southern reaches of Sweden and Norway.

Herds of females, calves, and young males tend to reach 15-20 members, whereas older males will travel solitary or sometimes with another male. The herds are not territorial and will frequently come together to form larger herds for short periods of time.

Their fur and horns are prized trophies and the hunt can form the basis for a thrilling adventure. While running away is their usual course of action, however, if forced into a fight, the males use their horns to try to gore the attacker and any wisent can easily run over a man-sized target.

## Wisent

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
STR	140-145	(3D6+18) x5
CON	80-85	(3D6+6) x5
SIZ	130	(4D6+12) x5
DEX	50-55	3D6 x5
POW	50-55	3D6 x5

Move: 12

Hit Points: 21

Av. Damage Bonus: +2D6

Av. Build: 3

## Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (gore, trample)

Fighting 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+DB

Trample 30% (15/6), damage 2D6+DB

Armor: 1-point muscle and hide.



## BESTIARY

### Wolf

Wolves are somewhat shy, rarely bothering humans, though they've long been viewed as evil creatures with sinister motives and characteristics assigned to them. Wolves hunt in packs ranging from a dozen to 40 or more—ganging-up on opponents, attempting to bring their prey down so that the rest of the pack can charge in.

The Keeper may also use these statistics to represent a large war dog.

### Wolf

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
<b>STR</b>	65	(2D6+6) ×5
<b>CON</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5
<b>SIZ</b>	40	(2D6+1) ×5
<b>DEX</b>	65	(2D6+6) ×5
<b>POW</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 9

**Av. Damage Bonus:** 0

**Av. Build:** 0

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (bite)

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D8+DB
Knockdown (mnvr.)	the combined attack of three or more wolves equates to build 1 (increase if more gang-up); if successful the target knocked prone.
Dodge	30% (15/6)

**Armor:** 2-point fur.

### Wild Boar

Wild boar are popular sport for hunts. A compact animal with a large head and short legs. Color ranges from dark gray to black. Males have protruding lower tusks and sharp upper tusks that bend upward. Females have sharp canines as well, but they don't protrude to become tusks. Boars are typically crepuscular.

Both male and female wild boar will attack if surprised, threatened, or protecting offspring. The male lowers his head and charges, slashing upwards. The female charges, her head up, and bites. Dismemberment is a very real risk from a boar attack.

### Wild Boar

<i>char.</i>	<i>averages</i>	<i>rolls</i>
<b>STR</b>	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
<b>CON</b>	80-85	(3D6+6) ×5
<b>SIZ</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5
<b>DEX</b>	65-70	(3D6+3) ×5
<b>POW</b>	50-55	3D6 ×5

**Move:** 11

**Hit Points:** 13-14

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Av. Build:** 1

### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (gore, bite)

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D6+DB
Dodge	35% (17/7)

**Armor:** 3-point muscle and hide.















## TOTBURH

**T**otburh is a fictional Anglo-Saxon burh (fortified settlement), analogous to the historical burhs found on the Burghal Hidage, a contemporary listing of all the burhs in England.

A fictional, rather than historical settlement is used for two reasons: firstly, not all historical burhs are the same, so using a fictional one allows elements from several historical burhs to be combined into one; secondly, it keeps with the established Lovecraftian tradition of creating unique locales for stories.

This guide lists the important locations in and around the burh, as well as the important residents. Every entry uses the same basic format. When the Mythos tag appears in an entry it's a suggestion to the Keeper on how this place or person might be tied to the Mythos. The Keeper should think of each tag as a scenario seed. Not every entry has a Mythos tag and not every Mythos tag should be used in a single game—to do so would overcrowd the world. Instead, Keepers are invited to pick and choose which elements to include, allowing for the creation of a thematically consistent setting and the luxury of reusing the same location and people in a different game without the risk of duplicating the Mythos elements.

There are also numerous blank spots on the map for a Keeper to fill in as necessary to build his or her world. Keepers will also notice that there are no dates attached to current events in Totburh. This burh will serve for anytime between 950 and 1066 to allow for easy slotting into any game.

## HISTORY

Totburh was founded as Tothyll in 801 CE, not far from an Iron Age hill fort destroyed by the Romans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Tothyll became Totburh in 850 when King Alfred had the

settlement fortified and redeveloped on an orthogonal grid. Without the walls and military presence afforded by its status as a burh, Totburh would have been burned to the ground when Vikings sailed up the Severn in 934 and laid siege to the settlement. They were able to penetrate the walls, but a relief force from Worcester was able to repulse the invaders.

A burh is a fortified settlement that serves as home to a thegn and houses a mint, where the kingdom's coins are minted. When Alfred planned the network of burhs, he placed them so that no Anglo-Saxon settlement was more than a day's march (20 miles) from a burh in the event of a Viking incursion. The centralized location of burhs led to their development as centers of commerce. Harvests are transported to burhs for sorting, storage, and taxation.

## THE SETTLEMENT OF TOTBURH

### 1. Earthen Ramparts

A series of three earthen ramparts protect the northern and eastern sides of the settlement. The west faces the river and to the south is a naturally steep incline. A wooden substructure keeps the 12-foot high ramparts from collapsing or shifting. A 15-foot high wooden palisade surmounts the innermost rampart.

### 2. New Stone Wall

The river facing side of the settlement has recently been rebuilt with a stone wall. The walls are 10-feet high with wooden merlons for additional protection.

The thegn's hearthweru (warband) patrol along the walls. The leader of the hearthweru is a settled Dane named Svein. Like the hearthweru under him, Svein is a professional



warrior. A recently converted Christian, Svein wears what he calls the finger bone of St. Martin around his neck on a thong. When not engaged in combat he can be found hunting, boasting, or carousing. A barrel-chested man with long blond hair and braided beard, Svein looks like a stereotypical Norseman.

Svein's daughter, Æsa, has followed in her father's footsteps, earning a place in the thegn's hearthweru. A skilled spear and shield fighter, she's respected by her fellow warriors despite her young age.

**Mythos:** Prior to settling in Totburh, Svein raided up and down the coast. In a raid on an Irish monastery, Svein killed the abbot and stole the finger bone of St. Martin, the monastery's relic. Unbeknownst to Svein, the relic is actually false, lacking *virtus* but possessing *daemones*. When Svein wears the relic bare-chested, an Old One takes possession of his body, driving him mad with rage; the rage lasts for 1D6 hours, after which he collapses. During his rage, he is under the effects of a Fury spell (page 163).



## Svein, age 35, leader of the hearthweru

**STR** 85    **CON** 85    **SIZ** 80    **DEX** 60    **INT** 60  
**APP** 75    **POW** 50    **EDU** 60    **SAN** 50    **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D6    **Build:** 2    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 10

### Combat

Brawl      60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D6  
Axe          65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D6 (+1D3 if thrown)  
Spear        45% (22/8), damage 1D6+1D6 (+1D3 if thrown)  
Dodge        40% (20/8)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Orate) 30%, Climb 20%, Insight 45%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 40%, Navigate 25%, Natural World 45%, Other Language (Old English) 40%, Own Language (Norse) 75%, Persuade 60%, Religion 55%, Ride Horse 25%, Status 55%, Track 30%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm (1D8).

## Æsa, age 16, shield-maiden

**STR** 65    **CON** 75    **SIZ** 60    **DEX** 70    **INT** 70  
**APP** 65    **POW** 80    **EDU** 40    **SAN** 80    **HP** 13  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4    **Build:** 1    **Move:** 9    **MP:** 16

### Combat

Brawl      60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4  
Axe          45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4  
                (+1D2 if thrown)  
Spear        65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4  
                (+1D2 if thrown)  
Shield       65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4  
Dodge        60% (30/12)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Orate) 40%, Climb 40%, Insight 45%, Intimidate 40%, Jump 40%, Navigate 35%, Natural World 45%, Other Language (Old English) 40%, Own Language (Norse) 55%, Persuade 60%, Religion 55%, Ride Horse 45%, Status 55%, Track 30%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm (1D8) + wooden shield (1D3).

## Hearthweru, typical soldier

**STR** 80    **CON** 85    **SIZ** 80    **DEX** 60    **INT** 60  
**APP** 60    **POW** 65    **EDU** 60    **SAN** 65    **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4    **Build:** 1    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 13

### Combat

Brawl      60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear        55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D4  
                (+1D2 if thrown)



## TOTBURH

Sword	45% (22/9), damage 1D8+1D4
Bow	40% (20/8), damage 1D8+1D2
Dodge	40% (20/8)

### *Skills*

Climb 40%, Insight 40%, Intimidate 50%, Jump 40%, Navigate 25%, Persuade 40%, Ride 45%, Status 50%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm (1D8).

### *3. Palisades*

The remaining three walls are wooden palisades constructed on top of a rampart.

### *4. Main Gate*

A gate tower made of stone has been constructed in the southern wall.

### *5. Smaller Gates*

Each wall has a stone tower equidistant from the corners.

### *6. Defensive Towers*

Newly rebuilt in stone, these towers are three stories tall. The ground floor opens to the settlement, the second floor opens to the gangway on the palisades and stone wall, and the third floor is the roof.

### *7. Internal Road*

A road runs the perimeter of the burh, just inside the rampart. It provides for the quick movement of troops and merchants.

### *8. Thegn's Compound and Residence*

This large wooden hall is the home of the settlement's thegn and his hearthweru. It's situated on a small rise and separated from the rest of the settlement by a gated palisade.

Within the compound is the thegn's two-story manor; a weaving shed; a bower where the thegn's daughter, Herewynn, sleeps along with the female slaves; a manorial church (#12); a kitchen; a well; and a latrine.

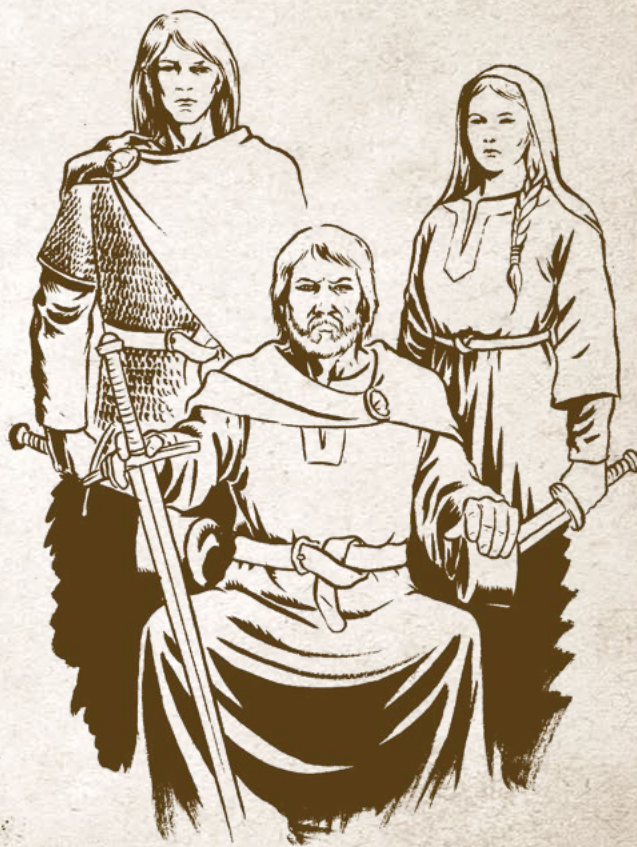
The thegn, Oswyn, and his sons sleep on the upper floor of the manor house. His hearthweru and male slaves sleep on the lower floor. Oswyn has served the king for 20 years as a loyal soldier. He is a level-headed man who values advice from his hearthweru and anyone else who can prove their worth. Oswyn delights in leading his hearthweru on hunts into the nearby forest. His wife, Athilda, died last year after falling from a horse. His eldest son, Wlencing, serves in the hearthweru, while another son, Alfred, is a farmer in the settlement.

Oswyn was a wealthy ceorl who amassed enough wealth to build a walled encampment with a kitchen and a bell, which qualified him to become a thegn. Now he works with the reeves of Totburh to ensure taxes are collected and the king's will is carried out.

Oswyn has 30 hearthweru in his service.

**Mythos:** Oswyn's hunts are not simply jaunts into the woods. His wife was killed by the cu sith and Oswyn is trying to locate the tribe to exact vengeance.

**Mythos:** Athilda isn't as dead as most people believe. Distraught over his loss, Oswyn had Eadda (see #10) attempt to resurrect her; Athilda rose from the dead, but came back different—she is a vampire, under the control of Eadda/Lilith. She fled over the wall and now lives in the Roman ruins northeast of Totburh (see #29).



*Oswyn, Herewynn, and Wlencing*



## CHAPTER 8

### Oswyn, age 34, thegn of Totburh

STR 80 CON 80 SIZ 70 DEX 70 INT 80  
APP 65 POW 75 EDU 70 SAN 75 HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 15

#### Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4  
Sword 45% (22/9), damage 1D8+1D4  
Spear 75%, (37/15), damage 1D6+1D4  
(+1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 35%, Art/Craft (Orate) 50%, Insight 70%, Listen 45%, Natural World 50%, Own Kingdom 60%, Persuade 55%, Read and Write (Old English) 35%, Religion 65%, Ride 45%, Status 56%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm (1D8).

### Herewynn, age 18, the thegn's daughter

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 60 DEX 75 INT 85  
APP 60 POW 75 EDU 60 SAN 75 HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 15

#### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3  
or knife 1D4  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Orate) 50%, Art/Craft (Serve Drinks) 45%, Art/Craft (Weaving) 55%, First Aid 45%, Insight 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 60%, Own Kingdom 40%, Persuade 45%, Religion 55%, Status 40%.

**Armor:** None.

### Wlencing, age 23, the thegn's son

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 75 INT 55  
APP 50 POW 60 EDU 60 SAN 60 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 12

#### Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4  
Sword 55% (27/11), damage 1D8+1D4  
Spear 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 50% (25/10)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 65%, Art/Craft (Woodworking) 35%, Climb 45%, Jump 45%, Listen 45%, Natural World 40%, Own Kingdom 30%, Ride 45%, Status 50%, Swim 50%, Throw 60%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm (1D8).

### 9. The Mint

Coins are minted in this squat stone structure. The coin is stamped with the head of the sovereign and a mint mark, and inscribed "Athelstan on Totburh" on the reverse, indicating who the minter is and in which burh the coin was minted. Athelstan isn't a permanent resident of the burh; he travels between three burhs, operating the mints under a license from the king.

Every six years, Athelstan oversees the collection of all the community's coins, replacing them with newly minted coins, collecting the half fee for exchanging the coins.

### Athelstan, age 38, minter

STR 50 CON 65 SIZ 75 DEX 80 INT 85  
APP 40 POW 80 EDU 70 SAN 80 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 16

#### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 35% (17/7), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 40% (20/16)

#### Skills

Accounting 60%, Art/Craft (Stamping) 65%, Insight 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 40%, Own Kingdom 60%, Persuade 45%, Read and Write (Old English), Religion 65%, Status 70%.

### 10. Parish Church

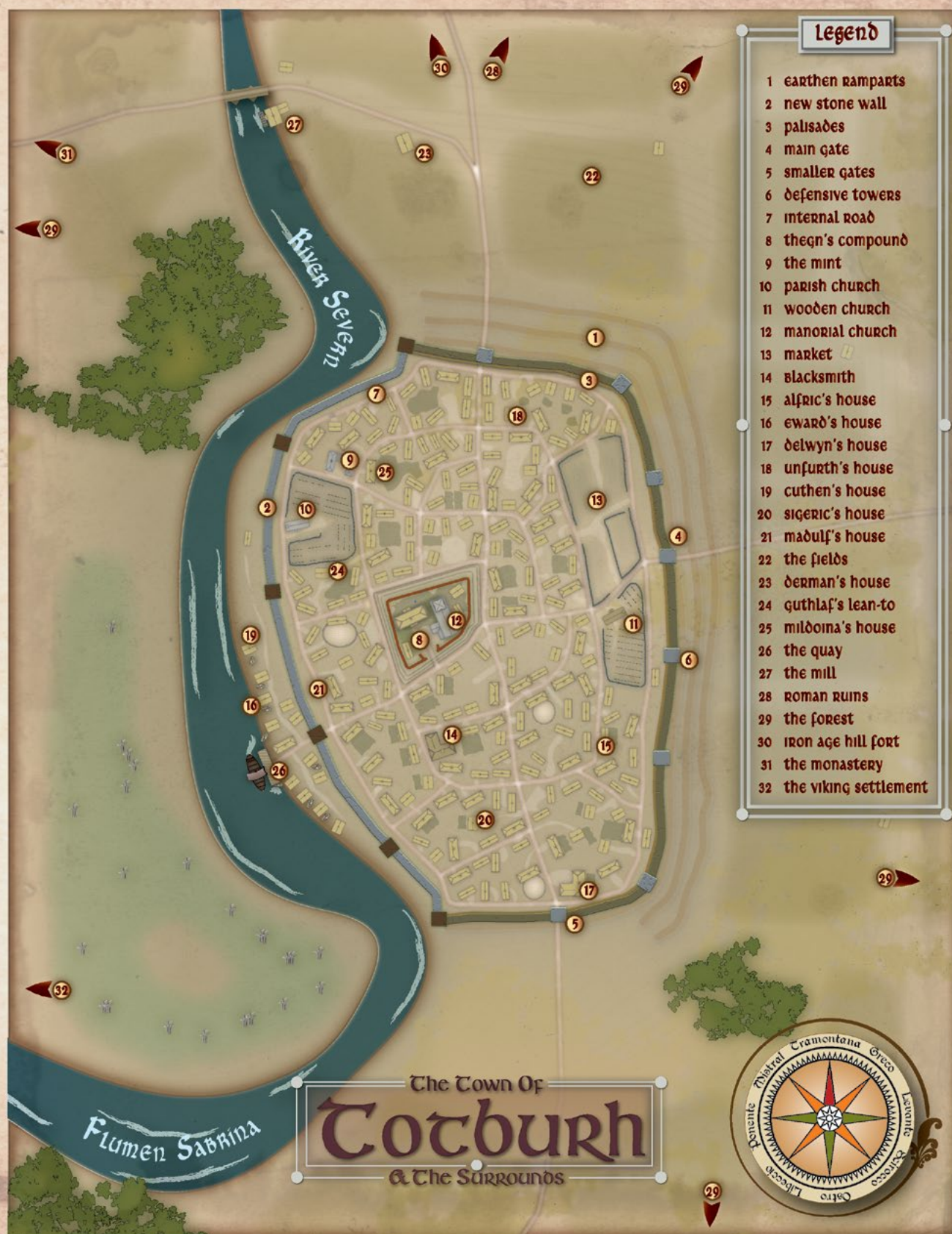
A small stone church that serves the western side of the burh. The parish priest, Eadda is a young, evangelizing priest eager to combat the evil he sees everywhere. He wishes he were born a couple of centuries earlier as there were so many more Pagans that needed conversion.

**Mythos:** Eadda knows of the Mythos because he is part of the Mythos. On a pilgrimage to Rome he was assaulted by Lilith. The spiritual attack scarred him, driving him deeper into his faith. What he doesn't realize is that Lilith regularly takes possession of his body to cause damage in the burh.

**Mythos:** A scucca haunts the graveyard around Eadda's church. It comes out at night seeking solitary prey.



# TOTBURH





## Eadda, age 21, parish priest

STR 65 CON 60 SIZ 50 DEX 75 INT 75  
APP 80 POW 80 EDU 70 SAN 73 HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 16

### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3,  
or knife 1D4  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Orate) 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Fast Talk 55%,  
First Aid 25%, Insight 40%, Language (Latin) 35%, Listen  
30%, Natural World 42%, Persuade 50%, Read and Write  
(Latin) 25%, Read and Write (Old English) 35%, Religion  
65%, Status 60%.

(Spells\*: Gray Binding).

Armor: None.

\*If the Mythos tag is used.

## 11. Wooden Church

A small wooden church that serves the eastern side of the burh. Halfdene has been the parish priest for Totburh for the last 30 years. He is a compassionate priest, known to overlook the occasional Pagan reference as long as the person confesses later. His wife, Wifrun, is rail-thin, having never fully recovered from the pox that struck Totburh 15 years ago.



Wifrun

A small, shuttered window in the sanctuary, the hagnoscope, opens to Hygerd's cell. Hygerd, an anchorite (a form of religious hermit), spends his days walled in the cell praying and offering guidance to villagers who visit him through a second window that connects to the outside. He's unable to leave the cell and would choose to die there in the event of a Viking attack. Hygerd has been in his cell for 25 years, ever since he finished his study at St. Swithun's. Most villagers come to visit Hygerd when they have a problem and need spiritual guidance. While the parish priests offer guidance and support, Hygerd, a man on his way to sainthood, is closest to God in their eyes.

**Mythos:** Wifrun is a wise woman, able to relate Mythos tales to those who need to hear them. She is frequently struck by Mythos tinged dreams.

**Mythos:** Halfdene is much older than he appears. A sorcerer who has prolonged his life indefinitely through sacrifice, he was at the battle mentioned in the *Praesidia Finium* where he killed the nightgaunt mentioned in the text (page 152). He hides the scroll and the nightgaunt's hide in a secret room behind the altar. He manages to prolong his life through draining the POW from those around him. He needs to drain 12 POW a year to prolong his life. He normally pilgrimages to Rome to drain other pilgrims along the route.

**Mythos:** Hygerd didn't lock himself away from the world to live an ascetic life. He was locked away because he knows too much. Driven insane by visions of God as a roiling, pulsating, fecund chaos, he began subverting the monks at St. Swithun's (see #32). Grimcytel had Hygerd locked away. Halfdene only opens the window when Hygerd is lucid.

## Halfdene, age 55, parish priest

STR 75 CON 80 SIZ 75 DEX 65 INT 60  
APP 50 POW 92 EDU 70 SAN 80 (0)\*HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6 MP: 18

### Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Axe 50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Orate) 30%, Art/Craft (Candle Dipping) 55%,  
First Aid 30%, Insight 75%, Intimidate 70%, Listen 55%,  
Natural World 60%, Occult 35%, Other Language (Latin)  
20%, Own Kingdom 40%, Persuade 45%, Potions 45%, Read  
and Write (Latin) 10%, Religion 55%, Status 50%.



(Spells\*: Compel Flesh, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Enchant Knife, Power Drain, Wrack, others as the Keeper desires).

**Armor:** None.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*

## Wifrun, age 54, wise woman

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 50 DEX 50 INT 75  
APP 60 POW 85 EDU 70 SAN 80 HP 10  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 6 MP: 16

### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3, or knife 1D4  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

### Skills

Animal Handling 45%, Art/Craft (Orate) 60%, Art/Craft (Potions) 60%, Art/Craft (Weaving) 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, First Aid 70%, Insight 65%, Listen 30%, Medicine 40%, Natural World 70%, Persuade 45%, Religion 25%, Status 55%.

**Armor:** None.

## Hygerd, age 48, somewhat insane anchorite

STR 50 CON 40 SIZ 50 DEX 50 INT 95  
APP 45 POW 105 EDU 95 SAN 33 HP 9  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 21

### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3,  
or knife 1D4  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Orate) 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Insight 55%, Language (Latin) 55%, Listen 46%, Natural World 75%, Occult 45%, Own Kingdom 60%, Persuade 45%, Religion 65%, Science (Astronomy) 55%, Status 40%.

**Armor:** None.

## 12. Manorial Church

A medium sized stone church with a bell that serves the thegn and his retinue. Earnwulf, a rotund man in his late 30s, serves as the manorial priest. His wife, Heagyth, and two sons, Godred and Grimwold, live with him. Wulfrun, a slave, also lives here, tending to the garden that feeds the family. Wulfrun slew Earnwulf's oldest son and was unable to pay the weregild, so he entered slavery.

This church, adjacent to the thegn's hall, is the largest stone structure in the burh and one of the newest, built five years ago.

Earnwulf has recently acquired a relic, the right hand of St. Swithun, which is proudly displayed in a reliquary in the nave.

**Mythos:** The church's bell, if rung 13 times during the dark of the moon, will summon Tawil at 'Umr from the depths. Cynred, the blacksmith, cast the bell for the church and knows of its special properties, creating it at the request of Grimcytel (see #32).

## Earnwulf, age 34, manorial priest

STR 70 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 55 INT 65  
APP 80 POW 65 EDU 65 SAN 65 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 13

### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4 (1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

### Skills

Accounting 35%, Art/Craft (Orate) 20%, Insight 55%, Intimidate 45%, Listen 35%, Natural World 30%, Other Language (Latin) 40%, Own Kingdom 60%, Persuade 55%, Read and Write (Latin) 35%, Read and Write (Old English) 25%, Religion 75%, Science (Arithmetic) 45%, Status 65%.

**Armor:** None.



Hygerd



## Heagyth, age 28, wife of Earnwulf

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 50 DEX 75 INT 75  
APP 80 POW 65 EDU 65 SAN 65 HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 13

### Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Weaving) 65%, Insight 45%, Natural World 60%, Own Kingdom 40%, Persuade 45%, Read and Write (Old English) 45%, Religion 45%, Ride 45%, Status 30%.

Armor: None.

## Godred and Grimwold, ages 10 and 12, rambunctious boys

STR 45 CON 55 SIZ 35 DEX 75 INT 60  
APP 60 POW 70 EDU 40 SAN 70 HP 9  
Damage Bonus: -1 Build: -1 Move: 9 MP: 14

### Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3-1  
Dull Spear 35% (17/7), damage 1D2-1  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

### Skills

Climb 45%, Fast Talk 40%, Jump 45% Natural World 25%, Stealth 45%.

Armor: None.

## Wulfrun, age 25, slave

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 55 DEX 50 INT 60  
APP 75 POW 45 EDU 60 SAN 45 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 9

### Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear 55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

### Skills

Animal Handling 65%, Art/Craft (Masonry) 35%, Insight 25%, Listen 35%, Natural World 36%, Other Language (Latin) 40%, Own Kingdom 40% Persuade 25%, Read and Write (Latin) 5%, Religion 65%, Status 10%.

Armor: None.

## 13. Market

Beyond the main gate is an open area where traders and ceorls come to sell and trade their produce and goods. Traders sell from the back of their wagons or from their baskets. Slaves are frequently sold here. The market reeve, Wihtgar, supervises all trades and ensures that the king's tax is paid for every transaction.

**Mythos:** A nearby Briton tribe, the Varenii, occasionally bring their produce to sell. If the produce is eaten, the consumer must roll a Hard CON check: if successful, nothing happens; if failed, he or she loses 10 CON points. This check is made each time the tainted produce is eaten. When CON is reduced to zero, the unfortunate turns into a child of the Green God (page 172).

**Mythos:** Deep One hybrids from the estuary travel up the Severn every three months to purchase slaves at the markets. They pay well, using gold they claim comes from Constantinople, so vendors look the other way when a hood slips, revealing bulbous eyes, or a sleeve rises up the arm, uncovering mottled grey-green skin.



Wihtgar



## Wihtgar, age 34, market reeve

STR 65 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 65 INT 85  
APP 60 POW 70 EDU 55 SAN 70 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 14

### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear 65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

### Skills

Accounting 55%, Appraise 60%, Insight 65%, Intimidate 60%, Listen 45%, Other Language (Latin) 30%, Own Kingdom 75%, Persuade 40%, Read and Write (Old English) 45%, Religion 35%, Ride 45%, Spot Hidden 55%, Status 50%.

Armor: None.

## 14. Blacksmith

Cynred, the settlement's blacksmith, lives and works in this wooden structure. He has forged tools, armor, and weapons for the settlement for the last ten years. He is a surly, thick bearded man covered in the grime and scars of working the forge. Cynred chose to serve the thegn as a slave rather than suffer paying taxes. His wife Aylild, age 23, and son Wynstan, age 8, are also slaves by extension.

**Mythos:** Cynred and his family worship Grimcytel (see #32), abbot of St. Swithun's monastery and an embodiment of Tawil at Umr.

## Cynred, age 29, blacksmith

STR 75 CON 70 SIZ 75 DEX 55 INT 55  
APP 60 POW 45 EDU 45 SAN 45 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 9

### Combat

Brawl 75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4  
Hammer 75% (37/15), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 27% (13/5)

### Skills

Animal Handling 30%, Art/Craft (Blacksmith) 75%, Art/Craft (Metalwork) 65%, Natural World 50%, Persuade 45%, Repair/Devise 45%, Spot Hidden 45%, Throw 55%.

Armor: None.

## 15. Alfric's House

Alfric's house is a single room wooden structure with a thatched roof. A common ceorl, he and his wife Bregeswith, both in their 20s, live here. Bregeswith is expecting her first

child. They work the fields outside the palisade and their own private plot behind the house.

**Mythos:** Bregeswith is anxious to have a child; in her desperation, she reached out to Derman (see #23) who told her to go the beacon on the hill, ten nights in a row. Each night she had to sacrifice a chicken. On the tenth night, a saint came to her and lay with her. Now, she is pregnant, but doesn't realize it's with a fosterling of the Old Ones.

## Alfric, age 21, ceorl

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 60 DEX 45 INT 55  
APP 60 POW 60 EDU 65 SAN 60 HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 12

### Combat

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3, or knife 1D4  
Spear 45% (22/9), damage 1D6  
Dodge 22% (11/4)

### Skills

Animal Handling 40%, Art/Craft (Farming) 75%, Fast Talk 45%, Listen 46%, Natural World 60%, Own Kingdom 40%, Religion 55%, Status 20%, Track 35%.

Armor: None.

## Bregeswith, age 21, ceorl

STR 50 CON 70 SIZ 50 DEX 55 INT 70  
APP 65 POW 75 EDU 65 SAN 71 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 15

### Combat

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3, or knife 1D4  
Dodge 27% (13/5)

### Skills

Accounting 35%, Art/Craft (Potions) 35%, Art/Craft (Weaving) 65%, Insight 55%, Listen 30%, Natural World 60%, Occult 15%, Persuade 65%, Religion 55%, Status 30%.

Armor: None.

## 16. Eward's House

Eward is one of several fishermen who make a living working the Severn and its estuary. He, his wife Roswitha, their three daughters, Saewynn, Theberga, and Mindred, as well as his house all reek of fish. Eward is glad to trade the bounty of his catch with anyone in the village who needs it, although most of this ends



## CHAPTER 8

up on the thegn's table or salted for later. Roswitha believes that Eward should use his skills as a fisherman to earn the favor of Oswyn (see #8) and elevate the family's position in the settlement. The slaves Ilhelm and Ormar tend the garden, maintain the house, and serve as the crew on Eward's small fishing vessel.

**Mythos:** On several occasions, Eward has taken his boat down the Severn and out into the estuary looking for larger catches. On one trip he spotted what he thought was a whale and set about trying to net it. His net became caught on the creature and the boat was pulled out of the estuary and to sea. Cursing his luck, he began cutting his net loose when first one and then a second tentacle grew from the whale and reached into his small boat. A sea spawn slowly pulled its way onto the boat, eating two of his crew. Eward managed to push the monster out of the boat and, like a man possessed, paddled his boat back to Totburh. Eward knows there is evil in the world, much more hideous than what the priests rail against, and he will be ready when it comes to Totburh.

**Mythos:** Roswitha is a deep one hybrid. She came to Eward one night while he was fishing. She lives with him, slowly corrupting him and his household.

### Eward, age 29, fisherman

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 70 INT 50  
APP 45 POW 55 EDU 60 SAN 48 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 11

#### Combat

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 35% (17/7), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Fishing) 60%, Art/Craft (Woodworking) 45%, Charm 45%, Natural World 65%, Navigate 55%, Occult 15%, Pilot (Boat) 50%, Repair/Devise 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 35%, Swim 35%.

**Armor:** None.

### Roswitha, age 22, fisherman's wife

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 60 INT 75  
APP 75 POW 50 EDU 65 SAN 44 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 10

#### Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Weaving) 35%, Art/Craft (Woodworking) 55%, Insight 45%, Listen 30%, Persuade 65%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 55%.

**Armor:** None.

### Ilhelm, age 19, slave

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 60 DEX 75 INT 70  
APP 60 POW 75 EDU 60 SAN 75 HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 15

#### Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3  
Spear 55% (27/11), damage 1D6  
Dodge 37% (18/7)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Farming) 55%, Art/Craft (Fishing) 20%, Insight 30%, Navigate 45%, Pilot (Boat) 15%, Spot Hidden 35%, Status 10%, Stealth 35%, Swim 40%.

**Armor:** None.

### Ormar, age 36, slave

STR 80 CON 50 SIZ 70 DEX 45 INT 55  
APP 70 POW 50 EDU 70 SAN 50 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 10

#### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Dodge 22% (11/4)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Potter) 70%, Art/Craft (Fishing) 30%, Charm 45%, Insight 55%, Listen 35%, Natural World 32%, Pilot (Boat) 35%, Religion 55%, Status 10%.

**Armor:** None.

### 17. Delwyn's House

Delwyn is the settlement's leech (healer). He's been in Oswyn's service of for the past ten years and is unfailingly loyal. A stooped, bald man, Delwyn mutters under his breath as he works. He views every person he heals as a personal success and feels the pain of family members when he's unable to help someone. His house is filled with all the accouterments of a leech and the aroma of dried herbs and freshly made unguents hang heavy in the air.



Two slaves, Aelfgiest and Lambin, live here as well. They assist Delwyn with his procedures, usually by holding down patients and collecting supplies as needed. Enslaved for debt, Aelfgiest wants to become a leech and aims to buy his freedom. Lambin, enslaved for assaulting a woman, has no desire to become a leech; instead, he focuses on keeping the household fed.

**Mythos:** Delwyn is a serpent man in disguise, studying humans to enable him to create effective toxins and weapons for the day when the great serpent race will rise and take back the planet. When he feeds he does so outside the settlement, claiming a need to gather more medicinal herbs. Both Aelfgiest and Lambin are under Delwyn's control through the use of domination serum.

**Delwyn, (age 38, leech); (Tsastha, age 4501, serpent man)\***

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 55 DEX 70 INT 85  
APP 55 POW 80 EDU 70 SAN 76 (00)\* HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 16

**Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1 (either as human or in serpent form\*)

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3, or  
knife 1D4  
Bite\* 60% (30/12), 1D8 + poison (Extreme  
CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage)  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

**Skills**

Art/Craft (Potions) 60%, Art/Craft (Potter) 25%, First Aid 75%, Insight 55%, Listen 35%, Medicine 50%, Natural World 60%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 45%, Religion 55%, Science\* (Biology) 50%, Science\* (Chemistry) 40%, Status 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** None (1-point scales\*).

**Spells\*:** Cause/Cure Blindness, Call Tsathoggua, Cloud Memory, Compel, Fear.

**Sanity Loss\*:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see Delwyn in serpent form.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*

**Aelfgiest, age 21, slave**

STR 70 CON 70 SIZ 70 DEX 50 INT 55  
APP 80 POW 65 EDU 60 SAN 65 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 13

**Combat**

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

**Skills**

Art/Craft (Potions) 30%, Drive Horses 45%, First Aid 35%, Insight 30%, Medicine 30%, Natural World 45%, Status 10%, Track 35%.

**Armor:** None.

**Lambin, age 23, slave**

STR 70 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 80 INT 65  
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 75 SAN 60 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 12

**Combat**

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
Bow 55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D2  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

**Skills**

Animal Handling 35%, Art/Craft (Farming) 45%, First Aid 30%, Medicine 15%, Natural World 55%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 45%, Repair/Devise 55%, Spot Hidden 55%, Status 10%, Stealth 50%, Track 50%.

**Armor:** None.

**18. Unfurth's House**

At 58, Unfurth is the oldest man in the settlement. A skilled bowyer, he lived in the same house when the settlement was

Delwyn





## CHAPTER 8

called Tothyll. His wife died many years ago and his two children were captured by Vikings and later sold into slavery in Constantinople. Covered in scars from years of fighting against the Vikings, Unfurth hates Svein (see #2) with a passion by virtue of the man being a Norseman; however, Unfurth is too weak to act upon his hatred.

**Mythos:** Unfurth lived in the forest surrounding Tothyll for decades and is a member of Beag Ma Aisus (see #30 and page 145). The members meet at the nemeton (a sacred space in Celtic religion) deep within the old forest where they sacrifice captured travelers to Esus.

### Unfurth, age 58, cantankerous coot

STR 45 CON 50 SIZ 70 DEX 50 INT 70  
APP 35 POW 65 EDU 70 SAN 65 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 5 MP: 13

#### Combat

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3  
Bow 80% (40/16), damage 1D6  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 40%, Art/Craft (Bowyer) 65%, Art/Craft (Orate 55%), Fast Talk 55%, Insight 75%, Navigate 45%, Natural World 75%, Persuade 45%, Religion 65%, Repair/Devise 35%, Status 50%.

**Armor:** None.

### 19. Cuthen's House

Cuthen, like Eward (see #16), is a fisherman. Fiercely competitive, he has secretly sabotaged Eward's boat on several occasions, hoping to gain an advantage and bring in larger hauls. Cuthen's boat, however, is smaller and with only one slave, Niall—an Irish man bought in the local market—he can't keep up with Eward's skill. It's only a matter of time before Cuthen does something rash (like openly attacking Eward or his slaves).

**Mythos:** Niall, eager to be free of his slavery, made a deal with a worm of the earth (page 177). If Niall weakens the settlement enough for the worms of the earth to invade, they have promised to spare him. Niall has been practicing his skills at making illness-inducing potions at every opportunity.

### Cuthen, age 26, fisherman

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 70 DEX 70 INT 45  
APP 40 POW 45 EDU 50 SAN 45 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 9

#### Combat

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 35% (17/7), damage 1D6+1D4 (1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Woodworking) 20%, Climb 35%, Intimidate 45%, Natural World 30%, Pilot (Boat) 35%, Status 35%, Stealth 60%, Swim 40%.

**Armor:** None.

### Niall, age 17, Irish slave

STR 70 CON 55 SIZ 65 DEX 65 INT 75  
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 12

#### Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear 65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4 (1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 60% (30/12)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Potions) 45%, Drive Horses 35%, Other Language (Old English) 15%, Own Language (Gaelic) 70%, Pilot (Boat) 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 10%.

**Armor:** None.

### 20. Sigeric's House

Sigeric, a poor ceorl, lives here; his wife, Oslafa, died last winter during childbirth. Oslafa came from Weorgoran Caester (Worcester), a burh further up the Severn. When Oslafa died, Sigeric refused to return the morgengifu (page 16), stating that since the child lived for several hours after Oslafa died, he does not have to pass the morgengifu onto her family. Oslafa's family, led by her mother Aethelu, a wealthy ceorl, is demanding the return of the morgengifu or she'll take it by force. Oswyn (see #8) is urging Sigeric to pay as much of the morgengifu as he can. Hopefully that will appease Oslafa's family.

### Sigeric, age 27, poor ceorl

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 50 DEX 60 INT 70  
APP 65 POW 50 EDU 75 SAN 50 HP 11  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 10



**Combat**

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3,  
or knife 1D4  
Dodge 55% (27/11)

**Skills**

Animal Handling 30%, Fast Talk 55%, Jump 50%, Listen 60%, Natural World 30%, Own Kingdom 45%, Persuade 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 5%.

**Armor:** None.

**21. Madulf's House**

Madulf, another ceorl, is Totburh's resident potter. Prior to his purchase of a potter's wheel from a Frankish trader, residents either made their own hand-thrown pottery or paid dearly for it from traders. Madulf's business and skill has grown so much that he frequently takes surplus wares to nearby settlements to sell.

**Madulf, age 22, potter**

STR 60 CON 75 SIZ 70 DEX 70 INT 65  
APP 65 POW 50 EDU 70 SAN 50 HP 14  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 10

**Combat**

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

**Skills**

Accounting 55%, Art/Craft (Potter) 75%, Drive Horses 45%, Insight 55%, Listen 35%, Natural World 50%, Navigate 50%, Religion 55%, Persuade 55%, Status 40%.

**Armor:** None.

**22. The Fields**

In addition to the fields inside Totburh's walls there are several large fields that lay between the ditches and the forest. Farmhouses cluster around these fields, which are cut into strips allotted to each farm. Delwyn (see #17) uses a fallow field to grow medicinal herbs.

**23. Derman's House**

Derman and his wife Haunild, both ceorls, live here with their two grown sons, Turec and Wulfic, as well as six slaves. Derman, a quiet, taciturn man fond of riddles, works the larger fields with the other families of the settlement. Haunild, a portly, eager to please woman, watches over the slaves to ensure they do their work. Turec and Wulfic both help in the fields.

**Mythos:** Derman and Haunild are both followers of the Black Man avatar of Nyarlothotep. They're powerful witches who sell their skills to the highest bidder. Their specialties included withering crops and killing livestock. Both Turec and Wulfic are Haunild's sons through the Black Man and both possess innate magical abilities. Any references to spells, otherworldly abilities, and the Cthulhu Mythos skill in the stat blocks should only be used if this Mythos tag is used.

**Derman, age 39, farmer**

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 70 DEX 75 INT 65  
APP 65 POW 75 EDU 70 SAN 75(00)\* HP 13  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 15

**Combat**

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

**Skills**

Animal Handling 50%, Art/Craft (Farming) 55%, Art/Craft (Potions) 35%, (Cthulhu Mythos\* 10%), Drive Horses 35%, First Aid 30%, Listen 55%, Natural World 60%, Navigate 45%, Occult 45%, Stealth 45%, Status 30%, Track 50%.

**Armor:** None.

**Spells\*:** Blight Crop, Body Warping, Curse (many variations), Ill Luck.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*

**Haunild, age 41, farmer**

STR 60 CON 75 SIZ 80 DEX 50 INT 75  
APP 70 POW 85 EDU 75 SAN 85 (00)\* HP 15  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 17

**Combat**

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

**Skills**

Animal Handling 40%, Art/Craft (Farming) 45%, Art/Craft (Potions) 55%, (Cthulhu Mythos\* 20%), Insight 55%, Natural World 45%, Occult 60%, Status 45%, Stealth 50%.

**Armor:** None.

**Spells\*:** Augur, Contact Black Man (Nyarlathotep), Curse (many variations), Dowsing, Enchant Knife, Fury, Poison Blood, Winds of Desolation.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*



## CHAPTER 8

### Turec, age 22, farmer

STR 80 CON 75 SIZ 80 DEX 70 INT 65  
APP 65 POW 70 EDU 60 SAN 70 (00)\*HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 14

#### Combat

Brawl 80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D6+1D4  
Spear 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Bow 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1D2  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Farming) 50%, Climb 55%, (Cthulhu Mythos\* 15%), Insight 45%, Intimidate 50%, Listen 35%, Natural World 55%, Navigate 70%, Occult 35%, Repair/Devise 55%, Status 45%, Stealth 55%, Track 55%.

**Armor**\*: 2-point (natural) magical armor.

**Magical abilities\*** (act as spells): Become Spectral, Command Animal, Shrivelling.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*

### Wulfric, age 21, farmer

STR 50 CON 55 SIZ 45 DEX 55 INT 80  
APP 45 POW 80\* EDU 70 SAN 80\* HP 10  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 16\*

#### Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3, or knife 1D4  
Spear 25% (12/5), damage 1D6  
Bow 70% (35/14), damage 1D6  
Tentacle\* 65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 30%, Art/Craft (Brewing) 55%, Art/Craft (Farming) 60%, Art/Craft (Potions) 55%, Charm 50%, (Cthulhu Mythos\* 18%), Natural World 45%, Navigate 40%, Occult 40%, Read and Write (Old English) 25%, Repair/Devise 50%, Status 45%, Stealth 60%.

**Armor**: None.

**Magical abilities\*** (acts as spells): Demon Senses, Circle of Nausea; \*Wulfric can reshape his body at the cost of 3 MP. If he forms tentacles, he has a 65% (32/13) chance to hit and they deal 1D6+1 damage. He can form up to four tentacles (allowing him up to 4 attacks per round) and each one can strike independent targets).

(**Sanity Loss**\*: 1/1D6 Sanity points are lost to see Wulfric change form).

*\*If Mythos tag is used. POW is 100, SAN is 00 and MP is 20 if Mythos tag is used.*

### 24. Guthlaf's lean-to

Guthlaf, his wife Rowena, and their 16 year old daughter Oslafa are some of Oswyn's slaves. They herd cattle, swine, and sheep through the fields and forests around the settlement. Guthlaf willingly entered himself and his family into slavery as payment for a debt he owes Oswyn.

### Guthlaf, age 31, herder

STR 60 CON 75 SIZ 70 DEX 70 INT 65  
APP 65 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 12

#### Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D4  
(1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 75%, Intimidate 25%, Drive Horses 45%, Listen 35%, Natural World 85%, Navigate 50%, Religion 55%, Spot Hidden 65%, Status 10%, Stealth 60%, Throw 45%, Track 55%.

**Armor**: None.

### Rowena, age 30, herder

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 60 DEX 75 INT 70  
APP 75 POW 65 EDU 60 SAN 65 HP 13  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 13

#### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
Dodge 37% (18/7)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 85%, Drive Horses 35%, First Aid 45%, Insight 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 85%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 55%, Religion 55%, Status 10%.

**Armor**: None.







## CHAPTER 8

### Oslafa, age 16, herder

STR 60 CON 75 SIZ 60 DEX 80 INT 70  
APP 80 POW 70 EDU 55 SAN 70 HP 13  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 14

#### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills: Animal Handling 45%, Art/Craft (Potions) 15%,  
Climb 60%, Drive Horses 45%, First Aid 30%, Insight 30%,  
Natural World 45%, Status 10%, Stealth 65%, Track 35%.

Armor: None.

### 25. Mildoina's House

Mildoina is an unmarried woman, age 25. She is one of several of Totburh's apiarists, providing honey and wax to the settlement and further afield through trade. Her father was an apiarist before her and when he died she inherited his land. She is a pleasant enough woman, provided the person she's talking to isn't a man trying to tell her what to do.

Mildoina has been having a secret affair with Lanfranc (see #32), the cellarer at St. Swithun's monastery.



**Mythos:** Mildoina communes with Eostre, an old fertility god, to improve her hives' output. Unbeknownst to her, her rituals turn the honey, when fermented into mead, into the milk of Shub-Niggurath.

### Mildoina, age 25, apiarist

STR 55 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 85  
APP 65 POW 85 EDU 60 SAN 85 HP 13  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 17

#### Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3  
Dodge 25% (12/5)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Apiarist) 65%, Art/Craft (Candle Dipping) 55%, Art/Craft (Potions) 45%, First Aid 55%, Insight 25%,  
Medicine 20%, Persuade 50%, Religion 60%, Status 35%.

Armor: None.

### 26. The Quay

Fisherman, such as Eward (see #16), pull their boats ashore here, unload their catch, and sell the surplus to traders.

The River Severn is vital to the settlement. It provides food, water, and transportation. Oswyn had a bridge built over the Severn to help protect against Viking predations.

**Mythos:** Under the surface of the Severn, just south of Totburh, is the remnant of a Roman temple to the river god, Nodens. The Elder God appears to worshippers here, surrounded by nightgaunts. When they appear, Nodens and his host go on a wild hunt through the region, frightening people and animals, and often abducting children (who are never seen again).

### 27. The Mill and Grain Preparation Site

A water-driven mill, operated by Octa, the miller, is on the banks of the river. For a quarter penny, or equivalent trade, Octa grinds customers' grain so that they can take it home for baking. Near the mill are three buildings with sunken floors and ramps leading up to double doors, where grains are prepared after harvest.

### Octa, age 26, miller

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 65 DEX 75 INT 65  
APP 55 POW 70 EDU 60 SAN 70 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 14



## Combat

Brawl	65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4, or hammer 1D6+1D4
Dodge	37% (18/7)

## Skills

Accounting 35%, Art/Craft (Miller) 75%, Drive Horses 45%, Insight 55%, Natural World 50%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 50%, Religion 45%, Repair/Devise 55%, Status 35%.

**Armor:** Heavy leather apron 1D2-1.

## 28. The Roman Ruins

The Roman ruins, remnants of a villa, are five hours northeast of the settlement. Little remains other than a few stone walls, a small building, and floor mosaics. Most of the stone has been plundered by Totburh and other settlements for building material. Shepherds frequently visit the spot to shelter their flocks from bad weather. Rumors abound that the Roman family buried their silver and gold in catacombs beneath the villa before fleeing.

A vampire, Athilda, and a ghost, Gaius, haunt these ruins.

**Mythos:** The vampire Athilda, former wife of Oswyn (see #8), and thrall of Lilith, hides in the catacombs that run under the ruins. She preys on anyone foolish enough to come seeking the gold. Athilda also returns to Totburh periodically to feed on Oswyn, slowly weakening him. She does this less to feed and more for vengeance. She detests having been denied entrance to Heaven and hopes to see Oswyn fall from grace, at least in the eyes of his hearthweru. It is possible that Athilda may create a clan of vampires in time, if no one takes steps to stop her.

## Athilda, age 33, young vampire

STR 90 CON 65 SIZ 70 DEX 105 INT 90  
APP 70 POW 90 EDU - SAN - HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 10 **MP:** 18+

+1+ magic point per STR point consumed.

## Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (claw, bite)

Fighting	50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1D4
Bite	65% (32/13), damage 1D4; 2D10 STR; automatic worry*
Gaze	Opposed POW roll**
Dodge	50% (25/10)

**\*Bite:** if the vampire strikes home, it hangs on and worries its victim with its fangs, continuing to do 1D4 damage + 2D10 STR drain automatically per round thereafter. A successful opposed STR roll will dislodge the beast.

**\*\*Gaze:** make an opposed POW roll; if Athilda is successful, the target is hypnotized and will follow simple, non-self-destructive commands. If a self-destructive command is given, allow the victim an INT roll to break the hypnosis.

## Skills

Charm 70%, Jump 70%, Stealth 80%.

**Armor:** Impaling (Extreme) attacks inflict normal damage to a vampire; other attacks are reduced to half of rolled damage. Athilda reforms when reduced to zero or fewer hit points.

**Spells:** Alter Weather and 1D4 more spells at the Keeper's discretion.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4 to see Athilda's true form.

**Mythos:** Gaius Mons, a Roman sorcerer, was executed in this villa centuries ago but his evil soul refused to stay away. A vile fungus grows over his grave on the north side of the villa. It is slowly spreading outward from the grave, covering about 200 square feet. Items left near to the fungus become infected and begin to sprout fruiting bodies within 1D6 hours. Those who come into contact with the vile fungus



Athilda



find that it slowly begins to dissolve their flesh as it takes root. Unless the affected area is cleaned and purified, the fungus continues to fruit over the body until nothing is left, a process normally taking 1D4 days. The victim loses 1D6 hit points per day, although a successful Hard CON roll reduces this by half. Burning the affected areas, a Hard First Aid, or Medicine roll will purify the infection. If totally consumed, the victim's body becomes a new spawning area for the fungus.

Gaiu' ghosts appears as a Roman patrician. The numerous knife wounds on his body continually ooze blood and his partially severed head lolls to one side. He can be put to rest through a number of means: by digging up his remains and scattering them in Rome; getting revenge on the descendants of those who slew him; or reducing his POW to zero.

### **Gaius Mons, age 950, *unquiet spirit***

STR – CON – SIZ – DEX – INT 90  
APP – POW 110 EDU – SAN – HP –  
Damage Bonus: – Build: – Move: 18 MP: 22

#### **Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1 (spirit combat)

**Spirit combat:** opposed POW roll; if Gaius wins, the target loses 1D10 magic points and a Sanity roll (1/1D4 loss), otherwise the ghost loses 1D10 magic points. This combat continues each combat round until the target is unconscious (0 magic points), or either side has fled. If Gaius loses the first round of spirit combat, the target may demand a boon\*. Gaius will do his best to flee before reaching 0 magic points. If Gaius reduces a character to 0 magic points, he possesses the unfortunate, usually causing the victim to commit suicide or harm another person. Even if Gaius possesses a character, he remains tied to the site of his haunting and cannot leave.

*\*Gaius will answer one question the victor poses to him before disappearing.*

**Armor:** Gaius can only be injured by spirit combat.

**Spells:** Alter Weather, Curse (many variations), Poison Blood, Power Drain, Soul Singing, and Winds of Desolation.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D3/1D8 to see Gaius Mons.

### **29. The Forest**

The forest stretches for miles around the settlement and along the rivers. There are few paths cut through the old growth, however main roads do run along the river edges, skirting the forest. The edges of the forest have been cut back, providing Totburh with lumber and additional farmland.

The forest is dark and foreboding. The oaks, alders, and other hardwood trees prevent most light from reaching the ground. Squirrels, deer, wolves, boars, and other animals call the forest home. Its here that many of the settlement's darkest fears take root, despite the priests' condemnation of those beliefs as mere superstition.

The forest is also home to a group of charcoal burners who live a two-hour walk from Totburh. These freemen survive by cutting timber, reducing it to charcoal, and then selling the charcoal in Totburh. They've built several huts around their clearing for housing. The residents of Totburh do not trust the charcoal burners, believing them to be outlaws, even though they're not. Oswyn tolerates the charcoal burners as they provide a useful service.

Begilda is the leader of the charcoal burners. Her husband was killed when a tree they were felling for timber crushed his leg. He died a couple months later from infection. She knows that Oswyn and the others in Totburh dislike her and her people, but as long as they trade metal goods, salt, and honey for the charcoal, she doesn't seem to care.

Another resident of the forest is Edric the Bloodhand, an outlaw from Worcester. He killed a man in a fight and fled before the victim's family could bring vengeance. Now, as an outlaw, he can be killed with impunity by anyone. During his ten years as an outlaw, Edric has gathered a hloð (gang of thieves) around him. Counting Edric, there are seven hloðere, in the gang. They primarily forage for food in the forest. Recent poor weather, however, has them turning their sights on Totburh.

**Mythos:** Not far from the charcoal burners' encampment is the sacred oak of the nemeton (a Celtic sacred place), where the Beag Ma Aisus (page 145) practice their divination. This grove has a pall about it and reeks of decaying flesh. Animals and the charcoal burners both shun the place.

**Mythos:** Begilda and the other charcoal burners practice an arcane ritual that summons a fire vampire to the midst of their pyre. They worship the creature, offering animal sacrifices unto it, believing they can control it. Begilda aims to one day turn it loose on Totburh—if she can find a way to fully bind it to her will.

**Mythos:** Elves (see **Old Ones**, page 174) armed with “elf-shot” lurk in the forest, waiting for humans to venture into the forest. Once a human enters a forest, the elves pounce, stinging their victim with elf-shot. The person feels nothing at first, but days later must succeed at an Extreme CON roll or fall ill with a disease the leech (see #17) can't treat.



## TOTBURH

### Begilda, age 42, charcoal burner

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 65 DEX 60 INT 55  
APP 45 POW 40 EDU 80 SAN 40(33)\*HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 8

#### Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Axe 65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Art/Craft (Burn Things) 85%, Art/Craft (Potions) 10%,  
Charm 55%, Climb 55%, (Cthulhu Mythos\* 8%), First Aid  
55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 50%, Repair/Devise 60%,  
Spot Hidden 45%, Status 40%, Stealth 60%.

**Armor:** Heavy leather clothes 1D2-1.

**Spells\*:** Summon Fire Vampire.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*

### Edric, age 24, outlaw with blood on his hands

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 80 DEX 75 INT 55  
APP 75 POW 70 EDU 60 SAN 70 HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 14

#### Combat

Brawl 70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D6+1D4  
Spear 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 60% (30/12)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 40%, Climb 45%, Fast Talk 55%, First Aid  
35%, Jump 45%, Listen 45%, Natural World 35%, Navigate  
50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 0%, Stealth 65%.

**Armor:** Leather 1D6-1.

### Hlodere, Edric's gang members

STR 80 CON 85 SIZ 70 DEX 60 INT 40  
APP 60 POW 65 EDU 60 SAN 65 HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 13

#### Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4,  
or knife 1D4+1D4  
Spear 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
Bow 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1D2  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Climb 40%, Insight 40%, Jump 45%, Navigate 30%, Persuade  
45%, Status 0%, Stealth 60%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Leather 1D6-1.

### 30. The Iron Age Hill Fort

A half-hour's walk north of Totburh, the peak of this tor  
rises above the forest providing a commanding view of the  
region. A pyre is maintained here at all times, ready to be lit  
in the event of a Viking (or other) attack. Other burhs have  
similar beacons and keep watch for the signal. In the event of  
a fire being lit, neighboring thegns dispatch their hearthweru  
and raise a fyrd (army) to assist.

**Mythos:** Prior to the arrival of the Angles and Saxons, both  
the Celts and Romans worshipped Magna Mater at this site.  
Prior to Christianization, the Anglo-Saxons worshipped  
Eostre on this mount. This is where Mildoina (see #25)  
communes with Eostre. On several occasions, she has seen  
the trees that ring the base of the tor begin to move and wave  
their branches like tentacles.



Begilda



**Mythos:** A small cult has moved into the hill fort and refortified it. They practice their dark rites deep within a series of catacombs. Unseating the cultists from a fully operational hill fort will prove a difficult challenge.

## 31. The Monastery

Across the river Severn, about a day's march from Totburh, is the Monastery of St. Swithun; dedicated to the Benedictine Order. Horses can cover the distance in a few hours at a canter. The monastery was founded in 568, centuries before Tothyll. In 917, it was re-founded by the Benedictines as part of reforms that swept through Anglo-Saxon England.

The monastery stands on a small rise surrounded by orchards and fields. The 30 monks, under the guidance of Abbot Grimcytel, are strict adherents to the *Regula Benedicti*. The monastery provides for all the monks, who are not allowed personal possessions, however a vow of silence is not required. All 30 monks spend equal time working the fields and performing religious observance. A select few act as scribes in the monastery's small scriptorium.



- Grimcytel takes his work guiding the monks to salvation very seriously. A life-long monk, he is unfamiliar with weapons other than a knife. He's on good terms with Oswyn and will like anyone who displays honest belief.
- Hothere is the almoner and has the most contact with Totburh. He visits with two or three monks every week to meet with the parish priests and discuss any help the monastery can provide. A lean, hawk nosed physique belies his readiness to laugh at any occasion. He has a profound respect for Derwyn's skill as a leech.
- Lanfranc is the monastery's cellarer. He is in charge of the storeroom and conducts trade with the people of Totburh. He trades away the monks' surplus produce in exchange for salt, metal wares, and other things the monks can't produce. He's forsaken his vows and is sleeping with Mildoina (see #25).
- Jurmin is a novitiate, who works in the scriptorium. He spends much of his day copying and illuminating manuscripts. His current work is a calendar of the seasons.
- Medwin, age 11, is an idiot from Totburh. His father, Unfurth, was unable to provide for him so the monastery took him in. Medwin spends his days in the care of Hothere or one of his helpers. His body is covered in small scars from the many accidents he finds himself getting into.
- Penda, age 28, is the lay bailiff of the monastery. He's responsible for collecting the rents from the monastery's various properties spread over the countryside. His father, Odda, was a great warrior in Totburh's hearthweru and Penda hoped to follow in his father's footsteps but lacked the necessary skills. Bitter, Penda accepts numerous "gifts" from the tenants and is willing to look the other way provided the rent is paid. Penda isn't without redeeming qualities though; he lost a leg below the knee to a vicious wolf attack trying to save a child who'd been cornered. He relies on an ornate spear, a gift from a tenant farmer, to walk around and has become adept at wielding it despite his infirmities.

**Mythos:** Despite the small scriptorium, the monastery has amassed a collection of Mythos tomes including the *Testament of Carnamagos*, the *Sapientia Maglorum*, and possibly the original, unexpurgated *Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus*. It also contains some pages from the *Testament of Solomon*. Grimcytel guards the existence of these tomes fervently and investigators will need to convince the abbot of their good intentions if he is to allow them to see one of these "dangerous" books—under no circumstances would investigators be allowed to leave the monastery with any of these manuscripts.



**Mythos:** Grimcytel is the embodiment of Tawil at 'Umr. The first part of Grimcytel's name, Grim, is a nickname for Wotan, one of Tawil at 'Umr's many names. The monks have replaced their worship of the Christian God with worship of Grimcytel.

**Mythos:** A demon plagues the monastery, tempting the monks to steal, fight, and even murder. It's taken up residence in one of the cellars, feeding from the energy given off by the misbehaving monks. The demon could be a lloigor, a ghost, or perhaps a long-forgotten demon, such as Phêth, mentioned in the *Testament of Solomon*.

**Mythos:** Medwin isn't an idiot. He was driven insane when his father, Unfurth, used the unsuspecting boy for one of Beag Ma Aisus' divinations (page 145). The boy was supposed to bleed out to complete the ritual, but Unfurth felt a twinge of conscience and cut the boy down. After the wounds healed poorly, he sent Medwin to the monastery. Medwin's lunacy manifests itself on the nights of the new moon. During those times, his mind is open to the Mythos and he raves for hours. Whether or not he passes along useful information is up to the Keeper.

**Grimcytel, age 39, abbot**

STR 50 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 55 INT 80  
APP 55 POW 85 EDU 80 SAN 85 (00)\* HP 12  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 17

**Combat**

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3  
Dodge 27% (13/5)

**Skills**

Art/Craft (Apiarist) 25%, Art/Craft (Illumination) 35%, (Cthulhu Mythos\* 40%), First Aid 30%, Insight 60%, Intimidate 65%, Library Use 25%, Listen 40%, Medicine 20%, Natural World 45%, Occult 35%, Other Language (Greek) 50%, Other Language (Latin) 60%, Persuade 40%, Read and Write (Greek) 35%, Read and Write (Latin) 40%, Read and Write (Old English) 40%, Religion 70%, Science 55%, Status 75%.

**Armor:** None.

**Spells\*:** As the Keeper desires.

*\*If Mythos tag is used.*

**Hothere, age 32, almoner**

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 60 INT 70  
APP 75 POW 65 EDU 70 SAN 65 HP 13  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 13

**Combat**

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+1D4  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

**Skills**

Art/Craft (Weaving) 35%, Charm 65%, First Aid 40%, Insight 70%, Intimidate 50%, Listen 40%, Medicine 30%, Natural World 65%, Occult 15%, Other Language (Latin) 40%, Persuade 60%, Read and Write (Latin) 40%, Read and Write (Old English) 45%, Religion 60%, Status 45%.

**Armor:** None.

**Lanfranc, age 27, cellarer**

STR 60 CON 80 SIZ 75 DEX 70 INT 75  
APP 60 POW 50 EDU 60 SAN 50 HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 10

**Combat**

Brawl 75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

**Skills**

Accounting 45%, Animal Handling 35%, Art/Craft (Brewing) 85%, Art/Craft (Potions) 45%, Insight 30%, Listen 40%, Natural World 55%, Other Language (Latin) 50%, Persuade 60%, Repair/Devise 45%, , Read and Write (Latin) 40%, Read and Write (Old English) 45%, Religion 65%, Status 45%.

**Armor:** None.

**Jumin, age 14, novitiate**

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 75 INT 60  
APP 45 POW 75 EDU 60 SAN 75 HP 12  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 15

**Combat**

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3  
Dodge 37% (17/6)

**Skills**

Art/Craft (Illumination) 55%, Art/Craft (Parchment Making) 55%, Library Use 55%, Other Language (Greek) 55%, Other Language (Latin) 60%, , Read and Write (Greek) 55%, Read and Write (Latin) 60%, Read and Write (Old English) 65%, Religion 60%, Status 35%.

**Armor:** None.



## CHAPTER 8

### Medwin, age 11, idiot

STR 45 CON 65 SIZ 40 DEX 60 INT 30  
 APP 55 POW 90 EDU 35 SAN 90 HP 10  
 Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 18

#### Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3  
 Throw Rocks 65% (32/13), damage 1D2  
 Dodge 40% (20/8)

#### Skills

Climb 70%, Insight 65%, Navigate 45%, Religion 45%,  
 Status 10%, Stealth 70%, Throw 65%.

**Armor:** None.

### Penda Eagle-Eye, age 28, lay bailiff

STR 75 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 25 INT 70  
 APP 60 POW 65 EDU 50 SAN 65 HP 12  
 Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6 MP: 13

#### Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3+1D4  
 Spear 50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1D4  
 Dodge 12% (6/2)

#### Skills

Accounting 55%, Charm 65%, First Aid 30%, Insight  
 60%, Intimidate 65%, Listen 40%, Medicine 30%, Natural  
 World 45%, Other Language (Latin) 30%, Persuade 50%,  
 Read and Write (Latin) 20%, Religion 30%, Spot Hidden  
 80%, Status 45%.

**Armor:** Leather (1D2-1) under an expensive tunic.

#### Monks

STR 55 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 85  
 APP 65 POW 65 EDU 80 SAN 65 HP 13  
 Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 13

#### Combat

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3  
 Dodge 25% (12/5)

#### Skills

First Aid 50%, Insight 65%, Listen 40%, Medicine 30%,  
 Other Language (Latin) 55%, Persuade 40%, Read and  
 Write (Latin) 35%, Read and Write (Old English) 35%,  
 Religion 60%.

**Armor:** None.









## 32. The Viking Settlement

A small Viking raiding encampment is in Welsh territory, not far from the Severn estuary. The Vikings launch raids into Ireland, Cornwall, and up the Severn from this camp. Totburh hasn't been attacked so far, but it's only a matter of time. Yngvi, the Viking leader, is getting bolder and has begun sailing up the river at night to avoid watches from the other burhs. There are 120 Vikings in the camp and three long boats.

**Mythos:** Yngvi and his men have had a long run of success because Yngvi is a deep one hybrid who has allied with a deep one clan off Cornwall. In return for the deep one's support in getting into settlements unseen, Yngvi guarantees the deep ones get a certain percentage of slaves from each raid.

**Mythos:** The Norsemen fled their original settlement in the Orkneys because of the slow approach of Rlim Shaikorth (see Yikilth page 144). Even though they escaped the Conqueror Worm, his minions, the cold ones, still dog the Vikings' every step. Yngvi raids to capture sacrifices for the cold ones. What Yngvi doesn't realize is that the sacrifices aren't working. The cold ones are coming.

## Yngvi, age 32, Viking leader and deep one hybrid

**STR** 90    **CON** 95    **SIZ** 90    **DEX** 65    **INT** 55  
**APP** 40    **POW** 85    **EDU** 45    **SAN** 33    **HP** 18  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D6    **Build:** 2    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 17

### Combat

**Brawl** 80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D6, or knife 1D6+1D6  
**Sword** 85% (42/17), damage 1D8+1D6  
**Dodge** 45% (22/9)

### Skills

Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Insight 30%, Intimidate 95%, Jump 70%, Navigate 55%, Occult 15%, Persuade 55%, Status 40%, Stealth 60%, Track 70%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm 1D8 points.

**Spells:** Fury.

## Vikings, Yngvi's men

**STR** 80    **CON** 85    **SIZ** 80    **DEX** 60    **INT** 50  
**APP** 50    **POW** 65    **EDU** 45    **SAN** 60    **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4    **Build:** 1    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 13

### Combat

**Brawl** 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
**Sword** 60% (30/12), damage 1D8+1D4  
**Spear** 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4 (1D2 if thrown)  
**Dodge** 30% (15/6)

### Skills

Climb 40%, First Aid 30%, Insight 40%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Navigate 70%, Persuade 40%, Status 30%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm 1D8 points.

## FURTHER AFIELD

Here are places outside of the immediate environs of Totburh. The Anglo-Saxon name is given with the modern name in parenthesis, where necessary. This list is by no means exhaustive and the information is brief, but it should provide Keepers a little information to get campaigns beyond the palisades of Totburh.

### Berclea (Berkeley)

Located at the confluence of the Little Avon and the Severn rivers, it's a small settlement of only a few hundred families. Founded in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, it serves as both a port and





a small market town. The nearby thick groves of birch not only give the settlement its name but also indicate its major industry, lumber.

**Mythos:** The Teutates (page 177) maintain a nemeton (a sacred space in Celtic religion) not far from Berclea, and many of the most important men in the town are members.

## Brycgstow (Bristol)

A small trading town at the confluence of the Avon and Frome rivers built in 1000 CE, although records of habitation go back 60,000 years. By 1020 CE it has its own mint and by 1067 CE it's a fortified burh. During *Cthulhu Dark Ages* it's a small, but rapidly growing port handling goods from up and down the Severn, Frome, and Avon. Bristol is home to the largest slave markets in Anglo-Saxon England.

## Eseweald

Nestled deep within the great forest on the border of Anglo-Saxon England is the Eseweald (Gods' Forest), a veritable forest within a forest. The boundaries are indistinct; in fact, many claim that it moves. Long before the Romans or even the Celts passed through the region an entity fell to Earth, becoming embedded in the ground. Over millennia, the entity became one with the earth and the forest around it, feeding upon anything foolish enough to enter its boundaries. The name of the creature is unknown but the locals call it "Horig" and they worship it as a multifaceted god (see **The People**, page 16).

The earliest humans in the area learned that the heart of the forest was unclean and avoided it as best they could—like most of the animals do. Those who dared to enter its confines slowly wasted away; even once they had left, some suffered from madness, becoming holy wanderers, or were driven to paroxysms of violence. **Horig** (page 172), the heart of the Eseweald, fed on all these people. The effect can be seen upon animals encountered in the Eseweald; some attack with no warning, while others merely stand still allowing humans to get surprisingly close.

The entire forest, even beyond the Eseweald, is dark and foreboding, but so are all forests. It feels like there are eyes peering from behind every sun-dappled branch and moss-covered boulder. The Eseweald proper is a circle about one mile in radius from Horig and it's here that Horig's influence can first be felt. The forest looks no different; the trees are old and the moss grows thick. The observant traveler will notice the sounds of the forest are different; creaking trees might sound muffled, or the warble of a bird oddly distended. The effect becomes more pronounced the closer one comes to Horig. Very observant travelers might find rotted leather thongs tied to tree trunks or the occasional human bone

in the undergrowth (at the base of a tree). To compound matters, Horig can rearrange the natural elements of the Eseweald at will. An investigator could go to sleep under a massive oak only to wake under a clear sky. Experiencing this effect and realizing that the forest is "moving" is worth a Sanity roll (1/1D6 loss).

Horig can drain CON from investigators in this area and will do so. Anyone within the Eseweald must make a POW roll each hour. The first time POW is checked it's against a character's full POW, however subsequent POW rolls are Hard. If the investigator fails the POW roll, 1D10 CON points are lost and can be described as a strange, unaccountable lethargy that saps the vitality of those affected. This continues until the investigator leaves the Eseweald or falls unconscious in Horig's Grove (make a CON roll per hour once CON has been reduced by half). Once a victim leaves the Eseweald, CON is regained at the rate of 1D10 per week, up to the character's starting value.

At the very center of the Eseweald is a grove containing a ring of mushrooms and a spring. Horig is buried several hundred feet below the ring, but the essence of it's being permeates every breeze that wafts across the mushrooms' caps, spreading a warm and earthy inviting scent. The fungi appear normal, yet anyone who looks upon their strange coloration and inhales their odor must beware (see **Horig**, page 172). In addition, there is a 5% chance that anyone who falls asleep in the mushroom ring, whether through Horig's machinations or not, will awaken in Limbo, the Dreamlands, or somewhere much, much worse at the Keeper's discretion.

Another of Horig's manifestations are the short, ugly creatures the Anglo-Saxons call "pucel" and which the Cymri refer to as "pwka." Whether the pucel are physically a part of Horig or merely one more horror unleashed by the entity, the creatures serve their god unwaveringly. The pucel walk the forest at night, bearing torches in an attempt to lure travelers to the clearing so that Horig may feast (see **Pucel**, page 174).

Just outside the Eseweald are several small villages. Each village is home to a handful of extended families. All of these families worship Horig and make sacrifices to the creature.

## Exham

A lonely priory set off in the forest, ostensibly as a hermitage. More on Exham can be found on page 142.

## Fernduna

A tiny Celtic village where everything is dilapidated and overgrown with unusually thick and dense plant life. The residents have an earthy smell about them and a vaguely leporine appearance. Anyone who eats the food runs the risk of devolving into a strange being not unlike the residents. The resident's worship a plant-like being that grows in the cellar of the village's only (and abandoned) church.



### Gloucester

Founded in 97 CE as the Roman settlement Glevum, Gloucester served as the seat of the legendary king Vortigern after the withdrawal of the Romans. The Saxons took the settlement from the Welsh in 577, from which point it became an important religious and administrative center. The Abbey of St. Peter, founded in 681, and a small church containing the relics of Saint Oswald are both pilgrimage sites. A large burh, it's governed by a portreeve (port warden). The wooden castle often doubles as a royal residence when the king travels through the region. The burh is also home to a mint.

**Mythos:** The relics of Saint Oswald are actually the bones of a Chaldean sorcerer who was executed at Golgotha. Anyone who prays over the relics is visited by strange dreams. The dreams instigate an opposed POW roll (dreamer's POW vs. POW 70): if the dreamer succumbs, a demon possesses his or her body at night and forces the dreamer to commit heinous acts. The dreamer is cognizant of the acts, but powerless to stop them, losing Sanity pursuant to the act.

### Gotii, Village of

Nestled in the thick forests is a small village of less than 100 people, all of whom have goat-like features. A mixture of Celtic and Roman heritage, the people worship Shub-Niggurath, focusing their rituals on a metal tower in the center of their village built by Roman engineers. The village will be destroyed by the Templars in the 14th century and resettled, but there must be something wrong with the land as the Templars soon take on goat-like visages and feel it necessary to reconstruct the tower.

Not far from the village is a massive tree that stands alone in a clearing. Its apple-like fruit first provide an enchanting delight, followed shortly by terrible regret.

See page 171 for further information about the Gotii.

### Island, The

A small, circular island about 200 feet in diameter. The island rises to a small hill in the center, which is surmounted by a dilapidated Roman temple. Cult icons have long since been torn down, but careful observers note a single shadow that flits around. Visitors to the island suffer severe headaches and fatigue, losing 1D10 POW per hour on the island. Lost POW returns immediately after leaving the island.

### Lydney

Along the west bank of the Severn are the ruins of a Roman castra (military defensive position) and an abandoned temple to Nodens. There are also the ruins of an Iron Age promontory fort overlooking the river.

**Mythos:** The current inhabitants, degenerate descendants of the Romans, live in ramshackle huts in the shadows of the temple, worshipping a pair of nightgaunts that roost in the ruined castra.

### Severn, Lake

This lake, a couple days from Totburh, is home to Gla'aki. The forest ringing the lake is covered in a strange yellow fungal growth, a corruption caused by the presence of the Great Old One. If the fungus is ingested, the person must succeed at a Hard CON roll or immediately suffer 1D8 damage from the toxic substance and 1D8 Sanity points from visions of the devil beneath the waves; whether the fungus has any further effects is left to Keeper to determine.



**Strigoiel (Chepstow)**

About two miles inland from the confluence of the rivers Wye and Severn, Strigoiel is a large Welsh settlement on a limestone gorge. Investigators looking for an entry point into Wales need look no further. A priory to Saint Cynmarch is located near the town. The region has been inhabited nearly continuously since 5,000 BCE.

**Mythos:** The nearly constant habitation has given Strigoiel a long history. Hidden within the limestone gorge is a small but deep cave complex that most inhabitants know nothing about. Nestled deep within its twisting passageways are a group of monks that know the real history of the Severn Valley. They will share their knowledge with those they deem worthy.

**Theocsbury (Tewkesbury)**

Named after a Saxon who founded a hermitage in the 7th century, Theocsbury is at the confluence of the rivers Severn and Avon. The hermitage has grown into a sizable monastery and supporting community, including a thriving market with traders from as far away as Constantinople and the Arab lands.

**Mythos:** One of the traders, an Arab, is willing to sell dark and mysterious tomes to those willing to pay the price.

**Weorgoran Ceaster (Worcester)**

Weorgoran Ceaster was originally a large Roman manufacturing center with pottery kilns and iron-smelting plants. It declined after the Roman withdrawal, becoming a shadow of its former glory. A strong Christian community dominated the settlement, so much so that the location was chosen to be the site of a Cathedral in 680 CE. In 1041 CE, the burh's fortunes are reversed when it rises against King Harthacnut in rebellion and is crushed, almost to the point of total destruction.

**Mythos:** The burh was almost destroyed by Harthacnut not because it rose up in rebellion, but because the church leaders learned that Harthacnut was a follower of Rlim Shaikorth and wanted to end his reign. Some knowledge of the white worm can still be found hidden in the cathedral.

















## THE HUNT

**T**he Hunt is a *Cthulhu Dark Ages* scenario designed for two to six players. It's straightforward, fairly linear, and serves as an introduction to the setting. Many of the characters in the scenario come from Totburh and the Keeper should reference the Totburh chapter for further details on these non-player characters (NPCs). Statistics for the characters and monsters encountered can be found at the end of this scenario.

Set in late December, the nights are long and cold and the days are short. A large wolf has been spotted in the Severn Valley and the investigators have joined in the hunt for its head. Success means rewards and an improved standing in the community. Failure might mean death at the hands of a massive beast.

## KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

The wolf is antediluvian, from a time when Shub-Niggurath exercised its powers more freely. Normally, the wolf and its mate remain fairly close to the moon lens, but they have wandered further afield, accompanied by a pair of Gotii looking for a sacrifice (page 171). The Gotii worship these wolves as symbols of their deity's power and have constructed a shrine to the beasts in the forest outside of their village. The milk of the she-wolf is used by the Gotii during their rituals.

Word has come back to Totburh that a massive wolf, one the Anglo-Saxons have named "wæl-wulf" (war-wolf), colloquially known as "eater of the dead," has been spotted. Oswyn, thegn of Totburh, sees the fun to be had in bringing down such a legendary beast and has offered a bounty of a horse and blade to anyone who can bring him the head of wæl-wulf.

As the investigators hunt down the wolf, they'll encounter the strange men from the Gotii village and their dark practices. If they're not careful, they'll end up as sacrifices to the master of the moon lens themselves.

## INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

There are numerous ways to involve the investigators, but plunging them right into the mystery is the most effective. To that end, Oswyn tasks the investigators to journey to Eorhelm's farm, as the farmer, his wife, and child have not been seen in a few weeks. Oswyn thinks they have seen the wolf.

Alternatively, the investigators are returning from somewhere outside of Totburh as a storm moves in. The only available shelter is Eorhelm's farm.

## THE FARM

Eorhelm's farm is like every other farm in Totburh. He grows grains and herds livestock. The animals typically wander free with only a fence to keep them from the grain fields. By the time the investigators arrive, night is falling, and it's clear that there is no fire burning in the one-story wattle-and-daub house.

Coming closer, the door has been broken in and is balanced precariously on top of something. Moving the door reveals Eorhelm's broken body still gripping a wood axe. The body of his wife, Angifu, is seated inside, against the far wall, torn open from neck to navel, her intestines spilling across the floor, her right hand covered in a black ichor. Gripped in her left hand is a bloody swaddling blanket. Call for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss).

Closer inspection of the bodies reveals the following information:

- It was no blade that cut Angifu; she looks to have been torn apart by a wild animal's claws and fangs.
- Eorhelm's chest is crushed, his ribs broken.



## CHAPTER 9

Searching the house and its immediate environs reveals the following:

- The cildcradol (cradle), where infant Inric slept, is overturned and there's no sign of the child.
- There are large dog-like footprints in the mud outside the house. They head east, deeper into the forest. These prints are larger than the average dog or wolf's.
- There are deep gouges on the outside of the door.
- The livestock are spooked. A successful **Animal Handling** roll is necessary to calm them down.

### WHERE'S THE FARM?

Astute readers will note that Eorhelm's farm doesn't appear on the Totburh map. That's intentional. Choose any of the outlying farms that meet your story's needs. The further from Totburh, the better.

Successful **Spot Hidden** rolls allow the investigators to uncover the following:

- A small clump of grey fur is wedged into a splinter in the doorframe.
- At the tree line are two sets of booted footprints that also lead to the east (a **Track** roll also reveals these).
- There is a faint blood trail that is intermixed with the tracks heading east.
- The large animal prints obscure a smaller set of prints, and both appear to be intertwined.
- A small to medium sized person's tracks can be found heading south toward Totburh (a **Track** roll also reveals these).
- The body of a hound has been flung into the trees where it dangles precariously from a branch; an unwary investigator might have the hound's corpse fall on top of them as they attempt to gather the livestock together (call for a **Sanity** roll with 0/1D2 loss if it falls onto them before it's noticed). The hound has a black ichor on its teeth and it looks like a knife blade caused the animal's wounds.

### Ealhaf

Eorhelm had one slave, a debtor named Ealhaf. He wasn't at home when the family was attacked as he was out gathering wood for charcoal. He arrived just in time to see the giant





wolf leaving. When Ealhaf saw the carnage, he suffered a temporary insanity and is now hiding in one of the lean-tos quaking in his boots.

While the investigators are outside the house call for a **Listen** roll to see if they hear Ealhaf inside the lean-to closest to the house. Successful rolls mean that the investigators hear a rough, deep breathing, just like a beast. As soon as an investigator comes close to the lean-to, Ealhaf jumps out, screaming. Call for a **Sanity** roll from the nearest investigator (if they failed the Listen roll). If they fail the Sanity roll, they lose no Sanity points but they have an involuntary reaction, lashing out with whatever weapon they have at hand (they should make a **Fighting** skill roll to see if they hit and damage poor Ealhaf). Success means they realize it's not a wolf but a man, and they hold their blow just in time.

As appropriate, Ealhaf collapses, crying into the investigator's arms. Between sobs and ragged breaths he alternately calls out Inric's name and the word "wæl-wulf" (war-wolf). He quickly gathers himself together and, with a pained look in his eyes, says that the wolf carried off Eorhelm's son, Inric. He can say little more on the incident other than reliving the horror of seeing the wolf disappearing into the forest with the child in its teeth.

At this point the investigators have a couple options: they can follow the blood trails toward Totburh, in which case see **The Béot** (following); or if the investigators decide to follow the tracks that go east, see **The Tracks** (page 225).

## THE DEAD RISE

Keepers who want to interject action into the scenario right away can have animated corpses of Angifu and the hound rise to attack—brought to unnatural life by the black ichor, the milk of Shub-Niggurath. Unlike modern zombies, which usually shamle and act mindlessly, the animated dead in medieval tales typically move and act like they did when they were alive.

The Keeper should choose the best time for the pair to strike. Pick a time when the investigators are off their guard. If the investigators choose to stay the night at the farm, Angifu can rise and attack, possibly crawling on top of the roof to strike through the thatching. Who knows what will be racing through the investigators' minds as they hear something scrabbling over the thatch? Call for **Listen** rolls to see if they hear the sounds of something crawling along the roof. Or, if the investigators leave the farm after their initial investigation, Angifu and the hound could stalk them through the forest. The opportunities for striking fear are endless.

## THE BÉOT

A faint blood trail heads south (see Guthlaf's lean-to page 204). Oslafa was covered in blood when she tried to help Angifu; the blood dripped to the ground as she stumbled back to her herd of sheep. A successful **Track** roll allows the investigators to follow the blood and young-adult sized footprints until they meet up with and are obscured by numerous sheep hoof prints. The tracks miander until they come to Totburh.

If the investigators fail the Track roll, they can head in what they presume is their general direction, eventually arriving at Totburh. On arrival, it is presumed they announce what has happened to Eorhelm and his family; word quickly spreads. The investigators are summoned to Oswyn's hall to recount their story and a group of hearthweru are dispatched to verify the investigators' claims.

Oswyn believes it was Edric, the outlaw, and his hloð who committed the crime and that Inric's body will be found shortly. While the characters are discussing matters with Oswyn, there's a shout from outside. Guthlaf the shepherd and his daughter Oslafa enter, her clothes stained with blood. Guthlaf claims his daughter saw the wæl-wulf. Oslafa explains how she was herding her sheep near Eorhelm's farm when she heard a loud growl. She ran to the tree line to see a gigantic wolf emerge from the house, its jaws dripping with blood. It ran off to the east and she ran into the house, finding the same scene as the investigators.

With two different people recounting the same events, Oswyn accepts that there's a man-killing wolf on the prowl, and a legendary one at that. He orders a feast prepared and summons his hearthweru. At the feast, he raises a decorated drinking horn and calls for a béot. Anyone who wants to hunt the wolf must drink from the horn and make a boast.

A béot consists of three phases:

1. First the drinker announces what they will do, such as kill the wolf.
2. Then he or she sets the terms of success and failure. In this case, killing the wolf or dying.
3. The third phrase is a call to God for support in this endeavor. Svein is the first to step forward and make a boast. The investigators can take part in the boasting if they want.

The investigators notice that the young priest Eadda and the old man Unferth both seem to be upset. A successful **Insight** roll reveals that Eadda is seething with anger and that Unferth is terrified. See the following sections for information about these characters.

After the béot is complete, Oswyn offers a sword and horse to anyone who can bring him the wæl-wulf's head. The wolf's



pelt will also belong to the victor. Svein and several hearthweru set off immediately. The arrogant Norseman refuses to cooperate with the investigators, preferring to trust in his own men.

## Eadda

If the investigators approach Eadda, he's nearing the breaking point. Not only did Oswyn instigate a Pagan ritual with the béot, but he's also fostering the belief in the wæl-wulf, a mythical wolf worshipped by several of the Pagan tribes in the Severn Valley (at least before Christianity arrived). The tribes sacrificed infants to the creature in dark rituals to slake their god's hunger. When St. Ceadda of Mercia came, he struck down the Pagan altars and burned the sacred groves, proving to the Pagans that the Christian God was the one, true God and that the Pagans' deities were powerless in God's presence.

Eadda's story is an example of the oral tradition, listening to his tale provides +1% to the investigator's Religion skill.

## Unferth

If Unferth is approached, he is on the verge of tears. If the wæl-wulf has returned, Totburh is doomed. Before the flood, mighty creatures walked the earth. When God sent the flood, he only saved the good creatures; those bent on evil were to be destroyed. However, Cain took his chosen creatures and held them aloft in his mighty arms for 40 days and 40 nights. As the floods receded, the wæl-wulf came to England where it was worshipped as a god. The Pagans threw infants into its many maws and quavered in fear of the beast's many arms, while the Romans built a mighty tower in its honor. When the Christians came, they burned the groves and smashed the altars. The wæl-wulf was not destroyed, instead it hid in the shadows, waiting until the time was right for it to return in blood and death.

Unferth's story is an example of the oral tradition; listeners to his tale gain +3% Occult skill points.

## BYPASSING TOTBURH

What if the investigators take it upon themselves to follow the tracks straight from the farm into the woods and never go to Totburh? That's not a problem. They'll miss out on some clues but can still complete the scenario. Don't try to force the investigators to go to Totburh. The players should have agency over their characters and not feel like they're being railroaded.

## OTHER INFORMATION IN TOTBURH

Asking around in Totburh about the deep forest, wolves, and so on, the investigators are recommended to speak with Begilda, the charcoal burner, who has a camp amidst the trees. Directions can be given, but also a warning: Begilda is not to be trusted as she is an outlaw who killed her own husband.

Another person may suggest asking the monks at the Monastery of St. Swithun, which is across the River Severn, about a day's march from Totburh. If the investigators elect to delay their pursuit of the wolf by heading to the monastery, they can speak with Abbot Grimcytel who directs them to the scriptorium. There isn't much written about the wæl-wulf (or the Gotii). Most of what's known is passed down verbally through tales and legends. However, in the scriptorium there is an excerpt from the field notes of a Roman centurion who encountered the Gotii (see **Handout: Hunt 1**).

The scriptorium is disorganized and nothing at all like a modern library. All the books are organized according to the whim of the Abbot Grimcytel. The papers are all organized

## THE FATE OF SVEIN AND THE HEARTHWERU

Remember that the investigators are central to the story. The investigators can succeed or they can fail, but the NPCs should not steal the spotlight. In light of the fiction, it makes sense for Svein and several houseguards to go after the wolf—that's what they're there for. However, they don't have to be the ones to find and kill the beast. There are several ways to use Svein and his men:

- **As competitors:** Periodically the investigators may catch sight of Svein and his men or signs of their passing. The other hunters could even bump into and taunt the investigators.
- **As clues:** If the investigators are fumbling around in the woods, the torn body of a hearthweru is enough to tell them they're on the right track (**Sanity** roll, 1/1D6 loss).
- **As rescuers:** If the investigators are being soundly thrashed by the Gotii or the wolves, have one or more hearthweru dash in long enough to distract the enemies and allow the investigators to escape or gain an advantage. The rescuers don't stand a chance of survival, but the investigators can return to avenge their death.



neatly on the shelf, ordered by the year Grimcytel brought them into the scriptorium. It takes a full eight hours of searching the papers to find the handout. A successful **Library Use** roll cuts that time in half (an Extreme success further cuts that time in half).

## THE TRACKS

The tracks of men and wolves lead east from Eorhelm's farm. The tracks are not side by side, but head in slightly different directions.

The large wolf tracks are easier to follow (no Track roll required) and the blood trail coincides with them. It leads east to a clearing about an hour from the farm, where there is a large, shallow den. Inside the den is a fair amount of loose fur. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll turns up a knife buried in the dirt and fur at the bottom of the den. The knife is covered in a tarry black ichor that an **Art/Craft (Potions)** or **Natural World** roll cannot identify—Angifu slammed her knife into the wolf's side as it killed her. It was stuck in the wolf until it reached the den and stopped to pull it out. The investigators may also find a leather water skin at the edge of the clearing. It's empty, but smells strongly of milk.

Following the man-sized tracks from the farm requires a successful **Track** roll. These take a different path, but ultimately also end up at the wolf den.

The wolf and its Gotii worshippers used this clearing as a staging area. The water skin was used to hold tainted she-wolf's milk for the baby Inric. After he ate his fill the Gotii just abandoned the water skin.

If a **Track** roll is made to determine the direction the wolf and men took from the den, further prints can be found continuing east. If the roll is failed, the investigators wander for an hour or so before picking up the trail. Failed pushed rolls could mean the investigators are attacked by zombie Angifu and/or the undead hound, or that it takes them even longer to find the trail.

The next major stop on the trail is the optional encounter of **The Enchanted Tree** (page 226). If this is not used, then proceed to the encounter **Edric the Bloodhand** (page 226) or **Begilda** (page 226), if they have been recommended to speak to her by people in Totburh.



### HANDOUT: HUNT I

An account of the natives by Gaius Aquilius Collatinus, found among his field notes after his Roman cohort was found crushed in the forest not far from the Severn River.



*Handout: Hunt 1*

And Legio IX rebuilt the tower in the castrum center, destroyed by my men, to worship the deity called Shub-Nigurat, a wolf among men. They participated in the rites, forsaking the Imperial cults to the point that Hadrian decimated the legion as punishment. When the remaining men still called upon the wolf, Hadrian ordered the rest of the legion killed and its Aquila destroyed.

One of my men reported seeing some of the natives with gladii and scuta, holding aloft a false Aquila of Legio IX as they danced around the tower.



## GATHERING INFORMATION

In addition to anything learned from the tracks or the people in Totburh, there are two further sources of information in the forest that may prove useful. If the investigators ask around Totburh about the deepest parts of the forest, they are recommended to speak with Begilda, the charcoal burner. Edric, the outlaw, is more of a wildcard that the Keeper should unveil when the investigators least expect it.

### BEGILDA

Begilda, leader of the charcoal burners, probably knows the woods around Totburh better than even Oswyn's best men—anybody in Totburh can tell the investigators that. They'll also say that she's a dangerous outlaw who killed her own husband. Begilda isn't an outlaw and she didn't kill her husband, it's just rumor and gossip. She is happy to let people believe such stories because it means she and her extended family of charcoal burners get left alone (for the most part).

If approached by the investigators, she will provide information on the forest, for a price. She wants staples, such as bread, honey, and axes. Coin is of little use to her. Use the **Barter** rules (see page 98) to play through such an exchange. If the investigators mention Inric, they receive a bonus die for the opposed roll.

If a deal can be reached, Begilda will relay what she knows about the forest. She hasn't seen the large wolf, but she has heard stories about how it sneaks into huts at night to steal infants for the wolf-lords, who live in a village far to the east.

If asked about the Gotii or Pagans, she will spit and make crude references to the Gotii's intimate knowledge of goats. The stinky men live in a village about two day's walk east. She went there once and tried to trade for a big iron pole with a mirror on top that they have in the village, however the men got very upset and chased her out of their pit of a village. Begilda can supply directions on how to find the Gotii village (saving the need for Navigate or Track rolls).

### EDRIC THE BLOODHAND

As the investigators move through the woods, remember it's December so even though there will be no leaves on the deciduous trees, the forest is dark and foreboding. If at any time the investigators aren't paying attention to their surroundings or seem over confident in their searching, have Edric and four of his men spring upon them. The outlaw won't announce his presence; he and his men will just jump from a hiding spot in an attempt to rob the investigators,

demanding they turn over horses, weapons, food, and other useful items unless they want a pasting.

If the investigator resist and demonstrate they can take care of themselves, allow a Hard **Intimidate** roll: if successful, Edric backs down and allows them to pass; otherwise a fight ensues. If two or more brigands go down, Edric and the others attempt to flee. If the investigators try to pursue and catch them use the chase rules in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*.

Savvy investigators will realize that Edric, despite having lost the privilege of being a member of society, knows the forest better than most. Edric might be persuaded with goods (especially weapons) to divulge his local knowledge, requiring a **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade** roll. If there has been a fight and he is captured, he'll refuse to cooperate. He knows his life is forfeit to anyone who wants to take it, so he doesn't hope to gain anything by bargaining. Investigators can use threats (**Intimidate**) or they might agree to release him and his men (**Persuade**) to extract information.

Edric saw a great wolf running through the woods with a mewling babe in its mouth; he assumed the wolf was saving it for later. The wolf was running to the east and two people were in pursuit. Presumably they were herders, like Eorhelm, because they stank of goat. If pressed, he'll tell the investigators that the only things to the east are more forest and after a day or so, the Gotii village. A suitably persuaded Edric can describe how to find the Gotii village.

### OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE ENCHANTED TREE

The enchanted tree is an optional encounter that can add mystery and suspicion to the scenario. As the investigators move through the forest, the investigator with the lowest POW catches a glimpse of light deeper in the forest, away from the tracks the investigators are following.

If they head toward the light, only the investigator with the lowest POW sees a grove with a massive tree, at least 20-feet in diameter, and a shallow, shimmering pond at its base—everyone else just sees a desolate clearing. Hanging from the tree are numerous bones. Approaching more closely reveals infant sized skulls, rib cages, spines, and assorted long bones. Several thousand infants must be hanging here. Everyone, even if they don't see the tree, pool, and bones must make a **Sanity** roll, losing 1/1D4 as an oppressive unease comes over them.

If the investigator enters the clearing, whether alone or not, a stooped, old crone wearing a ratty, hooded robe and leaning on a stick walks from behind the tree. It's not possible to see her face. When she speaks, her voice is hollow and reedy.

The crone asks what the investigator(s) seek, tittering to herself when they reply. If asked about the children's bones,



she answers vaguely, saying the bones are the remains of her children that she couldn't save.

The woman is a manifestation of the old Germanic god Holda, protector of infants, but will only refer to herself as "Ent." At a suitable moment, she lunges forward, gripping the wrist of the investigator with the lowest POW and throwing back her hood. The investigator doesn't see a face, but instead a star-filled void which then seems to spin. Suddenly, the investigator finds they are standing in a field. At least one hundred soldiers in metal armor are marching in tight formation across the field when a handful of small men scream and rush from a tree line toward them. A massive wolf, eight-foot high at the shoulder, leaps from behind the investigator and tears into the armored soldiers; their spears and knives seem to bounce-off the wolf's thick hide. Then, a second great wolf joins the fray. Within minutes the armored soldiers are dead and the small men are picking over the remains. The vision suddenly shifts to a small ramshackle village where a handful of men in armor are pulling down and smashing a tower as more frightened men look on. The entire vision calls for a **Sanity** roll (1D4/1D8 loss). Once the vision is complete, Ent turns and walks into the tree.

Anyone, even investigators who could see the tree, will not see anything other than a clearing if they return to this spot later.

## THE GOTII VILLAGE

The Gotii village is a rambling settlement that covers a hillside and reeks horribly of goat. The streets, if they can be called that, are muddy quagmires. Numerous small men with goat-like features walk back and forth going about their daily business (call for **Sanity** rolls to see the goat-featured Gotii; 0/1D3 loss). In the center of the village is a large, tapering metal pole (40-feet high) with a mirror on top. The mirror directs light to its base where a gore-covered stone altar surmounted with wolf skulls sits.

If the investigators are cautious and decide to watch the village, they'll need to succeed with **Stealth** rolls. The investigators will eventually see a Gotii woman walk by carrying a large infant and disappear behind a building. A few moments later, one of the wæl-wulf walks through the village, snuffing at the ground (call for **Sanity** rolls; 1/1D8 loss). Oppose the wæl-wulf's **Scent** of 85% against an investigator's **Stealth** skill. If the wæl-wulf wins the roll, it raises its head, curls its lips back, and pounces toward the hidden investigator.

Otherwise, if the investigators decide to simply walk into the village and are not openly hostile, a group of Gotii stops the investigators and inquires as to the investigators' business. If the investigators try to talk to the Gotii, the villagers speak a mélange of Latin, Cymric, and Old English so understanding may be difficult but not impossible.



The gotii village map



If asked about the strange pole and mirror, the villagers say that such things are of no concern to outsiders and will refuse to let any of the investigators approach it. The construct is the moon lens, a holy relic used by the Gotii to venerate the wæl-wulf. The moon lens provides power to the wæl-wulf; if it is somehow destroyed or rendered inoperable, such as by knocking it down or covering the surface of the mirror, the wæl-wulf loses its ability to spawn tentacles and regenerate.

The villagers disavow any knowledge of a missing infant or the wæl-wulf. As they talk, a successful **Listen** roll hears an infant's mewling. The Gotii will try to bar any investigator from going around the corner of a house to see the infant. If they investigators force their way, they see a massive she-wæl-wulf with the infant suckling. The wæl-wulf will raise its head and growl before standing up to attack. The second wæl-wulf will circle around from behind another building to also attack (allow a **Listen** roll to detect the second wolf coming up from behind).

## SUCCESS

The investigators must somehow render the moon lens mirror ineffective in order to be able to harm the wolves. The Gotii will hang back in a fight out of fear of being trampled by their gods. If any investigators don't engage the wæl-wulf, the Gotii will move in to attack, but will fall back if they suffer significant losses.

Encourage and reward investigator creativity. The moon lens is 40-feet high and the mirror, mystically enchanted by a Roman sorcerer centuries ago, has 20 hit points. They could try to lure a wæl-wulf into hitting the tower with its bulk in an attempt to knock it down, or an investigator could clamber up the tower and destroy the mirror with a weapon or even cover it long enough for the other investigators to attack and destroy the wæl-wulf.

**Optional:** Kindhearted Keepers, fearing the combat with the wæl-wulf is too much of a challenge for the investigators, may choose to have the beasts be destroyed (disappearing into thick greenish mist) if the moon lens is destroyed.

Destroying the wæl-wulf sends the Gotii running in fear, leaving the infant Inric behind. The investigators have won the day and can return the infant to Totburh, as well as the wolf pelts, to claim their prize from Oswyn.

## REWARDS

If the investigators took part in the béot, they can gain 1D10+1 points of Status in the village of Totburh. In addition, if Inric is saved, investigators gain 1D6 Sanity points. If the moon lens is brought down, they gain a further 1D4 Sanity points.





# APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

## Angifu, age 28, undead

STR 65 CON 55 SIZ 65 DEX 60 INT 30  
APP – POW 05 EDU – SAN – HP 12  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 1

### Combat

#### Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage 1D4+1D4

### Skills

Jump 50%, Listen 40%, Stealth 60%, Track 60%.

**Armor:** Major wounds delivered to the body will result in loss of a limb. Otherwise ignore damage except to the head (one penalty die on rolls to target the head).

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8 Sanity points to see zombie Angifu.

## Undead Hound, Eorhelm's Unfortunate

STR 45 CON 55 SIZ 45 DEX 85 INT 05  
APP – POW 05 EDU – SAN – HP 10  
Damage Bonus: 0 Build: 0 Move: 10 (6 swim)  
MP: 1

### Combat

#### Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 70% (35/14), damage 1D6

### Skills

Jump 70%, Listen 75%, Stealth 50%, Track 90%.

**Armor:** Major wounds delivered to the body will result in loss of a limb. Otherwise ignore damage except to the head (one penalty die on rolls to target the head).

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8 Sanity points to see the undead hound.

## Begilda, age 42, charcoal burner

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 65 DEX 60 INT 55  
APP 45 POW 40 EDU 80 SAN 40 HP 14  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 8

### Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D4+1D4  
Axe 65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

### Skills

Art/Craft (Burn Things) 85%, Art/Craft (Potions) 10%, Charm 55%, Climb 55%, First Aid 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 50%, Repair/Devise 60%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 40%, Stealth 60%.

**Armor:** Heavy leather clothes 1D2–1.

## Edric, age 24, outlaw with blood on his hands

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 80 DEX 75 INT 55  
APP 75 POW 70 EDU 60 SAN 70 HP 15  
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 14

Brawl 70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D6+1D4  
Spear 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge 60% (30/12)

### Skills

Animal Handling 40%, Climb 45%, Fast Talk 55%, First Aid 35%, Jump 45%, Listen 45%, Natural World 35%, Navigate 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 0%, Stealth 65%.

**Armor:** Leather 1D6–1.



## Hloðere, Edric's gang members

STR 80 CON 85 SIZ 70 DEX 60 INT 60  
 APP 60 POW 65 EDU 60 SAN 65 HP 15  
 Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 13

### Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4,  
 or knife 1D4+1D4  
 Spear 60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4  
 Bow 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1D2  
 Dodge 30% (15/6)

### Skills

Climb 40%, Insight 40%, Jump 45%, Navigate 30%,  
 Persuade 45%, Status 0%, Stealth 60%, Track 45%.

Armor: Leather 1D6-1.

## Gotii, effervescent cultists

char.	rolls	averages
STR	3D6 x5	50-55
CON	3D6 x5	50-55
SIZ	(2D6+6) x5	65
DEX	3D6 x5	50-55
INT	(3D6+6) x5	80-85
POW	2D6 x5	35*
APP	1D6 x5	15-20

\*One in ten Gotii have 3D6 x5 POW and serve as primus to their tribe.

Move 8

Hit Points 11-12

Av. Damage Bonus 0

Av. Build 0

### Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 50% (25/10), damage 1D4,  
 or spear 1D6  
 Dodge 25% (12/5)

## Wæl-wulf

The wæl-wulf is actually comprised of two elements, a male and a female beast, manifestations of Shub-Niggurath and worshipped by the Gotii. The creatures are eight foot high at the shoulder and typically appear as wolves. They're highly intelligent and capable trackers who revel in being worshipped by the Gotii.

The wæl-wulf draws power from the moon lens; if the construct is destroyed or rendered inoperable (such as by knocking it down or covering the mirror somehow), the wæl-wulf loses its ability to spawn tentacles and to regenerate.

**Attacks:** The wæl-wulf can attack with its teeth or claws, like a normal wolf, but prefers to spawn tentacles, usually from its mouth, to grasp a victim and crush it. The wæl-wulf can spawn up to four tentacles.

## WÆL-WULF, manifestations of the dark mother

Both male and female have identical statistics.

STR 180

CON 100

SIZ 180

DEX 120

INT 75

POW 40

Move 11

Hit Points 28

Damage Bonus +3D6

Build 4

### Combat

Attacks per round: 4 (bite, claw, tentacles)

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage as damage  
 bonus (3D6)  
 Dodge 60% (30/12)

### Skills

Listen 75%, Scent 85%, Spot Hidden 75%, Stealth 60%,  
 Track 65%.

**Armor:** 4-point skin and fur; regenerates 1D3 hit points per round.

**Spells:** None.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D8 Sanity points to see the wæl-wulf.



## APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

### *Handout: Hunt 1*

#### HANDOUT: HUNT I

An account of the natives by Gaius Aquilius Collatinus, found among his field notes after his Roman cohort was found crushed in the forest not far from the Severn River.

And Legio IX rebuilt the tower in the castrum center, destroyed by my men, to worship the deity called Shub-Nigurat, a wolf among men. They participated in the rites, forsaking the Imperial cults to the point that Hadrian decimated the legion as punishment. When the remaining men still called upon the wolf, Hadrian ordered the rest of the legion killed and its Aquila destroyed.

One of my men reported seeing some of the natives with gladii and scuta, holding aloft a false Aquila of Legio IX as they danced around the tower.







# THE DOOM THAT CAME TO WESSEX

**T**his short scenario introduces players and Keepers to both *Cthulhu Dark Ages* and Totburh. It can be completed in about four to five hours of play. Despite a hectic opening scene, it is generally investigative in nature.

Most of the major non-player characters (NPCs) in this scenario are described in **Totburh** (page 191) and Keepers should refer back to that chapter as necessary. Statistics for the other NPCs in *The Doom That Came To Wessex* can be found at the end of this scenario.

Keepers should also refer to the map of Totburh (page 195) for the first part of the scenario, and to the map of the Monastery of St. Swithun (page 213) for the latter part.

## KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

The Monastery of St. Swithun is about a day's journey from Totburh and home to 30 monks. Devout, God-fearing men under the care of Abbot Grimcytel, their days are usually unexciting, however all that changed in the last month. A Byzantine merchant, Mousoulios, visited the monastery, trading spices and wines for Anglo-Saxon pottery. Within one of the wine casks was a powerful demon, named Phêth. The demon can only be exorcised by the application of sweet, unmixed wine. Byzantine scholars thought it would be useful to imprison him in a cask of the stuff, just for good measure. Phêth infects people, making them hemorrhagic. When Lanfranc tapped the cask, Phêth escaped into the monastery.

Monk after monk fell ill after drinking the wine. Some have even died, bleeding from every orifice. Prior to the monks' deaths, Phêth toys with them, forcing them to indulge in all seven of the Deadly Sins.

Currently, Phêth is content to taunt the monastery. When he tires there, he plans to move to Totburh.

## INVESTIGATOR INTRODUCTION

There are multiple ways to involve the investigators. Here are a few suggestions get the Keeper started:

- If the investigators are in Totburh, Keepers should start with the scene entitled **Sea Wolves**.
- If the investigators are monks associated with St. Swithun's, they went with Hothere to Totburh for his regular rounds. Keepers should skip to the scene called **To The Monastery**, adjusting the situation accordingly.
- If the investigators are not residents of Totburh, they can be traveling through Wessex delivering trade goods, a message, or even as members of a fyrd. They stop at the monastery to rest and resupply. Keepers should skip to the scene called **To The Monastery**, adjusting the situation accordingly.

## SEA WOLVES

This scene, set in Totburh, is something of a red herring but serves to get investigators into the action. Investigators, whether they are residents of Totburh or just passing through, should be given the opportunity to go through their daily tasks. During the day, the investigators meet Hothere, the almoner from St. Swithun's. He and three other monks come to Totburh periodically to speak with the priests and anyone who might need their guidance. They leave Totburh on horseback at dawn.

As night falls, investigators should attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll. Those who succeed are the first to notice the pyre on the nearby hill being lit. The pyre is only lit when a long-ship

Opposite: Thieves breaking into the Burial Church of St. Edmund



is spotted on the Severn. Investigators can raise the alarm, giving more people time to get armed. If the Spot Hidden roll is failed, someone in the burh does eventually see the flames, giving the Vikings enough time to get almost on top of Totburh.

A small raiding party aims to plunder the market and escape, not fight a full-scale war. Twenty Vikings use ladders to get onto and over the walls. Ten more Vikings remain with the ship. With the suddenness of the task and the risk to the entire settlement, men and women take up arms to repulse the invaders.

This is a cinematic battle to set the mood in the burh and showcase some of the settlement's enemies. The Keeper should give the investigators enough time to fight one or two Vikings and act heroically. Perhaps they save an infant from a Viking's cruel axe or knock the torch out of an invader's hand just as he's about to put fire to a church. Play a short scene with each of the investigators to get them into the action, cutting between the scenes to maximize the tension and excitement. Avoid needlessly wounding the investigators so early in the scenario—if it looks like an investigator is about to take a hit, have one of the townsfolk take the blow instead or one of the hearthweru leap into the fray.

The battle lasts until investigators have either slain a Viking, done something heroic, or hidden under the straw bales. At that point, the Vikings withdraw back to the boat. If the investigators raised the alarm, eight members of Totburh are dead and twelve injured. If the investigators didn't raise the alarm, twelve died and sixteen are injured.

As the Vikings retreat over the walls, Oswyn orders Svein to assemble a twenty-man force from the hearthweru to pursue the Vikings. Investigators are free to tend to the wounded, put out fires, and help reconstruct the town.

## THE HORROR OF HOTHERE

After the Viking attack, most of the residents have gathered in Oswyn's hall. Oswyn is giving a speech on how valiantly the town performed, fending off the foul sea wolves. As he's talking, Hothere the monk stumbles into the firelight; his robes are filthy and he's out of breath. His horse, standing outside is lathered in sweat and breathing convulsively. An **Animal Handling** or **Ride** roll can be used to calm the horse if necessary.

Hothere begs Oswyn's forgiveness for interrupting, explaining that St. Swithun's was attacked. Some monks are dead and many are injured, bleeding profusely. He left the monks that were with him in Totburh at the monastery while he raced back for help.

Hothere knows the following and will provide it based on appropriate questions being asked. He can be asked questions in public or in private after Oswyn ends the gathering:

- From what little he saw, some of the monks had wounds as if attacked with weapons, while others were bleeding as if they had been poisoned. Yet others were acting oddly, eating too much, arguing, and indulging in other improper behavior.
- He's afraid the attacker is still nearby; that's why he wants aid from the town. He is unsure who the attacker might be.

While Oswyn feels pity for the monks, he knows the Vikings might come back. With Svein and two-thirds of his hearthweru hunting Vikings, Oswyn is hesitant to send out any more of the hearthweru in case the Vikings return. He'll happily recommend that the investigators go with Hothere instead. Most of the residents are unsettled by the descriptions of violence done to the monks and the violence they just experienced, so they are not willing to go. Hothere will plead and beg with the investigators to go with him—it's their Christian duty after all!

## TO THE MONASTERY

Hothere wants to leave immediately. Oswyn, feeling guilty about not being able to lend hearthweru, offers fresh riding horses to Hothere and anyone accompanying him. Since it's dark, the journey will take about five hours. The investigators can reduce that time to two hours if they push their horses into canters, requiring a successful **Ride** roll. Failure means the investigator's horse stumbles and sprains an ankle—increasing the journey time to seven hours.

As the group nears the monastery, the trees start to thin and they hear shouting, smell wood burning, and see a red glow through the trees. As the investigators emerge from the trees into the clearing, several of the monastery's support buildings are on fire and the entire monastery is backlit by an unnatural red haze. Monks and a few Vikings are out front. There are a total of ten Vikings at the monastery, sent to raid it while the larger force attacked Totburh. Some monks are fighting Vikings or other monks; other monks and Vikings are sloshing cups together; and still others are watching the buildings burn. Several bodies, both of monks and Vikings, lay dead or sleeping on the ground. Taking in the entire scene calls for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 loss).

As Hothere and the investigators enter the clearing, a monk comes running at them, stool leg raised, his face contorted in a wrathful grimace. A successful **Listen** roll lets investigators make out his cries of "*Deus vult!*" as he swings the stool leg. Hothere screams, "*Jurmin, no!*" as he dodges the



## THE DOOM THAT CAME TO WESSEX

blow. Jurmin presses his attack, swinging the stool leg at the investigators. Ideally, the investigators manage to subdue the frantic monk, rather than killing him outright. Once Jurmin has been dealt with, Hothere says that Jurmin's just a scribe in the scriptorium; his actions are most unlike him.

The burning buildings can easily be extinguished with water from the well, provided the investigators work together and aren't harried too much by the monks and Vikings.

## THE MONKS

Hothere will implore the investigators not to harm anyone. Remember that most of the monks and Vikings will be indulging in one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

The Seven Deadly, or Cardinal, Sins are considered to be the root of all other sin. The seven sins in the Dark Ages are: *luxuria* (lechery), *gula* (gluttony), *avaritia* (greed), *acedia* (sloth), *ira* (wrath), *invidia* (envy), and *superbia* (pride). Here are some ideas on how to implement them:

- *Luxuria* can be represented by a monk or Viking engaging in sex with a slave woman or by a person darting from place to place, lustful of everything going on.

- *Gula* can be represented by over-eating, eating too fast, or even eating too daintily.
- *Avaritia* can be represented by a monk pulling finery from the walls to decorate his cell or a Viking arguing with a monk over the price of a wooden cup.
- *Acedia* isn't lack of action it's despair that leads to inaction. Monks and Vikings wander about, looking forlorn or even asking an investigator why they are bothering trying to help anyone.
- *Ira* is perhaps the easiest to represent; rage, uncontrolled violence for little or no provocation. The Keeper should strive not to make every Viking a victim of this sin.
- *Invidia* can be represented by monks mocking an investigator if he or she fails at something, or a Viking attempting to steal an investigator cloak or weapon. It can also be envy of another person.
- *Superbia* is the basest of sins. It can manifest as a monk or Viking continually trying to outdo an investigator at some task, boasting loudly, or discussing their worth.

The named monks at St. Swithun's are struck with the following sins: Grimcytel—*acedia*, Hothere—*invidia*, Jurmin—*ira*, Lanfranc—*avaritia*, Mousoulios—*superbia*, and Medwin—*luxuria*.

*The Monks of St. Swithun's Monastery have fallen to Pheth's influence.*







## WHAT CAN PHÊTH DO FOR YOU?

Phêth is a demon mentioned in the *Testament of Solomon*. Within the confines of this scenario, he's a bodiless power able to manifest as a red haze. He can control people's emotions, but not people. He can drive two people into furious rage, but he cannot make them fight each other. If the two decide to team up and use their rage to cause wanton destruction, so be it, Phêth doesn't care. Chaos is chaos.

- Phêth can behave like a poltergeist, costing him 1 magic point per object. He can manipulate objects, throw casks of wine or church pews, turn the Bible's page when nobody's looking, write messages on the wall, recite Biblical verses in reverse in a mocking tone, and make blood drip down the walls. The Keeper should choose whatever behavior works best for his or her game. Witnessing any of Phêth's actions calls for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 to 1D6 loss, depending on the nature of the phenomenon).
- Phêth may possess people (including the investigators). Refer to the **Spirit Attacks and Possession** rules (page 107) for more information. He can control any number of people. Once Phêth has possessed someone he is in control of their emotions. If an investigator is possessed, the Keeper must remember that the player still controls the character, just with a heightened emotion of Phêth's choosing.
- Phêth also has the ability to make a possessed creature bleed from every orifice. He does this when he's finally tired of toying with their emotions. He can attack any number of targets during one round in this manner through an opposed **POW** roll (make one roll for Phêth compared to each of the victim's POW). Those losing the opposed roll to Phêth lose 1D4 hit points as blood spurts from his or her body. It costs him 1 magic point per person, per round.

While the investigators are interesting targets, Hothere and the other monks are much more tempting. Of course, the Keeper doesn't need to make any rolls to determine whether Hothere or another monk becomes possessed. Instead, at a dramatically appropriate moment, Hothere becomes the embodiment of one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Keepers looking to tie Phêth to the Mythos can make Phêth a particularly intelligent lloigor, an entity from beyond Earth, or possibly a spawn or avatar of Nyarlathotep.

## Events and Clues in the Monastery

The following clues are available at the monastery. The Keeper should portray both the oddness and the horror of the events at the monastery. People are acting out of character and suddenly expiring in violent and bloody ways.

- Searching the monastery and its environs turns up no source of the unusual red glow. The cloister itself isn't on fire. Even if the burning outbuildings are extinguished, the red glow remains, lighting up the night.
- The monks are acting oddly. A successful **Religion** roll after observing the monks and Vikings reveals that they're indulging in the Seven Deadly Sins.
- While the investigators are talking to a monk or Viking, he will start to convulse, then blood will spew from his mouth, followed by his eyes, ears, and nose. Call for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss).
- Abbot Grimcytel will be in his cell, staring at the walls. The phrase, "*Relinquo totus spes*" written in blood covers the walls, over and over. A successful **Latin** roll reveals the phrase means, "Abandon all hope." Grimcytel will not respond to investigators unless they succeed with an **Insight** roll, in which case he gazes at them and begins repeating, "*Tuatame ex infernis*" meaning, "liberate me from the fire."
- Medwin will appear and follow the investigators around, trying to one-up them, to the point of risking his life.
- Mousoulios can be found wandering from the kitchen to the cellar, explaining how great a trader he is, how his wine is the best in the world, and insisting they try some. He'll take them to the casks he brought and start sloshing out wine. A **Spot Hidden** roll may reveal that one of the barrels has strange symbols carved into it. The symbols are faded and hard to read. An investigator able to read Greek can translate the symbols to mean, "I am called Phêth. I make men consumptive and cause hemorrhagia." Otherwise Mousoulios can read it for them, if the investigators can get him to concentrate for a moment (requiring a **Charm**, **Intimidate**, or **Persuade** roll). If asked where he got that cask, Mousoulios will obfuscate before admitting he found it in the ruins of a Byzantine monastery while journeying abroad.
- Lanfranc can be found with Mousoulios trying to negotiate better deals for trade goods. He'll argue with the Greek over the shoddy quality of Mousoulios' goods. A successful **Accounting** or **Appraise** roll reveals that there's nothing shoddy about Mousoulios' wares. Alternatively, Lanfranc can be found in the kitchen, carefully cataloging everything recently acquired from Mousoulios. If the investigators talk to him, he'll point out the six excellent casks of wine, including one that's the sweetest he's ever tasted and one that's turned to vinegar. The infected cask is the sweet one. The cask can be destroyed and the wine will soak into the ground (this has no impact on Phêth).



## THE DOOM THAT CAME TO WESSEX

- The scriptorium has little of value. The room is in disarray, Jurmin's first act of rage was to scatter papers and ink everywhere. If he's still free and alive, he'll come in here when the investigators do and lash out at them for destroying his work, throwing invectives and castigating them for not following God's ways; they act like worldly men when they should be living like Hygerd and leading a simple and holy life. Eventually, unless otherwise restrained, he'll launch himself at them, fists raised.
- Call for periodic **Spot Hidden** rolls to see if any of the investigators notice an amorphous presence in the monastery. Those rolling successes see movement out of the corner or their eyes, but when they turn to look there's nothing there (possible **Sanity** roll; 0/1 loss).
- Although the monks do not notice anything different about their own behavior, all are able to comment on the oddness of their fellows and that the "other monks" started acting strange this afternoon—when Mousoulios was preparing to leave.
- Only Lanfranc knows that the new casks, the casks from Mousoulios, were tapped about two days ago.
- Hothere's possession and change should be sudden and when the investigators least expect it. He'll begin cursing Hygerd, the anchorite in Totburh, who believes himself so holy when in reality he is the most corrupt of all the monks. That's why he was banished from the monastery.
- Phêth will perform his poltergeist tricks as the investigators move around the monastery.

## BACK IN TOTBURH

The investigators might want to return to Totburh for reinforcements or to speak to Hygerd, the anchorite (page 237). Svein and the hearthweru return by dawn, but they were not successful in chasing down any more Vikings, who shoved off and headed back down the Severn toward the sea.

Now that his bodyguard is back up to full force, Oswyn is more inclined to send ten hearthweru with the investigators, if they request it. Oswyn will be very concerned to hear about the monks, especially when the Vikings are mentioned, however he will be unwilling (afraid) to go to the monastery himself; he thinks it all sounds like the work of a demon.

Talking to the priests in Totburh (Eadda, Earnwulf, or Halfdene) about the strange behavior in the monastery will net different, but correct, responses:

- Eadda believes the men have come under the sway of a demon and only an exorcism will heal them.

- Earnwulf is concerned; it sounds like the monks have resorted to base sins, but he has little idea about what could have caused it.
- Halfdene thinks the monks must have fallen deep in their cups; perhaps too much mead!
- Eadda and Earnwulf will both suggest talking to Hygerd. If the investigators press Halfdene, he'll say that talking to Hygerd isn't a bad idea. After all, Hygerd was a monk at the monastery.

## HYGERD'S RAVINGS

Hygerd is the anchorite at Halfdene's church. He's walled up in a small cell and speaks to people through a shuttered window. He's currently having a bad day. Phêth's corruption of the monks is somehow affecting Hygerd, driving him deeper into madness. If the investigators approach the window, Hygerd snarls and charges up to the opening, ranting and raving.

The investigators cannot get into the room with him; they must talk through the window. If the investigators ask about events at the monastery, Hygerd will rant the following over the course of three hours. Most of what Hygerd says is rambling, incoherent, and troubling; however, the following clue is delivered as and when the Keeper sees fit. Keepers may also wish to plant future scenario seeds, woven into Hygerd's dialogue. To provide players with the full impact of the speech, the Keeper should refer to the section on the **Oral Tradition** (page 99).

Read aloud or paraphrase the following (summarized) clue from Hygerd:

*"The monastery burns! It burns in the sweet smell of Pan's pissings. And lo, I am King Solomon, come to render unto thee. I am the master of the air, the earth, the flame, and the wave. The red glow is his coming. The twenty-seventh of Lord Sabaoth. Bathed in the pressing of uva Phêth has come. If one exorcise me in wine, sweet-smelling and unmixed by the eleventh aeon, and say: 'I exorcise thee by the eleventh aeon to stop, I demand, Phêth,' then give it to the patient to drink, and I at once retreat. Bathed in the blood of many, he lurks below."*

- Benefits from hearing the story: Occult +4%, Religion +3%; **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss); three hours to hear and comprehend.



At a suitable point, Hygerd disappears from view, exhausted by his ranting, and falls silent. Successful **Listen** rolls reveal a soft snoring coming from within the cell.

If asked, the priests will be willing to try to interpret Hygerd's rant:

- The Lord Sabaoth may refer to an army or host.
- Phêth is one of the many named demons of hell (a successful **Occult** roll also reveals this).
- The priests suggest that Hygerd may have provided the exorcism ritual for this demon, since all-powerful demons have special exorcism rites unique to them.
- According to some heretical teachings, mankind is currently in the 11th Aeon and that the world is prophesized to end in the 12th Aeon (a successful **Occult** or **Religion** roll also reveals this).
- Unmixed wine is wine not tempered with water.

## BACK TO THE MONASTERY

The investigators hopefully have a rough idea of how to free the monastery. Unmixed wine (wine not tempered with water) can be found in Totburh, in Oswyn's stores. Oswyn will need a successful **Persuade** or **Fast Talk** roll to allow the investigators to relive him of his wine, although a successful **Religion** roll may also swing it if the investigator's play-up the demon connection. Oswyn will provide a cart to move the wine if asked. Unmixed wine may also be found at the monastery.

Oswyn is willing to send ten hearthweru to deal with the Vikings. He'd prefer to capture and ransom them rather than kill them, allowing him to buy peace for a season or two from the Norsemen.

Once again, as the investigators approach the monastery, the red glow is visible, but from a greater distance this time.

## EXORCISM

The investigators can perform an exorcism however they see fit, but they will probably proceed in one of two ways:

- They can give each possessed person a cup of unmixed wine and provide the exorcism individually, chanting the words "*I exorcise thee by the eleventh aeon to stop, I demand, Phêth.*"
- Or they can pour the unmixed wine into the infected cask and exorcise the demon that way.

During the exorcism, Phêth will fight back. He'll agitate monks and Vikings with rage, trying to drive them against the investigators. He'll possess any hearthweru. If Phêth

feels he's in danger of being exorcised, he'll raise up dead monks and Vikings as zombies to attack the investigators. Finally, he'll offer deals to the investigators: riches, power, or immortality. All demonic deals, however, come with a price. To exorcise Phêth, the investigator leading the chant must win an opposed **POW** roll against Phêth's POW of 135. Every time the chant is said, Phêth's POW is reduced by 10 points; other investigators also saying the chant further reduces Phêth's POW by 10 points. Thus, six investigators saying the chant reduce Phêth's POW by 60 points; this can be done each round, reducing Phêth's POW even further. Describe to the players that Phêth is growing more and more angry each time the chant is spoken, as further evidenced by the chaos and turmoil increasingly targeting them. Of course, the players will not know that the chant mechanically reduces the demon's POW, but allow them to understand that it does somehow weaken him. When they feel ready, have the lead exorcist make the opposed POW roll. If successful, Phêth's is exorcised (see next section). If unsuccessful, they can try again on the following round—as long as they can hold out against whatever Phêth is throwing at them.

If Phêth is exorcised, there's a large thunderclap that sends a shockwave throughout the monastery. Bricks and stones shudder in their mortar, possibly falling free, and everybody is forcefully knocked to the ground for 1D6 points of damage; those succeeding with a Dodge or Jump roll take no damage.

The red glow fades quickly and the monks and Vikings return to normal over the next half an hour. The monks immediately prepare to pray for forgiveness for their actions (they can remember all that they did). The Vikings either try to flee or fight, depending on whether the investigators are

## DEALING WITH A DEMON

If an investigator accepts a deal, they will be bound to protect Phêth forever, starting immediately. If an investigator accepts riches, he'll be robbed blind in a month. If he accepts power, he will always have to be on the watch for assassins. If he accepts immortality, he will exist forever, but not in his present state. His body will continue to age and weaken (perhaps ultimately becoming a corrupted, zombie-like, husk of a man). Think about how such bargains can play into your future scenarios—each should have a sting in their tail!







armed and the hearthweru is present.

## CONCLUSION AND REWARDS

If the investigators can rid the monastery of Phêth, the abbot and monks will be grateful. Grimcytel offers future assistance to the investigators if they should ever need it (this possibly could include allowing the investigators to look at the monastery's occult and Mythos tomes).

If Phêth is not exorcised, he continues to possess everyone who visits the monastery for the following month. After this, he grows bored and rides a possessed person to Totburh where he can further spread chaos. Such events may provide further complications and trouble for the investigators at the discretion of the Keeper.

- Restoring order to the monastery by exorcising Phêth: +1D4 Sanity points.
- Running the Vikings out of town/monastery: +1D3 Sanity points.

## APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

Statistics for many of the NPCs already appear in the Totburh chapter and won't be repeated here.

### Viking, typical raider

**STR** 80   **CON** 85   **SIZ** 80   **DEX** 60   **INT** 50  
**APP** 50   **POW** 65   **EDU** 45   **SAN** 60   **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4   **Build:** 1   **Move:** 8   **MP:** 13

#### Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
Sword 60% (30/12), damage 1D8+1D4  
Spear 45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4 (+1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Climb 40%, Insight 40%, First Aid 30%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Navigate 70%, Persuade 40%, Status 30%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm 1D8 points.

### Hearthweru, typical soldier

**STR** 80   **CON** 85   **SIZ** 80   **DEX** 60   **INT** 60  
**APP** 60   **POW** 60   **EDU** 60   **SAN** 60   **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4   **Build:** 1   **Move:** 8   **MP:** 12

#### Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4  
Spear 55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D4 (+1D2 if thrown)  
Sword 45% (22/9), damage 1D8+1D4  
Bow 40% (20/8), damage 1D8+1D2  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

#### Skills

Climb 40%, Insight 40%, Intimidate 50%, Jump 40%, Navigate 25%, Persuade 40%, Ride 45%, Status 50%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm (1D8).

### Mousoullos, age 34, Greek trader

**STR** 70   **CON** 70   **SIZ** 65   **DEX** 60   **INT** 65  
**APP** 80   **POW** 75   **EDU** 55   **SAN** 75   **HP** 13  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4   **Build:** 1   **Move:** 8   **MP:** 15

#### Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D4+1D4  
Sword 45% (22/9), damage 1D8+1D4  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Charm 60%, Insight 45%, Navigate 30%, Other Language (Old English) 35%, Persuade 60%, Read and Write (Greek) 55%.



## THE DOOM THAT CAME TO WESSEX

**Armor:** None.

### **Monks—see Totburh chapter**

STR 55   CON 70   SIZ 60   DEX 50   INT 85  
APP 65   POW 65   EDU 80   SAN 65   HP 13  
Damage Bonus: 0   Build: 0   Move: 7   MP: 13

### **Combat**

Brawl                      35% (17/7), damage 1D3  
Dodge                     25% (12/5)

### **Skills**

First Aid 50%, Insight 65%, Listen 40%, Medicine 30%, Other Language (Latin) 55%, Persuade 40%, Read and Write (Latin) 35%, Read and Write (Old English) 35%, Religion 60%.

**Armor:** None.

### **Phêth (unique entity—or lloigor or avatar)**

According to the *Testament of Solomon*, Phêth is the 27<sup>th</sup> demon in the Sabaoth (Host of Hell). A spreader of disease and sorrow, Phêth delights in causing suffering. He'd rather sow misery than engage in direct confrontation.

He appears as a red glow just outside of a person's peripheral vision, although the longer he remains in one place the stronger the red glow becomes. If he expends 5 POW, he can appear as a ten-foot tall human with two heads, bathed in a hellish hue. His eyes glow red and his mouths are filled with razor sharp teeth and two-foot long snake tongues. While he remains insubstantial in this form and unable to be harmed by mundane weapons, he may pretend to be wounded to confuse and mislead, appearing later unharmed.

### **Special Abilities:**

**Poltergeist:** Phêth can expend 1 magic point to move things, throw things, cause blood to run down walls, speak in

whispers, write on walls, or any suitably creepy thing. If he throws an object at someone, he uses his Throw skill.

**Possession:** Phêth may possess people. Refer to the **Spirit Attacks and Possession** rules (page 107). He only controls their emotions. He can control any number of people at a time.

**Hemorrhagic bleeding:** Once in control of a person's emotions, Phêth can cause 1D4 damage per round by an opposed POW roll versus the target's POW. It costs him 1 magic point per person, per round. He can attack any number of targets during one round in this manner (make one roll for Phêth compared to each of the victim's POW).

### **PHÊTH, demon of sin**

STR —   CON —   SIZ 105   DEX —   INT —  
APP —   POW 135   EDU —   SAN —   HP —  
Damage Bonus: —   Build: —   Move: —   MP: 27

### **Combat**

#### **Attacks per round: 1**

Throw                      60% (30/12), damage by object thrown (1D4 to 1D6)

Hemorrhagic Bleeding   Opposed **POW** roll, damage 1D4, cost 1 MP (see note)

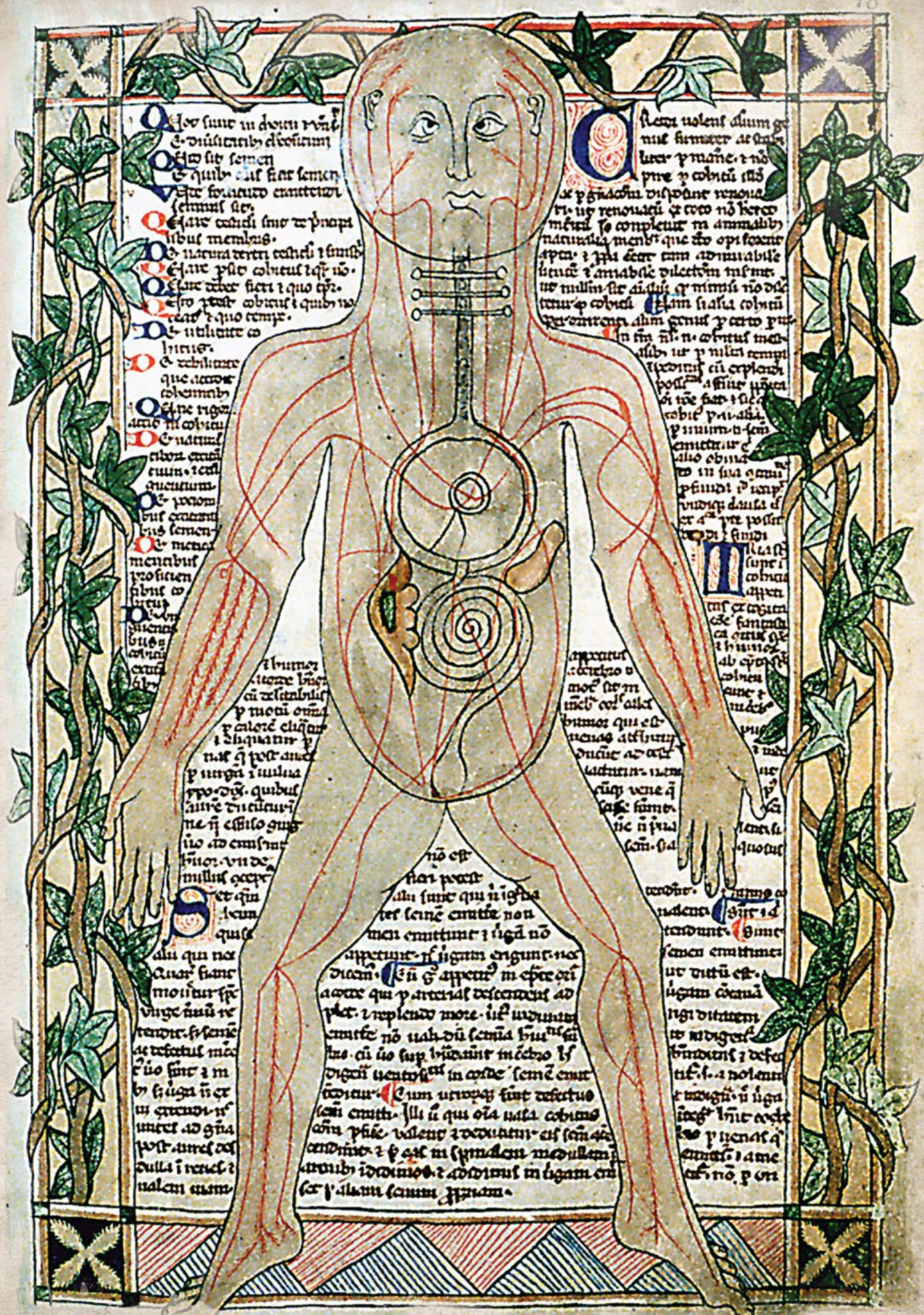
### **Skills**

Insight 65%, Persuade 80%, Religion 99%, Throw 60%, others as the Keeper desires.

**Armor:** Phêth cannot be injured by mundane physical weapons.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1 to see Phêth out of the corner of the eye; 1D3/1D10 to see him take humanoid form.



[illegible]

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pne p cobitū illū  
de p gndom dispant renoua  
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mētū se compleuit ra animalib  
natiuitatē mētib que tū opī facit  
apta. i pū ēcat tam admirabile  
utū ē amabile dilectum mīme  
ut nullū sit aliqd q mīmū nō dī  
tetur q cobitū. Nam hīaū cobitū  
pū sūntora alim genū p ceto pū  
In fin nī. nī cobitū mē  
alib ut p mētū temp  
pūntū cū copulā  
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i tūe sūntū i sūntū  
cobitū pūntū  
pūntū nī sūntū  
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tū in sūntū  
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pūntū dūntū  
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i. huius  
ab aqua  
colmen  
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accidit. **S**icut et  
malicia. **S**icut et  
tandunt. **S**icut  
femen emulthime  
ut vitu est.  
ugam cotua  
ngi ditatam  
to miger  
bimont; defec  
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lo puenat q  
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## ESEWEALD

**E**seweald is an investigative scenario set in the dark forests along the Severn.

Totburh lives under the shadow of war. A decades-long peace with the neighboring Cymri hangs in tatters and Norsemen incursions up the Severn have grown bolder. It won't be long before the sea wolves lay siege to Totburh.

Oswyn, the thegn, is beside himself in worry. Totburh's hearthweru can fight off the Cymri or the Norse if it comes down to it, but a war on two fronts is unwinnable. To save his town, he sent a delegation led by his son to negotiate a new peace with the Cymric village of Corduon. If peace can be forged there, Oswyn can swing the might of Totburh to bear on the Norsemen. If his son fails, then so too might Totburh.

It's been two weeks and there's been no word of Oswyn's son. The thegn's doubts and worries are mounting, not only for Totburh but also for his son. Thus, Oswyn decides to send a new delegation to secure the peace and to find his son.

## KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

Horig, a foul entity, lies beneath the forest floor, fomenting disease and rot. Served by both depraved humans and creatures out of the darkest recesses of folklore, the god-like being subsists on sacrifices.

The recent political turmoil has brought Horig new food—the two delegations: the Anglo-Saxon and the Cymric, who have both fallen into its clutches. The investigators are tasked with finding one of the missing delegations, as well as their thegn's son; all while the three communities stand on the precipice of war.

In this scenario, the Mythos is not the driving threat. The Cymric and Norsemen both pose real threats to Totburh, while the Mythos is only the unintentional catalyst. The Mythos must be dealt with in order to attempt to stop the bloodshed.

Keepers should be aware that this scenario is not linear. The investigators might travel from one point to another and then back again, so it's best if the Keeper has at least an idea of what might happen at any location. In addition, there is unlikely to be a true resolution to the Mythos threat unless the investigators dig deep. The investigators might stop the war and they might even be party to the founding of a new folk tale—one that warns travelers away from a certain section of the forest—however, the Mythos, in all its fecundity, will continue to grow.

This scenario is laid out by location, in the most likely order that investigators will visit. Very few explicit skill rolls are called for; instead, the Keeper is encouraged to call for rolls only when it's dramatically appropriate. Many of the NPCs have a secret, which is information that won't be parted with easily. Some secrets provide deeper clues, some lead to red herrings, and others just provide roleplaying opportunities. The Keeper should not feel the need to involve each and every secret.

Keepers should refer to the maps and information found in the chapter describing Totburh (page 191).

## INVESTIGATORS' INTRODUCTION

It's a warm summer day when the investigators are summoned to the thegn's residence in Totburh. Oswyn, the normally calm thegn, is beside himself in frustration. It's common knowledge that Totburh is under pressure from the Norsemen who live down the Severn. To compound matters, the Cymric in the Gwentish town of Corduon have been raiding Totburh land, stealing cattle and burning fields.

What's not common knowledge, Oswyn explains, is that he sent a group of six hearthweru, under the leadership of his son, Wlencing, to Corduon to renegotiate a long-standing peace treaty. Wlencing had in his possession several gold arm



rings, similar to those that Oswyn is wearing, that were to be offered to the men of Gwent as a gift. Oswyn is not sure why the men of Corduon broke the existing treaty, but he thinks it has much to do with a recent spat between the Gwentish and English leaders.

The six hearthweru have been gone for two weeks, which Oswyn feels is too long for comfort. Corduon is only a three-day ride away. He wants to know what has happened to his men, especially his son. He implores the investigators to bring back his son, either to rejoin the family or for burial. He knows that some of the people of Totburh may be able to provide some insight into the places the investigators will travel to: Earnwulf the priest has been to Corduon, and Wihtgar, the market reeve, and Guthlaf, the herdsman, may have once been to the Cymric lands.

To make matters even worse, a long ship was spotted on the Severn this morning—the Keeper could have the investigators be the ones to spot the ship in the morning's light. Without a doubt, the Norsemen are getting braver.

## INFORMATION IN TOTBURH

Encourage the investigators to gather what information they can by asking around the town. Following are some of the residents and what they have to say about current events and Corduon. Refer to Totburh (page 191) for further information and statistics for the residents.

### The Hearthweru

If the investigators ask about the six men who went on the mission, they learn that Wlencing, Osred, Ingar, Alfgar, Cenric, and Edwulf, took part. Svein, leader of the hearthweru, believes them all to be good men, although he doubts Wlencing's leadership ability and believes Wlencing may be the cause of any misfortune that befell the group. Insightful investigators may notice that Svein's temper is flaring (a nerve has been touched). All the men were experienced warriors with several campaigns against the Norsemen under their belts.

**Secret:** Probing deeper into Svein's comments about Wlencing, possibly by asking another member of the hearthweru, reveals that Svein's dislike of Wlencing is a result of Wlencing's fondness for Æsa, Svein's daughter. If confronted with this information, Svein flies into a rage. Depending on how the investigators react, he may attack them.

### Æsa, Svein's daughter

Æsa can easily be found practicing her spear and shield techniques against some practice dummies. If asked about Wlencing, the frustration on her face is obvious. She has

no feelings for Wlencing beyond what one member of the hearthweru has for another. The boy is always trying to get her attention with bolder and bolder stunts, little of which impresses Æsa. Prior to leaving a couple weeks ago, Wlencing boasted that he'd earn the respect of the Corduon warriors one way or another and bring her a trophy of his victory.

**Secret:** Æsa overheard Wlencing telling the five men accompanying him that he will bring back the heads of any Cymric warriors he meets. The other hearthweru tried to counsel him against that course of action, but Wlencing looked determined to follow-up his boasts with action.

### Eadda, parish priest

The firebrand village priest has a low opinion of the Cymri, going so far as to call them "Welsh," or "foreigners." He disagrees vehemently with the Celtic Christianity they practice, holding it akin to idolatry and a sure path to Hell. Eadda believes that anyone who intends to cross the river into Cymric territory should first seek out a priest for a blessing.

**Secret:** Eadda's been having visions of an old hag with no eyes. The hag cackles as she couples with him and then reaches down and plucks out his eyes and eats them. When the investigators approach Eadda, he's sketching an image of the hag in the margin of one of his psalms. He'll quickly try to hide it as they approach. This is a red herring, but the vision can possibly put the investigators on edge when they meet the hermit later on.

### Halfdene, parish priest

Halfdene saw the men of the hearthweru leaving and spoke to Cenric as they passed by. The men didn't seem overly nervous. Cenric said they were on important business for the thegn, but would not divulge what it was.

**Secret:** Cenric expressed serious doubts about Wlencing's ability to lead the group. Cenric asked Halfdene to pray for his soul, should he not return.

### Wifrun, Halfdene's wife

One of the village's wise-women, Wifrun will recount a dream she has had four times since the hearthweru left. The dream depicts a lone man running from flaming ravens before abruptly changing to a man rising from a bog, his lifeless eyes locked with Wifrun's. Just before she wakes, the head says, "*Ware the flame's feast.*"

This dream is a reference to Ingar's flight from the pucel and the beheaded Cymric warrior whose head finds its way into the charcoal burner's stewpot (see **The Charcoal Burners**, page 247).



**Secret:** Ingar, one of the hearthweru on the mission, asked Wifrun to provide him with a charm against evil spirits. He was afraid of what he'd encounter as they passed into the forest on the other side of the river.

### Hygerd, anchorite

The anchorite is locked safely in his chamber. If the investigators seek him out, or maybe even just overhear his ravings as they pass by, he screams for them to, "*Rouse not the honey'ed lord with bone crown; for he 'as killed all that in battle-sweat drown.*" If they confront Hygerd, he continues frothing at the mouth, "The feeder of ravens must tread carefully lest he be the feeder of tree-sponge."

The first clue is a hint at the massive, undead bear that slumbers over Horig; however, the leader of Corduon, Anwar, has honey-blond hair and has stag antlers mounted above his chair in the hall, which may cause some confusion. The second clue is merely a warning that overly martial investigators, the feeders of ravens, must be wary of Horig and the fungal spores.

**Secret:** Hygerd's too insane to have secrets. If he thinks it, there's a good chance he'll say it.

### Earnwulf, manorial priest

The priest saw the hearthweru before they left. As one of Oswyn's trusted advisors, he knows the group's goal. He'll confirm everything that Oswyn has already told them, but also that the men all sought Earnwulf's blessing. He willingly gave the men a blessing but only when they promised to strive for peaceful reconciliation.

Earnwulf traveled to Corduon several times as a younger man, spending a lot of time among the Cymric, both in Corduon and elsewhere in Gwent. Despite Eadda's proclamations to the contrary, Earnwulf believes the Cymri to be good Christians who follow a slightly different path. He only wishes they were less warlike and superstitious.

**Secret:** Osred, one of the hearthweru, took Earnwulf aside and admitted he was worried about the dark folk that live in the Cymric forests. Earnwulf counseled Osred that the dark folk were just superstitions, but gave the man a wooden cross to carry, to ease his nerves.

### Wihtgar, market reeve

The market reeve has traveled to Corduon numerous times in the past for trade. He was unimpressed with the town and its people, thinking them uncivilized and more than willing to lie to get what they wanted. In his mind, the Cymri he dealt with were always a little too eager to reach for blades when a situation became tense. Those who know Wihtgar

realize he can be a bit abrasive, so the Cymric reactions might not be that far off.

**Secret:** Wihtgar was attacked on the road near Corduon once by a large, sick-looking wolf. He's ashamed to admit that he chose to run rather than stay and fight. He always thought it was the pet of one of the Corduon hunters.

### Guthlaf, herder

The herdsman has roamed from Totburh to Corduon and places further afield over the course of his life while tending flocks. Guthlaf considers the Cymri to be good neighbors. They've never bothered him as he's traveled and he's even dined with some of the charcoal burners deep in the forest. The charcoal burners intended to sacrifice Guthlaf to Horig, but the shepherd proved immune to Horig's call and escaped, without realizing he was escaping or having any awareness of Horig.

He will warn about the evil spirits that lurk deep in the woods. He's heard they lead men into temptation.

**Secret:** Guthalf has encountered the pucel on his travels. He saw their torchlight and followed it, thinking it was a dwelling. However, he was never able to get close to the light; each time he came close, the light suddenly went out and he found himself far from the road and lost. That's how he met Omagh and the People. He was "rescued" by Omagh from the pucel (who had planned to sacrifice him).

### Other Totburh Residents

Very few people knew of Wlencing's mission. It is common knowledge that the six members of the hearthweru are not in town, but they don't know why. Most folk simply assume the men are on a hunt.

### Rumors about the Forest

The Forest of Dean is a massive, old forest. Everyone in Totburh knows about it and can provide basic information. Odds are the investigators will know this information if they're from Totburh. The Keeper could spread any of this information among various Totburh NPCs, playing up the mystery of the forest. Even though it's not far from Totburh, most people have only passed through it and not plumbed its hidden depths.

The forest serves as a buffer between the Cymric kingdom of Gwent and Anglo-Saxon England. Wolves and bears both prowl the forest, as do numerous hunters and herders from both cultures. Rumors persist of a lost monastery, one that was founded but never heard from again after a comet passed overhead. Others tell of mad hermits that wander through the shadows, luring unsuspecting travelers into traps. Then,



there are the bandits; men who've been cast-off from society and now subsist by robbing travelers, usually leaving them for dead, strung up from trees. Some bandits are even Pagans, in league with the Devil. Worse still, some say the Devil himself haunts the darkest recesses of the forest; calling witches to his side so that they can dance and fornicate, spawning evil, foul creatures.

## HEADING OUT

The road leaving Totburh, heading through the forest, eventually connects to Corduon and varies from a wide dirt road near Totburh to a barely detectable track as it passes through the forest. Skilled trackers can determine that a large force of perhaps 20 men moved along the road recently. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll can find torn clothes, punctured water skins, and other cast-offs—some inscribed with Norse runes. These are the remnants of an advance Viking war band that's moving through the area to meet with Corduon.

Whether or not the Norsemen pose a threat to the investigators is up to the Keeper. But, having to avoid a Viking patrol could add tension to their mission.

The forest is old. The trees block out most of the sunlight the deeper one travels. Where the forest is thickest (near the center), the sun barely penetrates, rendering the forest in dusk, even at noon. The pucel have free reign in this area.

The forest is cool, even at the height of summer, and unexpected gusts of wind suddenly flare up. A sweetly sick scent often wafts upon the breeze. The further one travels into the woods, the more it feels like someone is watching.

## THE CAMP

The Cymric and Anglo-Saxon delegations met at a small campsite not far from the road. Sharp-eyed investigators can notice it from the road or see the hints of week-old tracks leaving the road. The camp is in good condition. There are tracks for about 12 men and an intermingling of Anglo-Saxon and Cymric goods. There's no sign of the gold rings, but a finely wrought cloak-clasp can be found under an overturned pot. The tracks all leave the camp heading north in an orderly fashion, fanning out the farther they get from the camp.

Not far from the camp lies Ingar, one of the hearthweru. He has a few superficial scratches and scrapes from running through the forest, but no other physical wounds. He has dried blood crusted around his eyes, nose, and mouth—an effect of the hemorrhaging caused by the disease he contracted from Horig. In one hand he clutches a wooden stick covered in symbols written in dried blood;

a protective amulet he received from Wifrun. In his other hand is a torn shred of cloth with gold thread woven through in a knot work pattern. This is from Omagh's cloak that ripped when Ingar fled. Ingar is near death. If anyone approaches, he gurgles the word, "*Pucel*," as fungus bursts through his neck, spraying spores everywhere. Call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss).

About a half-mile from the camp, deeper into the woods, is another body lying in a gully. This one belongs to Wadu, one of the Cymric warriors. Wadu's head has been brutally hacked off. The head is now in Omagh's stew pot (see **The Charcoal Burners**, page 247).

There are also child-sized footprints scattered about, starting a half-mile or so from the camp. They appear for five or six steps and then disappear, only to be picked up later. They mill about, moving back and forth. Sharp-eyed trackers might spot bits of ash on the ground. These are the traces of the pucel, leading the two delegations to Horig's glade.

## CORDUON

Corduon, like Totburh, is surrounded by a wooden palisade. The town is on a war footing. Warriors are armed and smiths can be heard producing more tools. If they ask about the missing Anglo-Saxons, they're met by a mix of confusion and hatred. Corduon sent a delegation to Totburh and haven't heard from them in several weeks, and there's been no sign of anyone from Totburh. The town is preparing to launch a campaign to rescue their men from Totburh!

Anwar, the leader of Corduon, will meet with the investigators. Honey-blond haired, he sits on a chair in his hall with numerous stag antlers covering the wall behind him. To his side stand several Norsemen. Anwar is angry about what he perceives to be treachery on Totburh's part and is actively negotiating with the Norse to form an alliance against the Anglo-Saxons. Relations had been strained for a while between the Anglo-Saxons and Cymri because of politics in Gwent. The recent Cymric raids had been carried out without Anwar's consent and he's punishing those involved. However, if Totburh is responsible for the missing delegation, Anwar will toss aside any semblance of reconciliation.

Anwar's son, Eiddol, led the Cymric expedition to Totburh. Like Oswyn, he wants his son back. He won't supply any aid to the investigators, as he's suspicious of their intent. But he does offer them safe travel through his territory and gives them one week to return his son—or else he will start a war with Totburh!

If presented with the cloak-clasp found at the campsite, Anwar becomes slightly more conciliatory. However, the Norsemen around him will try to goad Anwar's anger by



telling him the investigators are using the clasp as proof that they have Eiddol in their custody.

Asking around in Corduon about the forest reveals that most people believe it's haunted. The pwka stalk the forest at night, luring lone travelers off the trails and into traps. Some very powerful pwka even have the ability to take human form. Several of the Cymri also fear a powerful witch, said to live in the forest. She's ensnared more than one man with her magic and these men are never heard from again.

## THE HERMIT

The hermit is Eurwen, an old, Cymric woman. She's a former nun who still wears a tattered, filthy habit. She is the loathsome witch that the folk in Corduon fear. She's been in the forest for decades, living in a small lean-to. She bears more than a passing resemblance to the woman Eadda sketched, except she has eyes clouded by cataracts. She knows of the pucel, the People, and Horig. But, she doesn't give out such information freely. If she's provided with ample food and, if possible, wine, she'll provide a riddle for the investigators:

*Once crowned in green,  
Graced by the light of heaven,  
The mighty earth rent  
As the sky-born seeks a new home.  
By what wanderers cold most desire,  
Lung-taker stalks the traveler  
Delivering his prize to the heart.  
The warmth bearers keep the foe at bay  
And feed the guard of ring eternal.*

## THE PUCEL

The pucel are one of Horig's most powerful agents in the forest. They appear in the night as flickering lights off in the distance and try to lure victims into Horig's grasp. If a pucel is cornered or trapped, it lashes out, willing to fight to the death.

See **Appendix A** (see page 250) for the pucel's statistics.

## THE CHARCOAL BURNERS

As the investigators travel through the forest, they may encounter the charcoal burners, particularly their leader, Omagh, a devotee of Horig. Omagh and his wife, Teleri, live in a hut not far from the edge of the Eseweald. A pucel in human form often poses as their child, Adda, in an attempt to lure travelers to their doom.

Teleri will be either preparing food or making charcoal, while Adda runs around playing. If the investigators

stumble upon the hut on their own, Omagh and Teleri welcome them in.

If investigators are ensnared by a pucel's wiles, Omagh might "save" them—just so he can deliver them to Horig himself.

Regardless of how the investigators arrive, the family is welcoming and offers to share their meager meal of stew. The hut is dark and crammed full of stuff. If investigators snoop around they find six armbands that match the ones Oswyn mentioned (gifts for Anwar in Corduon). There is also a stash of Anglo-Saxon and Cymric weapons tucked under a table surmounted by the massive stew pot.

Omagh appears very helpful. He'll tell the investigators he witnessed a brutal fight between a group of Anglo-Saxons and Cymri; there were several deaths. The combatants ran off into the woods fighting, toward the center of the forest. He'll offer to take the investigators to where they were headed. Adda will accompany the party as well, waiting for an opportune time to shed his human guise.

Unbeknownst to the investigators, the head of Wadu, one of the Cymric soldiers, rests at the bottom of the stew pot, adding a certain flavor. If the investigators find the head, perhaps because they find too many long blond hairs in their soup or a tussle overturns the table, call for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss).

See **Appendix A** (see page 249) for Omagh and Teleri's statistics.

## THE ESEWEALD

This is the center of the forest, a ring about a mile in diameter surrounding the grove of Horig. Within this area, Horig controls the trees, able to shift them as it sees fit. It is also darkest here, a near-perpetual gloaming. Anyone who has traveled this far will see severely diseased animals that, if they could beg for death, would do so.

Horig can drain CON from investigators in this area and will do so. Anyone within the Eseweald must make a **POW** roll each hour. The first time POW is checked it's against a character's full POW, however subsequent POW rolls are Hard. If the investigator fails the POW roll, 1D10 CON points are lost and can be described as a strange, unaccountable lethargy that saps the vitality of those affected. This continues until the investigator leaves the Eseweald or falls unconscious in Horig's Grove (make a **CON** roll per hour once CON has been reduced by half). Once a victim leaves the Eseweald, CON is regained at the rate of 1D10 per week, up to the character's starting value.

Note that a reduction in CON points will affect (reduce) an investigator's damage bonus.



## HORIG'S GROVE

The grove is about 400-feet in diameter, with a large ring of toadstools in the center and a bubbling spring off to one side. There are several men, both Anglo-Saxon and Cymric, hanging from the trees from chains around their wrists. Some are moaning, some are dead, and several have been rent asunder with their entrails hanging loose, vines intertwined with their organs, while fungi sprouts from their orifices. The men who are not already dead beg to be killed. Other, older corpses litter the ground, strewn amid the trees throughout the clearing.

Within the toadstool ring are four men who appear to be sleeping, one of whom is Oswyn's son, Wlencing. A fifth man, Eideol, dances manically, as if possessed, around the ring. It's obvious he's way past exhaustion, but something is driving him on.

The carcass of a massive bear rests on the far side of the mushroom ring. Fungi and other plants sprout from various openings in the carcass, including from its rotted scalp, which is nothing but exposed bone. The entire scene calls for **Sanity** roll (1D6/1D10 loss).

If Omagh is present, he will encourage the investigators to stay as long as possible in the grove (knowing that the longer they stay, the weaker they become due to Horig feasting on their CON). When they appear weak enough, he will try to push the investigators into the toadstool ring. If any investigators pass out from CON loss, he'll try to lash them

to a nearby tree. At this point, the pucel may appear from the Eseweald to help Omagh prepare the investigators as sacrifices to Horig.

The toadstools look normal, but close inspection means that the onlooker has inhaled their otherworldly odor, meaning that they must make a **POW** roll: if successful, nothing happens; if failed, the victim is driven into a frenzied dance around the mushroom ring, perhaps joining Eideol in a jig. While dancing, the investigator must make a **Hard CON** roll: if successful, he or she snaps out of the dance; if failed, the victim collapses unconscious within the ring and may also become a carrier for Horig's virulent plague (cumulative 5% chance per 5 minutes spent in the ring). The Keeper should pick a suitable disease from the **Diseases Table** (page 112).

Note that there is a 5% chance that anyone who falls asleep in the mushroom ring, whether through Horig's machinations or not, will awaken in Limbo, the Dreamlands, or somewhere much, much worse at the Keeper's discretion.

If desired, the Keeper can also have the bear awoken as soon as someone steps into the clearing; otherwise, if anyone touches the carcass or attempts to harm the mushroom ring, the bear awakens, possessed by Horig, to attack the miscreants.

See **Appendix A** (see pages 249-250) for Omagh, the pucel, and the bear's statistics.





## AFTERMATH

Depending on the outcome of the investigator's actions, award the following Sanity gains:

- If the investigators are successful in rescuing Wlencing and any other members of the Anglo-Saxon or Cymric delegations, they receive 1D6 Sanity points and gain 1D4 Status with the appropriate community.
- If the investigators rescue Cymric prisoners as well as Anglo-Saxons, then Corduon will ally itself with Totburh. If however, the investigators fail to rescue anyone or leave the Cymric victims behind, Corduon will ally with the Norsemen and Totburh will have to prepare itself for a fight.
- If the investigators desecrate the clearing by burning trees, chopping up mushrooms, and killing the guardian bear, they receive 1D4 Sanity points. If they ever return to the clearing and see that everything has returned to its prior state, they lose 2D4 Sanity points.
- If the investigators manage to dig up Horig and destroy his core, they gain 1D8 Sanity points.

## APPENDIX A: CHARACTERS

**Note:** see Totburh (page 191) for named NPC residents.

### Viking or Cymric Warriors

**STR** 80    **CON** 85    **SIZ** 80    **DEX** 60    **INT** 50  
**APP** 50    **POW** 65    **EDU** 45    **SAN** 60    **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4    **Build:** 1    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 13

#### Combat

Brawl    55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4  
Sword    60% (30/12), damage 1D8+1D4  
Spear    45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4  
          (+1D2 if thrown)  
Dodge    30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Climb 40%, First Aid 30%, Insight 40%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Navigate 70%, Persuade 40%, Status 30%, Stealth 50%, Track 45%.

**Armor:** Chainmail and helm 1D8 points.

### Wolf

**STR** 65    **CON** 55    **SIZ** 40    **DEX** 65    **INT** —  
**APP** —    **POW** 50    **EDU** —    **SAN** —    **HP** 9  
**Damage Bonus:** 0    **Build:** 0    **Move:** 10    **MP:** 10

#### Combat

**Attacks per round:** 1 (bite)

Fighting    45% (22/9), damage 1D8  
Knockdown (mnvr)    the combined attack of three or more wolves equates to build 1 (increase if more gang-up); if successful the target knocked prone.  
Dodge    30% (15/6)

**Armor:** 2-point fur.

### Omagh, charcoal burner

**STR** 60    **CON** 75    **SIZ** 70    **DEX** 70    **INT** 65  
**APP** 65    **POW** 60    **EDU** 70    **SAN** 42    **HP** 14  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4    **Build:** 1    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 12

#### Combat

Brawl    50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D4+1D4  
Axe    55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1D4  
Dodge    30% (15/6)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 75%, Art/Craft (Make Charcoal), Listen 35%, Natural World 85%, Navigate 50%, Religion 55%, Persuade 60%, Spot Hidden 65%, Status 10%, Stealth 60%, Throw 45%, Track 55%.

**Armor:** None.

### Teleri, charcoal burner's wife

**STR** 70    **CON** 75    **SIZ** 60    **DEX** 75    **INT** 70  
**APP** 75    **POW** 65    **EDU** 60    **SAN** 46    **HP** 13  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4    **Build:** 1    **Move:** 8    **MP:** 9

#### Combat

Brawl    55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4, or knife 1D4+1D4  
Dodge    32% (16/6)

#### Skills

Animal Handling 85%, First Aid 45%, Insight 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 85%, Navigate 50%, Religion 55%, Status 10%, Stealth 50%.

**Armor:** None



**Pucel**

Further information about the pucel can be found on page 174.

STR 50    CON 50    SIZ 60    DEX 85    INT 70  
 APP 30    POW 85    EDU —    SAN —    HP 11  
 Damage Bonus: 0    Build: 0    Move: 8    MP: 17

**Powers**

**Mesmerizing Light:** Anyone who sees a pucel's light must make an opposed POW versus the pucel's POW: if failed, the individual feels compelled to follow the light, wherever it might lead. The pucel try to lead travelers to Horig's grove where the god can feast upon the unlucky victim(s). If an investigator doesn't fall prey to the pucel's light trick, he or she is safe for the night.

**Child-like appearance:** Pucel have the ability to appear as a human child for a number of minutes equal to their POW. They run, joke, and laugh, trying to lure travelers from their friends.

**Infection:** Being a spawn of Horig, a pucel can spread the entity's disease. When a pucel is killed, it explodes into its component pieces; an investigator might see bits of human, wolf, bat, or bear in the remains. The explosion itself can cause 1D3 damage from bone shrapnel to any within 10-feet of the dying pucel. If the damage is sufficient to overcome any armor, the investigator is infected with Horig's disease (see **Horig**, page 172).

**Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1 (by weapon)

Brawl                      60% (30/12), damage 1D4+DB,  
    or knife (1D6+DB)  
 Torch                      60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1+DB,  
    plus 1D4 fire damage  
 Dodge                      40% (20/8)

**Armor:** 2-points of heavy robes and ropy skin. If killed, investigators within 10-feet must make a Dodge roll to avoid being struck by the pucel's exploding remains (causing 1D3 damage and the risk of infection).

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D3 to see a pucel. 1D3/1D6 to see them explode into component parts.

**Bear, undead guardian**

STR 165    CON 85    SIZ 170    DEX 55    INT —  
 APP —    POW 55    EDU —    SAN —    HP 25  
 Damage Bonus: +3D6    Build: 4    Move: 14    MP: 11

**Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 2 (bite, claw, or slap)

Fighting                      50% (25/10), slap damage 3D6,  
    or claw/bite 1D6+3D6  
 Dodge                      27% (13/5)

**Skills**

Climb 50%, Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 30%.

**Armor:** 3-point fur.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D4/1D6 to see the undead bear.

**Horig**

Further information about Horig can be found in **Chapter 7**, page 172.

**Powers**

**Drain CON:** Opposed POW roll per hour while victim is in the Eseweald (Regular difficulty for first roll, Hard thereafter); failed POW roll drains 1D10 CON loss from victim. Once CON has been reduced by half, victim should make CON roll per hour or fall unconscious. Once a victim leaves the Eseweald, CON is regained at the rate of 1D10 per week, up to the character's starting value.

STR —    CON 120    SIZ 05    DEX —    INT 100  
 APP —    POW 200    EDU —    SAN —    HP 12  
 Damage Bonus: -2    Build: -2    Move: 14    MP: 40

**Combat**

**Attacks per round:** 1 (ooze black puss)

Black Pus                      100%, damage 1D10, plus the  
    investigator contracts 1D4 diseases  
 Dodge                      N/A

**Armor:** 6-point rock.

**Spells:** Any spell the Keeper desires.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D6/1D8 Sanity points to see Horig.



# DARK AGES GLOSSARY

**Abbey:** important monastery run by an abbot or abbess.

**Alchemy:** in the Dark Ages, *al-kimia* (Arabian alchemy). Mystical teachings of Arabic scholars and philosophers about the order of nature, the four elements of Aristotle (earth, water, air, and fire), and how to control their transmutation.

**Ale:** alcoholic beverage fermented from yeast, water, and malt. Safer than water!

**Allod:** land held in full ownership. Inheritance regime based on the division of the allod among all heirs of equal rank; all sons, for example.

**Armarius:** librarian. Books are put in armaria (closets).

**Arts:** cycle of seven literary and scientific disciplines that form the base of teaching and culture during late antiquity and the Middle Ages (see *quadrivium* and *trivium*). Saint Augustine's doctrine states that the sole objective of an art should be a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

**Astrology:** scholarly theory by which the celestial movement of the stars and planets constrain "human forces" as well as the forces of nature.

**Auctores:** authoritative classical writers. Cicero is the Dark Ages epitome of the art of writing and Virgil the epitome of poetry.

**Automaton:** self-acting machine. Mechanical wonder that imitates the movements of life. One example is the animated throne of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (941), adorned with a golden tree, singing birds, and roaring golden lions.

**Ban:** power to command, to constrain, and to punish. Originally a royal power, the ban was usurped by lesser lords with the weakening of public authority: the right to rent out somebody's bull or boar, to force tenants to use one's mill, or oven or wine press for a fee. Above all, the right to exert (arbitrary) justice and levies.

**Benedictine rule:** a monastic rule elaborated by Saint Benedict of Nursia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

**Bible, the:** the Septuagint is the first major Greek translation of the Old Testament, written in Alexandria between 250 and 150 BCE. The Vulgate is the major Latin translation of the Bible, written by Jerome late 3rd, early 4th century at the request of Pope Damasus. There are also scattered and partial English translations attributed to Bede.

**Boni homines:** freemen recipients of local custom (Roman or German), presiding over malls (see *Malls*). In feudal countries, they merely assist seigniorial courts exercising the ban.

**Books:** primarily bound, copied, and stored in abbeys. The catalogue of a monastic library typically contains the books of the Bible, commentaries on the Bible, the works of Flavius Josephus, Horacius, Lucan, Perseus, and Juvenal, poets of late antiquity, *historiae* and the life of saints. In the profane closet, one could find classical theatre pieces, Boece's summary of Plato and Aristotle, books treating the seven arts of the Quadrivium and the Trivium, *quaestiones medicinales* (see *Quaestiones medicinales*), and books on the virtues of plants.

**Bronze:** many monumental bronze doors and statues are produced in the Dark Ages. The most famous bronze workshop is that of Bernard of Hildesheim.



## APPENDIX A

**Canonical praying hours:** prima hora at dawn, tertia in the morning, sexta at noon, nona in the afternoon, vesper at sunset.

**Castrum:** a fortified settlement.

**Chanson de geste:** a long epic poem such as "Roland."

**Charter:** manuscript that contains the ownership titles of a physical or moral person.

**Clepsydra:** very rare clock powered by water from a slowly emptying receptacle.

**Constable:** household officer, headman of the stables, and by extension, garrison. Officer and keeper of the law.

**Corn:** wheat, rye, oats, and barley grain.

**Craftsmen:** armorers, bakers, blacksmiths, brewers, butchers, carpenters, cooks, furriers, goldsmiths, locksmiths, masons, millers, painters, parchment makers, saddlers, shoemakers, Tailors, tanners, etc.

**Crypt:** column-supported, vaulted chapel with curved walls, often situated under a church's choir; usually houses the bodily remains of saints (relics).

**Custom:** the established custom (*consuetudo*) is often the only recourse against arbitrary seigniorial justice (the ban) and unfair taxes (*malas exactiones*).

**Denier/d/denarius:** silver coin in use in the Occident. Fictitious monetary units used for accounting but rarely minted are the *sou/shilling/solidus* (12 deniers) and the *livre/pound/librum* (20 solidus). The byzantines use the *nomisma*, and the arabs use the *dinar*, both gold currencies. Known as a penny in Britain.

**Dues (in kind):** sheaves, poultry, honey cakes, livestock, skins, clothing, etc.

**Exemption:** privilege granted by the pope to a monastery that more or less freed it from the control of the bishop.

**Familia:** group of servile workers housed and fed by a master, and who owe him all their work.

**Fêtes, Christian:** the three oldest and most important ones are: Christmas (Christ's birth on December 25th),

Epiphany (January 6th), and Easter (Christ's resurrection on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox). Lent (40 days of fasting) and the holy week before Easter are very important too.

**Feudalism:** relationship that takes place between the dominated class (peasants) and the dominant class (nobility).

**Feudal system:** system of man-to-man ties that structure the dominant class (*potentes*). The practical aspects of this system consist of swearing *fidelitas* (fidelity) and paying *hominium* (homage) to one's lord, in exchange for the fief (*feudum, beneficium*).

**Fief:** administrative domain of a lord.

**Fish:** commonly consumed fishes are salmon, lamprey, cuttlefish, carp, trout, eel, barbel, roach, chub, and also mullet and herring. Fish is traditionally salted or smoked.

**Forest fruits:** apples, pears, plums, chestnuts, and hop cones.

**Frock:** outer robe-like garment worn by a monk.

**Fruits:** fruits are very varied including quinces, peaches, medlars, walnuts, hazelnuts, cherries, and strawberries.

**Greek fire:** incendiary substance made of naphtha, quicklime, and sulfur, and almost impossible to put out. To be flung at enemy ships and buildings with catapults.

**Haus/domus:** house. In the high aristocracy, the "house" consists of the direct family, a chaplain, household officers (seneschal, constable, etc.) Who are sometimes granted a fief for support, a few clerics, servants, and even prostitutes.

**Hawking:** hunting sport imported from the plains of Asia and growing in popularity.

**Herbs:** vegetables; lentils, leeks (eaten raw), cabbage, lettuce, chervil, parsley, watercress.

**Historiae:** history annals (manuscripts). Men of the Church who conceive of history only in a biblical perspective, write *historiae*.

**Immunity:** institution that closes a territory (usually a religious domain) to royal officers; the beneficiaries of the immunity fulfill the tasks usually reserved for the public authority, such as justice.



## DARK AGES GLOSSARY

**Indulgence, partial:** the payment of money in lieu of penance. Standard practice from the 11th century onwards.

**Itineraria:** lists of region and city names. Itineraria are inherited from the Romans and regularly updated. Used for military expeditions, travel, and territorial divisions.

**Joculatores:** wandering minstrels, professional entertainers. Joculatores might also juggle, ropewalk, or sell sexual favors.

**Languages, written:** the most widespread language in the Occident is Latin (Roman Catholic Church). "Vernacular" languages come second: (Old High) German in the empire, (Old) English in England, (Old) French—a simplification of vulgar Latin—in France and Burgundy, "glagolica" script throughout the Slavic world, and Syriac in western Asia as a replacement of Greek. Arabic is used in the Arab world, including southern Spain.

**Magyars:** heathen Hungarians, nominally converted around 1000 CE by St. Stephen of Arpad.

**Maleficia:** potion, supposedly magical.

**Mall:** public assembly of justice enforcing the "custom," as opposed to seigniorial justice (the ban). Defendants are rarely acquitted or executed (nobles are beheaded, others hanged), as most are simply banned.

**Mansus:** type of landholding. One distinguishes between the master's mansus (representing up to a half of the arable land) and the farmers' tenures.

**Mappa mundi:** symbolic world map.

**Mead:** alcoholic beverage fermented from honey and water.

**Miles, milites:** soldier or mounted warrior. A feudal warlord typically has 10 to 20 milites in service or hired.

**Music:** typical musical instruments are drums, the tambourine, flutes, and strings. The Dark Ages are also famous for the monks' Gregorian chants.

**Ordeal:** severe physical test that a criminal suspect must endure to prove his or her innocence in the face of God, such as having no marks from putting one's hand into fire or boiling water, or holding a white-hot iron. Another favorite of the Dark Ages is the judicial duel, whereby the duelist who dies is decreed guilty post mortem.

**Pagus:** "country," district of a county.

**Parish church:** one village out of two possesses a church, but there are none in the frontier marches. Most churches are built of stone and the dead are buried next to them. Note that stone itself is not used as a decorative element. Rather, mosaics and mural paintings embellish surfaces. Parish churches provide sanctuary to wanderers, fugitives, and strangers; some churches have special huts for this purpose. In theory, no armed or mounted man is allowed to enter a church.

**Peace of God:** movement started by the Church in the 980s. This movement has two objectives: to limit the brutalities of the warrior aristocracy and to protect the victims of these brutalities. The decisions of the assemblies of peace, expressed in council canons, aim above all to protect the persons and properties of non-warring parties (clerics, farmers, and merchants). The "truce of God" forbids battle from Friday to Sunday, or during Lent or other liturgical events.

**Priory:** small monastery, sometimes with only a handful of monks, led by a prior or prioress.

**Privileges, urban:** clauses like the inviolability of homes against public officials, the suppression of judicial duels, and the ban on legal proceedings against burgesses outside the city.

**Quadrivium:** scientific disciplines of the liberal arts: music, astronomy, arithmetic, and geometry.

**Quaestiones medicinales:** widespread teaching technique for medicine consisting of questions and answers.

**Reform:** aimed at the purification of the morals of the clergy and the independence of ecclesiastic power with respect to the secular power.

**Relics:** relics come in three classes. First are corporeal parts of saints and artifacts from Christ's passion and death, such as Christ's crown of thorns at the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, chunks of the True Cross in Paris (as well as three of the four nails), Rome, Brussels, Oviedo, and the lance that pierced Christ's side (of which the head seems to have been lost). Second are articles of clothing or household artifacts touched by saints. Third are items that have touched first or second-class relics.



## APPENDIX A

**Runes:** religious and magical ideograms. The runic alphabet is used in Germany and Scandinavia.

**Saltus:** non-cultivated part of the land (forest or fallow land) used for gathering, hunting, and rearing.

**Saracens:** heathen Arabs from southern Spain and Sicily. Unequalled scholars.

**Scholasticus:** literally "that belongs to the school"; person responsible for a monastic or cathedral school. The scholastic philosophy defines all of science and theology in the Middle Ages.

**Scriptorium:** copying workshop in monasteries.

**Seneschal:** household officer, chief officer for the lord (steward), and manager of the household.

**Sergeant (mayor):** servant of the lord (abbot), estate manager, and tax collector.

**Slavs:** heathen people east of Germany.

**Tariff penance:** ancient judicial custom of the Germans, adopted by the Church, in which sins and crimes are inventoried with appropriate punishments, such as days of fasting (bread and water), prayers or pilgrimages. Hardly applied in practice. Secular justice is arbitrary or simply lacking, or rooted in personal vengeance and vendettas. God is the ultimate judge of course, and life is cheap indeed!

**Technographs:** authors of *Artes*, manuals for the basic and practical teaching of a discipline.

**Tenure:** strips of land attributed to one farmer. A tenant owes dues in kind and labor service to his lord and the tithe to the parish priest.

**Treasures:** denier chests, jewelry, silver and onyx vases, crucifixes, chalices, and other liturgical objects in solid gold, holy relics in precious reliquaries, wooden statues of saints sheeted in gold, ivory sculptures, miniatures, magnificent sacerdotal clothes, all in purple and gold, precious silken cloth, etc.

**Trivium:** literary disciplines of the liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic.

**Tropes:** sacred theatre in Latin, as opposed to the mimed theatre dating back to antiquity, which is partly obscene and strongly reprovéd.

**Venison:** small game, deer, wild boar, and bear. Meat is spiced with thyme, rosemary, and bay leaves. For conservation meat is either salted or smoked.

**Vicus:** new pole of commercial activity that forms the kernel of a budding town; a stopping-off place to cross a river or a mountain pass.

**Vikings:** heathen Nordmanni (Scandinavians). Unrivalled sailors, ravagers of Europe.

**War engines (from *ingenium*, "ingenious contrivance"):** battering rams, catapults, wheeled towers, ballistae, and trebuchets. Heavy catapults can shoot 50-pound missiles up to several hundred yards or shoot a 60-pound missile up to two hundred yards. A large hybrid trebuchet can easily hurl a 400-pound stone (or animal carcasses, or bundled humans) 100 yards.

**Wine:** reserved for the most privileged and for the celebration of the Mass. The largest vineyards are situated in ecclesiastical domains, or on the banks of large rivers, since these are major transport routes.



## APPENDIX

## 2

DARK AGES  
TIMELINE*A hundred years and more...*

**950–986:** Harald Blaatand unifies Danemark and imposes his rule on Norway.

**951:** Otto I the Great, King of Germany, is declared King of Italy. He actually manages to impose his authority ten years later.

**954:** Hungarian raids in Germany and Italy.

**954–994:** Following Aymar, Maieul becomes fourth Abbot of Cluny (abbey founded in 909 by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine).

**954:** France: death of Louis IV; his son Lothaire succeeds him under the tutelage of Hugh the Great, Duke of the Franks.

**955:** Battle of Lechfeld (August 10th): Otto I vanquishes the Hungarians.

**959–975:** Edgar rules over England. Archbishop Dunstan crowns him in 973.

**960–992:** After the conversion of Duke Mieszko I in 966, Poland becomes Christian and has its own bishopric (Posen). Mieszko seeks the support of the empire by becoming the “friend of the emperor.” He places his land under the protection of the pope (985).

**961:** The Byzantines, under the leadership of the general Phocas, conquer Crete, then Alep (Syria) in 962. Nicephorus II Phocas is Emperor from 963 to 969, and campaigns against the Arabs in Cyprus.

**961–972:** Kingdom of Kiev: Sviatoslav dominates international trade routes and clashes with Byzantium.

**961–976:** In Cordoba, Kalif al-Hakam II, son of Abd al-Rahman III, continues the work of his father who pacified Muslim Spain (al-Andalus).

**962:** Otto I crowned Emperor in Rome by the Pope John XII: The Ottonians restore the Holy Roman Empire.

**963:** Otto I deposes the “unworthy” Pope.

**969–976:** Apogee of the Byzantine Empire under the rule of John I Tzimiskes. Russians thrown out of the Balkans; eastern Bulgaria becomes a Byzantine province. John also conquers Syria and Palestine.

**973–983:** Empire: Otto II succeeds to Otto I and marries Theophano, the niece of the Byzantine emperor.

**975:** A Pisano-Byzantine fleet attacks Messina.

**976–1025:** Basil II, “the Killer of Bulgarians,” defeats the Bulgarian King Samuel after a 20-year war. He promotes the propagation of the orthodox faith in Russia by giving his sister to the Russian prince Vladimir in 989.

**977–1002:** Abusing the youth of the new Kalif Hisham II, son of al-Hakam II, who is only 10, the vizier Almanzor establishes the Arab domination over Spain (Omeyyad Dynasty).

**978:** First teaching hospital: medical faculty of 24 physicians established at the al-Bimirastan al-‘Adubi by ‘Adud-ad-Dawla, in Baghdad.

**978–1015:** Vladimir I, “the Bright Sun,” becomes sole ruler over the Russian princes of the Kingdom of Kiev. He marries the sister of Basil II, Princess Ann, and after his baptism in 988, Kiev becomes a religious center of orthodoxy.



## APPENDIX B

**978–1016:** King Ethelred vainly tries to stop the Danish invasion of England, started in 980, by paying them large tributes (the Danegeld). The Danes conquer England in 1013.

**982:** Vikings discover Greenland. In 984, Erik the Red of Iceland reaches Greenland and establishes colonies.

**983:** Spring: Mistav, Prince of the Obodrites (Slavs), takes Hamburg, and the Weletabs attack the bishoprics of Havelberg and Brandenburg.

**983:** First custodial prison sentences (Britain): introduced under law of King Alfred for breaking a pledge. Prisoners to be fed by relatives unless they have none.

**983–1002:** Empire: Otto III is ruler. Until 995 though, he is put in minority by his mother Theophano and grandmother Adelaide. In 996 he makes his cousin Bruno Pope (Gregory V) and is crowned emperor in Rome.

**985:** The vizier Almanzor takes Barcelona.

**985–1014:** Sven Forked-Beard Christianizes Denmark and leads the Danish army against the Anglo-Saxons in 994. Anglo-Saxon priests establish the Danish Church.

**986:** France: death of Lothaire: his son Louis V, “the Lazy,” associated to the throne since 979, succeeds him.

**987:** Death of Louis V the Lazy. At the request of the Archbishop of Reims, Adalberon, the overlords reject Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine and Lothaire’s brother, and elect Hugh Capet, who is crowned by the prelate.

**987:** Crowning in Orleans of Robert the Pious, son of Hugh Capet, “associate” king.

**987:** Almanzor takes Coïmbra.

**988:** Almanzor takes León.

**988:** Charles, son of Louis IV, Duke of Lower-Lorraine and Carolingian pretender, takes the cities of Laon and Reims with the support of his bishop Arnoul. Laon is taken back in 991 and Charles dies in captivity in Orleans in 992.

**988–1004:** Abbon, Abbot of Fleury-sur-Loire.

**989:** Institution of the Peace of God.

**991:** June 11th: deposition of Arnoul, Bishop of Reims and election of the monk Gerbert of Aurillac; formation of the “party of monks” that wants to relieve their institution from the authority of bishops and only depend on Rome.

**992:** First commercial treaty between Venice and Byzantium.

**992–1025:** Duke Boleslas I Chobry the Brave, son of Mieszko, rules in Poland. Friendly relationship with Germany at first, but from 1003 to 1018 conflicts arise because Germany is opposed to Boleslav’s conception of a unified western Slavic state under Poland’s rule.

**993:** January 31st, first saint canonization: Bishop Ulrich, died 973, canonized by Pope John XV.

**994–1049:** Odilon, Abbot of Cluny.

**995:** Eudes II becomes count of Blois at his father’s death. He seizes the county of Champagne in 1023 and tries to occupy the kingdom of Burgundy-Provence in 1032.

**995–1022:** Olof Skötkonung of the Upsal dynasty rules over Sweden and is baptized in 1008.

**996:** Death of Richard the First; his son, Richard II, Duke of Normandy.

**996:** October 24th, France: death of Hugh Capet; Robert the Pious succeeds him.

**996–997:** Uprising in the Champagne country.

**997:** Almanzor takes Santiago de Compostella in Spain.

**997–1038:** Stephen Arpad, later Stephen I, founds the Christian kingdom of Hungary, with the help of German knights and Benedictine monks.

**999–1003:** Pontificate of Sylvester II (Gerbert of Aurillac).

**1000:** Leif Erikson, son of Erik the Red, discovers Vinland (“Land of Pastures”) in North America on the basis of a rumor, but fails to establish a lasting colony.

**1000–35:** Sancho the Great, King of Navarre, joins Castile and Aragon to his kingdom to better resist Muslim Spain. He extends his influence to Catalonia and León.

**1002–24:** Empire: Henry II the Saint rules (crowned emperor in 1014). He conquers Bohemia and becomes king of Italy in 1004.



## DARK AGES TIMELINE

**1002–31:** At the death of Almanzor, rival factions fight for power and provoke the fall of the Omeyyad caliphate of Cordoba in 1031. Christians attack—this is the beginning of the Reconquista.

**1002:** Death of Henry I, Duke of Burgundy, without an heir. His nephew, Robert II the Pious, conquers the duchy after a conflict that lasts 14 years. Robert eventually entrusts it to his second son, Henry, in 1018.

**1005–29:** Gauzlin, Abbot of Fleury-sur-Loire.

**1006–28:** Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres.

**1007:** Foundation of the Bishopric of Bamberg; christening missions to the Slavs in the East.

**1016:** Pisa and Genoa ally to attack the Arabs in Sardinia and Corsica.

**1016–35:** Knut the Great, son of Sven, King of Denmark, of England and of Norway (1028). He marries Ethelred's widow. After his death, his sons rule over England until 1042.

**1016:** Beginning of the Norman expeditions in South Italy and Sicily.

**1017:** France: Hugh, son of Constance of Arles and Robert the Pious, is crowned and associated to the throne.

**1019:** Kingdom of Kiev: Iaroslav the Wise consolidates the Russian unity. First compilation of the Russian Code (Russkaja Pravda), a mix of Byzantine law and Slavic custom.

**1023:** Robert the Pious and the Emperor Henry II meet in Ivois (Ardennes).

**1024–39:** Empire: Conrad II rules (crowned King of Italy in 1026 and Emperor in 1027).

**1024:** Knut the Great occupies the March of Slesvig.

**1025:** Poland: Boleslas I crowned King.

**1025+:** Decline of Byzantium because of rampant feudalism: the state grants lands to maintain its army, church and bureaucracy.

**1025–34:** Poland: Mieszko II must renounce the crown because of Conrad II's opposition, and recognize Conrad's sovereignty in Poland (1033).

**1026:** France: death of Hugh, designated heir to Robert the Pious. His second son Henry is crowned associate King in Reims (1027).

**1031:** France: Henry I succeeds Robert the Pious.

**1031:** Spain: after the dislocation of the caliphate of Cordoba begins the reign of the clan kings (reyes de taifas). Their short-lived kingdoms have uncertain frontiers.

**1033:** The Kingdom of Burgundy is incorporated into the empire.

**1033–36:** The monk Guido of Arezzo introduces the modern musical notation Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Si.

**1035:** Spain: death of Sancho the Great. His domains are split among his three sons; Castile and Aragon become independent.

**1035–47:** Magnus the Good becomes King of Norway after deposing Sven, son of Knut the Great.

**1038:** Poland: heathen insurrections and Czech attacks drive Casimir I out of the land. He returns with the help of the Germans, restores the state and the church in Krakow.

**1039–56:** Henry III marries Agnes of Poitou and is crowned emperor in 1047. Bohemia and Hungary become German fiefs.

**1040:** The clergy proclaims the Truce of God.

**1040:** Pagan insurrection in Hungary.

**1042:** Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred, organizes a centralized administration of England with the help of the Normans.

**1044:** Earliest known formula for gunpowder, published in the *Chinese Complete Compendium of Military Classics*.

**1046:** Synod of Sutri: Pope Clement II intends to purify the clergy and forbids the marriage of priests.

**1054:** Schism between the Western and the Oriental Church.



## WHO'S WHO

## GOD

The One and Only Almighty Creator, known to Christians as God the Father, YHVH (pronounced "Yahveh") in Hebrew, and Allah to Muslims.

## MONKS

**Abbon of Fleury (945–1004):** monk, scholar and abbot of the monastery of Fleury-sur-Loire (988). Very learned in the liberal arts, especially the Quadrivium, and author of numerous educational pamphlets. Abbon and Odilon of Cluny are the leading figures of the reforming monks around 1000 CE. Mortally wounded in a fight with rebellious monks.

**Adalberon (c. 920/30–989):** Bishop of Reims (969). He played an important role in the political intrigues that marked the beginning of the reign of Hugh Capet.

**Aimoin of Fleury (970–?)**: successor and biographic author of *Abbon*. Author of a *History of the Fleury Abbey* and the *Miracula Sancti Benedicti*.

**Anselm of Canterbury (1033/34–1109):** famous scholasticus who tried to explain faith by using the ontological proof of God's existence.

**Fulbert of Chartres (960–1028):** founder of the School of Chartres, and Bishop of Chartres in 1006. High quality teacher.

**Gerbert of Aurillac (940–1003):** first scholasticus of Reims and friend of the Archbishop Adalberon of Reims, Gerbert soon went into service with the Ottonians. Under the name of Sylvester II he was Pope between 999 and 1003. As a scholar, he specialized in the Quadrivium. Using the works of Boece, Gerbert taught his students notions of logic and Aristotle's ten categories: substance, quality and quantity, relations, position, place, time, state, action, and emotion. Gerbert brought back from northern Spain a treasury of Muslim science in mathematics, astronomy, and music, and diffused this knowledge into Christendom. Gerbert also taught the Occident how to calculate by reintroducing the abacus.

**Ibn Sina or "Avicenna" (980–1037):** last famous Arab philosopher and doctor, perhaps the most remarkable man of the Orient. Author of numerous books, including the *Book of Healing* (a scientific encyclopedia) and the *Canon of Medicine*.

**Liutprand of Cremona (912–972):** Bishop of Cremona, cleric and writer

at the service of Otto I and Otto II, author of the *History of Otto*.

**Maieul (906–994):** fourth Abbot of Cluny (954). Famous for being captured by the Saracens in 972.

**Oddon of Meung:** author of a long epic poem on the virtues of plants.

**Oliba (971–1046):** Count of Berga and Ripoll (988–1002), Abbot of Ripoll, Cuxa and Bishop of Vic, in Catalonia. Prestigious clergyman, founder of Monserat (1023), and reformer of numerous monasteries. He took part in the creation of the Truce of God.

**Peter Damian (11th century):** Cardinal notorious for writing a manual praising flagellation, in spite of Saint Augustine's advice to congregates not to flagellate themselves too enthusiastically or frequently.

## KINGS AND EMPERORS

In the early days, the proclaimed kings and emperors were merely those who were able to amass enough followers and wealth to tell others what to do. These lists of rulers are just that, lists.



They don't show all the gory details about one family usurping the throne from another, foreign kings seizing power, or restorations.

### Byzantine Emperors

Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus ("the purple-born") (913–959)  
 Romanus I Lecapenus (920–944)  
 Romanus II (959–963)  
 Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969)  
 John I Tzimiscēs (969–976)  
 Basil II Bulgaroctonus ("the Bulgar-Slayer") (976–1025)  
 Constantine VIII (1025–1028)  
 Romanus III Argyropoulos (1028–1034)  
 Zoe I (1028–1050)  
 Michael IV (1034–1041)  
 Michael V Calaphates (1041–1042)  
 Theodora (1042)  
 Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055)  
 Theodora (1055–1056)  
 Michael VI Stratioticus (1056–1057)  
 Isaac I Comnenus (1057–1059)  
 Constantine X Ducas (1059–1067)

### Charlemagne's descendants

Louis IV, King of France, 936–954  
 Lothaire, King of France, 954–986  
 Louis V the Lazy, King of France, 986–987

### Capetian Kings (France)

Hugh Capet, 987–996  
 Robert the Pious, 996–1031  
 Henry I, 1031–1060

### Kings of England

Eadmund the Magnificent (939–946)  
 Eadred (946–955)  
 Eadwig (955–959)  
 Edgar the Peaceful (959–975)  
 Edward the Martyr (975–978)  
 Æþelræd Unræd [Aethelred the Unready] (978–1013) first reign  
 Svend Tveskæg [Swein Forkbeard] (1013–1014)  
 Æþelræd Unræd (1014–1016) second reign  
 Eadmund Ironside (1016)

Knútr [Cnut] (1016–1035)  
 Harald Harefoot (1035–1040)  
 Hardeknud [Harthacnut] (1040–1042)  
 Eadweard the Confessor (1042–1066)  
 Harold Godwinsson (1066)  
 Eadgar Æþeling (1066, proclaimed, never crowned)

### Holy Roman Emperors (Germany)

Otto I the Great, 936–973  
 Otto II, 973–983  
 Otto III, 983–1002  
 Henry II, 1002–1024  
 Conrad II the Salian, 1024–1039  
 Henry III, 1039–1056

### Kings of Gwynedd

Hywel Dda ap Cadell (Howell the Good) (942–950)  
 Iago ab Idwal (950–979)  
 Ieuaf ab Idwal (950–969)  
 Hywel ab Ieuaf (974–985)  
 Cadwallon ab Ieuaf (985–986)  
 Maredudd ab Owain (986–999)  
 Cynan ap Hywel (999–1005)  
 Aeddan ap Blegywryd (1005–1018)  
 Llywelyn ap Seisyll (1018–1023)  
 Iago ab Idwal ap Meurig (1023–1039)  
 Gruffydd ap Llywelyn (1039–1063)

### Kings of Gwent

Morgan the Old (930–974)  
 Arthfael ap Nowy (about 970–983)  
 Rhodri ap Elisedd (983–c.1015) who ruled jointly with his brother, Gruffydd ap Elisedd (983–c. 1015)  
 Edwyn ap Gwriad (1015–1045)  
 Meurig ap Hywel (1045–1055) who ruled jointly with his son, Cadwgan ap Meurig (1045–1055)  
 Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, prince of Gwynedd (1055–1063)

### Kings of Kiev

Igor I (913–945)  
 Olga of Kiev (945–962)  
 Sviatoslav I the Great (962–972)  
 Yaropolk I (972–980)  
 Vladimir I the Great (978–1015)  
 Sviatopolk I the Accursed (1015–1016)

Yaroslav I the Wise (1016–1018)  
 Sviatopolk I the Accursed (1018–1019)  
 Yaroslav I the Wise (1019–1054)  
 Iziaslav I (1054–1068)

### Kings of Powys

Hywel Dda (942–950)  
 Owain ap Hywel (950–986)  
 Maredudd ap Owain (986–999)  
 Llywelyn ap Seisyll (999–1023)  
 Rhydderch ap Iestyn (1023–1033)  
 Iago ap Idwal (1033–1039)  
 Gruffydd ap Llywelyn (1039–1063)

### Popes (Rome)

Stephen IX (939–942)  
 Marinus II (942–946)  
 Agapetus II (946–955)  
 John XII (955–963)  
 Leo VIII (963–964)  
 Benedict V (964)  
 John XIII (965–972)  
 Benedict VI (973–974)  
 Benedict VII (974–983)  
 Boniface VII, antipope (974; 984–985)  
 John XIV (983–984)  
 John XV (985–996)  
 Gregory V (996–999)  
 John XVI, antipope (997–998)  
 Sylvester II (999–1003)  
 John XVII (1003)  
 John XVIII (1003–1009)  
 Sergius IV (1009–1012)  
 Benedict VIII (1012–1024)  
 Gregory, antipope (1012)  
 John XIX (1024–1032)  
 Benedict IX - first reign (1032–1045)  
 Sylvester III (1045)  
 Benedict IX - second reign (1045)  
 Gregory VI (1045–1046)  
 Clement II (1046–1047)  
 Benedict IX - third reign (1047–1048)  
 Damasus II (1048)  
 Leo IX (1049–1054)  
 Victor II (1055–1057)  
 Stephen X (1057–1058)  
 Nicholas II (1058–1061)  
 Benedict X, antipope (1058)  
 Honorius II, antipope (1061–1072)



## APPENDIX C

### Rulers of Deheubarth

Hywel Dda (Hywel the Good)  
(909–950)

Owain ap Hywel (950–986), Rhodri  
ap Hywel (950–953), and Edwin ap  
Hywel (950–954)

Maredudd ab Owain (986–999)

Cynan ap Hywel, prince of Gwynedd  
(999–1005)

Edwin ab Einion (1005–1018) who  
co-ruled with his brother, Cadell ab  
Einion (1005–1018)

Llywelyn ap Seisyll, prince of  
Gwynedd (1018–1023)

Rhydderch ap Iestyn, prince of  
Glywysing (1023–1033)

Hywel ab Edwin (1033–1044)

Gruffydd ap Rhydderch (1047–1055)

Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, prince of  
Gwynedd (1055–1063)

### Spanish Kings

Sancho, King of Castile, Navarre and  
Aragon, 970–1035

Ferdinand, King of Castile, 1033–65

Garcia, King of Navarre, 1035–54

Ramiro I, King of Aragon, 1035–63



## SAINTS

Saints are important to the people of the Dark Ages. Here's a list of some saints, their feast day, and a non-exhaustive list of what they're patrons of. The more popular the saint is, the more places and professions that seek patronage.

Saint	Feast Day	Patron of
Mary	Over 30, but primary September 8	Numerous things, most notably, the human race
Aldhelm	May 25	Wessex
Anthony	January 17	Basket makers, invoked against skin diseases
Berlinda	February 3	Invoked against cattle diseases
Catherine of Alexandria	November 25	Unmarried girls, librarians, jurists, potters, spinners, scribes, Alexandria
Cedd	October 26	Essex
Christopher	July 25	Bachelors, travelers, invoked against storms, epilepsy, toothaches
Defendens	January 2	Invoked against wolves and fires
Erasmus	June 2	Invoked against intestinal ailments
George	April 23	Riders, soldiers, scouts, butchers
Hermes	August 28	Mental illnesses
Hippolytus	August 13	Horses, guards
Joseph	March 19, May 1	The Church, fathers, invoked against doubt and hesitation
Julian	February 12	Boatmen, ferrymen, murderers, fiddlers, pilgrims
Lawrence	August 10	Rome, librarians, students, miners, cooks
Maximin	May 29	Trier, invoked against perjury, loss at sea, and devastating rains
Nicholas	December 6	Soldiers, fisherman, merchants, children, the falsely accused, Myra
Peter	June 29	Popes, fishermen, sailors, bakers, carpenters, blacksmiths
Regina	September 7	Shepherdesses, torture victims, invoked against poverty
Severus	February 1	Woolers
Urban of Langres	April 2	Vintners, gardeners, invoked against alcoholism, blight, frost
Valentine	February 14	Bee keepers, marriage, love, invoked against plague, fainting, epilepsy
Willoc	November 6	Millers, invoked against fever, whooping cough, drought



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*The Name of the Rose* (Annaud, 1986)  
*Gawain and the Green Knight* (Weeks, 1973)  
*The Seventh Seal* (Bergman, 1957)  
*Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (Gilliam and Jones, 1975)  
*The Vikings* (Fleischer, 1958)  
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*The 13th Warrior* (McTiernan and Crichton, 1999)  
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# INDEX

## A

Aberffraw . . . . .36  
 Accounting . . . . .72, 74  
 Actions in a Combat Round . .101  
 Adjudicating Court Cases . . .20  
 Age . . . . .57  
 Age Modifiers . . . . .57  
 Aiming . . . . .106  
 al-Azif . . . . .134, 146, 151, 152  
 All-Out Defense . . . . .101, 102  
 Allocating Skill Points . .18, 57, 59  
 Altclud . . . . .36  
 Ancient Ones . . . . .149  
 Anglo-Saxon England . .9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 36, 41, 47, 210, 215, 245  
 Anglo-Saxon Months . . . . .32  
 Anglo-Saxon Names . . . . .13, 70  
 Animal Handling (Skill) . .72, 74  
 Annals of the Monks of John Chrysostom, The . . . . .151  
 Antidote . . . . .74, 110, 113  
 Appearance (APP) . . .23, 57, 66  
 Appearance (Anglo-Saxon Average) . . . . .23  
 Appraise (Skill) . . . . .72, 74  
 Appropriate Tools . . . . .100  
 Archbishops of Canterbury . . .29  
 Armor 46, 88, 91, 94, 95, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 106, 116, 135

Art/Craft (Skill) . . . . .72, 75  
 Assets . . . . .71, 73, 98, 99  
 Atlach-Nacha . . . . .149  
 Attributes, Derived . . . . .57, 58  
 Aul-Lu-got . . . . .142  
 Avoiding Hack and Slash . . .135  
 Axe (Skill) . . . . .76  
 Azathoth . . . . .39, 134, 149, 173

## B

Backstory . . . . .57, 66, 70, 71  
 Backstory, Key Connection . . .70  
 Barter . . . . .20, 71, 73, 75  
 Battle . . . . .26, 27, 28, 36, 38, 43  
 Beag Ma Aisus . . .145, 146, 202, 208, 211  
 Beatus Methodivo . . . . .155  
 Belief . .28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 47, 49, 51  
 Beliefs/Ideology . . . . .66, 68  
 Béot, The . . . . .18  
 Birthplace . . . . .71  
 Black Rites . . . . .36, 151  
 Black Tome, The . . . . .151  
 Bolting (Horse) . . . . .103  
 Book of the Watchers . . . . .140  
 Bouts of Madness . . . . .122, 123  
 Bow (Skill) . . . . .79, 104  
 Brawl (Skill) . . . . .76  
 Breaking Up The Scenery . . .100

Build . . . . .58  
 Buildings . . . . .18, 19, 29  
 Bula-Shess . . . . .143, 170  
 Burh . . . . .9  
 Bynames . . . . .13

## C

Cabala of Saboth . . . . .151  
 Canon Episcopi . . . . .44, 155  
 Canterbury . . . . .28, 29, 36, 37, 84  
 Caring for Those Back Home . . . .131  
 Carlisle . . . . .37  
 Castles . . . . .43  
 Characteristics . . . . .57, 58, 59, 62  
 Charm (Skill) . . . . .72, 75  
 Charms . . . . .29, 30, 35, 36, 47, 48  
 Chester . . . . .37  
 Children . . . . .13, 16, 17, 18  
 Christianity .28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 36, 50, 53  
 Church, Corruption in the . . . . .51  
 Churches, Types of . . . . .29  
 Climb (Skill) . . . . .72, 75  
 Clothing . . . . .23  
 Clues . . . . .25, 99, 133, 134  
 Combat . . . . .75, 76, 79, 101  
 Combat Round, Actions In . . . . .101  
 Combat, Mounted .102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107  
 Combat, Movement . . . . .106  
 Common Tithes . . . . .28



## CHAPTER 9

Communication. . . . .43  
 Community. . . . .43  
 Concealed Damage. . . . .116  
 Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus. . . . .151, 210  
 Congregants. . . . .84, 85  
 Constitution (CON). . . . .57  
 Costs, Equipment, and Services 88  
 Court Cases, Adjudicating. . . .20  
 Cover and Concealment (with Shield). . . . .105  
 Creatures of Folklore and Legend. . . . .140  
 Crime. 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 44, 50, 53  
 Crime (Reparations). . . . .21, 22  
 Crossbow (Skill). . . . .79  
 Cthaat Aquadingen. . . . .151  
 Cthugha. . . . .149  
 Cthulhu. . . . .136, 150  
 Cthulhu Mythos (Skill). 66, 72, 75  
 Cult of Magna Mater. . . . .146  
 Currency and Taxes. . . . .20

### D

Daemonolorum. . . . .152  
 Damage Bonus. . . . .58  
 Damage, Concealed. . . . .116  
 Damascus Weapons. . . . .94  
 Danelaw. . . . .12, 39, 41  
 Daoloth. . . . .133, 140, 149  
 Darkness. . . . .31, 44  
 Day-to-Day Expenses. . . . .97  
 Deadly Combat. . . . .114  
 Dealing with Class. . . . .133  
 Death and Burial. . . . .36  
 Defense, All Out. . . . .101, 102  
 Derived Attributes. . . . .57, 58  
 Describing Scenes. . . . .130  
 Devil, The. . . . .44, 86, 141  
 Devise/Repair. . . . .73, 79, 116  
 DEX Order. . . . .101, 105, 106, 107  
 Dexterity (DEX). . . . .57

Dinefwr. . . . .38  
 Disease. . . . .24, 29, 34, 35, 36, 76, 111, 112, 113  
 Distances. . . . .25, 43, 101  
 Dive for Cover. . . . .104, 105  
 Doctor's Toolkit. . . . .34  
 Doctrine. . . . .51, 120  
 Dodge (Skill). . . . .72, 75, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107  
 Dodge (while Riding). . . .103, 105  
 Dodging Benefits. . . . .114  
 Drive Horses/Oxen (Skill). 72, 75  
 Durham. . . . .38

### E

Easier Recovery, Insanity. . . .126  
 Education (EDU). . . . .57  
 Education Improvement Check. 58  
 Entertainment. . . . .16, 25  
 Equip Investigator (Starting Equipment). . . . .71  
 Equipment and Weapons. . . .88  
 Escaping Close Combat. . . .114  
 Everyday Violence. . . . .121  
 Execution. . . . .22, 49  
 Exeter. . . . .38  
 Exham Priory. . . . .81, 141, 142, 143  
 Expenditure, Investigator. . . .97

### F

Family. . . . .16  
 Famine. . . . .24  
 Farming. . . . .24  
 Fast Talk (Skill). . . . .73, 76  
 Fast-Moving Targets. . . . .106  
 Feuds. . . . .17, 23, 44, 135  
 Fight Back. . . . .102, 105, 107, 114  
 Fighting (Skill). . . . .73, 76  
 Firing Into Melee. . . . .105, 106  
 First Aid (Skill). . . . .73, 76, 77, 108  
 Fishing. . . . .25  
 Flail (Skill). . . . .76

Folk Magic. . . . .156, 157  
 Food. . . . .23  
 French (Old) Names. . . . .70  
 Fury Potion. . . . .111  
 Fyrd. . . . .26, 28

### G

Garrote (Skill). . . . .76  
 Gear, War. . . . .26  
 German (Old High) Names. . . .70  
 Getting the Group Together. . . .129  
 Gla'aki. . . . .149, 164, 177, 216  
 Green God, The. . . . .30, 172  
 Grimoire, Dark Ages. . . . .158  
 Grimoires. . . . .44, 47, 48  
 Grubenhauser. . . . .19

### H

Hairstyle. . . . .23  
 Hallucinogen. . . . .74, 111  
 Hastur. . . . .144, 149  
 Healer. . . . .33, 60, 71, 77, 156, 157  
 Hearthweru. . . . .26, 27, 28  
 Heresies. . . . .45  
 Hermit. . . . .60  
 Hierarchy. . . . .45, 48, 51, 52  
 Hierón Aigypton. . . . .152  
 Hill Fort. . . . .10  
 Hit Points. . . . .58  
 Home Care. . . . .124  
 Hostage Taking. . . . .46  
 Humor. . . . .46  
 Humors, The. . . . .120, 121  
 Hunting. . . . .23, 25, 26

### I

Ideology/Beliefs. . . . .68  
 Idiocy and Lunacy. . . . .120  
 Illness and Injury. . . . .34  
 Income. . . . .99  
 Initiative, Rolling. . . . .113



## THE HUNT

Insanity . 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126  
 Insanity, Easier Recovery . . . . .126  
 Insanity, Home Care . . . . .124  
 Insanity, Self-Help . . . . .126  
 Insight . . . . . 73, 75, 76, 77, 80  
 Intelligence (INT) . . . . .57  
 Intimidate (Skill) . . . . . 73, 76, 77  
 Investigator Development Phase . . . . . 97, 98, 122, 123, 124, 127  
 Investigator Expenditure . . . . .97  
 Investigator Organizations . . . .84  
 Investigator Sheet . . . . .271, 272  
 Ipswich . . . . . 38, 39  
 Ithaqua . . . . .150

### J

Jump (Skill) . . . . . 73, 77

### K

Key Backstory Connection . . .70  
 Kitab al-Kimya . . . . .155  
 Knights . . . . .46  
 Knock-Out Blows . . . . .114

### L

Lance (Skill) . . . . . 76, 92, 104  
 Language, Own (Skill) . . . 73, 77  
 Language . . 46, 77, 79, 80, 99, 133, 134  
 Language, Other (Skill) . . . 73, 77  
 Leicester . . . . .39  
 Liber Ivonis . . . . .152  
 Library Use (Skill) . . . . . 73, 77  
 Life Event(s) 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 66  
 Lilith . . . . .134, 150  
 Limbo 37, 140, 159, 161, 162, 165, 172  
 Limited Good, Theory of . . . .54  
 Lincoln . . . . .39  
 Listen (Skill) . . . . . 73, 77  
 Literacy . . . . . 17, 18, 46

Living Standards . . . . .97  
 London . . . . . 10, 27, 39  
 Long Weapons vs. Riders . . . .104  
 Love Potion . . . . .111  
 Loyalty . .16, 17, 19, 26, 45, 46, 47  
 Luck & Luck Points . .57, 58, 106, 108, 116  
 Lunacy . . . . .120

### M

Mace (Skill) . . . . .76  
 Magic Points (MP) . . . . .58  
 Magic, Folk . . . . .156, 157  
 Magic, Ritual . . . . .157  
 Magic, Types . . . . .47  
 Magical Weapons . . . . .94  
 Magus, Magi . . . . .156  
 Major Wound Effects . .116, 117  
 Major Wounds .77, 104, 108, 116, 117, 135  
 Major Wounds and Shock . .116  
 Major Wounds (Horseback) .104  
 Marriage . . . . .16  
 Medicine (Skill) . . .34, 73, 76, 77, 108, 111, 113  
 Medicine Fumbles . . . . .33  
 Melee, Firing Into . . . . .106  
 Monasteries (Insanity) . .124, 126  
 Monastery Hierarchy . . . . .52  
 Monastic Life (Monasteries) . .51  
 Monastic Offices . . . . .52  
 Money Coming In . . . . .98  
 Mons Fractus . . . . .143  
 Mounted Combat .102, 103, 104  
 Mounts and the Supernatural .103  
 Mounts, Attacking the Rider or Mount . . . . .104  
 Mounts, Bolting . . . . .103  
 Mounts, Dive for Cover . . . .105  
 Mounts, Long Weapons . . . .104  
 Mounts, Major Wounds . . . .104  
 Movement During a Combat Round . . . . .106

Movement Rate (MOV) . . .58, 81, 101  
 Multiple Attacks (100%+ Skill) . . .101, 113, 114  
 Musical Instruments . . . . .90  
 Mustering . . . . .28  
 Mutilation and Execution . . . . .22

### N

Naglgitor, The . . . . .147  
 Name(s) . . . . .70  
 Nameless City, The . . . . .143  
 Natural Obstacles . . . . .100, 101  
 Natural World (Skill) . . . . .73, 78  
 Navigate (Skill) . . . . .73, 78  
 Necronomicon . . . .146, 152, 174, 183  
 Norwich . . . . .39  
 Numbing Ointment . . . . .111  
 Nyarlathotep . . . . .141, 149, 150

### O

Obstacles . . . . .100, 101  
 Occult (Skill) . . . . .73, 78  
 Occult Books . . . . .155  
 Occupations . . . . .59, 71, 133  
 Old English Phrases . . . . .19  
 Old French Names . . . . .70  
 Old High German Names . . . . .70  
 Old Ways, The . . . . .29, 31  
 Oral Tradition . . . .49, 74, 99, 133, 134  
 Orate, Art and Craft (Skill) . . . . .74  
 Ordeals . . . . .49, 50  
 Order of The Sword of Saint Jerome, The . . . . .147  
 Other Kingdom (Skill) . . . . .73, 78  
 Outlawry . . . . .23, 86, 99  
 Own Kingdom (Skill) . . . . .73, 78  
 Oxford . . . . .40

### P

Pagan Gods . . . . .29, 30  
 Pastores, The . . . . .147  
 Pengwern . . . . .40



## CHAPTER 9

Penny (d) . . . . . 20, 71, 88  
 People (in the Dark Ages) . . . . . 16  
 People, The . . . . . 147  
 Personal Description . . . . . 66  
 Personal Interest Skills . . . . . 66  
 Personal Residence . . . . . 19  
 Persuade (Skill) . . . . . 73, 76, 78  
 Pilgrimage (Insanity) 122, 124, 125  
 Pilgrimage Sites . . . . . 124  
 Pilot (Boat) . . . . . 73, 78  
 Pnakotica . . . . . 152  
 Poems and Riddles . . . . . 25  
 Point-Blank Range . . . . . 105  
 Poison . . . 29, 35, 74, 108, 109, 110  
 Polyphemoi, The . . . . . 148  
 Possession . . . . . 107  
 Potion, Fury . . . . . 111  
 Potion, Love . . . . . 111  
 Potions . . . . . 108  
 Potions, Art and Craft (Skill). 74, 77  
 Power (POW) . . . . . 57  
 Praesidia Finium . . . . . 152  
 Prone . . . . . 107, 116  
 Pronunciation Guide . . . . . 37  
 Psychology - see Insight  
 Punishment . 13, 18, 21, 22, 44, 45,  
 49, 50, 53, 111, 134

### Q

Quick Creation Summary  
 (Investigators) . . . . . 62  
 Quick Reference Chart for Half  
 and Fifth Values . . . . . 63

### R

Range, Difficulty Levels &  
 Modifiers . . . . . 105  
 Range, Point-Blank . . . . . 105  
 Ranged and Thrown Weapons. 105  
 Ranged Attacks . . . . . 104, 105  
 Ranged Weapons (Skill) . . . 73, 79

Ranged Weapons DEX order . 105  
 Rasul al-Albarin . . . . . 152  
 Read and Write (Skill) . . . 73, 79  
 Recommended Spells . . . . . 165  
 Reflections . . . . . 154  
 Relics (Insanity) . . . . . 125, 126  
 Religion . . . . . 28, 31, 50, 51  
 Religion (Skill) . . . . . 73, 79  
 Remedy . . . . . 111  
 Repair/Devise (Skill) . . . . 73, 79  
 Reparations . . . . . 21  
 Residence, Personal . . . . . 12, 19  
 Residence, Thegnly . . . . . 19  
 Rhetoric (Science Skill) . . . . 80  
 Riddles . . . . . 25, 49, 133  
 Ride Horse (Skill) . . . . . 73, 79  
 Ritual Magic . . . . . 157  
 Rituals. 32, 39, 47, 155, 156, 157, 158  
 Rlim Shaikorth . . . . . 150, 167  
 Rural (Life) . . . . . 53, 54

### S

Saints . . . . . 19, 29, 30, 47, 53, 260  
 Sample Treatments . . . . . 35  
 Sanitation . . . . . 34  
 Sanity . . . . . 120, 121  
 Sanity Points . . . . . 58, 70, 75  
 Sanity, Alternative Check . . . 126  
 Sanity, Everyday Violence . . . 121  
 Sapienta Maglorum . . . . . 41, 210  
 Science (Skill) . . . . . 73, 80  
 Secrecy . . . . . 53  
 Seeing Monsters . . . . . 127  
 Self-Help . . . . . 122, 123, 126  
 Serfdom . . . . . 53  
 Settlement Types . . . . . 9  
 Shield (Skill) . . . . . 76  
 Shield Options . . . . . 114  
 Shield Wall . . . . . 28  
 Shield, Cover and Concealment 105  
 Shields . . . . . 95, 101, 105, 106, 116

Shock . . . . . 116  
 Shrike Moor . . . . . 142  
 Shub-Niggurath 139, 143, 146, 147, 150  
 Sibylline Oracles . . . . . 154  
 Significant People . . . . . 68  
 Silver Penny (d) . . . . . 71  
 Size (SIZ) . . . . . 57  
 Size, Target Size . . . . . 106  
 Skill List . . . . . 72  
 Skill Points: What do they mean? . 72  
 Skill Ratings Above 100% . . . . 97  
 Skill Specializations . . . . . 72  
 Slavery . . . . . 53  
 Sleight of Hand (Skill) . . . . . 73, 80  
 Sling (Skill) . . . . . 79  
 Social Structure . . . . . 12  
 Song of Yste . . . . . 154  
 Sources of Inspiration . . . . . 262  
 Spear (Skill) . . . . . 76  
 Spell Components . . . . . 159  
 Spending Level . . . . . 73, 97  
 Spending Luck to Remain Conscious . 116  
 Spirit Attacks and Possession . . . 107  
 Spot Hidden (Skill) . . . . . 73, 80  
 Spot Rules . . . . . 100  
 Staff (Skill) . . . . . 76  
 Status (Skill) . . . . . 73, 80  
 Stealth (Skill) . . . . . 73, 81  
 Steps to Create an Investigator . . . 57  
 Strength (STR) . . . . . 7  
 Supernatural . . 19, 33, 48, 53, 103, 110,  
 120, 136, 137, 156, 178  
 Suspicion . . . . . 44, 54  
 Swim (Skill) . . . . . 73, 81  
 Sword (Skill) . . . . . 76

### T

Tablets of Destiny . . . . . 154  
 Tabula Smaragdina . . . . . 155  
 Target Size . . . . . 106  
 Tawil at'Umr . . . . . 150



## THE HUNT

Taxes . . . . .	12, 13, 20, 53, 134
Testament of Carnamagos . . . . .	154
Testament of Solomon . . . . .	155
Teutates, The . . . . .	149, 177
Thetford . . . . .	40
Theory of Limited Good . . . . .	54
Three Codices, The . . . . .	154
Throw (Skill) . . . . .	73, 81
Thrown Attacks . . . . .	104, 105, 106
Time and Year . . . . .	33
Tithing of Eawulf . . . . .	85, 86, 87
Tithing of Eawulf, Notable Members . . . . .	87
Tools . . . . .	34, 91
Totburh . . . . .	191ff
Track (Skill) . . . . .	73, 81
Training . . . . .	98
Training a War Steed . . . . .	104
Traits . . . . .	69
Travel . . . . .	25
Treasured Possessions . . . . .	69
Treatment, Medical . . . . .	33, 34, 35, 52, 76, 77
Tsathoggua . . . . .	147, 150
Tuscan Rituals . . . . .	154
Types of Magic . . . . .	47

## U

Using Random Tables for Inspiration (Backstory) . . . . .	66
Using Shields . . . . .	101

## V

Vikings . . . . .	9, 12, 20, 25, 27, 31, 33, 98, 130, 134, 145, 150, 155, 177, 183, 184
Village . . . . .	12

## W

Walkers in the Night . . . . .	31
Wander (Insanity) . . . . .	120, 123, 124, 125
War Engine (Skill) . . . . .	79

War Gear . . . . .	26
War Steeds . . . . .	103
Wareham . . . . .	40
Warfare . . . . .	26
Weapons and Equipment . . . . .	88
Weapon Wear and Tear . . . . .	116
Weapons, Poisoned . . . . .	108
Weather . . . . .	9
Weregild . . . . .	22
When to Roll Dice . . . . .	97
Who's Who . . . . .	30, 258
Wic . . . . .	12
Wilderness . . . . .	54
Winchester . . . . .	41
Witch . . . . .	30, 47, 49, 54, 134
Wyrd . . . . .	31

## X

Xuthltan . . . . .	144
--------------------	-----

## Y

Yikilth . . . . .	144
York . . . . .	41

## TABLES

Armor . . . . .	95
Barter and Assets . . . . .	73
Bouts of Madness - Real Time . . . . .	122
Bouts of Madness - Summary . . . . .	123
Combat Outcomes for Shield Users . . . . .	102
Damage Bonus and Build . . . . .	58
Dark Age Currency . . . . .	88
Digging and Quarrying . . . . .	100
Diseases . . . . .	112, 113
Hand-to-Hand Weapons . . . . .	92
Hit Point Loss . . . . .	108
Income and Status . . . . .	99
Life Events . . . . .	60, 61
Man-Made Obstacles . . . . .	100
Missile Weapons . . . . .	93

Mounted Combat . . . . .	103
Optional Effects of Major Wounds . . . . .	117
Poisons . . . . .	109
Random Humors . . . . .	120
Sample Armor . . . . .	106
Selected Pilgrimage Sites . . . . .	124
Shields . . . . .	95
Summary of Range Modifiers . . . . .	105
The Humors . . . . .	121
Vessels . . . . .	89
War Engines . . . . .	93
Weather Components . . . . .	159
Winds of Desolation . . . . .	165

## MAPS

Anglo-Saxon England . . . . .	11
Farm of Eorhelm . . . . .	222
Monastery of St. Swithun . . . . .	213
Totburh . . . . .	195
Village of the Gotii . . . . .	227
Western Marches . . . . .	205

## DARK AGE SPELLS

Alter Weather . . . . .	158
Augur . . . . .	158
Become Spectral . . . . .	159
Bind Soul . . . . .	160
Bless Blade . . . . .	160
Blight/Bless Crop . . . . .	160
Body Warping . . . . .	160
Cast Out The Devil . . . . .	160
Circle of Nausea . . . . .	160
Command Animal . . . . .	161
Command Ghost . . . . .	161
Compel Flesh . . . . .	161
Create Limbo Gate . . . . .	161
Curse . . . . .	161
Death's Breath . . . . .	162
Demon Senses . . . . .	162
Disembodiment . . . . .	162



## CHAPTER 9

Dowsing	162
Eibon's Wheel of Mist	162
Enchant Brazier	163
Enchant Knife	163
Fury	163
Healing	163
Ill Luck	164
Levitate	164
Nyhargo Dirge	164
Poison Blood	164
Power Drain	164
Siren's Song	164
Soul Singing	164
Winds of Desolation	164

### BESTIARY (A-Z)

Aurochs	184
Basilisk	178
Bear	184
Children of the Green God	172
Cold Ones	167
Cu Sith	168
Dveorg	169
Deer	185
Demon of Bula-Shess	170
Dog	185
Dragon	179
Goff'nn Hupadgh	170
Gotii	171
Hawk	185
Horig	172
Horse	185
Nameless Mist	173
Old Ones	174
Pontius Pilate (Vampire)	182
Pucel	174
Scucca	180
Skraeling	175
Spawn of the Abyss	176

Teutates	177
Thyrs	181
Vampire	181
Werewolf	183
Wight	183
Wild Boar	187
Wisent	186
Wolf	187
Worms of the Earth	177

### TOTBURH (A-Z)

Aelfgiest, Slave	201
Æsa, Shield-Maiden	192
Alfric, Ceorl	199
Athelstan, Minter	194
Athilda, Vampire	207
Begilda, Charcoal Burner	209
Berclea	214
Bregeswith, Ceorl	199
Brycgstow	215
Cuthen, Fisherman	202
Cynerd, Blacksmith	199
Delwyn, Leech	201
Derman, Farmer	203
Eadda, Parish Priest	196
Earnwulf, Manorial Priest	197
Edric, Outlaw	209
Eseweald	215
Eward, Fisherman	200
Exham	215
Fernduna	215
Gaius Mons, Spirit	208
Gloucester	216
Godred and Grimwold, Boys	198
Gotii Village	216
Grimcytel, Abbot	211
Guthlaf, Herder	204
Halfdene, Parish Priest	196
Haunild, Farmer	203

Heagyth, Wife of Earnwulf	198
Hearthweru, Typical Soldier	192
Herewynn, Daughter of Thegn	194
Hlodere, Outlaw	209
Hothere, Almoner	211
Hygerd, Anchorite	197
Ilhelm, Slave	200
Island, The	216
Jumin, Novitiate	211
Lambin, Slave	201
Lanfranc, Cellarer	211
Lydney	216
Madulf, Potter	203
Medwin, Idiot	212
Mildoina, Apiarist	206
Monk	212
Niall, Slave	202
Octa, Miller	206
Ormar, Slave	200
Oslafa, Herder	206
Oswyn, Thegn	194
Penda Eagle-Eye, Lay Baliff	212
Roswitha, Wife of Eward	200
Rowena, Herder	204
Severn, Lake	216
Sigeric, Ceorl	202
Strigoiel	217
Svein, Leader of Hearthweru	192
Theocsbury	217
Turec, Farmer	204
Unfurth, Old Man	202
Weorgoran Ceaster	217
Whitgar, Market Reeve	199
Wifrun, Wise Woman	197
Wlencing, Son of Thegn	194
Wulfric, Farmer	204
Wulfrun, slave	198
Yngvi, Viking leader	214
Viking	214





## CHAD BOWSER

A former carny, Chad Bowser holds a bachelors degree in Classical Archaeology and a masters degree in Medieval European with emphasis on Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic history and early modern Russia. He's works as an archaeologist, historian, translator, and now an engineer. A firm believer in melding two of his loves—history and gaming—into a single formless spawn, his RPG writings have spanned almost 20 years and have covered such diverse topics as Stalin's Russia, ancient Rome, and the Revolutions of 1848.

## ANDI NEWTON

I write stories. It's what I do. I make up worlds where most of us wouldn't want to go, then force characters who've rarely done anything wrong to suffer in them. Sometimes the characters survive; sometimes they don't. I feel very bad about it when they don't, but it really isn't up to me to decide. You'll have to blame the story for that.

I co-wrote *Cthulhu Invictus*, an award-winning sourcebook for the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game, the *Cthulhu Invictus Companion*, several books for the Victoriana line, and have had short stories published in magazines such as *The Willows*, *The Storyteller*, and *Tales of the Talisman*.



## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



### JAMES HOLLOWAY

James Holloway read his first Lovecraft story and his first *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook on the same fateful day, in the long-ago 1990s. Being of an impressionable age, he became fascinated by the intersection of history, games, and the weird, writing his first published Lovecraftian gaming material in his teens. He studied history at Cambridge University, where he moved from modern history to the early middle ages, going on to receive a PhD in archaeology. He lives in Cambridge with his wife Allison and their very good dog.



### MIKE MASON

Creative Director for *Call of Cthulhu*

Mike is the co-writer of *Call of Cthulhu 7th edition* and *Pulp Cthulhu*. Around the turn of the millennium, Mike edited and published *The Whisperer*, a zine devoted to *Call of Cthulhu*. In the intervening period Mike set up and ran the Kult of Keepers, a group of scenario writers who organized the UK's Cthulhu Nationals Tournament. Mike, no stranger to the arcane workings of games companies, previously worked for Games Workshop as Black Industries Line Manager for the ENnie Award winning *Dark Heresy RPG*. Nowadays, Mike lives in Nottingham, England, and enjoys coffee, strong beer, and whiskey in equal measure. Mike edits, writes, and produces all books for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* line and, when not doing that, can be found watching horror films and searching for Innsmouth gold.



# dark ages investigator

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Player \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
 Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

## Characteristics

STR 


 DEX 


 POW 


  
 CON 


 APP 


 EDU 


  
 SIZ 


 INT 


 Move Rate 


major wound

Max HP

temp. insane

mind. insane

Start

Max

Insane

01 02 03 04 05 06 07

Dying		00	01	02
Unconscious		03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

sanct

## CALL OF CTHULHU

Max MP

																		Out of Luck					01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Luck	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						
	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53						
	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76						
	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99						

luck

00	01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24

magic points

## Skills

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Own Kingdom (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Handling (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Insight (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Own Language (EDU)	<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (15%)	Status (00%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Boat (01%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ranged Weapons	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> R&W Language (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX)	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Devise (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Horse/Oxen (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Kingdoms (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride Horse (05%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting (Brawl) (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Language (01%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Armor

armor type	value
_____	_____
shield type	dmg./armor
_____	_____/____
_____	_____/____

## weapons

weapon	regular	hard	extreme	damage	range	attacks	ammo	half.
Unarmed				1d3 + db	-	1	-	-

## Combat

Damage Bonus	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Build	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				
Dodge	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				



# backstory



Personal Description \_\_\_\_\_

Traits \_\_\_\_\_

Ideology/Beliefs \_\_\_\_\_

Injuries & Scars \_\_\_\_\_

Significant People \_\_\_\_\_

Phobias & Manias \_\_\_\_\_

Meaningful Locations \_\_\_\_\_

Arcane Tomes, Spells & Artifacts \_\_\_\_\_

Treasured Possessions \_\_\_\_\_

Encounters with Strange Entities \_\_\_\_\_

## gear & possessions

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Cash & Assets

Spending Level \_\_\_\_\_

Cash \_\_\_\_\_

Assets \_\_\_\_\_

## Quick Reference Rules

### Skill & Characteristic Rolls

Levels of Success: 

Fumble 100/96+	Fail > skill	Regular ≤ skill	Hard ½ skill	Extreme 1/3 skill	Critical 01
-------------------	-----------------	--------------------	-----------------	----------------------	----------------

Pushing Rolls: Must justify reroll; Cannot Push Combat or Sanity Rolls

### Wounds & Healing

First Aid heals 1HP; Medicine heals +1d3 HP

**Major Wound** = loss of  $\geq \frac{1}{2}$  max HP in one attack

Reach 0 HP without Major Wound = **Unconscious**

Reach 0 HP with Major Wound = **Dying**

*Dying*: First Aid = temp. stabilised; then require Medicine

**Natural Heal rate** (non Major Wound): recover 1HP per day

**Natural Heal rate** (Major Wound): weekly healing roll

## fellow investigators

Char. _____ Player _____	Char. _____ Player _____	Char. _____ Player _____
Char. _____ Player _____	<b>me</b>	Char. _____ Player _____
Char. _____ Player _____	Char. _____ Player _____	Char. _____ Player _____



## CALL of CTHULHU®

# Cthulhu Dark Ages™

## Setting Guide


*Cthulhu Dark Ages* is a world lit only by fire. The ancient empires collapsed centuries ago, taking their culture and learning with them. It's a dark world and people are right to be afraid of the dark. Apart from the Viking raiders, witches, and outlaws, there are the unquiet dead, ancient horrors, and other malevolent beings stalking the countryside. Dark entities, beyond good and evil, wait hidden in the recesses of time and the angles of space. A few brave souls try their best to resist the horrors and push them back from whence they came.

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This supplement is best used with the *CALL OF CTHULHU* (7th Edition) roleplaying game and optionally the *PULP CTHULHU* sourcebook, both available separately.

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