



Phelantar's Guide
to
Lovecraftian Nightmares
for
The 13th Age Roleplaying Game



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Introduction and Designer's Notes

Normally, I would save these kinds of notes for the end so that people can get straight to the gaming material, but in this case I feel it's worth getting done up front. The title of this product is called "Lovecraftian Nightmares", but the creatures within aren't a direct conversion of any other gaming system or an attempt to completely accurately model the stories of H.P. Lovecraft using the Archmage Engine. It would be more accurate to say that these are my interpretations or that these are my designs as inspired by the originals. My goal is to make them fun and interesting to use with the average 13th Age campaign and so they may break somewhat from what you might expect.

With that said, I would recommend you use these creatures sparingly. One of the reasons that Lovecraftian creatures work in the horror genre is that the protagonists are rarely taking them on in a straightforward fight. In the original material, few of these creatures are even possible to fight in such a manner, but that would be frustrating or boring in the context of this sort of tabletop RPG.

But, if you would like my advice, these creatures should be found lurking in the euclidian depths of a strange living dungeon or fought at the climax of a story involving deranged and murderous cultists. Avoid naming them directly to the players, as telling the players "Okay, here's a shoggoth" is considerably less scary and mysterious than saying "there's an amorphous black blob oozing towards you, eyes forming briefly in the black goo to stare at you as it comes quickly closer". Have them speak, act, fight, and retreat in strange ways, confusing players and characters alike. These aren't creatures from the world or universe that the characters live in and playing them accordingly should increase the level of mystery, tension, and even horror. Make the players and characters both wonder what they're fighting and if they're even dead.

Still, these are only my recommendations and if you want to throw byakhees at your group in broad daylight on the way to dungeon delve, then by all means you should do so.



Overview

Arcane scholars, wizards of a darker bent, and the occasional unlucky soul know that there are places far beyond the mortal realm, which does not obey the laws of reality, magic, or divinity. These places are known by many names including the far planes, the dimensions of madness, or the edge of the universe. Regardless of what one might call them, they are so alien to life as it is known that merely looking into them can shatter minds. Even those of strong will and mind may find their sanity and stability being eroded through contact with this disturbing place or the creatures within.

So why does anybody deal at all with this realm of madness or the creatures which inhabit it? Knowledge or power. Because these creatures are beyond the known laws of the world, they can do things or teach things that would be impossible through any other method. By studying them and their abilities as well as the locales they inhabit, someone can turn reality itself on its head. But the transfer isn't just one way. Many of the creatures have their own inscrutable reasons for wanting to come to the world and they work through dreamers, madmen, and degenerate cults.

Fortunately, the average person is unlikely to deal with the realms of madness or the creatures from them. But an adventurer is not an average person and when these creatures or their agents make themselves known, it's frequently a band of adventurers who must take care of the situation. Even so, that documented encounters with these creatures and their agents remain rare and in a world where danger and monsters lurk around every corner, even most adventurers remain ignorant of their existence.

Mechanics

This supplement introduces a new monster type, Eldritch. All Eldritch creatures have the following characteristics in addition to everything else listed.

Fear - All Eldritch creatures cause Fear. Even if there are other monsters in the world that are disturbing and unknowable, something about these creatures strikes viewers as being *wrong* on a primal level.

Immunities and Resistances - All Eldritch creatures are immune to being Confused and Stunned. In addition, they have Resist 12+ to Holy and Negative energy attacks as well as resist 16+ to Poison and Psychic attacks.



Byakhee

A byakhee is a beaked flying creature which resembles a skeletal cross between a crow, a mole, and a bat. Of the creatures from the far realms, the byakhee initially appears to be one of the most “normal”, but few who have seen the byakhee in broad daylight or up close would say such a thing. The byakhee has two arms, two legs, and two large bat-like wings, but the entire creature is slightly asymmetrical, with limbs larger than their partner and the “face” twisted in disturbing ways. To say nothing of the lurching and twitchy way that the byakhee moves while on the ground..

A byakhee is large enough to carry a full grown human and is frequently summoned to act as a steed, ferrying cultists through the night air. Byakhees are also sometimes summoned as lurking guards for cult sites, as their unnaturally grey and black mottled skin makes them difficult to detect in the darkness. If there’s one advantage that the average adventurer has in dealing with a byakhee, it’s that the typical byakhee is not much faster, stronger, or tougher than a healthy adult human. An adventurer has a good chance of slaying a byakhee in a stand up fight, though not without risk. The byakhee has large claws and the ability to drain the blood from opponents make it very dangerous for the unprepared.

Byakhee

Level 4 Trooper (Eldritch)

Init: +9

Claw Swipe (Two Attacks) +8 vs AC - 12 damage and if both attacks hit the same target, the Byakhee may immediately make a Blood Drain attack

Natural Odd Miss - 4 damage

Blood Drain +8 vs PD - 10 damage and the Byakhee heals for 10 damage

Natural 16+ - Target is Dazed until the end of their next turn.

Flight - The Byakhee can disengage on an Easy (6+) roll and cannot be Intercepted

Home in Darkness - The Byakhee gains a +1 to all defenses while fighting in darkness or near darkness

Eldritch - The Byakhee has all Eldritch traits as listed on page 3

AC 20

PD 17 HP 50

MD 15



Gug

Some whisper that gugs might have once been a part of the normal waking world, but were banished to lands beyond reality by the gods for some unspeakable blasphemy. Whatever the truth and whatever gugs might have been in ancient ages before history, they are now enormous and terrifying creatures the size of a giant. They have two key features which distinguishes them from any other giant. First and foremost is their mouth, which is enormous and full of jagged shark-like teeth and opens vertically instead of horizontally. So much so that the entire head seems to split in half whenever the gug opens their mouth. The second unique feature is the way that they have two forearms sprouting from their elbow, each ending in an enormous taloned paw.

Even more than many creatures from the far realms, gugs are rarely seen. Their enormous size means that they are much more noticeable and thus not often summoned by cultists who wish to continue operating without drawing attention to themselves. However, “not often summoned” is not the same thing as “never summoned” and some gugs appear for overt purposes near isolated communities. Far more disturbing is the way that gugs have found their way to the world without the help of cultists, riding up through the depths of the earth within living dungeons.

Gug

Huge Level 6 Wrecker (Eldritch)

Init: +8

C: Taloned Paws +10 vs AC vs 2 nearby enemies - 55 damage

Natural 16+ Hit - Nearby enemies take 14 damage

Natural Even Miss - 14 damage.

Stomp Shock +11 vs PD - The target is Dazed and Stuck until the end of their next turn. Usable once per round as a Quick Action.

Violent Thrashing - Enemies engaged with a gug at the end of their turn take 14 damage.

Thick Hide - Ignore the first 21 damage done to the gug each turn.

Eldritch - The gug has all Eldritch traits as listed on page 3

AC 23

PD 19 **HP 270**

MD 15



Fire Vampire

The fire vampire is an oddity amongst the creatures from the far realms in that it almost could be something from the realms of reality. The fire vampire, in many ways, is merely a living ball of burning gas and energy which doesn't seem very strange when you compare it to fire elementals or flame skulls or even fire giants. There are differences, however. The fire vampire doesn't merely burn the flesh it touches, but drains the very soul and vitality from the victim, leaving them cold and weak. The victim's connection with their arcane or divine powers is diminished as well.

Fire Vampires are very frequent tools of the cultists and others who know how to summon them since they are so easily mistaken for something more normal. Fire Vampires don't even cause the same sense of unease or anxiety that so many creatures from beyond do, which makes it easier for them to work with more mundane sentries or guards. The fact that the light emitted from the Fire Vampire helps eliminate shadows and uncover unwelcome guests is a bonus to the situation. As Fire Vampires are just burning balls of gas and energy, they're also quite difficult to injure or destroy. However, the downside to using Fire Vampires is that they have a compulsion to burn non-living objects as well as drain the power from living creatures. Careless summoners can find their abodes ablaze and their bodies bereft of life if they don't keep a tight rein on the creatures.

Fire Vampire

Level 4 Spoiler (Eldritch)

Init: +9

Burning Touch +9 vs PD - 10 fire damage and the target deals 1 die less damage on their next successful attack (or 0 damage on their next miss)

Natural 16+ Hit - Ongoing 5 fire damage and the Fire Vampire heals 5 damage

Fire Heart - Any fire damage done to a Fire Vampire deals only half damage. The Fire Vampire's AC and PD increase by 1 for the rest of battle after being hit by a fire-based attack. Cold damage has a +2 to crit range when attacking a Fire Vampire

Dispersion - A Fire Vampire can disengage on a 6+ and takes half damage from opportunity attacks.

Eldritch - A Fire Vampire does not cause Fear, but otherwise has the immunities and resistances as listed on page 3.

AC 19

PD 19 HP 45

MD 16



Shoggoth

The shoggoth is a disturbing monster which, at first glance, seems to be related to the oozes and slimes found underground or in dungeons across the land. Then it moves and all questions as to the origin disappears. A shoggoth is a very large mass of inky black ooze punctuated by occasional spots that glow a sickening blue-green. Eyes, mouths, and tentacles seem to bubble up to the surface of the shoggoth before disappearing back down again, only to reappear somewhere else on the creature within moments. Even the smallest shoggoth is an enormous thing, starting at 15 or more feet across even before factoring in the length of the tentacles and pseudopods. Stories of shoggoths large enough to swallow entire sailing ships or houses might be the tales of madmen or drunken tavern-goers, but nobody who has actually seen a shoggoth would doubt that it could be possible.

Shoggoths are often found in the deepest of underground areas and are not often seen closer to the surface. They occasionally will find their way into a living dungeon and ride with them towards the surface. Even the most deranged cultist usually has a healthy respect for the power of the shoggoth and they are rarely called forth by cults, but sometimes they are called anyway. Shoggoths are notorious for breaking free from those who would control them and more than one cult hideout has been turned into the lurking lair of a newly free shoggoth after the deaths of the would-be master.

Shoggoth

Large Level 7 Wrecker (Eldritch)

Init: +12

C: Tentacle Swarm +12 vs AC against 3 different nearby targets - 70 damage

Natural Even Miss - 25 damage

Natural 1-5 roll - Make another attack roll against a nearby ally

Engulf +10 vs PD - 28 damage and the target is Stuck (save ends both). Any creature engulfed by a shoggoth moves with the Shoggoth until they make their save. Usable once per turn as a quick action.

Amorphous Mass - A shoggoth has resist 12+ to everything except Epic-tier magical weapons and attacks.

Eldritch - The shoggoth has all Eldritch traits as listed on page 3

AC 20

PD 21 HP 320

MD 20



Cultists

Cultists come in many varieties, from jaded nobility searching for their next thrill to secretive arcane societies searching for terrible knowledge to isolated rural communities worshipping forbidden gods. Despite this disparity in circumstances and goals, there are usually a few common threads. First is that the cult is often lead by a charismatic or influential member with some sort of magical power. This leader often controls the contact with the creatures and spaces beyond, limiting the knowledge available to the other members of the cult. The second is that most cultists rarely attempt to keep eldritch creatures around for long, instead summoning them for specific purposes and rites. A cult which can keep the creatures around on a regular basis is both extremely dangerous and terrifyingly insane.

Mechanically, these are generic cultists that can be used with any sort of campaign focus, even if the cultists aren't devoted to eldritch knowledge. Instead, you can select from a number of abilities to customize the cultists to fit the needs of the particular situation they're being used. It's recommended that you re flavor the abilities to fit the exact cult you're using. For example, the Death Gaze power could be described as the Poisonous Glare, doing poison damage instead.

Cultist Powers

- **Touched by Madness** - When targeted by a power that would Daze, Stun, or Confuse the Cultist, roll a saving throw. On a failure, the condition does not effect the cultist. On a success, the character which made the attack is afflicted instead.
- **R: Death Gaze +8 vs MD** - 14 necrotic damage and the target is Vulnerable (save ends). If the user of this power is a Mook, the damage is instead 7.
- **Bleeding Slice +9 vs AC** - 9 damage and 5 ongoing damage (save ends). If the user of this power is a Mook, instead this deals 4 damage and 4 ongoing damage.
- **Unnatural Resilience** - When dropped to 0 HP, this cultist may immediately make one final attack before dying.
- **C: Black Tentacles +7 vs PD vs 1d3 enemies** - 10 acid damage and the target is Stuck until the end of the cultist's next turn. When a mook uses this, reduce damage by half.
- **Inhuman Strength** - When this cultist hits with a melee attack, you can choose to increase the damage by 4 or cause the target to pop free.
- **Touch of Insanity +8 vs PD** - 12 damage and the target is confused (save ends). If used by a Mook, this does 7 damage and Dazes instead.
- **Warped Body** - Once per battle, heal a nearby friendly creature for their Level x4 HP. The creature is considered Dazed until the start of their next turn. Mooks may not use this power, but it may be used on them, which "revives" dead mooks as necessary.
- **Disturbing Whispers** - All engaged enemies suffer a -1 to all defenses. If more than one cultist with this power is engaged with a single target, the effects stack up to a maximum of -3.
- **C: Dread Curse +8 vs MD vs up to 2 engaged or nearby targets** - Target takes 5 ongoing damage. While taking this ongoing damage, the target rolls 1 less recovery die (minimum 1).



Cult Initiate

Level 4 Mook (Humanoid)
Init: +6

Dagger Blow +8 vs AC - 7 damage
Natural Even Miss - 3 damage

Improvised Thrown Weapon +7 vs AC - 5 damage

Power in Numbers - For every Cult Initiate engaged with a single target, increase attack rolls and damage by +1, to a max of +3

Cultist Power - Choose 1 Cultist power from the above list.

AC 19

PD 18 **HP 17**
MD 13

Mook: For every 17 damage done to the mob, remove one Cult Initiate

Cult Thug

Level 4 Wrecker (Humanoid)
Init: +5

Bloody Axe +11 vs AC - 14 damage. The crit range on this attack is 19-20.

Natural Even Hit - Next attack, hit or miss, does 5 additional damage.

Retribution - Any enemy who hits the Cult Thug with a melee attack takes 7 damage

Cultist Power - Choose 1 Cultist Power from the above list.

AC 17

PD 15 **HP 60**
MD 10

Rank & File Cultist

Level 4 Trooper (Humanoid)
Init: +8

Zealous Strike +7 vs AC - 16 damage
Natural Odd Miss - 7 damage and the next attack gains a +1 bonus

OR

Aimed Crossbow +9 vs AC - 12 damage

Natural Even Hit - Target is stuck until the end of their next turn.

Twisted Aura - Twice per battle a Rank & File Cultist may either reduce damage taken from an attack by half or immediately end one ongoing status effect.

Cultist Power - Choose 2 Cultist Powers from the above list

AC 21

PD 18 **HP 55**
MD 13

Cult Leader

Level 4 Leader (Humanoid)
Init: +7

C: Eldritch Blast +8 vs PD - 12 damage and the target is Dazed

Natural Even Miss - 6 ongoing damage

Inspiration - All nearby allies ignore the first 8 damage each turn.

Cultist Power - Choose 3 Cultist Powers from the above list

AC 20

PD 15 **HP 50**
MD 18





February 2015 Patron Thanks

Thank you to all these Patrons for making this work possible.

John Campbell, Drew Bergstrom, Andrew Raphael, Graham Poole, Chris Turner, J. Brandon Massengill, Joshua Ramsey, Are Sørli, Paul DeMartino, Lowell Francis, Matthew Caulder, Dane Ralston-Bryce, Bryan Rennekamp, Wesley Hall, Michael Bowman, Michael Hasko, Patrick Malone, Jean-Christophe Cubertafon, Matt Greenfelder, Matt Hogan, Tim Densham, Richard Green, Rob Heinsoo, and Simon Rogers.

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