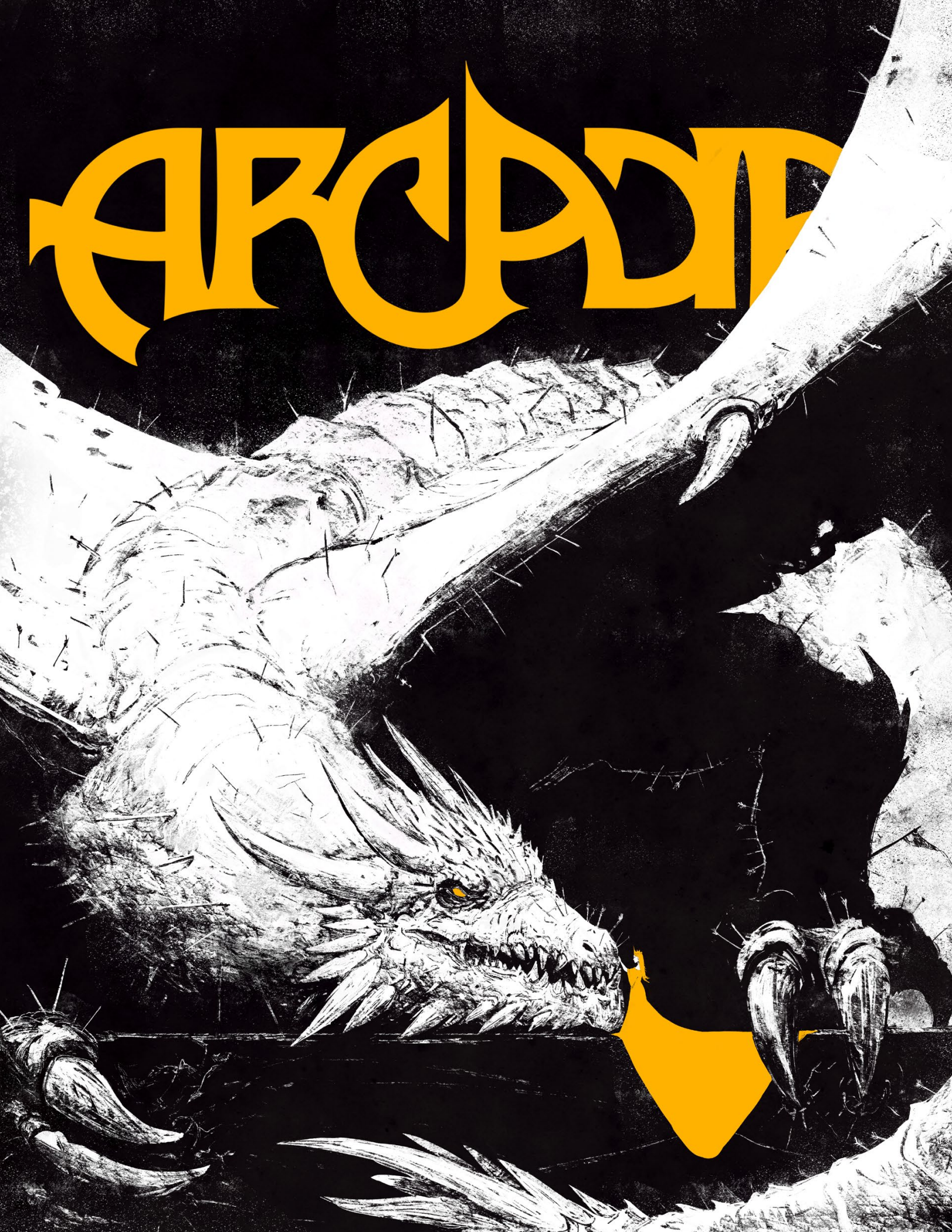


# ARCADIA



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ISSUE 13  FEBRUARY 2022



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

You may have noticed in *ARCADIA 12* that we issued a content warning in our article, “So Your Best Friend Is a Monster.” In the coming months, you’ll see more content warnings in the pages of *ARCADIA*, including in this issue’s article, “Poor Undead Souls,” by [Mario Ortegón](#) (which gives you a whole bunch of evocative new ghosts). I thought this letter would be a good chance to talk about how that change came to be.

But before we dive into the *how*, let’s talk about the *why*. What’s the purpose of content warnings? If an article has a content warning on it, that doesn’t mean we’re ashamed of the content. We’re proud to present all kinds of great material to add to your game! Likewise, a reader shouldn’t feel ashamed if they come across a content warning and think, “This article isn’t for me. It will upset me if I read it, so I’m going to pass.” That’s exactly the purpose of giving the reader a heads-up.

Most folks come to *ARCADIA* to get fun ideas and useful content for their games, not to feel scared, hurt, anxious, or other traumatic emotions. A majority of our content is and will always be light-hearted goodness. But we also recognize that we’re writing for a game built around slaying monsters. Our authors are artists, and we give them a canvas to fill with ideas that inspire them. This occasionally leads to some dark places. We don’t want to upset our incredible readers, so we think giving a heads-up is a great way to let artists create *and* make sure *ARCADIA* is an enjoyable experience for readers. Content warnings don’t hold our authors back from darker places—they allow them to go there without anxiety.

We should have been using content warnings from the get go. There are some older *ARCADIA* articles that would benefit from them, like “Long-Term Curses,” “The Grim Accord,” and “Filthy Peasants.”. It wasn’t until our sensitivity readers and some other folks we work with brought them up that I thought, “Of course! Why didn’t we do this sooner?” If you’ve been with us since *ARCADIA 1*, then you’ve seen the many small tweaks and evolutions the magazine has had so far. This is just another little change on our way to becoming a charizard.

We’re only thirteen issues into what we hope will be a very long run. It is our mission to provide material from some places we haven’t gone yet. In the rest of 2022, you’ll see a lot of fantastic articles: some whimsical, some horrifying, some funny, and some emotional. A lot of it will compliment what you’ve seen in previous pages of *ARCADIA*. For instance, last year we had a lot of content for spellcasting characters. This year we hope to give you some more options for martial heroes, starting with “Group Maneuvers” by [Steve Fidler](#) in this issue. In our survey last year, you asked for more monsters in *ARCADIA*, so we’re bringing you the best stat blocks around, as [Kat Kruger](#) delivers this issue with “Monsters of Wonderland.”

As we continue to explore new kinds of content, we will give you a heads-up when we go places that could upset you, and we’ll work with the authors, editors, and sensitivity readers to make sure we’re handling all our articles in a responsible and thoughtful way. Our commitment, as always, is to help maximize the fun and imagination you can bring to the game. We’re excited to see where you take it next!

*Ex animo,*  
James Introcaso  
Managing Editor

# GROUP MANEUVERS

TEAMWORK MAKES THE SCHEME WORK!

by Steve Fidler

*The line in the sand has been drawn. Valen, a hulking dragonborn, stands toe to toe with the grinning halfling known as Tella, ready to see their feud through to its bitter end. As Valen commits to a powerful charge, Tella lets out a piercing whistle, calling her gnomish ally out from the shadows and into the fray. As she sidesteps the dragonborn's charge, she grabs Valen's forearm and torso and pulls him with ease over her now-prone ally, forcing the dragonborn into an embarrassing stumble to the floor.*

Group maneuvers introduce new reactions that allow creatures to work with their allies to manipulate the flow of combat. These lightweight mechanics are designed to be available to all creatures big and small—even foes and monsters!

## LEARNING MANEUVERS

When using this system, each character can learn a number of maneuvers of their choice equal to their proficiency bonus. The options are listed under “Maneuvers” later in the article. These maneuvers can be introduced at character creation, or as part of an ongoing campaign as part of the narrative or as a group reward. You learn new maneuvers as your proficiency bonus increases. When you gain a level, you can replace one maneuver you know with another from the list.

## DOWNTIME ACTIVITY: TRAINING MONTAGE

A GM can allow player characters to study maneuvers during downtime. Two or more characters can choose to study together. It typically takes 5 days of dedicated practice to train each maneuver, and anyone who participates in the training can choose to learn the maneuver at

the end of that time. In order to learn a maneuver during downtime, you must have a dedicated teacher who knows the maneuver or a scroll that guides you through the process of learning the maneuver.

### COMPLICATIONS

Optionally, the GM can introduce complications to your downtime activity.

Practicing maneuvers is an interactive activity between two or more people. You have a 10 percent chance to encounter a complication during each day of practice. When a complication arises, the GM can choose or roll for the complication on the Training Montage Complications table.

## ROLEPLAYING A MANEUVER

Using a maneuver is a chance to create memorable moments with your friends. Coordinate with your team in advance: “James, please use your Clever feature as a bonus action! I’m probably going to miss with one of the attacks from my *scorching ray*, so get ready to redirect it!”

To encourage this behavior as a GM, don’t be afraid to give out inspiration for successful tactics and hilarious mistakes, or simply have an enemy drop dead from embarrassment after falling victim to a Tabletop Trip.

## TRAINING MONTAGE COMPLICATIONS

d6	COMPLICATION
1	You have difficulty finding a set of instructions for the specific maneuver you are trying to learn, forcing you to spend 5 days finding a teacher before you can begin practice.
2	Others witnessing your training mistake it for an actual fight, and the authorities come to break up the “altercation.”
3	You go a bit overboard, and one person training (determined at random by the GM) suffers an injury. For 5 days, or until they receive magical healing, they recover half as many Hit Dice as normal during a long rest.
4	You notice early in your training that the scroll you’re using as a guide was created for creatures with entirely different anatomy, or that your instructor can’t teach you this particular maneuver. You can choose a different maneuver to train or end your training early. You’ll need a different scroll or an instructor to learn this maneuver.
5	After an intense training session, you discover that opportunistic scavengers have stolen your food and water.
6	Your rowdy and raucous training causes property damage in the area where you are practicing.

## USING MANEUVERS

A maneuver is executed by using your reaction in response to a predefined trigger—an activity being performed by an ally that you can see or hear—to combine your efforts into an effect greater than the sum of its parts.

### MANEUVER SAVING THROW DC

If a maneuver requires your target to make a saving throw, the DC is calculated as follows:

**Maneuver save DC** = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence modifier (your choice)

## INSPIRATION

You can use inspiration in a new way with group maneuvers to create truly awe-inspiring moments. If you have inspiration when you perform a maneuver, you can expend the inspiration to perform the maneuver without using a reaction. In addition, you and your ally have advantage on any attack rolls or ability checks you make as part of the maneuver, and your target has disadvantage on any saving throws made to avoid or resist it.

## MANEUVERS

The group maneuvers are presented in alphabetical order.

### ALLEY-OOP

When an ally you can see or hear disarms a creature within 5 feet of you and causes it to drop an object, you can use your reaction to either pick up the object, provided you have a free hand to do so, or kick it up to 20 feet away.

You can also use your reaction after an ally you can see or hear scores a critical hit against a creature within 5 feet of you to disarm that creature, forcing it to drop an object of your choice that it’s holding. As part of this maneuver, you can pick up the object up or kick it up to 20 feet away.

### ARCANE ECHO

*Prerequisite: Pact Magic or Spellcasting feature*

When an ally you can see or hear within 30 feet of you casts a spell that you also know or have prepared with a casting time of 1 action and a range of self that targets an area (such as *thunderwave*), you can use your reaction and expend a spell slot of the triggering spell’s level (a minimum of a 1st-level slot) to echo the spell, casting it yourself. If the areas of the spells overlap, a target in the overlapping area is affected only by the first spell cast.



## CATAPULT JUMP

When an ally within 5 feet of you who weighs less than 30 times your Strength score jumps, you can use your reaction to launch them farther. The distance they are able to jump doubles, and every 2 feet of movement during their jump costs only 1 foot.

## CHARGED PROJECTILE

*Prerequisite: You can cast a cantrip that requires an attack roll*

When an ally makes a ranged weapon attack and you are within 5 feet of the target or the attacker, you can use your reaction to cast a cantrip to charge the projectile. The cantrip must be one that requires an attack roll and targets only one creature, and it is cast as if you were a 1st-level spellcaster. If the attack hits, the target is also hit by the cantrip.

## CROSS STRIKE

When an ally you can see or hear hits a creature within 5 feet of you with a melee weapon attack, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against the target. On a hit, instead of suffering the normal effects of your attack, the target takes damage of your weapon's type equal to the ability modifier used for your attack roll.

Hit or miss, both you and your ally can move up to half your speed to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target.

## DIVERSION

After an ally you can see or hear hits a creature within 5 feet of you with a melee weapon attack, you can move up to half your speed as a reaction. The target of the attack can't use their reaction to make an opportunity attack against you.

## DOGPILE

When a creature within 5 feet of you makes a Dexterity saving throw against a spell cast or effect created by an ally, you can use your reaction to attempt to grapple the target. On a success, the target is grappled as normal and also has disadvantage on the Dexterity saving throw.

## GET DOWN

*Prerequisite: Evasion feature*

When you and an ally within 5 feet of you both make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage from an effect or spell, you can use your reaction to cause the friendly creature to take only the same amount of damage that you do.

## HAIL OF ARROWS

When you are wielding a ranged weapon and an ally makes a ranged weapon attack against a target you can see that is within your weapon's range, you can use your reaction to join in the attack. Your ally makes their attack roll with advantage, and if the attack hits, you can roll your weapon's damage dice and add the total to the damage dealt.

## JUGGLER

When an ally you can see makes a ranged attack with a thrown weapon against a target within 5 feet of you and you have a free hand, you can use your reaction to toss the weapon back to your ally. Once you've used your reaction to execute this maneuver, you can repeat it any number of times without using your reaction until the end of the turn.

## REFLECT MAGIC

*Prerequisite: The Deflect Missiles feature or the ability to cast at least one spell*

If an ally makes a ranged spell attack against a target within 10 feet of you and misses, you can use your reaction to redirect the magic back toward the target. Make a new attack roll using your proficiency bonus and your Dexterity or spellcasting ability modifier (your choice).

## SPOTTER

When an ally that can see or hear you makes a ranged attack against a target that is behind half cover or three-quarters cover for them but isn't behind cover for you, you can use your reaction to guide their strike. Your ally's attack ignores half cover or three-quarters cover.

## TABLETOP TRIP

When an ally you can see pushes or pulls a creature that starts the movement from within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to fall prone in the creature's path. If the target is your size or one size larger, it stumbles and falls prone in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you, or the nearest unoccupied space.

## WHIRLING MAGIC

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell*

When an ally you can see or hear within 30 feet of you makes a melee weapon attack against a creature, you can use your reaction to enchant your ally's weapon, allowing them to create a damaging burst of force with their weapon instead. In lieu of the attack, your ally can force each creature within 5 feet of themselves to succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take force damage equal to a damage roll made with the weapon, plus additional force damage equal to your spellcasting modifier.

# MONSTROUS MANEUVERS

Why should the player characters have all the fun? This section presents a host of monstrous group maneuvers which can be used by the opposition! There are endless ways that two monsters might work together to overcome the might of the player characters, so these maneuvers are only a few of many possibilities and can serve as inspiration to create your own.

All the maneuvers available to player characters are also suitable for monstrous creatures. You can also choose to allow your characters to take maneuvers that would normally be available only to monsters if you want to create some especially memorable moments—perhaps they could adopt a maneuver after a group of monsters uses it against them!

## MINION MANEUVERS

The following maneuvers are designed for creatures of a low challenge rating that are easily dispatched, such as goblins, kobolds, and cowardly brigands.

### COPY CAT!

After this creature sees an ally score a critical hit against a target, this creature can use its reaction to make a weapon attack against a creature it can see that is within its reach or the range of its ranged weapon if it is wielding one. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

### OOH ... MAGIC?

After this creature sees one of its allies cast a spell, this creature can use its reaction to move up to its speed toward either the caster or one of the targets of the spell.

### YOU GOT THIS, RIGHT?

When an ally hits a target within 5 feet of this creature with a melee attack, this creature can use its reaction to take the Disengage action, with the benefits lasting until the end of its next turn.

## BRUTE MANEUVERS

These maneuvers are best suited for the big'uns: bugbears, beasts of burden, and Giants.

### BULL RUSH

If an ally this creature can see moves at least 20 feet and makes a melee attack, this creature can use its reaction to move up to 20 feet toward the same target and make a melee weapon attack against it. If this creature hits, instead of suffering the normal effects of the attack, the target is knocked prone.



## GET HELP

After rolling initiative, if this creature is not surprised and is standing within 5 feet of an ally that is its size or smaller, this creature can use its reaction to toss the ally at an enemy creature it can see within 20 feet. The enemy must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and take 1d4 bludgeoning damage. The tossed ally lands prone in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target.

## FOOT STOMP

If an enemy within 5 feet of this creature is knocked prone by an ally, this creature can use its reaction to stomp on the prone creature. The target takes bludgeoning damage equal to this creature's Strength modifier, and is restrained until this creature chooses to release it (no action required), moves, or uses Foot Stomp on another target. The restrained creature can use its action on its turn to end the restrained condition.

## LEADER MANEUVERS

The maneuvers listed here are designed for creatures who lead the pack, such as alpha beasts, chieftains, and lords.

### COVER ME!

When this creature is the target of a ranged attack and is not benefiting from cover, it can use its reaction to grab an ally within 5 feet of it and use the ally to gain half cover.

If the attack misses, but would have hit without cover, the ally is hit with the attack instead.

## COURAGEOUS TO THE END

When an allied creature is reduced to 0 hit points, this creature can use its reaction to allow that creature to make one attack against a target within its reach (or the range of its ranged weapon if it is wielding one) before it falls.

## SAW THAT COMING

If this creature isn't surprised when it rolls initiative, it can use its reaction to allow an allied creature that was surprised to act as normal during its first turn in combat.

## POSITIONS, PEOPLE!

If this creature wasn't surprised when it rolls initiative, it can use its reaction to command 1d4 allied creatures. Each of those creatures can use its reaction to move up to half its speed.

## DRAGON MANEUVERS

As if dragons weren't lethal enough, these maneuvers are designed to amplify the threat of those rare few that fight as a group.

### CROSS BREATH

If another dragon uses a breath weapon while this dragon's breath weapon is available, this dragon can use its



own breath weapon as a reaction, targeting an overlapping area. A target caught in the area of both breath weapons has disadvantage on its saving throws against both of the breath weapons. This dragon can't roll to recharge the use of its breath weapon on its next turn.

### FLAMBÉ

When another dragon knocks a creature prone while this dragon's breath weapon is available, this dragon can use its reaction to exhale a sustained blast of its breath weapon in an area that includes the prone creature, which lasts until the start of this dragon's next turn. Any creature that starts its turn in the area, or moves into it for the first time on its turn, must make a saving throw against the breath weapon's effects. This dragon's breath weapon is then expended, and it can't roll to recharge the use of its breath weapon on its next turn.

### RIPPED AND TORN

If another dragon is carrying a creature and leaves this dragon's reach, this dragon can use its reaction to make a bite or claw attack against the creature.

## NEW CHARACTER OPTIONS

When using group maneuvers, characters have access to the following additional class features and options.

### FIGHTING STYLE OPTIONS

*1st-level fighter or 2nd-level [illrigger](#), paladin, or ranger feature*

When you choose a fighting style, the following style is added to your list of options. When you gain this feature, you can replace one of your previously chosen fighting styles with this option.

### GANG TACTICS

Choose a maneuver and add it to the maneuvers you know. You have a pool of opportunity dice equal to your proficiency bonus, which are d6s. When making an opportunity attack or performing a maneuver that deals damage, you can expend one of these d6 and roll it, adding the result to the damage dealt. You regain all of your expended opportunity dice when you finish a long rest.

### CLEVER

*2nd-level rogue feature*

As a bonus action, you can ready yourself to anticipate your allies' movements in battle. The first opportunity attack you make or maneuver you perform before the start of your next turn doesn't require you to use your reaction.

## KI-INSPIRED TACTICS

*2nd-level monk feature*

Once per round, you can spend 1 ki point to execute a maneuver without using your reaction.

### FEAT: OPPORTUNIST

*Prerequisite: The ability to perform at least one maneuver*

You've dedicated extra time and training to practicing maneuvers that you can execute with others. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have a pool of two opportunity dice, which are d6s. When you deal damage with an opportunity attack or maneuver that uses your reaction, you can expend one of these d6 and roll it, adding the result to the damage dealt. You can only spend opportunity die at a time. You regain all of your expended opportunity dice when you finish a long rest.

## MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items are useful and fun rewards for player characters who use group maneuvers.

### HEADBAND OF MAGICAL ARTS

*Wondrous Item, Uncommon (Requires Attunement)*

While you wear this headband, you know Arcane Echo, Reflect Magic, and Whirling Magic maneuvers, even if you don't meet the usual prerequisites. When a maneuver calls for your spellcasting ability modifier, you use your Constitution modifier if you don't have one.

### MANUAL OF METHODS

*Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)*

A long, battered tube contains this worn scroll of parchment. While attuned to this text, your ability to execute maneuvers is extraordinary, giving you a bonus to your maneuver save DC. The bonus is determined by the manual's rarity.

Additionally, this manual has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you are holding the manual, you can expend a charge to perform a maneuver or make an opportunity attack without using your reaction.



## SHIELD OF MAGIC REFLECTION

*Shield, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)*

This smooth and plain shield's surface is polished to a mirror-like shine. As it moves within the light, a faint shimmer of azure and purple cascades over the reflective surface. While holding this shield, you gain a +2 bonus to AC against spell attacks, in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.

Additionally, the shield has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you are holding the shield and an ally makes a ranged spell attack against a target within 10 feet of you and misses, you can expend 1 charge to redirect the magic back toward the target. Made an attack roll against the target with an attack bonus equal to your proficiency bonus plus your Dexterity or spellcasting modifier if you have one (your choice).

## TECHNIQUE SCROLL

*Scroll, Varies*

A *technique scroll* contains a step-by-step guide to executing a specific maneuver. While holding the scroll, you can perform the maneuver on it as a reaction provided you meet the maneuver's prerequisites. Once the maneuver is

performed, the instructions on the scroll fade and it crumbles into dust.

The rarity of the scroll determines the maneuver's save DC, as shown in the Technique Scroll table.

If the maneuver contained on the scroll is one you already know, you can use this item when performing the maneuver to do so without using your reaction. When you do, you can choose to use your maneuver save DC in place of the saving throw DC determined by the rarity of the scroll.

### TECHNIQUE SCROLL

RARITY	SAVE DC
Common	13
Uncommon	15
Rare	17
Very Rare	18
Legendary	19

# MONSTERS OF WONDERLAND

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES  
WITH FOUR NEW FRUMIOUS FEY CREATURES

by Kat Kruger

In realms where fey have dominion, nature is suffused with magic. These domains are filled with great beauty and charm, as well as peculiarity and danger. From elves to dryads and hags to blights, as much as the fey realms are a place of whimsy and wonder, there exist creatures of the most wicked imaginings. These are the monsters that go bump in the dark—the unimaginable stuff of nightmares.

The world of *Alice in Wonderland* (and complementary poems) is rife with such creatures. The topsy-turvy world of Wonderland is one of literary nonsense that can leave visitors disoriented. That's if they're lucky. The less fortunate are swooped up and never heard from again. That is precisely the jeopardy that this article presents. Four of Lewis Carroll's creatures are reimagined as formidable monsters that can be dropped into a game taking place in the domains of the fey. It includes monster tactics that allow GMs of any experience level to run them cleverly and effectively.

So venture down the rabbit hole or through the looking glass, if you dare, then surprise your players with these grim foes at the game table.

## BANDERSNATCH

"BUT WHILE HE WAS SEEKING WITH  
THIMBLES AND CARE,  
A BANDERSNATCH SWIFTLY DREW NIGH  
AND GRABBED AT THE BANKER, WHO  
SHRIEKED IN DESPAIR,  
FOR HE KNEW IT WAS USELESS TO FLY."

—THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK  
BY LEWIS CARROLL

Ferocious and quick on its feet, the bandersnatch is a consummate predator. It is a muscular fey creature with a deep-chested body, round ears, and a tuft at the end of its tail. Parts of its coat could easily be mistaken for coniferous tree needles, allowing the bandersnatch to camouflage itself in a forest.

**Terrible Claws.** The bandersnatch has venomous claws that putrefy a target. As the venom courses through the veins of a living creature, it decomposes the target's flesh

and eventually kills its prey. This allows the bandersnatch to stalk a dying target and scavenge the remains as a meal.

**Tactics.** This fast predator chases down prey much like a big cat. It stalks a target using its superior camouflage before running at a target to utilize its Pounce trait. Should it succeed in knocking its prey prone, the bandersnatch uses its bonus Bite attack. It singularly focuses on a target it has taken down and releases poisonous fumes to keep others at bay with its Noxious Stench legendary action. The bandersnatch instinctively backs down after it has been reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, taking the Disengage action before retreating.

## PUTREFYING IORE

At the GM's discretion, a character can learn to cure the bandersnatch's venom if they have a background that involves healing or fey ancestry, or if they have proficiency in the Survival skill or with a poisoner's kit. Any other character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check knows how to cure the venom.

# BANDERSNATCH

Large Fey, Typically Neutral Evil

ARMOR CLASS 14 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 85 (10d10 + 30)

SPEED 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

SKILLS Perception +4

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

CONDITION IMMUNITIES charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

LANGUAGES —

CHALLENGE 5 (1,800 XP)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +3

*Forest Camouflage.* The bandersnatch has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in forest terrain.

*Pounce.* If the bandersnatch moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the bandersnatch can make one Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

## ACTIONS

*Multiattack.* The bandersnatch makes one Bite attack and one Putrefying Claw attack.

*Bite.* *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

*Putrefying Claw.* *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage, and the target is infected with putrefying venom. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 3 (1d6) poison damage. If the target suffers this effect for 1 hour, the venom putrefies the target's flesh and kills the target. Any effect that cures disease or ends the poisoned condition removes the venom from the target. A creature that spends 1 minute working with the dead bandersnatch's remains and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check creates one dose of an antidote for the putrefying venom, which can be consumed as an action and ends the venom effect. This check can be attempted multiple times with the creature's remains.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The bandersnatch can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The bandersnatch regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

*Putrefying Claw.* The bandersnatch makes one Putrefying Claw attack.

*Noxious Stench (Costs 2 Actions).* The bandersnatch emits a toxic cloud from its needle-like fur. Each creature within 60 feet of the bandersnatch must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the bandersnatch's next turn.



# HAG MOTH

“IN A MINUTE OR TWO THE CATERPILLAR TOOK THE HOOKAH OUT OF ITS MOUTH AND YAWNED ONCE OR TWICE, AND SHOOK ITSELF. THEN IT GOT DOWN OFF THE MUSHROOM, AND CRAWLED AWAY IN THE GRASS ...”

—ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND  
BY LEWIS CARROLL

In poisonous mushroom groves, the hag moth thrives. One might venture into such places, foraging for fungi and spot clusters of shimmering dew, only to realize too late that the location is a hag moth’s lair. The dewy eggs of a hag moth develop into caterpillars with the appearance of spun glass. A hag moth caterpillar feasts on fungus deadly to other creatures before weaving a cocoon, where it transforms into its winged adult form then leaves to find its own grove.

An adventurer lucky enough to survive an encounter with a hag moth in its lair may discover the rare hag moth mushroom. These large fungi fetch a handsome price at a market. With the right tools, they can be ground into a powder or mixed with other tonics to cure mind-altering effects such as charmed or frightened conditions.

**Monstrous Metamorphosis.** The hag moth caterpillar has a voracious appetite. Though it prefers fungi, it is not a finicky eater. That said, fresh corpses are excellent fodder for their mushroom groves and the remains of many a creature (or adventurer) can be found beneath the thick loam of these places. Once the caterpillar has had its fill, it metamorphoses into a hag moth.

**Hallucinogenic Breath.** The hag moth and caterpillar exhale psychedelic smoke that confuses their target and dizzies them with extreme feelings of euphoria or despair.

**Hypnotic Eyes.** When an adult hag moth flaps its wings, the eye-like circles on them create illusions of eerie eyes seemingly floating outward and hanging in the air. The hapless victims mesmerized by these wings become charmed, and thus easy prey for the creature.

**Tactics.** A hag moth caterpillar’s primary means of attack is with its Bite, which only does a modest amount of piercing damage but a significant amount of poison damage. In addition, its Bite has a chance of imposing the poisoned or paralyzed condition on a target. The caterpillar also grapples enemies with its suction cups, doing further poison damage as a toxic slime covers its slick body. A caterpillar uses the Dash action to climb away when retreating, but a hag moth has the advantage of flight. In its winged form, the hag moth can dive in and out of combat without provoking opportunity attacks.



# HAG MOTH CATERPILLAR

Medium Fey, Typically Chaotic Neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 12 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 37 (5d8 + 15)

**SPEED** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, poisoned

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**LANGUAGES** telepathy 60 ft.

**CHALLENGE** 2 (450 XP)

**PROFICIENCY BONUS** +2

**Poison Suction Cups.** The caterpillar adheres to anything that touches it. A Large or smaller creature adhered to the caterpillar is also grappled by it (escape DC 13). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage. At the end of a grappled creature's turn, it takes 3 (1d6) poison damage.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Hallucinogenic Breath (1/Day).** The caterpillar exhales a puff of hallucinogenic smoke at one creature within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn and have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls for 1 minute. While under this effect, the target hallucinates, causing all creatures to appear doubled, and its spoken words float off in puffs of smoke that form letters in the air. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

# HAG MOTH

Large Fey, Typically Chaotic Neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 16 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 57 (6d10 + 24)

**SPEED** 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +4

**SKILLS** Perception +4

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, poisoned

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**LANGUAGES** telepathy 120 ft.

**CHALLENGE** 4 (1,100 XP)

**PROFICIENCY BONUS** +2

**Flyby.** The moth doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Hallucinogenic Breath (Recharge 6).** The moth exhales hallucinogenic smoke in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn and have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls for 1 minute. While under this effect, the target hallucinates, causing all creatures to appear doubled, and its spoken words float off in puffs of smoke that form letters in the air. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Hypnotic Wings (1/Day).** The moth flaps its wings, creating a twisting pattern of colors that weaves through the air. Each creature within 30 feet of the moth that can see it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the moth until the end of the moth's next turn. While charmed in this way, the target is incapacitated and has a speed of 0.

## A HAG MOTH'S LAIR

A hag moth makes its lair in poisonous mushroom groves.

### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the hag moth can take one of the following lair actions; the moth can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

- The mushrooms in the lair shriek and release spores. Each creature within 30 feet of a mushroom that is not the moth or its allies must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving or become vulnerable to poison damage until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Puffs of noxious gas fill a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the moth chooses within 120 feet of it. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (2d12) poison damage.
- The hag moth creates an area of hallucinatory terrain centered on a point anywhere in its lair. The effect is similar to the *hallucinatory terrain* spell with the following changes: its area of effect is a 60-foot cube, it only lasts until the start of initiative count 20 on the next round, and it requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check save to disbelieve it.

### REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a moth's lair is warped by the hag moth's presence, which creates one or more of the following magical effects:

- The land within 6 miles of the lair is difficult terrain, since the earth is moist, and the area is thick with fungi.
- Fungi within 6 miles of the moth's lair take on dazzling hues.
- Within its lair, the moth can create any number of illusory sounds, such as soft music and strange echoes, to be heard in various parts of the lair.

If the moth dies, these regional effects end immediately.

## MOME RATH

"'TWAS BRILLIG, AND THE SLITHY TOVES  
DID GYRE AND GIMBLE IN THE WABE;  
ALL MIMSY WERE THE BOROGOVES,  
AND THE MOME RATHS OUTGRABE."

—JABBERWOCKY  
BY LEWIS CARROLL

A mome rath is an amphibious creature that lurks in swamps and resembles a green pig with a shark mouth. As a group, they make excellent minions for swamp hags who wish to keep intruders away. Fast and deadly, mome raths lurk below the surface of mud or murky water in search of prey. They take down targets with the element of surprise, using their leap and Electrifying Skin to stun a creature before biting and clawing.

**Tactics.** When a mome rath wounds a target, it relentlessly attacks that creature. If a wounded target flees, the mome rath gives chase and uses the Dash action to pursue if needed. Should the target manage to get too far away to catch in one turn, the mome rath turns its attention to closer targets. The fey predator breathes a faerie fire (similar to the spell of the same name) to mark nearby targets before beginning its attacks anew.

Despite its low intelligence, a mome rath's survival instinct kicks in when it is losing a fight. When reduced to 35 or fewer hit points, it uses the Dash action to dive into the nearest body of water and swim away.





# MOME RATH

Large Fey, Unaligned

**ARMOR CLASS** 14 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 94 (9d10 + 45)

**SPEED** 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**SKILLS** Perception +3, Stealth +3

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** lightning

**SENSES** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**LANGUAGES** —

**CHALLENGE** 8 (3,900 XP)

**PROFICIENCY BONUS** +3

**Amphibious.** The mome rath can breathe air and water.

**Electrifying Skin.** A creature that touches the mome rath or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) lightning damage and must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the end of the mome rath's next turn.

**Relentless (1/Day).** If the mome rath takes 20 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mome rath makes one Bite attack and one Claws attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

**Faerie Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The mome rath exhales faerie fire in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be outlined in green for 1 minute. Affected creatures shed dim light in a 10-foot radius. Any attack roll against an affected creature has advantage if the attacker can see it, and the affected creature can't benefit from being invisible.

**Stunning Leap (1/Day).** If the mome rath jumps at least 30 feet as part of its movement, it can then use this action to land on its feet in a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or take 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 16 (3d6 + 6) lightning damage, be knocked prone, and be stunned until the end of the mome rath's next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't stunned, and is pushed 5 feet out of the mome rath's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the mome rath's space.

# SNARK

"THEY HUNTED TILL DARKNESS CAME ON,  
BUT THEY FOUND  
NOT A BUTTON, OR FEATHER, OR MARK,  
BY WHICH THEY COULD TELL THAT THEY  
STOOD ON THE GROUND  
WHERE THE BAKER HAD MET WITH THE  
SNARK.

IN THE MIDST OF THE WORD HE WAS  
TRYING TO SAY,  
IN THE MIDST OF HIS LAUGHTER AND GLEE,  
HE HAD SOFTLY AND SUDDENLY VANISHED  
AWAY—"

— THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK  
BY LEWIS CARROLL

Many have hunted the snark in hopes of studying it, while others seek glory or fortune from bounties posted for its capture. The snark is an amorphous creature that feeds on emotions. It is rarely seen, and those who claim to have done so provide varying details of its description. Some snark sightings report that the creatures have feathers and bite, while others claim the fey have whiskers and scratch. Though many have tried to capture the snark, few have succeeded. In fact, many have never returned to tell their tale.

**Tactics.** In truth, the snark is a creature of powerful psychic ability. It has no true form, at least none that it allows to be seen. Because it is a creature that cannot be truly perceived, the snark is a formidable foe. It uses its actions to read the thoughts of a target to glean useful information before engaging in combat. If attacked, the snark then uses this information against the target to cause psychic damage.

# SNARK

*Medium Fey, Typically Neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 14

**HIT POINTS** 130 (20d8 + 40)

**SPEED** 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +8, Con +6

**SKILLS** Perception +6, Stealth +8

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** necrotic, poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**SENSES** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**LANGUAGES** Common, Sylvan

**CHALLENGE** 9 (5,000 XP)

**PROFICIENCY BONUS** +4

**Amorphous.** The snark can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Antipathy/Sympathy Aura.** When a creature starts its turn within 15 feet of the snark and the snark is not incapacitated, the creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the snark's Antipathy/Sympathy Aura for the next 24 hours. On a failed save, the target can't take reactions and must roll a d6 on its next turn:

1–4. The target becomes frightened until the start of its next turn. While frightened, the target must use its movement on its turn to move away from the snark (even if it can't see the snark).

5–6. The target feels an intense urge to approach the snark and must use its movement on its turn to get as close to the snark as possible (even if it can't see the snark).

**Freedom of Movement.** The snark ignores difficult terrain, and magical effects can't reduce its speed.

**Inscrutable.** The snark is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, and can choose to be unaffected by any divination spell. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the snark's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

**Invisibility.** The snark is invisible.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The snark makes two melee attacks.

**Phantasmal Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature that isn't blinded. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) psychic damage as the snark takes on an illusory form, lashes out, then disappears. If the target has no image of the snark's appearance, the snark creates an illusion drawn from the target's deepest fears.

**Psychic Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) psychic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Read Thoughts.** The snark magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the snark can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the snark's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the snark has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

# POOR UNDEAD SOULS

OPTIONS AND NPCs TO SPICE UP GHOSTS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

by Mario Ortegón

WHAT IS A GHOST?

A TRAGEDY CONDEMNED TO REPEAT ITSELF TIME AND TIME AGAIN?

A MOMENT OF PAIN, PERHAPS.

SOMETHING DEAD WHICH STILL SEEMS TO BE ALIVE.

AN EMOTION SUSPENDED IN TIME.

LIKE A BLURRED PHOTOGRAPH.

LIKE AN INSECT TRAPPED IN AMBER.

– GUILLERMO DEL TORO, DAVID MUÑOZ & ANTONIO TRASHORRAS, *THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE*

While frequently relegated to tales of horror and mystery in popular culture, ghosts can be used to tell stories from different perspectives, explore a narrative unbound by linear time, and highlight a forgotten or hidden past. This article offers a variety of ghostly allies and threats, as well as several ghost NPCs with tragic backstories, ready to haunt any location.

## GHOST VARIANTS

The following sections introduce seven spectral variants: the covetous, the devoted, the disgraced, the jubilant, the restless, the sorrowful, and the vengeful. To use these variants, start with the ghost stat block, then add the appropriate traits and actions.

### THE COVETOUS

Covetous ghosts died unsatisfied with their legacy, and the pain of what they could have had continues to haunt them. They are rarely violent, but they enjoy bringing misery to those who have what they lacked or lost in life. Covetous ghosts particularly enjoy tormenting people they perceive as undeserving of good fortune.

### CONTENT WARNING

With ghost stories as its central topic, this article delves into themes of horror and death. More specifically, it contains plots about child death, loneliness, grief, despair, mental illness, abusive relationships, house fires, and gruesome imagery.

If you incorporate these stories into your game, make sure your players are comfortable with their themes. Safety tools, such as the TTRPG Safety Toolkit from Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk, can help you create a horror experience that is safe and fun for everyone.

Remember that the horrors presented here are meant to give the characters, not the players, a hard time. Let the players decide how despair, shame, anger, and other emotions elicited by ghostly threats affect their characters, and check in with them regularly to make sure everyone's having a good time.

## COVETOUS GHOST TRAITS

Covetous ghosts have the following additional actions:

**Multiattack.** The ghost makes one Withering Touch attack and one Luck Rending attack.

**Luck Rending.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is magically cursed for 1 hour. Until the curse ends, the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet, and they can't gain advantage on any ability check, attack roll, or saving throw.

## APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Covetous ghosts have warped and exaggerated features, unnaturally reflecting what they envy most. A ghost who died jealous of another's physical appearance looks horrific. One who envied material wealth appears rotting, miserable, and tattered. Another who desired power becomes a pitiful, scuttling creature.

Pure spite motivates these spirits. They twist existence to mirror their wretchedness, haunting victims for decades or even centuries, turning friends and loved ones against each other, and ruining relationships, occupations, and lives. Sometimes a ghost targets a family, causing misery for generations before they are discovered.

## HAUNTINGS

Places haunted by covetous ghosts become spoiled, befouled, and rife with misfortune. Furniture creaks and breaks, strange molds taint the walls, and food rots too quickly. The ghosts revel in these trappings, content with ruining the victims' daily lives, though the spirits don't control how often or severely these manifestations occur.

The haunted victims of covetous ghosts might feel weighed down by an unseen burden, wrestle with constant insecurity, or have their abilities impaired by strange symptoms. Covetous ghosts don't often possess their victims, but when they do, it's to prevent and ruin the target's satisfaction. Possessing their victims to experience what they envy only furthers their misery.

## SOUGHING SEAMSTRESS

The Soughing Seamstress was a human named Beryl Greydam, who was once the most sought-after dressmaker in the town of Baruster, a small but prosperous hilltop hamlet. During Beryl's later years, her daughter Luella learned her trade, helping with minor tasks until she could sew beautiful, eye-catching dresses. Beryl should have felt pride, but when the seamstress received praise for her daughter's work, all she heard was that it was better than



hers ever was. Riddled with spite and jealousy, Beryl fired her daughter. Industrious Luella opened her own shop, which went on to outperform her mother's.

The mother-daughter rivalry went on for years, until Beryl fell ill from old age. She became bedridden, and so Luella cared for her. Though Beryl still held her daughter in contempt, she had no choice but to accept Luella's help.

Beryl knew that her final hour drew near. She wished to wear one of her finest dresses when she passed, but the old dress no longer fit. She watched in horror as Luella fixed her greatest work.

Too weak to fight the decision, Beryl died wearing a bitter reminder of her jealousy. Her ghost haunted Luella ceaselessly, driving her daughter to despair until she abandoned her business, never to return to town. Known to locals as the Soughing Seamstress, Beryl's ghost remains in her old, run-down boutique, plaguing those wearing the latest fashion or exhibiting any hint of talent with a needle and thread.

**Exorcism.** Convincing Beryl to move on to the afterlife requires two important steps. First, she must let go of her bitterness toward Luella. The characters must either find Luella and convince her to confront her mother, revealing how much her jealousy has affected Luella's life, or provide proof that Luella has moved on from their feud so Beryl sees that her torments are meaningless.

Second, the characters must gather exotic materials and help Beryl make one final, unique dress to serve as her legacy. The materials can vary in difficulty, ranging from expensive silks to dragon scales.

## THE DEVOTED

Devoted ghosts stay in the world when they can't bear to let go of a deep love for someone else. Many of these spirits are benevolent, driven by a pure sense of loyalty that leads them to protect their loved ones. The ghosts may watch over them, intervene to help them, or simply enjoy their presence, never interacting with them.

However, some devoted ghosts can be so protective that they refuse to let anyone near their loved ones, isolating them physically or through more subtle means.

### DEVOTED GHOST TRAITS

Devoted ghosts have the following additional traits:

**Devoted Permanence.** If the ghost is within 30 feet of the subject of their devotion, the ghost gains a +3 bonus to AC and advantage on saving throws.

**Selective Horror.** When the ghost uses their Horrifying Visage action, they can choose any number of creatures to be unaffected by it.

## APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Devoted ghosts look different to those they protect than they do to other people. To their loved ones, a devoted ghost can look as they did in life, often choosing the form most comforting to them, even if it doesn't match how they looked when they died. (For example, offspring might appear as a toddler to their parents, even if they died at a later age.) However, to everybody else, their corpse-like features are perverse and exaggerated, hollowed out by the bouts of jealousy common in these ghosts.

A devoted ghost's desire to stay near their beloved compels them to act irrationally at times. If the ghost thinks their loved ones are threatened, they respond violently, sometimes even to the detriment of their beloved. In extreme cases, some spirits go as far as killing their loved ones to spare them from suffering some perceived danger.

## HAUNTINGS

Devoted ghosts haunt those they love and follow them no matter where they go. Perceptive onlookers spot them accompanying their beloved as shapes in shadows or reflections in mirrors. Occasionally, these spirits manifest in the background of paintings or sketches of the haunted person, even though they weren't drawn by the artist. While most of these ghosts are content to watch over their family and friends without interfering, the most zealous ones wreak havoc on a loved one's life. These ghosts can be overprotective, jealous, and stringent in tradition. At all cost, they prevent loved ones from new friends and experiences for fear of losing that connection.

Some devoted ghosts are drawn to locations significant to the undead instead of the living, such as tombs, mass graves, battlefields, or evil temples. The spirits remain there until fading away from loneliness, which can take centuries. In rare instances, a devoted ghost might instead wander around looking for mortals who remind them of their loved ones.

## DEFEAT VS. EXORCISM

How does exorcising a ghost compare to simply defeating the creature in combat? For some games, destroying a ghost with violence yields the same result as an exorcism—the ghost simply doesn't return.

At the GM's discretion, particularly strong apparitions (like the NPCs in this article) can return to haunt their victims or locations after being defeated in combat. A defeated ghost might disappear for a while, but they always come back. Only exorcism can lay them to rest forever.

## LOST MOTHER

The Lost Mother is the gentle spirit of Sarinda Thorntop, a dwarf from a village that no longer stands. A farmer in a land left barren by a great calamity, Sarinda became known for her talent to cultivate in such dire conditions. She fed and cared for her village into old age, and her family and friends expected many more years of happiness for cheerful Sarinda—until a particularly harsh winter brought bitter cold, famine, and disease.

Sarinda didn't survive the season, but her spirit remained. She considered the entire village her family, and when the land became barren in her absence, Sarinda's spirit taught them her ways. Years later, a terrible war razed the village, leaving her without a family. She has drifted for centuries since then, searching for people to love her as much as her village did.

The Lost Mother appears every few decades in towns affected by famine, desperately trying to convey her teachings to them. While Sarinda isn't prone to violence, she zealously protects these towns—sometimes to the point of sabotaging attempts to help that deviate from her methods, fearing they'll do more harm than good.

**Exorcism.** To exorcise the Lost Mother, she must be convinced she is no longer needed. Sarinda believes there will always be those who require her, but the characters can prove otherwise by tracking down a descendant from her original village, someone who has kept her teachings alive and extrapolated them into more efficient methods.

Alternatively, if the characters are willing to help a village survive, Sarinda can be convinced to leave the place peacefully ... at least until she's needed again elsewhere.

## THE DISGRACED

Disgraced ghosts died in misery and humiliation. Overcome with unbearable shame, these spirits take their indignant anger out on the living. Examples of disgraced ghosts include diplomats who committed grievous blunders in negotiations, soldiers humiliated by cowardice in



the face of danger, and powerful figures brought low.

Those who died with hidden shame might also manifest as disgraced ghosts, seeking to unburden themselves from an appalling secret that they regretfully took to the grave.

### DISGRACED GHOST TRAITS

Disgraced ghosts have the following additional bonus action:

**Disgraceful Retreat.** The ghost can use their Etherealness action as a bonus action.

Disgraced ghosts also have the following reaction:

**Expose Shame.** When a creature the ghost can see within 60 feet of them makes an ability check, attack roll, or forces another creature to make a saving throw, the ghost can use their reaction to force the triggering creature to

make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature immediately blurts out a shameful secret and becomes frightened until the end of their next turn.

### APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

A disgraced spirit rarely shows their face, their ghostly form always obscured in some way behind unnerving masks, long curtains of hair, the shadows of a tattered cloak, or the simple lack of facial features altogether. They are also known to manifest chains or other torturous implements around their bodies as symbols of their guilt, even if the objects had nothing to do with their deaths.

These ghosts are usually too caught up in their guilt to notice the impact they have on living creatures. They sometimes show awareness of other creatures, but it's just as likely that a disgraced ghost doesn't even consider the living's existence unless they are a potential source of humiliation. However, when a disgraced ghost witnesses something that reminds them of their shame, they explode in anger and punish the perpetrator.

### HAUNTINGS

A disgraced ghost can quickly turn an otherwise pleasant area into an unbearable nest of misery that mirrors the spirit's sense of worthlessness. Feelings of silent judgment and constant unease burden these places. Echoing sounds of rattling chains, incoherent babbling, and jumbled prayers, frequently accompanied by a heavy miasma of putrid smells, repel most living creatures from these locations.

Disgraced ghosts haunt the living who remind the spirits of their shame. The ghost's presence can be extremely disruptive when this happens, as they monitor their victims with an obsessive fanaticism, looking for the slightest hint of shameful behavior to punish.

### FOILED PUPIL

The Foiled Pupil was Ivor Attervayne, the last scion of a noble clan that was betrayed in the aftermath of a war. Branded as a traitor and stripped of power, Ivor was taken in by a reluctant wizard named Oras the Gloomsworn, who honored a promise he made Ivor's late mother and made Ivor his apprentice. Though Ivor convinced Oras that he had altruistic motivations, he secretly harbored an ambition to restore his family's glory.

Ivor was a quick, practical learner who excelled in magical theory, yet he clashed with Oras in personality. The wizard often tasked the pupil with researching topics that Ivor deemed unimportant. One day, when Oras performed a ritual to contact an eldritch entity from beyond the stars, the spell began to go awry. Oras ordered Ivor to dispel it; desiring to best his master, the pupil instead continued the ritual, even unto disaster.

Consumed by magic beyond his control, Ivor's body scattered across the floor in a cloud of fine, grey dust. His ghost haunts the halls of his former master's tower, tormented by his unfulfilled purpose and the recklessness of his actions.

*Exorcism.* The Foiled Pupil remains out of a sense of shame and regret, rather than malicious intent. Feeling responsible for his demise, the wizard Oras never exorcised the spirit, instead suffering him for years. The ghost torments townsfolk and spellcasters who visit the tower, something Oras discourages but never fully addresses due to his guilt.

Ivor's ghost can be briefly appeased with offerings of arcane knowledge, but to permanently exorcise the pupil, adventurers must return to his home, uncover the betrayal the Attervayne family suffered, and expose the truth to someone who can set the record straight, thus restoring Ivor's reputation.

## THE JUBILANT

Jubilant ghosts are bound to the material world by an all-consuming passion for an activity, place, or object, either one that held their interest for most of their lives or one that brought them great joy shortly before their passing. These ghosts, however misguided they may be, cling to what brought them pleasure in life.

Many are harmless, haunting their favorite tavern, music hall, or library. But some are extremely insidious, possessing people to satisfy their obsessions, no matter the harm they inflict.

### JUBILANT GHOST TRAITS

Jubilant ghosts have a challenge rating of 5 (1,800 XP) and the following additional trait:

*Fanatic Rush.* The ghost regains 5 hit points at the start of their turn if they have at least 1 hit point and is within 30 feet of their object or place of desire.

Jubilant ghosts also have the following additional action:

*Share Obsession.* A creature within 20 feet of the ghost that can see or hear them must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by the ghost for 10 minutes. While charmed this way, the target becomes fixated on an object designated by the ghost that is within 120 feet of the target. If the target can see the object, they must use their entire turn to move toward the object by the safest route. If the target can't see the object, they must use their entire turn to search for the object. The charmed target can repeat the saving throw whenever they take damage and at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success.

## APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Jubilant ghosts are frequently mistaken for the living. But when the ghost is near the source of their obsession, their supernatural nature becomes apparent: their face becomes haggard, their eyes hollow, and their mouth thin with a hungry smirk.

Most jubilant ghosts carry on exactly how they did in life, but a few become monstrously consumed with their obsession. Once consumed, they do nothing but wait for the right person to follow or possess, digging their cold dead hands into anyone who can help them obtain what they seek.

## HAUNTINGS

When a jubilant ghost haunts a specific location, it's because the place is tied to the spirit's idolized object or activity. Feelings of passion and hunger fill these areas; the living who inhabit them experience sensory hallucinations that harken to the spirit's obsessions. A derelict tavern might smell like freshly-brewed ale, haunting music might echo out of an abandoned opera house, or a luscious banquet might adorn the dinner table of a decrepit manor.

Jubilant ghosts ignore the living who don't hold interest to them, but they occasionally attach themselves to someone who holds similar interests or has access to that which they crave. In these cases, the haunted individual gradually becomes consumed by the ghost's passions, and anyone who dares interfere is at risk of being seen by the ghost as a threat.

## RED VEIL

The ghost known as the Red Veil is the spirit of a demon-worshipping elf named Zalagossa, who lived in ancient times. Her early years as a cultist are mostly forgotten, but she quickly rose to great prominence for her unshakeable resolve and remarkable aptitude as a leader. Zalagossa led raids against temples dedicated to good deities, desecrating shrines and plundering fortunes. Her cult is known for destroying the Solemn Archives, one of the greatest libraries of the ancient world, resulting in a dark age.

The Cult of the Red Veil was eventually crushed and its members punished by a conclave of holy paladins, but a few cultists escaped their fate, including Zalagossa herself. She eluded pursuers long enough to prepare a ritual that pledged her soul to a demon lord in exchange for horrific powers. But on the eve of the consummation of her ritual, a group of heroes stopped her. The cult leader died in fanatical ecstasy, believing she would descend to demonhood and claim her vengeance from the Abyss. But the heroes killed the woman before she transformed, preventing the Abyss from claiming her soul and leaving her ghost adrift.

Zalagossa now haunts a small demonic shrine in the forest she once ruled, attempting to perform the ritual that would bind her soul to her lord and restore her power. To complete it, she needs a relic and living beings to perform it properly, neither of which she currently has—though cultists may be working on that. She obsesses over demonic artifacts and knowledge, and anyone who dares approach the shrine is at risk of being possessed.

**Exorcism.** There are two ways to exorcise the Red Veil. The easier method is to help Zalagossa recover her remains and complete the ritual that would allow her soul to descend to the Abyss. Is it power or torment that she'll encounter when she reaches her lord's realm?

The second approach is to eliminate all chances of the ghost's ritual ever being completed. This could send the characters on a quest to find and destroy a powerful demonic relic, or even lead them to uncover surviving members of her cult working in the shadows. Dealing with these threats leaves Zalagossa with nothing to latch onto, forcing her spirit to depart for good.

## THE RESTLESS

Restless ghosts die in intense fear and are condemned to an eternity of nightmarish torment. They become trapped in the places where they died and are unwittingly drawn to events that echo their last moments alive, causing them to continually experience the horrors of their demise.

These ghosts don't retain much memory of their former lives. Many know only the terrors that assail them. Fear pours out of them like rain, and the living who interact with these spirits run the risk of being drowned in their dread or plagued by their nightmarish reality.

## RESTLESS GHOST TRAITS

Restless ghosts have the following additional traits:

**Restless Jitter.** The ghost's flying speed is 45 feet, and opportunity attacks made against the ghost have disadvantage.

**Unbound Terrors.** At the start of each of the ghost's turns, each creature within 10 feet of the ghost must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or take 5 (1d10) psychic damage.

## APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Restless ghosts are faded and grim, but otherwise, their faint forms appear as they did moments before their death. When their terrors overtake them, these spirits become more substantial, transitioning into dreadful apparitions, their bodies marred by the trauma that killed them and their faces contorted in terror.

Ghosts of this kind are timid, often manifesting in hiding places such as below beds or behind doors. The living





see restless ghosts at the periphery of their vision, peeking out from their hiding spots. In severe hauntings, the ghosts run screaming at victims as if to attack, only to pass through them and vanish.

### HAUNTINGS

Places haunted by restless ghosts are never truly quiet. Even when not actively manifesting their terrors, the restless constantly flit about, anxiously moving objects, shifting furniture, and clawing at walls as they dart from one hiding place to the next. Pure dread permeates these locations, and the presence of unfamiliar people and objects intensifies these sensations.

The living who cross paths with these spirits are afflicted with horrific nightmares while in their presence and for weeks after. The consequences of the dreams vary in severity, though they almost always result in sleep deprivation. Some are so severe that the haunted stop sleeping completely.

### CLOISTERED LORD

The Cloistered Lord is the ghost of Dionar Ashenbluff, a noble who spent almost the entirety of his life inside his family's manor. He stepped outside his home for the last time when he was six for a hunting trip, during which he got lost in the woods for two days. His parents were

hysterical, and even though they found him, the boy was never allowed outside again.

The little lord was resentful at first, but over time, he lost interest in the world outside his home. The sun became a monster that tried to kill him with its rays. The sky was a murderous expanse that robbed him of breath. And the friends who tried to convince him to go out were cruel villains who mocked him for refusing. Even years after the passing of his parents, Dionar remained a veritable hermit. Enamored with his isolation, he refused to acknowledge his developing agoraphobia.

Lord Ashenbluff's demise came at the hands of a doppelganger who infiltrated the manor staff and murdered Dionar to take his place. As the lord tried to flee from his attacker, he bled to death outside the one door that remained unsealed. No one knew that Dionar was murdered that night. The doppelganger disposed of the body in the same woods the lord got lost in and then lived as Lord Ashenbluff for years. The lord's ghost now wanders the woods, lost and wanting to go back inside.

*Exorcism.* To exorcise the Cloistered Lord, characters must first reveal the truth about Lord Ashenbluff's death. Then they must find his remains and bury them beneath the foundation of his manor, the only place where he truly felt safe. While the woods the lord is buried in are massive, keen adventurers might be able to locate the grave by

following the panicked ghost during one of his terrors.

Accessing the manor itself might be a challenge. If the doppelganger isn't still alive and posing as the lord, perhaps so much time has passed that the manor belongs to someone else, or the structure no longer stands.

## THE SORROWFUL

Sorrowful ghosts are people who died with profound grief for something they lost. Unable to move on or focus on anything except that which reminds them of their pain, these ghosts howl in agony and wander listlessly, seeking only to end their suffering. Overt malevolence is uncommon among these melancholic spirits, but some are so racked with anguish that they desperately grasp at anyone who can provide the slightest hint of comfort, sometimes with deadly results.

### SORROWFUL GHOST TRAITS

Sorrowful ghosts have a challenge rating of 5 (1,800 XP) and the following additional traits:

**Mournful Wail.** The ghost weeps and moans constantly while they can see any living creature and isn't incapacitated. Each creature that starts their turn within 10 feet of the ghost that can hear the wailing must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be overcome with sadness and despair. Until the start of their next turn, an affected target can take either an action or a bonus action on their turn, not both, and can't take reactions. If a target is grappled by the ghost when they fail this saving throw, the target becomes restrained until the grapple ends.

**Sorrowful Grasp.** A Medium or smaller creature hit by the ghost's Withering Touch attack becomes grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the ghost can't use their Withering Touch attack on another target.

### APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Sorrowful ghosts are recognized by their anguished wails, which carry to unnaturally far distances on the night winds. These spirits appear as they did in life, although their features are more gaunt and hollow, at times completely skeletal. They wear tattered rags or burial clothes, if any at all, and move about with great effort, as if swimming through an ocean of molasses.

Some wander aimlessly, while others pace a set path, repeating the same actions over and over, oblivious to their surroundings. Living creatures caught in a sorrowful ghost's path run the risk of being caught, dragged, and smothered by the ghost as they mindlessly cling to the flicker of hope in their life force.

## HAUNTINGS

Sorrowful ghost hauntings manifest in two forms: ghosts who carry out a single task repeatedly, or ghosts who are imprisoned in one location and can't leave. The first form manifests when a spirit lost something dear to them before their death, and they repeat the activity in a futile attempt to prevent that loss. The second manifestation occurs when a ghost lost something as a result of their death and can't bear to move on from the site that originated that grief, usually the place where they died.

In both cases, the location around the ghost becomes warped by their heartache. The environment seems to languish and weep in unison with the spirit. Colors look faded and dull, time seems to move slower, light fails to shine at full brightness, and walls and ceilings weep with spontaneous watery leaks, even with clear skies outside.

### DRIFTING CHILD

The Drifting Child is the ghost of a forlorn youth named Tisaan who was born into a family of traveling merchants. As an infant, their wagon's gentle creaks and clattering wheels soothed Tisaan to sleep. By the time they turned ten, the many locations the family visited and tales of other travelers captivated them. And so, when Tisaan's parents announced they had enough savings to settle in the small farming town of Calinvale, Tisaan was heartbroken, fearing that their world would soon become smaller than before, and duller.

The parents sold the wagon, adding to the child's sadness. But a few days later, Tisaan spotted the vehicle near the outskirts of town and snuck inside to give it one last goodbye. They made a tent below the canvas and imagined themselves on the road, so lost in the daydream that they fell asleep. Oblivious to the child's presence, the merchants who bought the wagon loaded it with grain. It wasn't until days later, after reaching a nearby port city, that they became aware of the tragedy. The child suffocated, buried beneath the goods.

Tisaan's ghost wanders the road between the town and the city, crying for their parents and the life they never got to live. Sometimes they approach travelers who stop along the way to ask for a story about their homeland, vanishing for the night if the story pleases them, or sinking further into grief if it doesn't.

**Exorcism.** Tisaan's spirit can be eased by sharing a story from a distant place they don't know. Enchanted by the story, Tisaan disappears for a few days or even months, as the grief that tethers them to the world fades temporarily.

To help the Drifting Child move on permanently, Tisaan's remains must be recovered from the unmarked grave where they were buried and transported by wagon to the town of Calinvale, giving them the last ride they longed for before the tragedy.

## THE VENGEFUL

Vengeful ghosts arise when a creature dies in the grip of such intense, overwhelming rage that their soul becomes corrupted, creating a spirit who knows nothing except the burning need for retribution. Intense, agonizing hatred anchors them to the world, and they unleash that rage on anyone who crosses them.

These seething phantoms are more violent than other ghosts, and their propensity for murder has the potential to create more vengeful spirits.

### VENGEFUL GHOST TRAITS

Vengeful ghosts have a challenge rating of 5 (1,800 XP) and the following additional trait:

**Engender Vengeance.** If a humanoid dies from the ghost's attacks or to a creature affected by the ghost's Hateful Outburst, a new vengeful ghost rises from the corpse the next evening.

**Enmity.** When a creature deals damage to the ghost, the ghost has advantage on attack rolls against that creature until the end of the ghost's next turn.

Vengeful ghosts also have the following reaction:

**Hateful Outburst.** When a creature within 20 feet of the ghost that the ghost can see starts their turn, the ghost can force the creature to make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must use their action before moving to make a melee attack against another creature of the ghost's choosing. If no target is within reach, the creature can act normally.

### APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

A vengeful ghost looks as their corpse did after they died, with every sign of injury or trauma that led to the spirit's death gruesomely highlighted, gushing with wispy, ethereal blood. The longer a vengeful ghost exists, the more hideously distorted their features become. Their mouth might be missing or replaced with a gaping hole, their eyes might sink into the skull, or they might even grow a mantle of thorns out of their twisted body.

The vengeful are consumed by their overwhelming desire for revenge. Their pain remains so sharp that they can't abstain from inflicting it on the world, burning with the same hatred and misery that led to their demise. These ghosts rarely have clear memories of who they were or what brought them low, but they never forget someone they wish to hurt, even if they don't understand why.

### HAUNTINGS

By lashing out at anyone who encounters them, vengeful ghosts perpetuate the cycle of hatred that created them, dragging other unfortunate souls into their grudge. As a

result, a vengeful spirit seldom haunts a place alone; typically, a swarm of enraged spirits stalks a particular location, usually a place tied to the oldest and most dangerous among them. These wretched places reek of rotting corpses and fester with hatred. Faint palls of shadow stretch out from them, threatening to infect nearby sites.

With luck, these dreary venues become shunned and avoided by surrounding societies. But more often than not, the living ignore or forget the danger these ghosts represent, and risk expanding the hauntings while attempting to reclaim their ill-fated land.

### GLOWING STEWARD

The Glowing Steward was Dario Lohar, a butler who served the ungrateful and cruel Norwend family. Years into his service, Dario's sister died, leaving him as the only living relative of his nephew, Omar. The Norwends reluctantly allowed Dario to take the boy in, but they never accepted him. The nobles punished Omar for the slightest perceived missteps, locking the child out of the house until the steward retrieved him.

One cold winter evening, the Norwend children decided to play a devious prank on Omar. They tricked him into hiding in the matron's closet and told the woman the boy was rifling through her belongings. Furious, she threw Omar outside and locked the doors. On this fateful eve, Dario was stuck in a neighboring village on an errand, waiting out an approaching blizzard. When Dario returned early next morning, he found Omar outside, dead from the cold.

Overcome with rage, Dario locked the doors and windows and set the curtains and carpets ablaze while the family slept, burning himself along with them. Now his ghost manifests as a smoldering corpse, ablaze with the fury that possessed him before his death. He haunts the ashen halls of the mansion, and his violent rage has created other vengeful ghosts.

**Exorcism.** Few interactions can assuage the rage of a vengeful spirit, and often surviving the encounter is the best outcome one can hope for. The steward, however, can be briefly pulled out of his rage by reminding him of his sister or nephew, granting him a moment of clarity. Dario kept drawings and belongings of his family in the ruins of his old room.

In a moment of lucidity, Dario's spirit can be eased by the characters if they show him that he ended the Norwend family line. Dario realizes the extent of his transgressions over the years and asks that the characters cleanse the house of the curse he started. They must defeat the vengeful ghost in the ruins and then burn what remains to the ground, leaving the spirits with no place to return to. Doing this allows Dario's spirit to finally move on and reunite with his family.



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