

GARY'S APPENDIX

A Thoughtful Zine

ISSUE 3



DESIGNED FOR USE WITH

**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**

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A Thoughtful Zine

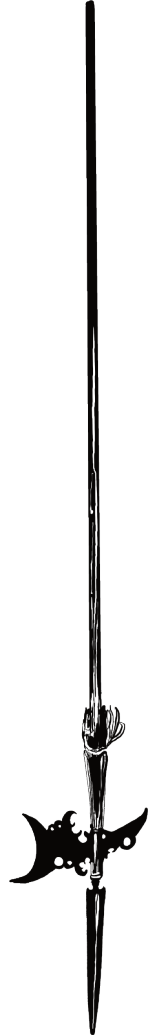
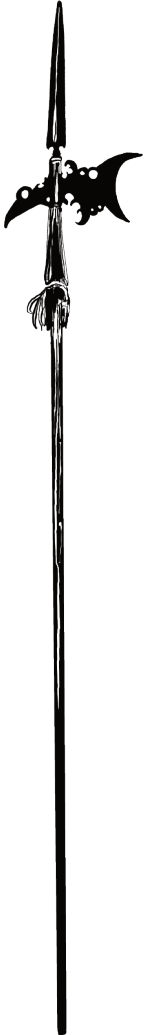
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EFREETI (LESSER)

Highly magical, free-willed, intelligent beings from the elemental plane of fire. Manifests as giant men with demonic faces and an aura of heat and smoke. Solidifies out of billowing smoke clouds.

AC	3 [16]
HD	10* (45 hp)
ATT	1x fists (2d8), magic
THACO	11 [+8]
MV	90' (30') /240' (80') flying
SV	D4 W5 P6 B5 S8 (15)
ML	12
AL	Chaotic
XP	1,600
NA	1 (1)
TT	None



SPECIAL

- **Mundane damage immunity:** Can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Magic powers:** Each can be used three times per day:
 - **Pillar of flame:** Transform into a column of fire for up to 3 rounds. Flammable items within 5' are ignited. Attacks do additional 1d8 damage (3d8 total).
 - **Invisibility**
 - **Illusion:** Visual and audial. No concentration. Remains until touched or dispelled.
 - **Create Wall of Fire:** Transform into a column of fire for up to 3 rounds. Flammable items within 5' are ignited. Attacks do additional 1d8 damage (3d8 total).
 - **Create Food and Drink:** For 12 humans and mounts for one day.
 - **Conjure Metallic Objects:** Up to 1,000 coins weight. Temporary: hardness determines duration (gold: 1 day; iron: 1 round).
 - **Conjure Soft Goods/Wooden Objects:** Up to 1,000 coins weight. Permanent.
- **Carrying capacity:** Up to 10,000 coins (flying).
- **Hate djinn:** Attack on sight.
- **Bound servitor:** Efreet summoning spells can be researched by high-level magic-users. Can be bound to service for 101 days.

Lore:

Some legends claim Efreeti are evil beings created by God along with the djinn and angels. Some say these are malevolent spirits haunting remote areas. Others say these are magical tricksters who enjoy a good laugh.

Taken together, the legends show the possibility of Efreeti having a variety of temperaments, just as people do.

Looking at their unusual and non-combat powers demonstrates these creatures are fun and challenging opponents and not mere monsters.

Plot Hooks:

1. A fun distraction. The Efreeti believes the adventurers present a perfect opportunity to have fun.

The Efreeti will (Roll 1d6):

1-2: Help the party.

3-4: Hinder the party.

5-6: Seek to bewilder the party.

With the variety of powers at their disposal (including being invisible), it takes only a little imagination to determine the activities an Efreeti might perform to befuddle, confuse, or horrify the adventurers.

The Efreeti will leave after feeling sufficiently entertained and grows bored. The Efreeti might even (2 in 6) leave 1d6 x100 gp to the characters for their "performance."

2. The creature falls in love with a party member. The degree of infatuation and the direction it takes should be acceptable for the player whose character is the object of affection. While a fun side encounter, a relationship may also change the game's direction.

3. The creature falls in love with another person and seeks the party's help to win their affection. It doesn't understand the nuances of courting and needs guidance navigating unknown waters. It desires to win its love's affection sincerely and wants to understand human interactions to properly communicate how it feels. This can be a light-hearted diversion for a campaign.

4. The Efreeti is a patron, sending characters on quests for (1d6):

1-2: Entertainment. They set up difficult (or even zany) tasks to watch the character's antics.

3-4: Distance. They send others on missions because they don't want direct involvement.

5-6: Access. they cannot access certain places (the location has magical wards) or involvement risks exposing their identity and they choose to remain hidden.

5. The creature seeks to lure and trap the party in a remote location.

It desires to terrorize before killing them. The monster seeks entertainment through psychological torment of its victims. The GM must provide a way for the adventurers to outwit, overcome the creature, or negotiate terms of their release.

6. An object imprisons an Efreeti.

The person carrying the object can command the creature to perform tasks. An entrapped Efreeti must obey 1d8 (secret roll) of tasks. Upon completion of the last task, the creature is free and may choose to return home, or it may exact vengeance upon its previous master(s). The Efreeti has no obligation to tell the bearer the remaining number of uses.

Efreeti are perfect for memorable encounters but don't use them to frustrate players. Like good seasoning, be judicious and easy-handed in application.

GARGOYLE

Magical monsters that look like hideous, horned, winged statues. Semi-intelligent and possessed of a great cunning.

AC	5 [14]
HD	4 (18hp)
ATT	2x claw (1d3), 1x bite (1d6), 1 x horn (1d4)
THACO	16 [+3]
MV	90' (30')/150' (50') flying
SV	D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (8)
ML	11
AL	Chaotic
XP	75
NA	1d6 (2d4)
TT	C



SPECIAL

- **Blend in with stone:** May be overlooked or mistaken for inanimate statues.
- **Guardians:** Almost always attack when approached.
- **Mundane damage immunity:** Can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Spell immunity:** Unaffected by *sleep* or *charm* spells.

Introduction

Gargoyles are frightening adornments placed in the upper portions of churches and cathedrals designed to jettison rainwater away from the building's foundation and protect the structural integrity of the building. Although intended to ward off evil spirits, rumors abound of them being malevolent.

Gargoyles are commonly associated with gothic European cathedrals, but their heritage dates back thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians fashioned lion-headed motifs along the temples of Thoth to protect the buildings from the deadly electrical storms of Set. There are many early examples of stone

carvings of creatures used to guard buildings against evil. Even some ancient Greek and Roman temples were adorned with mythological creatures functioning as waterspouts.

According to an old European legend, St. Romain, bishop of Rouen, slew a monster ravaging the countryside. He was determined to burn the creature's carcass, but the neck and head were impervious to the flames. Seeing its destruction was impossible, he ordered beast's neck and head mounted to the wall of a church.

The beast in this story was a fire-breathing creature, like a dragon. Therefore, it's appropriate to assign similar monsters a 2d6 breath weapon.

Plot Hooks:

1. A fire-breathing monster prowls the countryside devouring people and destroying their homes. A band of adventures ridding the populace of this menace would gain the adoration of the community and whatever monetary reward they can muster. The neck and head of the beast is valuable, creating options for characters who wish to sell it.

- A vain noble wants to display the beast's head at his castle to bolster his reputation and will pay handsomely for the trophy.
- A community is cursed and needs the creature's head to remove it. For the last twenty years, the community has endured severe, economic misfortune and the beast's head will end their misfortune.
- A nearby temple seeks the beast's head to ward off a demonic presence plaguing them. The priests believe this evil is growing in power and needs to be dealt with quickly before it spreads.

2. Seventeen centuries ago, the wizard-priests of Xalchol hid seven mighty relics in an abandoned temple for use during a time of dire need. They placed gargoyles to guard the site, with orders to kill anyone seeking entry, except those bearing the White Sigil.

The time of dire need has arrived, and the characters are tasked with retrieving one of the mighty relics. The last priest of Xalchol died a century ago and no one is left to create the White Sigil. The characters will need to muster their creativity to obtain the relic, as the gargoyles serve an important service and destroying them leaves the remaining six artifacts vulnerable to theft.

3. The monster lives at the top of a tall tower, accessible only by climbing. Adventurers successfully climbing to the top will encounter the monster in a mood to negotiate.

1. The gargoyle agrees to leave the region if the party performs it a service.
 2. If the service is performed to a high standard, the gargoyle will reward the adventurers with something they desire.
 3. The gargoyle will grant the adventurers immense power in exchange for their souls.
 4. The monster is bored and desires to see if anyone in the land is brave enough to stand against it.
 5. The gargoyle is lonely and simply craves polite conversation. Afterward, it flies off, leaving the adventurers a small hoard of treasure collected from its victims.
4. A wizard priest created gargoyles to guard a sacred site. Over the millennia, the site decayed and crumbled into a massive pile of rubble. This removed the magic spell binding the creatures to the site and left them to ponder their existence. Initially, the gargoyles were neutral in alignment but are now free to adjust their moral compass.

GHOUL

Grotesque, animalistic, undead humans that crave the flesh of the living.

AC	6 [13]
HD	2* (9hp)
ATT	2x claw (1d3 + paralysis), 1x bite (1d6 + paralysis)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	90' (30')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	9
AL	Chaotic
XP	25
NA	1d6 (2d8)
TT	B

SPECIAL

- **Paralysis:** For 2d4 turns (save versus paralysis). Elves and creatures larger than ogres are unaffected. After paralyzing a target, ghouls will attack others.
- **Undead:** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep).



Introduction

Ghouls exist in mythological lore, often taking different forms. Some cultures identify them as demons. Other societies believe ghouls are the souls of those denied entrance to heaven. All share the trait of eating human flesh. While most ghouls are indiscriminate about their victims, some have a taste for children or livers. Ghouls are known to dig up fresh graves to harvest delectable organs from the dead.

Folklore depicts ghouls as owning a malevolent intelligence and not mere hulking beasts. They also often possess the ability to shapeshift into humans or animals. The trademark paralyzing touch, however, appears to be a Gygaxian flourish. Between what is presented in folklore and how they are portrayed in D&D, there are several options for including ghouls in adventure scenarios.

Plot Hooks:

1. A group of ghouls once belonged to an ancient, heretical branch of an established religion. For their sins, the chief priest had them branded, cursed, and exiled after declaring them an anathema. Driven to a remote region, they settled in an abandoned tower, living meagerly and worrying how they would survive. Then a plague swept across the land, and the banished heretics were among the thousands who perished. But they soon realized the curse would not allow them to die. They now exist among the damned, driven by the insatiable impulse to feed on the flesh of the living.

Unlike typical ghouls, these monsters will not stay dead for long. They can be killed in combat but will reanimate the next evening. To release the heretics from their torment, a priest of their religion must cast Turn Undead. If successful, the curse is broken, absolving them of their sins, and granting them entry into the afterlife. (Suggestion: Consider removing the ability to inflict a paralyzing touch)

2. The characters come across a curious and gory scene in the wilderness. The bodies of several soldiers and their mounts lay strewn about, faces frozen in horror, victims of a violent and gruesome slaying. Steam rises from the disemboweled corpses, indicating the slaughter occurred within the hour. Close examination of the dead reveals the absence of several "choice" organs, such as the liver and heart.

Nearby are several magnificent horses wandering about, missing a saddle and bridle. They appear docile and will allow characters to approach and

capture them. The horses are ghouls who killed the soldiers and their mounts. The adventurer's approach caught them mid-feast and, with haste, they transformed into horses to avoid detection. If taken by the characters, the shapeshifting monsters will continue to play the role of beasts of burden. The ghouls could easily attack the unsuspecting characters. But for the time being, they will maintain the ruse, devouring an occasional victim while the party continues its travels.

3. A pack of ghouls present an obstacle for adventurers traveling through the region. The monsters agree to let the party use the route without incident, but only if they're provided with a dozen, fresh human livers. The characters must decide how to resolve this logistical and ethical dilemma, especially if they'll need to frequently use the route to pass through the land.

4. The ghouls once belonged to a small tribe, who, after pillaging graves, suffered a curse of the undead for their blasphemy. They still retain their personality but must now consume human flesh to survive. Preferring decaying corpses over the freshly killed, they lean more towards grave robbing than murder. The ghouls are not inherently evil. They're people in a predicament who've chosen to survive at any cost. Unlike traditional undead, they maintain the ability to procreate among themselves, albeit with a low fertility rate. The ghouls might even consider living among society, provided they can find those willing to tolerate, or even supply, their taste for human flesh.

GOLEM (CLAY)

Artificial being constructed from clay by mighty clerics or wizards.

AC	6 [13]
HD	11* (49hp)
ATT	1x fist (3d10)
THACO	11 [+8]
MV	60' (20')
SV	D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (5)
ML	12
AL	Neutral
XP	1,900
NA	1(1)
TT	None



SPECIAL

- **Mundane Damage Immunity:** Only harmed by magical attacks.
- **Magical Weapon Immunity:** Only harmed by blunt magical weapons.
- **Energy Immunity:** Cannot be harmed by fire or cold attacks.
- **Construct:** Not affected by Sleep, Charm or other spells affecting the mind.

Introduction

Breaking from the custom of spotlighting OSE SRD monsters, here is the clay golem. The SRD contains other golems made from a variety of materials but leaves out the one with ties to folklore.

According to legend, a man sought a means to protect their community from others wishing their people harm. They created a golem by fashioning a humanoid form from clay then placing a magical word upon its forehead.

Despite being created for good, the golem became dangerous and violent toward the people it was supposed to protect. The creator was forced to remove the magic word, reverting the creation back to its inanimate form.

Plot Hooks:

1. The Golem's Creators No Longer Exist. The adventurers seek entrance into ruins guarded by golems. The characters know they lack the ability to match these creatures in combat. To progress on their mission, the characters must discover a means to avoid, disable, or deactivate these relentless guardians. Deactivation may require someone to touch the sigil on golem's head or perform a ritual.

2. The Golem is an Antagonist. The golem's current mission is to kill (or capture) a character, or the entire adventuring party. The golem's slow speed puts it at an immediate disadvantage, but it is relentless in its pursuit. It never grows weary and overcomes most obstacles. It can demolish walls, scale mountains, and walk across riverbeds and the bottoms of lakes and seas. Having a golem (or golems) on their tail keeps characters on task. If they loiter, they risk the monster appearing at an unexpected and inopportune time.

3. A Golem is a Solution to a Problem. A barrier separates the characters and their goal, such as a wall or vault door. A clay golem, given enough time, has the strength to breach the barrier. Creating a golem to serve a purpose might help a plan to succeed. What could go wrong? Another option is a golem allows the adventuring party to take on opponents beyond their ability to handle. Like infantry advancing behind a tank, a golem allows the characters to face more difficult foes, even if only for a short amount of time.

4. The Golem is Intelligent. A spirit inhabits this golem and, much like in the comic book, *Concrete*, the golem lives out an extended life in an alien body. Perhaps it uses this advantage to gain political power? Maybe it simply wants to lead a normal life? Or is it tired of people and chooses to wander the world in a new form? The golem could even see itself as a vigilante, righting wrongs, oblivious to the unintended consequences.

Gaining the Enmity of a Golem:

1. Failed Ritual. A priest, wizard or community hire the characters to retrieve a scroll containing a ritual, or to gather necessary components for a ritual. After completing the mission, the spell animates the clay form, but the golem is not under the control of its masters. First, it pulls the limbs off the priest then turns its attention to the adventurers.

2. Bad Luck During a Random Encounter. While traveling, the adventurers come across a strange statue, a golem, appearing out of place. Once the characters start physically engaging with the statue, the golem awakens. The characters' presence might profane the ground upon which they stand, or an evil spirit inhabits the clay form.

3. Save the Village. The community created a golem to protect their town from a malevolent group (bandits, soldiers of a cruel ruler or neighboring kingdom). The golem performed its function, slaughtering the invaders in an efficient and spectacular way. Unfortunately, those killings corrupted the golem. Now, it's turned on those who created it, and the characters must find a way to stop it.

HELLHOUND

Monstrous, cunning, and very intelligent hounds, the size of a small pony. Breathe fire and love heat. Dwell in dungeons or near volcanoes.

AC	4 [15]
HD	3 to 7* (13/18/22/27/31hp)
ATT	1x bite (1d6), OR 1x breath (1d6 per HD)
THACO	By HD (17 [+2] to 13 [+6])
MV	120' (40')
SV	By HD
ML	9
AL	Chaotic
XP	50/125/300/500/850
NA	2d4 (2d4)
TT	C



SPECIAL

- **Fire breath:** 2-in-6 chance per round of breathing fire. One target. Save versus breath for half damage.
- **Fire immunity:** Unharmd by non-magical fire.
- **Detect invisible:** 75% chance per round. 60' range.
- **Pets:** Sometimes found with other creatures with an affinity for fire.

Introduction

Many cultures believe in the concept of supernatural dogs connected to the land of the dead, or even Hell, itself. In Greek Mythology, Cerebos is the most famous. Depicted as a giant, three-headed dog, it maintains vigil over the entrance to Hades, the realm of the dead. Norse Mythology gave us Garmr, who also stood guard at Hel's gate to keep intruders from entering the underworld. Depictions of other kinds of hellhounds insert them into the lives of everyday people.

These creatures, such as the Black Shuck, the Barghest, or even the dog's part of The Hunt, haunt the lands of the living.

Hellhounds in the OSE SRD (and 1st Edition D&D) depict them as creatures from the elemental plane of fire, unmooring them from their traditional mythical roots.

In the suggestions below, combat with the hellhound isn't always necessary. These creatures are portents of things to come, not, for example, vicious guardians of a fire giant's treasure.

Plot Hooks:

1. Guardians of the Underworld.

The presence of Hellhounds indicates they guard a magical portal to the land of the dead. This grants the characters access to the realm, if they find a means to kill, subdue or nullify the pack of hellhounds. The portal also provides a way for the adventurers to retrieve a deceased member of their party. To add complexity to a campaign, this portal could allow the characters to bring a key, deceased NPC back to life. It also could act as a plot device, justifying how a villain killed by the adventurers returns from the dead, wanting revenge.

2. Severe Weather.

The sighting of Hellhounds means a devastating calamity could occur soon, an event severe enough to affect a region or country (Suggestion: Use the number of Hellhounds to indicate the magnitude of the event).

Examples include:

1. Severe weather (snowstorms, drought, forest fires, etc.).
2. A horrific plague.
3. An approaching savage army.
4. Sudden outbreak of a bloody war.
5. A calamity, such as a building collapsing, killing several prominent and beloved citizens.
6. A portal to a foul realm opens, allowing abyssal entities to enter the mortal world.

Armed with foreknowledge of an impending catastrophe, the characters must discern the nature of the calamity before attempting to stop it or save people from its effects.

3. Portent of Death. The sighting of a Hellhound indicates someone emotionally close to the person viewing the Hellhound will soon die. For many OSR-style games, killing a character's friend, lover or family member may have little effect on the player. Instead, kill a friendly henchman, popular NPC, or important patron. Another option is to have the party members make a save vs. dead, one at a time, until someone fails.

4. A Terrorizing Threat. A pack of Hellhounds are not simply interested in guarding a portal. They take peculiar delight in terrorizing communities. Killing townsfolk suddenly and randomly, especially in plain sight of witnesses, appears to bring them an inordinate amount of joy. A party able to rid the community of these monsters will earn their gratitude.

MUMMY

Undead humanoids wrapped in funerary bandages. Haunt ruins and tombs.

AC	3 [16]
HD	5+1* (23hp)
ATT	1x touch (1d12 + disease)
THACO	14 [+5]
MV	60' (20')
SV	D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (5)
ML	12
AL	Chaotic
XP	400
NA	1d4 (1d12)
TT	C



SPECIAL

- **Paralyze with terror:** Anyone seeing a mummy must save versus paralysis or be paralyzed with terror. Paralysis is broken if the mummy attacks or goes out of sight.
- **Disease:** Anyone hit contracts a horrible rotting disease. Magical healing is ineffective; natural healing is ten times slower. The disease can only be removed by magic.
- **Damage immunity:** Only harmed by fire or magic. All damage reduced by half.
- **Undead:** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures

Introduction

The Egyptians and various civilizations in South America mummified the bodies of the deceased.

Frightening tales about mummies are an invention of the modern age, spun decades after archaeologists began exhuming the bodies of the ancient pharos. There are no mythological tales of terror nor any moralizing stories from local folklore. The discovery of King Tut's tomb fueled the imagination, inspiring tales of curses and animated dead.

Physical Restoration

The mummies, as written, awoke after centuries of entombment. They find themselves in a weakened state, a matter they seek to fix.

In their past life they were (1d6):

1-3: Powerful wizards.

4-6: Diabolical priests who found a means to die and rise from the dead much later.

They undertook this path to (1d6):

1-2: Achieve immortality.

3-4: Cheat a death that was awaiting them.

5-6: Gain powers reserved for those who have come back from the land of the dead.

The Path

Whatever the reason, something delayed their resurrection by centuries and now they deal with a situation they did not expect, including the degree their mystical abilities atrophied.

The path to restoration requires:

1. The blood of hundreds of people.
2. Finding a lost mystical item.
3. Performance of a specific ceremony at a particular location and certain time.
4. All three.

The restoration is (1d6):

1-3: Immediate.

4-6: Incremental.

The restoration's result (1d6):

1-3: Restores the abilities possessed when they were a living wizard or priest.

4-6: Transforms them into a lich.

Political Restoration

They are intelligent creatures and will not gain any additional powers: Rather than being a deadlier version of a zombie, these monsters are intelligent and seek restoration back to power. The mummies think the adventuring party can accomplish this and will intimidate or bribe to obtain their help.

The mummy's alignment (1d6):

1-2: Lawful.

3-4: Neutral.

4-6: Chaotic.

They have Servants

The tombs of Egyptian royalty included the bodies of family, pets, soldiers, and artisans to serve them in the afterlife. The same should be true for mummies in a fantasy setting. When rolling for the number of mummies appearing, assume one mummy is the leader, and the others are trusted servants and family members. Add 3d6 skeletons for the number of mummified soldiers. Add 2d6 skeletons for non-combatant servants and artisans.

Complex Motivations

There is nothing wrong with making a mummy the master villain for a campaign, a role they portray in movies and fiction. Options include:

- They were powerful people who died, awaiting resurrection in a time of need. The time has come, and they now require the adventurers to provide them with something morally repugnant to protect the city/region/world from a terrible threat.
- Once restored, they will take the throne and rule the nation whose future conquests create a sizable empire. Their rule turns out no more (or less) oppressive than the previous regime, and they create peace and stability, at the cost of regular blood sacrifices.
- They want revenge and will not find peace until it is accomplished. The revenge does not have to be performed by the mummy. Players can carry out the act to eliminate the mummies, creating a moral quandary. With the mummies gone, treasure is for the taking.

SHADOW

Intelligent, incorporeal (but not undead) monsters that look like shadows. Able to slightly change their shape.

AC	7 [12]
HD	2+2* (11hp)
ATT	1x touch (1d4 + STR drain)
THACO	17 [+2]
MV	90' (30')
SV	D11 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	12
AL	Chaotic
XP	35
NA	1d8 (1d12)
TT	F



SPECIAL

- **Surprise:** On a 1–5.
- **Strength drain:** Victims lose 1 STR per hit. Recovers after 8 turns. If reduced to 0 STR, the victim becomes a shadow.
- **Mundane damage immunity:** Can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Spell immunity:** Unaffected by charm and sleep spells.

Introduction

Old-School Essentials does not denote these creatures as undead but indicates they are monsters resembling shadows. This allows a wide variety of interpretation, allowing shadows to fit into different campaign settings, including ones with a historical basis. Additionally, shadow monsters feel appropriate in urban, wilderness, abyssal and even underground settings.

These shadows are not ghosts and do not attack people. Judicious use of a creature going about its “routine” may be enough to spark unnecessary fear in the characters.

Plot Hooks:

1. Eerie Creature. The Kage-onna, from Japanese folklore, is a spiritual creature living in the physical world who takes the form of a shadow. They appear to be a woman's silhouette cast on the paper covering the windows and sliding doors of Japanese homes.

The shadow's form (1d6):

1-2: A young woman.

3-4: An old lady with bells around her neck.

5-6: Those inside the home think someone is outside but find nobody when they investigate.

The shadow's disposition (1d6):

1-2: Mischievous.

3-4: Malevolent.

5-6: Simply going about their routine.

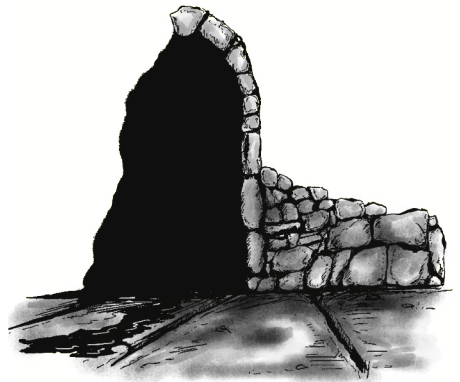
2. Bringer of Nightmares. Greek legends associate Mormo, a shadowy female monster, with nightmares. Use the shadow to plague adventures with frightening dreams from which they awaken suddenly. While they sleep, the shadow strikes them with her strength drain but does not deal damage. The characters wake after vivid, even lucid nightmares, with 1d4 points of strength drained. By making this a daily event, the players feel the need to investigate, even if it doesn't negatively affect their characters.

3. Devourer of Children. According to some legends, Mormo was a Corinthian woman who devoured children, starting with her own. This makes for a truly horrific monster, as this shadow enters homes and parents are incapable of preventing it from eating their children. The community celebrates adventurers that stop this monster's murderous rampage.

4. Trapped Creatures. These are creatures trapped in our realm and seek a way back to their home. They need the adventurers' help but, unfortunately, they cannot speak. The adventurers might assume these are enemies to be slain, which makes it difficult when the shadow attempts to communicate with the characters.

5. Reasonable Creatures. These monsters terrorize the area, feeding off the energy of its inhabitants. To do this, they use their deadly touch (1d4 damage + STR drain) to drain the life energy from their victims. While they have unsettling diets, this does not require them to be malevolent creatures. Perhaps, they do not intend to kill people, but their method of feeding puts lives at risk. Or to survive, they must feed off creatures who dream. While lower mammals suffice in times of dire need, the monsters must feed on those possessing a human level of intelligence to maintain their vitality.

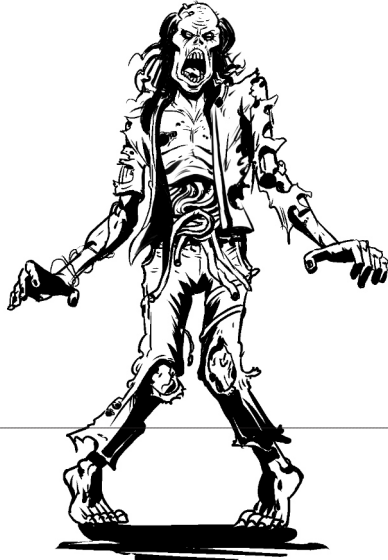
The adventurers may not be strong enough to slay the creatures, but they could figure out a way to deal with them, finding a way for the shadows to eat "food," while keeping the community safe.



ZOMBIE

Listless, humanoid corpses, reanimated as guardians by powerful clerics or wizards.

AC	8 [11]
HD	2 (9hp)
ATT	1x weapon (1d8 or by weapon)
THACO	18 [+1]
MV	60' (20')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1)
ML	12
AL	Chaotic
XP	20
NA	2d4 (4d6)
TT	None



SPECIAL

- **Surprise:** On a 1–5.
- **Guardians:** Always attack on sight.
- **Initiative:** Always lose (no roll).
- **Undead:** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. charm, hold, sleep).

Introduction

The folklore behind zombies originated in West Africa and, because of the slave trade, traveled to Haiti. The concept further developed on the island nation before expanding to other borders. Zombies have a long and rich historical tradition, but this entry focuses on utilizing more modern versions of this popular monster for your gaming table.

Plot Hooks:

1. Fast zombies. Contemporary zombie fiction demonstrates slow, shambling zombies are not a universal trope. Regardless of opinions about fast vs. slow zombies, giving the undead a little “boogie” can spice up almost any encounter, even if the zombies move at a normal speed.

2. Worker Exploitation. The use of zombie labor by necromancers is not new, but the concept enables the undead to play prominently in the narrative element of an adventure scenario. For example: A rich lord has a productive mine and uses cheap labor for hazardous work. Those that don't die from accidents die young from lung disease or being

overworked. In a self-serving act of so-called compassion, the lord pays the impoverished family a pittance for the body and a necromancer/practitioner reanimates the worker as a zombie. While the zombie does not provide the same quality of work as a living being, it needs no food or other support. Thus, the lord keeps people impoverished and depending on him for work, which he exploits.

3. Zombies in Disguise. The Santa Clarita Diet television series depicts zombies as infected people who retain their intelligence and personality. These infected try to live as the normal people they once were, but the need to consume human flesh complicates their plans, and hijinks ensue. For games, a zombie keeping its “mind” has the possibility of being a sympathetic creature. Maybe it feeds only upon “bad people?” Perhaps the characters can reason with it and provide a different outlet to satisfy its hunger? Or the zombies might be malicious individuals who see no moral problem with what they are doing and use their wits to turn the players’ zombie-trope assumptions against their characters.

4. Deadly Obstacles. Fictional scenarios about hordes of zombies are less about an enemy to dispatch but a dangerous obstacle to overcome. Individually, zombies often pose a low threat. But hordes, especially in confined areas, are deadly. This requires characters to be resourceful and rely on stealth and trickery to distract, decoy or even strategically outmaneuver a mob of the undead.

5. Doomsday Clock. Sometimes, players will dawdle at the table and spend long stretches of time planning and discussing, causing the game to drag. If the GM places the adventure in a “zombie rich” environment, the undead become a perfect mechanism to drive players to a decision and the characters into action.

6. Everybody is Infected. A central plot point in The Walking Dead television and graphic novel series is that all humans are infected by the zombie virus. Once a person dies, their corpse will return as one of the undead. This injects emotional tension as characters fight reanimated loved ones or must deal with mortally wounded friends. The concept of people reanimating after death creates numerous adventuring scenarios.

For example, the characters enter a dungeon to kill a necromancer and only encounter living opponents, who lack the ability to provide a significant threat. As the characters progress deeper into the dungeon, they realize the people (and possibly monsters) they mowed through so easily are now zombies. Harder to kill and now very dangerous. Perhaps this creates a quandary: Do the characters try to make their way back before the number of zombies becomes too great? Or do they press forward, hoping the successful completion of the mission will solve the ever-growing “zombie problem?”

Suggested reading: *Beyond Deep* by Wes Alcolese, a horror adventure designed for the Mörk Borg tabletop role-playing game.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DEATH

Dave Semark

Celebrating the End

“Must not all things at the last be swallowed up in death?” - Plato

Plato was right, obviously. All things are swallowed up in death, but not just for the poor soul who has breathed their last. “All things” include those folks left behind by the deceased. In fact, probably even more so than for those who have recently shuffled off the mortal coil. The living have always been left behind to deal with the

deceased. To make sure the dead are happy, and—well—stay dead, so they can enjoy all the benefits a long and prosperous afterlife may bring. And there's more to that than you might imagine.



The Corpse

AT SEA

The first thing those left behind needed to do was ensure their dearly departed was actually dead. On sailing ships in the eighteenth century, when a dead sailor was committed to the sea, he would first be sewn inside his hammock. The last stitch was always run through the poor fellow's nose, in the hope of waking him up if he was just in a really deep sleep. It was naturally considered “a bad thing” to drown a living crewmate. It was also pretty bad if a dead crewmate crawled back aboard having been buried at sea, or if their shroud were found, torn and empty, the dead sailor nowhere to be seen, but stalking the decks of the isolated boat.

MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

In medieval England, a dead body would have a string tied to their finger before they were incarcerated in their coffin and placed in the ground. The string ran out to a bell, just in case the deceased wasn't as dead as everyone thought and came to their senses after the burial. They could pull the string, and these “dead-ringers” would tell the world they weren't dead after all. Sometimes these bells would ring, even though there was no doubt the person was dead. At other times, it would ring but the person was most definitely dead when they were exhumed. This rising terror of the undead would keep a medieval village in thrall for weeks, and lead to the nearest Witchsmeller paying a visit to

investigate, exorcize evil spirits and burn every warlock and witch they find.

The fears of the risen dead were real to the people of antiquity. In some ancient cultures, a pitcher of blood was included in the grave goods, presumably for the deceased to drink as they passed to the afterlife. The prospect of the dead coming back to life to drink blood brings echoes of ghouls and ghosts, vampires and revenants, and more recently, zombies.

ANGLO SAXONS

To stop the worst ravages of the recently dead, the Anglo-Saxons had a simple but effective approach: they took an axe and chopped the feet off a person once they'd died, to stop them walking away after death. In earlier ages, the dead were sometimes defleshed, and the flesh buried apart from the bones. In the Iron Age, spears were thrown into the bodies of the dead, possibly an ancient twenty-one-gun salute, but perhaps with a more sinister purpose: to keep the dead, dead. All these efforts were means to prevent the dead from rampaging across the world of the living before they could be safely ushered into the glories of the afterlife.

As we can see, helping your loved ones reach the afterlife was of vital importance to the people of the past and a lot of time and effort went into doing this properly.

GREEKS AND ROMANS

In ancient Roman and Greek civilizations, the passing of a loved one would be sealed with a last kiss from their beloved, releasing their spirit through a last breath. The path to the afterlife was guarded by both Charon—the ferryman across the river

Styx—and the goddess Ceres—the door warden between the realms of the living and the dead. A payment of a coin—Charon's Obol, as it was known—would be placed in the deceased's mouth to pay for the final ferry ride, and animal sacrifices would be made to Ceres, to gain her favor and speed the transition. If these weren't attended to properly, the dead would be trapped in limbo between the world of the living and the dead, and angrily pester those left behind.

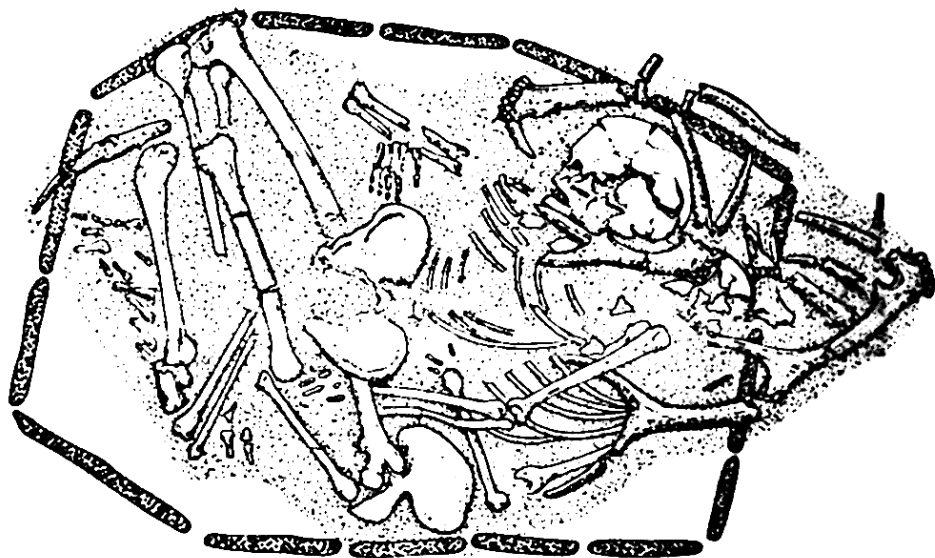
An elaborate funeral would be held, or at least as elaborate as the family could afford! For the elite this would involve professional mourners wearing the ancestral masks of the family, a eulogy immortalizing the importance of the family over the life of the deceased, funereal gladiatorial games and an extravagant funeral pyre, scented with generous amounts of herbs and spices, to disguise the stench. There were differences in other cultures.

SOUTH AMERICA

The clothes of the deceased would be ceremonially washed and dried before being burned, all to help the spirit take the final step into the afterlife.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The casket holding the deceased must be guarded, otherwise the dreadful Aswangs and Bal-bals would creep in and steal the body, to later eat it in a gruesome frenzy.



EGYPT

The dead would be buried with a number of shabtis, figurines assisting the departed with their chores in the afterlife. However, if the deceased failed to pass the Hall of Final Judgement, these shabtis would come alive in the realm of the living to destroy and kill until their eternal chores can begin.

But there are also some things you must avoid. Having sacrificed a succulent lamb or tender bull to the gods overseeing the funeral, you must never partake of that delicious meat. In doing so you would be telling the gods of your readiness to pass to the afterlife, and they would be only too happy to oblige! Perhaps, tricking an enemy into eating this divinely inspired food would be a good way of killing two birds with one stone?

MEXICO

You must avoid laying with your feet pointing towards a door, as this invites Death to come and take you. Death knows the dead are taken from their homes to their place of rest feet first, to avoid the lonely deceased looking back and beckoning a loved one to join them in death. So, easily confused, Death is believed to come to all with their feet towards a door, thinking them already dead.

Ceremonies

Once you have prepared your loved one for their last journey, finished the rituals, completed the ceremonies, you are done with your duties and have gently laid them to rest. You have said your last goodbyes. Or have you?

Many cultures spend a lot of time on ceremonies to keep the dead happy, and keep them in the afterlife, for what is worse than having all your old relatives hanging around, complaining about the state of the house?

GAELIC CULTURE

Some families have a Banshee charting their lives and howling when misfortune is about to befall them. However, you could argue the Banshee is doing them a favor, warning them of dangers to come rather than reveling in their troubles—perhaps Banshees have had bad press all these years?

CHINA

The Teng Chieh is an ancient Chinese festival to help guide errant spirits still walking the earth. Offerings of incense, artwork and food are laid out to appease these hungry ghosts, usually by families of their deceased ancestors. These ghosts will bestow blessings upon their living relatives if they are impressed by the offerings, or punishments if not.

ROME

The Caereris mundus festival invites the ghosts from the afterlife to lawfully roam amongst the living, literally a “holiday for the dead.” What these ghosts say and do during their annual leave from the afterlife is up to them, but perhaps they bring important messages to their friends and families, insights or secrets they otherwise would not have known?

Whatever happens, and however you cope with death, the one thing we all know (thanks to that lazy chameleon) is that Death’s cold finger will tap every one of us on the shoulder eventually. I’ll leave you with the immortal words of T.S. Eliot:

“I have seen the Eternal footman hold my coat, and snicker.”

But personally, I’m not planning to get my coat quite yet.

Where Does This Death Thing Come From In The First Place?

Putting aside the boring biological answer to that question, there are many myths that follow a similar pattern. They go something like this: God sent a creature to tell humans they will live forever. In some stories this is a chameleon or lizard, in others a frog, goat, dog or sheep.

Whichever one is sent doesn’t realize the eternal importance of this otherwise simple task and fails to get a move on—the chameleon dawdles, the goat stops to eat a tasty bush. So, God sends a second messenger, and this one gets to humanity first. But this time the message is different: Humans will not live forever but will now face death. In some myths, God still sent the original message to humanity but—as with the sheep—the poor confused creature got the benevolent message mixed up.

Whatever happened in the end, God had obviously changed his mind, and that was that. Thanks to a lazy lizard or forgetful sheep, humanity now had to contend with death, alongside all the other hassles of everyday life. And there was a lot to contend with.



THE HODAG

Jason Hobbs

The Legend

Few globally recognized stories of mythological creatures originate from the United States. There's Sasquatch, the Jersey Devil and Babe the Blue Ox. A lesser-known tale from American folklore is the Hodag, reportedly discovered in the 1890s in Rhineland, Wisconsin.

According to legend, the Hodag was born from the ashes of cremated oxen, an incarnation of suffering at the hands of abusive masters. Witness accounts of the Hodag's form vary, but most describe it as a four-legged creature with a long tail and row of dorsal spines, a pair of large, sharp horns and a grinning, tooth-filled mouth. A creature born of revenge, and the subject of horror stories told around the campfires of loggers and those who travel in the deep woods.

Oxen

Like horses or camels, oxen have been used by farmers and herders in many societies throughout history, and game mechanics for their use deserve a place in the OSE lexicon.

Oxen Cost (gp) 25, Unencumbered: Miles per Day 15, Movement Rate 120' (40'), Max Load (Coins) 5,000, Encumbered: Miles per Day 12, Movement Rate 60' (20'), Max Load (Coins) 10,000

NORMAL OXEN

A beast of burden bred for brute strength and endurance for pulling plows in most societies.

AC	7 [12]
HD	2+2 (11hp)
ATT	1 x horn (1d6)
THACO	17 [+2]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16
ML	6
AL	Neutral
XP	20
NA	0 (1d12)
TT	None

SPECIAL

Charge: If threatened, it charges and makes a horn attack roll on all targets in its path, inflicting double damage. Requires a run of at least 20 yards.

Hodag Lore

As a monster, the Hodag is made of much sterner stuff than a typical ox. Its origins are murky but perhaps it was created by a deity, such as one of Beasts of Burden or Vengeance, or it manifested because of a witch's curse. Regardless, the Hodag is driven by anger and hatred for mankind, coalesced from the ashes of their abused progenitors. They typically roam near the home of the abused oxen it was borne from, unless it's gathering with others of its kind, or it has already enacted revenge on a cruel, former master.

USAGE

- **Armor:** A skilled artisan can fashion the hide into leather armor and a wizard's enchantments can make it magical.
- **Potion:** A knowledgeable alchemist can powder down the horns of a Hodag to fashion a Potion of Frenzy.
- The horns are worth 50gp each.

HOOKS

- Local farmers have a history of abusing their oxen, causing a Hodge of Hodag to appear. The village council hired mercenaries, who tracked the Hodge to a nearby ruin, but they were killed by the creatures. The council only have 100gp and their wits remaining to entice another band of adventurers to save the village.
- While wandering through a great wood, the party encounters a ransacked cabin beside a small, unharvested farm plot. A Hodag wanders the area, seeking to enact its insatiable revenge upon anyone entering its territory.

Hodag

A mythical creature in the forests of Northern Wisconsin with characteristics of both a reptile and a cow.

AC	7 [12]
HD	2+2* (11hp)
ATT	1x bite (1d4) or 1 x horn (1d6)
THACO	17 [+2]
MV	120' (40')
SV	D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2)
ML	6
AL	Neutral
XP	20
NA	0 (1d12)
TT	None

SPECIAL

Charge: When encountered, it charges and makes a horn attack roll on all targets in its path, inflicting double damage. Requires a run of at least 20 yards.

In combat, the hodag can attack with a bite and tail or horn gore and tail.



LEGENDS OF THE SUPERNATURAL PT 1

Dave Semark

The supernatural history of Britain and Ireland has always fascinated me and is often the source of role-playing hooks and scenario ideas. Legends of the Supernatural is a short series of articles taking some of my favorite myths and legends and writing them up as role-playing inspiration. All are based on an established history, myth or legend—or combination of all three—but I have taken some artistic license to add to the RPG feel.

This time, I'm looking at the ancient Great Old Yew tree and Angelystor in Llangernyw, Wales, the mystically sinister Green Park in London, and the mermaids of Blackmere Pond, in the Peak District.



Llangernyw And The Angelystor, Wales

Midway between Abergele and Llanrwst lies the village of Llangernyw, in the county borough of Conwy in North Wales. The village has been there a very long time, with its church of St. Digain going back to the 13th century, although people have lived here for thousands of years before that. The village sits on the tributary of the River Elwy, with a bridge just south of the church. The Stag Hotel is the only wayfarer's tavern in the village, with Hafodunos Hall, a gothic mansion dating from 1615, to the southwest. The village has never been highly populated, with only a few hundred souls ever living there.

The only detail of note about this old medieval village is the yew tree in the churchyard. Believed to be 4,000 years old, the Great Old Yew was here before anyone ever knew this place and will probably be here long after all have left. For on the night of every All Hallow's Eve, a spectral voice can be heard coming from the tree into the eerie dark of the churchyard. This "Reciting Angel" or Angelystor as it is known—a spirit living deep within the magical embrace of the tree—recites the names of parishioners of the village, parishioners who will not live to hear the spirit again, for they would die

within the next twelve-months, before the Angelystor recited once again. According to the local folklore, the Angelystor is never wrong, and nothing can prevent its prophecy once it has been spoken. A vigil is held every year to hear and record the names called, in the desperate hope the Angelystor will one year fall silent.

The Angelystor is a form of Will-o'-the-Wisp, bound to the Great Old Yew. It recites the names it hears from the spirit realm, and once a name is uttered the realm bends against the poor victim, ensuring their death within the year. There is no escape, as Kiffin Lloyd proved in 1921, when he fled as far as New Zealand, only to die from a falling slab of masonry exactly 364 days after he heard his name called.

Some have scoffed at the legend as a mere fable. Many years ago, one such foolish man, in his cups and emboldened by Dutch courage, challenged the legend. Shôn ap Robert scorned the tale and made his way to the church, only to hear his name called by the Angelystor. He fulfilled the prophecy and died some months later. Needless to say, no one in Llangernyw doubts the legend now.

It is widely believed rituals exist to mimic the voice of the Angelystor and, in effect curse, a person who otherwise was not due to have their name recited. Local legend says these rituals were written in an ancient tome, "The Angelystor's Song," once in the possession of Sir Hywell Morgan of Hafodunos Hall in the 17th century.

The Angelystor's prophecy has never been known to fail, but perhaps there are ways to prevent the fate decreed by the Angelystor?

Green Park, London

One of the great Royal Parks, just a stone's throw from Buckingham Palace, Green Park is grassy and wooded. However, its fifty acres of trees and grass are dark and somber. Apart from a few hardy wildflowers that struggle and wither, Green Park is devoid of color. Many believe this is down to the park's history. It was once the burial ground for the St James leper hospital. But not only poor lepers were buried here—myths abound about the ungodly experiments and diabolical acts perpetrated at the hospital, under the guise of a charitable hospice. The stench of disease, death and the evil spirits summoned to this place are said to pervade the grounds like an invisible miasma.

Another legend tells of King Charles II, the king of England from 1660 to 1685. He used to pick flowers for his wife, Queen Catherine, in Green Park. But that was not all. A terrible philanderer, Charles also picked flowers for his many mistresses. On discovering this, Catherine in her anger cursed all the flowers in the park, and they withered and died, never to grow again. Until this day it is said anyone who finds and picks a flower from Green Park will either be blessed with eternal love, or damned to heartache and sorrow, depending on the lost Queen's mood.

The Queen's curse stirred the spirits of London, those who had once learned to accept the growth of the city if the oases of fey power remained, the Royal Parks. They occasionally allow a flower to grow to tempt a passer-by to pick it in its beauty. This person, in picking the

flower, unknowingly volunteers for a test of their good heart and worthiness. A test, if passed, will allow Green Park to cast off the Queen's curse and restore nature's embrace. Sadly, no one's heart has yet proven worthy. The curse still stands, and the poor victim must pay the fatal price for their failure. But that is not all, for their spirit is trapped to wander Green Park's paths and byways as a ghostly apparition, until the curse is lifted.

While this dark shadow lies across Green Park, the curse's power collects in certain trees, driving the wildlife from them and drawing in those with evil intent and despair in their hearts. Spirits haunt these trees. A long-coated man dressed in early 20th century garb. A crazy-eyed old man tearing his hair out. A young woman in evening clothes and dancing shoes. And a repulsive woman, warty, bloated and decaying, wailing and beating her chest in despair. Those who linger too long within Green Park are found dead the following morning, their spirits consumed by the ancient curse of the vengeful Queen Catherine.

Blackmere Pond, the Peak District

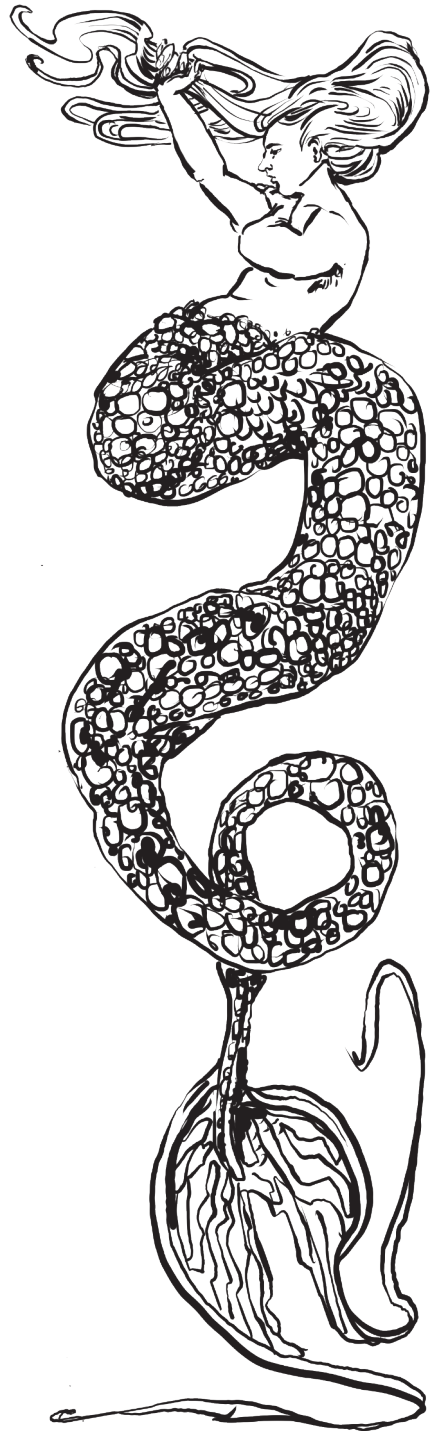
In the hills of the Peak District, a few miles north of the hamlet of Leek, lies Blackmere Pond. Legend has it this bottomless pool is home to two ghostly mermaids. One is calm and kind and appears at midnight every easter. She is said to award immortality to those who ask for it and are deserving. The other, however, was the victim of a terrible injustice in life. Young Sally Braithwaite was falsely accused of witchcraft by Joshua Linnet, a man whose unwelcome advances she had rejected. In his anger, Linnet used the accusation to convince the townsfolk to condemn her to death. She fled into the hills, only to be captured and drowned in Blackmere Pond. But not before she could curse her accuser. Linnet was found dead three days later, with terrible claw marks on his face. Ever since, the locals have steered clear of the pool and warn any who choose to visit it to be careful what they wish for. For who knows which mermaid will greet them?



What the locals don't understand is there aren't two mermaids here, there are three, and they are not mermaids, but shapeshifting wraiths. The Grey Maid formed from Sally Braithwaite's good heart and compassion and is kind and nurturing. The Green Maid grew from her vengeance and is evil and destructive. The Brown Maid took the rest of her spirit and cares only for the balance of nature.

In the mid-19th century, a group of archaeologists and folklore hunters came to Blackmere to test the legend and drain the pool, to see if it really is bottomless. They spent only a day there. In their rushed return, they spoke of a mermaid, of her threat to flood the valley and the villages of Leek and Leekfrith, of the evil in her eyes and the terror in their hearts. None ever returned.

To this day, their unfinished drainage ditch can still be seen. The locals still shun the area and say their livestock refuse to drink from the water. But some foolhardy adventurers still come to Leek asking about the mermaids of Blackmere Pond. Usually, the locals go quiet and deny any knowledge, hoping the poor fools will lose interest and pass on by. But the lure of immortality is strong, and some still resolve to try their luck with the mermaids. Which one will appear? Nobody knows.



RAISE DEAD

Onslaught Six

What is the purpose of death in fantasy TTRPGs? Often, it sets tone. If player characters can die easily, as in almost all TSR-era versions of D&D, then life is cheap, and death is swift and quick. The player characters are not special; even if they are the protagonists, they are not heroes. Their success, their continued survival, is not guaranteed.

Not everyone is into this, for every genre of game, even within the same system. Some want their characters to be heroes, which translates to them wanting their character to never die. Some even posit character death is a failure on the referee to balance encounters properly. However, I think those players overlook a key component of the worlds we are, by default, playing in: Resurrection.

Death and resurrection are a core part of many fantasy stories; a character's death is rarely the end of their tale, and even today fans speculate how a

dead hero in a story might be brought back to life later. Conan's death and resurrection through magic is a huge set piece in the 1982 film.

Many historical mythologies include heroes who die and then come back from the afterlife. The idea of your character dying, and that's the definitive and final end of the character, is a little absurd. Gygax even said himself in the AD&D 1e DMG: "[...]Death due to combat is no great matter[...] for the character can often be brought back by means of a clerical spell[...]" By 1979, it was expected that your favorite dead PC could be brought back to life as a matter of rote.

As with many things, part of the problem comes with open communication between players and referees about the style of game they wish to play in. Personally speaking: Kill my character. We both know there's a way to bring them back.



Paying for Resurrections

Old-School Essentials doesn't provide any recommendations for spell casting services, and original B/X materials (including Gyga's B2) say that local priests will help adventurers, but don't provide any prices for doing so. AD&D 1e suggested 1,000 gp + 500 gp/level of the caster. Should the players find a cleric of sufficient level to resurrect them, they might be unable to pay the requisite fee.

That's okay; while money usually makes the world go round, favors and barter do as well. If the players are in good standing with the church or town, they may even perform the resurrection before the favor is completed. You can also seed these favors into your adventures, allowing the players to complete them early and be owed a favor by the church.

1D8 FAVORS FOR RESURRECTIONS

1. Find a lost acolyte in the local dungeon
2. Recover a holy symbol stolen by local bandits
3. Transport a cursed magic item to the church in the next town
4. Perform community service — the church needs a new roof installed
5. The priests need a selection of local, hard-to-get-herbs for various rituals
6. The church requires a diamond worth at least 500gp to perform the resurrection

7. The church requires someone in the party be of the same alignment as the church
8. The church demands up to 2d6 local townsfolk be converted to the church as payment

PHOENIX DOWN

Of course, reviving a dead PC has become so common a variety of computer and Japanese video game RPGs have made it even more rote, allowing one to buy resurrection items at an ordinary store.

While I think that's a bit extreme for an old-school TTRPG, the idea of unique items to revive a fallen PC are very useful for a fantasy campaign. Each of these items could be legendary, with knowledge of them locked behind powerful sages (like those found here in Gary's Appendix!) and requiring an entire adventure just to obtain.

1D6 UNIQUE RESURRECTION ITEMS

1. A dust made from a feather stolen from the tail of a Phoenix
2. A red leaf from the lowest branches of the World Tree
3. A bottle containing a fairy from the healing springs
4. A spotted green mushroom from the Fey kingdoms
5. A balm from the druids of the furthest forest
6. A horn to call upon the resurrection spirits of the barbarian mountains



Finding a Priest

On the other hand, in your game you may find it more worthwhile to make finding a cleric of sufficient level a quest in and of itself; these priests should be unique characters and their locations fantastical and strange.

1D6 UNIQUE PRIESTS & LOCATIONS

1. A retired priest who works as a gravedigger in a cursed town
2. A priest who can only be found in a temple existing outside of time
3. A priest who is a silver dragon, living in a tower atop a mountain
4. The Great Fairy who resides behind a waterfall in the woods
5. A hermit trader in the far desert, who moonlights as a high-level priest
6. The Master of Skulls, living in his eternal citadel

A Timeline of Resurrection

As early as 1974's OD&D, the Raise Dead spell existed. There were, of course, limitations: It's a 5th level spell, so you need to be at least a 7th level Cleric to cast the spell, or presumably know one back in town who owes you a favor. The spell is not immediately clear on how long you've got after you die to be resurrected; it states clerics above the 8th level can "raise a dead body up to four days," with an additional four days per cleric level. Does this mean a 7th level cleric has only a day to raise someone? Gygax is unclear.

What we do know is "If the character's Constitution was weak, the spell will not bring him back to life," and "Raised characters must spend two game weeks of time recuperating from the ordeal." The exact terms of "weak constitution" do not seem immediately defined. But listed in the OD&D scores is that characters with constitution of 9 to 12 have 60% to 90% chance of survival and 7 or 8 have 40% to 50% chance of survival. This would later be expanded into the rules in Supplement I: Greyhawk and given a more generous curve; later editions would call this the "System Shock Survival" table.

In the AD&D 1e Player's Handbook, player characters could additionally be limited to a number of resurrections as their original Constitution score. The time limit for resurrections was also simplified to the cleric's level, meaning a 9th level cleric can resurrect someone up to 9 days after their death. We also are introduced to the Resurrection spell, which multiplies this time limit by ten. By AD&D 2nd edition, they added the caveat that resurrected characters lose one point of Constitution.

All these rules are repeated as optional rules in the *Old-School Essentials: Advanced Fantasy* rules.

SALT & GARLIC

Zac Goins

Recipes for Countering the Undead

When your cleric's sick or out of town, who's going to take the responsibility of cooking the deathless? Here's a three-part take on how low-level parties can use ingredients found in pantries to detect, ward, and turn the undead.

Homemade Detect Evil

Not everyone has a 2nd-level spell lying around, so when you desperately need to know when you're about to dance with the devil but you find yourself out of spell slots, a quick answer may be lying within your loot.

Certain crystals make excellent detectors. Amethyst, jet, peridot, and other precious stones can be prayed over for at least 10 minutes and then fashioned into a necklace or tucked into a breast-pocket.

Whenever undead are within a given range, the stones begin to dramatically change in temperature. A crystal that becomes frigid indicates undead are nearby, while a stone that heats may indicate a devil or demon's presence.

Different qualities of stones are more or less adept at communicating a presence. The size of the crystal, along with its clarity and cut, offer varying levels of detection as outlined in the following table.

CRYSTAL VALUE	DETECTION RANGE
50-249 gp	10-foot radius
250-999 gp	30-foot radius
1,000 gp+	60-foot radius

To use a crystal, it must be worn close to the heart, then on your turn, you may use your action to grasp the stone and see if it detects a presence as if casting a modified version of the spell *detect undead*. Crystals are not magic items, and using them as such is a quick trip to a worthless gem. Each time you use a crystal in this way, roll 1d6. On a 1, the crystal clouds and then shatters into dust. For gems of distinction, a d8 may be used instead. For lackluster gems, use a d4 or even a d2.



Stir-Fry Protection from Evil

This section's called "Stir-Fry" because there's a thousand different ingredients that you can throw into this pot, but once it's dinner time, everything had better come together. Key, go-to ingredients in your cleric-less protection from evil could be the following:

- Stinking Rose (Garlic)
- Iron
- Horse Skulls
- Dried Cat Husks
- Silver Dust
- Salt

Really though, a cat husk is just a cat husk until someone gets on their knees and starts prayin', and that's the truth about all of these. The mandatory ingredient in your stir-fry is the approval of your deity or demi-god patron. The items are (largely) just a repository for power, and it's beyond the power of any mortal to infuse them properly on their own. This sans-spell version of protection from evil requires a ritual, and if you're hoping for a larger effect, protection from evil 10' radius is going to take even more. Neither one is impossible, but it's going to take both time and effort.

Going back to the original AD&D Dungeon Master's Guide, you'll find a detailed description for the creation of holy water on page 114. In those instructions, you'll need to cast several spells, including creature water, purify food and drink, bless, chant and prayer. You'll also need a masterwork basin, a rare wood repository, and the right vestments. For the most part, all of those things are going to be unfortunately off the table if you don't have a cleric.

Here's then the recipe for protection from evil sans-spells and clerics:

1. Gather together ingredients based on your character's particular folk traditions (see bullet-list above for examples). These items will be consumed as part of the ritual
2. Spend no shorter than 1 hour praying to your chosen deity. At the end of the prayer, spend vitality equal to the number of hours spent praying. For each hour, reduce your hit points by 1d6. These hit points cannot be recovered for 48 hours. The maximum number of dice rolled is equal to your character level.

For each 10 gp of ingredients used, gain 1d6 (maximum of 5d6, no minimum). For each d6 rolled against your health, gain 2d6. Wearing holy vestments adds 1d6 to the dice pool. Roll all gained dice together and note the number of rolled 6s.

Protection from Evil:

Requires 1 success. May be initiated anytime within the next 24 hours. Spend extra successes to increase the duration of the effects for 6 turns per success.

Protection from Evil 10' Radius:

Requires 3 successes. May be initiated anytime within the next 24 hours. Spend extra successes to increase the duration by 3 turns.

Your GM is empowered to add or remove d6s from your pool based on the following circumstances: your relationship with your deity, the power level of your enemy, the rarity of your chosen ingredients, and the earnestness of your prayers.

Customizing for Effect

Certain types of undead and infernal creatures have adverse effects on particular sorts of ingredients. While using these ingredients is not mandatory in your protection from evil rituals, your GM may determine that not using them will result in a reduced dice pool. On the other hand, a benevolent GM may determine that putting them to use accurately may result in an additional die being added to the pool.

INGREDIENT	INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST
Stinking Rose	Ghasts, ghouls, vampires, zombies, and other flesh-eating undead
Iron	Ghosts, shadows, spectres, wraiths and other incorporeal undead
Horse Skulls	Undead raised by necromancy
Dried Cat Husks	Mummies, skeletons
Silver Dust	All undead and demons (except for liches, demon lords, and arch-devils)
Salt	Devils, Demons, and any infernally-bound or raised undead

Mom's Turn Undead

Turning the undead is really the cream of the crop when it comes to a cleric's abilities, and as thus it's hard to find a perfect substitute. It's like sugar to your tea, and no matter how much splenda, stevia, or other half-hearted sugar-replacements you use, nothing's going to quite be perfect; that said, beggars can't be choosers, so here's the next best thing: silver.

Now, simply waving a raw silver chunk at a vampire isn't going to do much except piss it off; however, the more

you work with the material and refine it, the more likely it is to turn your Transylvanian-uncle or mummified aunt into something more akin to the hissin' and spittin' feral cat that's been treed.

When wielding silver, any character may attempt to roll on the abbreviated "Clerics Turning the Undead" table below. The higher levels of this ability are never available to non-clerics and paladins have their own way of doing things. All that said, use the following modifiers to your initial 2d6 roll, depending on your quality of silver:

Raw Silver: Roll at Cleric Level 1, subtract 2d4 from total.

Purified Silver / Silver Weapon: Roll at Cleric Level 1, subtract 1d6.

Silver Holy Symbol: Roll at Cleric Level 1, subtract 1d4 from total.

Silver Holy Symbol (prayed over for 1 hour each day): Roll at Cleric Level 2, subtract 1d4 from total.

Silver Holy Symbol (prayed over for 1 hour each day, dipped in holy water): Roll at Cleric Level 3, subtract 1d4.

		Monster HD				
		1	2	2*	3	4
Cleric Level	1	7	9	11	-	-
	2	T	7	9	-	-
	3	T	T	7	-	-

"T" = Auto Success, "-" = Auto Failure, "7, 9, 11" = 2d6 roll must be equal to or higher than for success.

Whenever a silver item is successfully used to turn the undead, roll 1d6. On a "1," the silver blackens and becomes brittle, ruining the item and making it impossible to turn the undead with that item. A side note: this sort of blackened silver is an ideal reagent in cursed magic item creation.

A Quick Note on Holy Symbols

Without a doubt, the most iconic and important of active ingredients in any war against the profane is the holy symbol. It comes standard issue for clerics, and as mentioned above, it can even be used by non-clerics to some

effect. Add some spice to your campaign by making customized holy symbols of different rarities that produce heightened results and/or unique effects. Now your cleric has another form of unique loot to get them excited, much like scrolls for wizards.

Here's a few suggestions for unique holy symbols:

Alignment	Description	Mechanics
Law	A walking stick capped with a silver ram's head and a hollow interior.	Add +1 to your initial 2d6 roll for Turn Undead.
Law	A large arrowhead cut from ivory and etched with a twisting flame. Warm to the touch.	Add +1 to your Wisdom ability score.
Law	A silver hammer with the icon of an acorn stamped into its head. Ancient elven markings grace its surface.	Add +2 to your 2d6 roll to determine the number of HD.
Neutrality	An entwined set of ebony spiders, with the smaller devouring the larger.	Add +1 to [S] Saving Throws.
Neutrality	An iridescent globe with a glowing rune of Eligor suspended within.	Add +1 to your Cleric Level when Turning the Undead.
Chaos	An emerald shaped in the form of a fly. Strands of liquid rubies flow just underneath the surface.	Know the spell animate dead (must be 7th+ level cleric).



DRAUGR: UNDEAD VIKINGS

Travis Miller

Draugr: Undead Vikings For OSE

The pre-modern Scandinavians had a considerable body of lore about the dead and the undead. They had beliefs and practices involving the proper treatment of the dead spanning millennia from their forebears that came from the Pontic-Caspian steppe in the early Bronze Age.

The dead were respected and feared, for some of them could leave the grave and cause problems for the living. It seems silly and superstitious to modern people but the people of medieval northern Europe earnestly feared the undead. Some of the lore was recorded in stories and poems that survive from that era.

Gary Gygax included a number of monsters from fairy tales and folklore in the *Monster Manual*. Gary saw that in addition to being entertaining to read, the spooks and specters of the old world were great fodder for gaming. In this article, I'm going to present one of the undead the Norse recorded in their heroic legends and provide an example of how you can use those stories in your games.

The draugr is one of the creatures the northerners feared the most. Also known as *haugbui* or “mound-dweller”, the draugr are undead monsters who live in burial mounds. Like most all monsters in folklore, the draugr has consistent characteristics with some variation across the stories in which it appears. You can use that concept of a monster with variation between individual instances. This provides scaffolding for a monster that can become familiar while retaining variety that keeps players guessing. Every ghoul might be the same but each draugr can be a little bit different.



Undead in the Icelandic Sagas

The best sources for the draugr come from the Icelandic sagas. The Icelandic Sagas were influential on the Appendix N sword-and-sorcery writers Robert E. Howard and Poul Anderson. Returning to the original sources of inspiration for fantasy fiction can allow us to come to our own personal interpretations. I recommend reading them, both for their entertainment value and as fuel for your creations.

The draugr stories I'll discuss in this essay come from Grettir's Saga. Grettir came from a line of vikings. Even as a young man he is known for his great size and strength. At the age of 14, Grettir kills a man in a quarrel and is sentenced by the Althing to three years exile. Grettir leaves Iceland and finds a place to stay in Norway. One evening, while visiting a friend named Auden, he sees a great fire burst out on the headland below his friend's farm. Grettir asks about this and his friend Auden counsels Grettir to pay no attention to it. Grettir says that in Iceland, a supernatural event like that suggests a buried treasure.

Auden says that there is treasure but it is protected by a draugr. The land is owned by a wealthy local named Thorfinn. Thorfinn's father Kar the Old is buried in a mound and is unquiet in his grave. The undead Kar drove away the neighbors and his son Thorfinn now owns the island. His undead father watches over the land and the treasures of the mound.

Grettir wants the gold and breaks into the mound. He has a fierce battle with the draugr and wins. The young warrior cuts off the draugr's head and places the skull on the buttocks of the

corpse. Grettir takes the treasure to Thorfinn and gives it to him asking only for a fine sword he found in the hoard. Thorfinn recognizes the sword as one that belonged to his father and seems impressed by the deed but is unwilling to give up the weapon. Thorfinn did eventually give Grettir the sword but only after Grettir killed some vikings who came to loot Thorfinn's lands while he was away.

Back in Iceland, a shepherd named Glam was hired by a farmer. Glam was a hard and unpleasant man. The farmer and his wife tolerated Glam because he was a good shepherd and was the only man they could keep in the job. The valley where the farmer kept his sheep was haunted by a wight and scared away the previous shepherds. Though Glam was a nasty man, he was not scared by the wight and took good care of the sheep. The farmer tolerated Glam's nasty disposition. On Christmas Eve, Glam refused to observe the custom of fasting as he was not a Christian. That night, there was a blizzard and Glam did not return to the farm. The farmer and some men went looking for Glam.

They found the shepherd's corpse in an area where the snow was trampled and looked like a battle had taken place. The body was swollen two or three times its normal size and the skin turned blue-black. When the farmer and his men tried to take the body to the church, it couldn't be moved. It was too heavy. Even oxen couldn't budge the corpse. They brought a priest but couldn't find Glam when he arrived. When the priest left, the corpse was immediately located. Giving up, they built a cairn over Glam right where he lay. The troublesome dead man didn't stay put. He was

soon seen loitering about the farmhouse and scared away the workers. Some of them went insane.

The summer came and Glam's hauntings grew infrequent. When he appeared, he didn't harm anyone but made a lot of noise and would sit on the ridge of the house banging his heels into the roof. Another hard man came to work on the farm and found Glam's antics to be amusing and was not scared like the others. That arrogance didn't last long. Glam killed the man by breaking him over a slab of stone like a dry stick.

The situation went from bad to worse. The farmer gathered up his possessions and left. The draugr killed the livestock the farmer couldn't bring along. Glam then started terrorizing other farmers in the area. About this time, Grettir's sentence of exile was over and he had returned to Iceland.

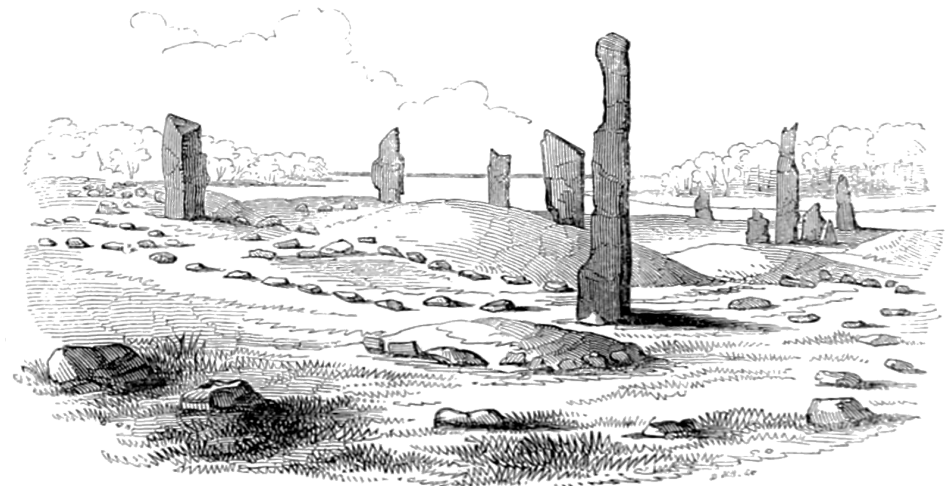
Grettir learned of this situation with the draugr and offered to help the farmer. The viking stayed on the farm so he could take the matter in hand when Glam showed up again.

Glam sensed the warrior and entered the farmhouse where Grettir was sleeping. Glam is shocked by the strength of Grettir as they fight. Grettir is able to overcome the creature but the monster puts a curse on Grettir. The great viking is cursed to be unlucky, an outlaw, become weak, and to die alone.

Grettir cuts off the draugr's head and places it on its buttocks. The farmer and Grettir bring wood and burn the corpse. They gather up the ashes and put them in a leather bag. The bag is carried into the wilderness away from farms and houses and buried.

The curse is quite potent. Grettir has a run of bad luck. Soon after the fight with the draugr, he accidentally sets a house on fire and kills a family. Grettir is named an outlaw for this and permanently exiled from Iceland. His enemies chase him for years and he is betrayed. Eventually he is killed by his enemies by the use of sorcery.

There are a few more sagas with the undead to flesh them out a bit more. In Laexdaela Saga we learn of a man



named Hrappr. Hrappr was a violent, covetous, and greedy man. As he is dying from an illness, he instructs his wife to bury him near the doorway of his hall when he dies. That way, he can keep an eye on things. She fears him and does as she is told but it doesn't work out well. Hrappr haunts the farm and kills many of the servants. The widow is forced to abandon the farm. Her brother digs up the corpse and moves it away from the house. The saga informs us that the "walking abated somewhat" so that Hrappr's son could take up the farm but he too died soon after and the property was abandoned.

In Eyrbyggja Saga a draugr leaves his mound to kill men and animals at night. The man's son digs up the corpse and moves it further away from human settlement but that doesn't work. The draugr returns and continues to cause problems. The son burns the corpse to ashes and spreads them at sea. Several other sagas describe similar situations where the undead must be burned and their ashes disposed of in the sea or a swift running river.

Using These Tales for Inspiration.

There are other draugr stories but they mostly repeat what we've already seen. The draugr in some of those stories have other abilities like shape changing, casting spells to control the weather, and prophecy.

Here are the elements these stories have in common.

- The draugr comes from men who were miserly, greedy or generally unpleasant in life.
- They retain some sentience and their worst character flaws are enhanced.
- Draugr are supernaturally strong and only the greatest heroes can contend with them.
- Draugr don't hurt family members.
- The mere sight of a draugr causes normal men to flee in fear or drives them insane.
- The body swells to great size and the flesh is blue-black in color.
- Draugr can use other abilities like invoking a potent curse.
- The draugr may only be a nuisance for a while but eventually starts killing.
- The surest way to destroy a draugr is burn it to ashes and dispose of them in the ocean or a river.
- A temporary fix is to move the body away from the community.
- Draugr are often found in burial mounds that have treasure.

Using this list, you can create versions of the draugr for your campaign.

The Draugr for Old-School Essentials

DRAUGR

Undead humans who linger near their place of burial and guard the treasures or lands they valued in life.

AC	6 [13]
HD	5+2 (24hp)
ATT	2 x (1d6+1) or 1 x Hug (2d4)
THACO	15 [+4]
MV	90' (30')
SV	D10 W11 P12 B13 S16
ML	12
AL	Chaotic
XP	425
NA	1 (1)
TT	B

SPECIAL

- **Undead:** Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells.
- **Fear:** Creatures with 2HD or less must save vs paralysis or flee
- **Hug:** A “hugged” combatant is immobile and takes an automatic 2d4 damage each round unless they make a STR check to break free.

The creature is swollen and bloated to twice the size of a normal man and its skin is blue-black with decay.

Using a Draugr in Your Campaign

The draugr is an ideal monster you are running an adventure in an area with a Norse motif. Anyplace where the dead are buried has the potential to contain a draugr.

A draugr would make for a good encounter in an area where there are abandoned farms or homesteads. They are an ideal monster for a burial mound or tomb that contains treasures. You could put a legendary sword or magic item in a mound guarded by a warrior or king who has become a draugr.

A perennial issue for referees is that once the players experience a particular monster, they become a bit jaded. Since the draugr have some consistent characteristics but variations between them, you can make each one a little bit different to confound players with experience handling the monster. When they encounter their second or third draugr of the campaign, switch things up.

You can mess with the players by reanimating a particularly obnoxious henchman or hireling. Since draugr retain some of their intelligence, the undead thing could remember some of the party's combat tricks and how to counter them. A curse as retribution for not burying his corpse properly might also be in order.

In the sagas, the draugr were major jerks in life. Anytime you have an NPC that annoys the players enough for them to kill him, you can get extra mileage out of the NPC by reanimating him as a draugr.

In Grettir's Saga, Kar the Old benefited his son by driving competitors off the island. Thorfinn took over all the land and became an important man because of his undead father. Your PCs might kill an undead monster for a patron but gain an enemy when the patron's neighbor loses their protector.

The tendency of the draugr to stay in the area where they were buried makes them avoidable. The locals recommend that the PCs avoid a certain road, even though it's a direct route, because of the draugr. If they try the road, the draugr might not attack the party as long as they don't attempt to steal its treasure. It could be quite a nuisance when it spooks draft animals and hirelings.

In the sagas, the heroes must go to extra effort to destroy the draugr permanently. That suggests they have some ability to regenerate. In several stories, the monster is burned and its ashes buried in an out of the way place or dumped into the ocean or a river. How annoying would it be to a party to kill a draugr, only to be passing through the area several months later and find it "alive" and back to its old tricks?

Lastly, you could give specific draugr additional powers or weaknesses. In some of the stories, draugr inflict curses on their destroyers, cast spells, and utter prophecy. You could use those ideas or add your own if it fits your adventure.

In the Robert Eggers film, *The Northman*, a draugr has a powerful but cursed sword that is sought by the protagonist, Amleth. Even though Amleth is a powerful berserker, he is overmatched by the draugr until it is

stunned by the light of the full moon. Amleth takes the opportunity to cut off the draugr's head and take its sword.

Conclusion

Folklore, legends, and myths are an excellent source of inspiration for monsters in your Old-School Essentials campaign. Adapting monsters from old tales invokes some of the same feelings that people sitting around the fire hearing stories of heroes and monsters might have had.

The draugr is an undead monster with some personality. It can have an identity beyond the typical mindless undead that makes each one distinctive. That gives you a monster that will feel unique each time you use it and confounds veteran players who have deep lore of the game.

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A silhouette of a fantasy landscape against a sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep red at the horizon to a dark, cloudy grey at the top. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged silhouettes of mountains and trees. On the right side, a church with a cross on its roof is visible. The overall mood is mysterious and nostalgic.

Gary's Appendix is a collective effort by a creative menagerie to create a memorable zine for fantasy gamers. This is a first in a series of zines that explores the curious and fascinating parts of our beloved hobby in a way that is thought-provoking and useful.

The inspiration for this zine is the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Dungeon Masters Guide. Gary wrote and collected a vast amount of information, rules, and guidance. Its haphazard nature and perplexing subjects makes it as fresh today as when he penned the work almost fifty years ago.

We do not have the audacity to believe that we can produce a work that matches that evergreen classic. We are partakers of the past who seek to share our works, our journey and our excitement about the hobby.