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SUPPLEMENT

THE AGE OF CONAN

SECRETS

OF THE BLACK CIRCLE

BY

JASON VEYS

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**SECRETS OF THE
BLACK CIRCLE**
THE AGE OF CONAN BOOK III
BY
JASON VEY

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INTRODUCTION

*What do I know of cultured ways, the gilt, the craft and the lie?
I, who was born in a naked land and bred in the open sky.
The subtle tongue, the sophist guile, they fail when the broadswords sing;
Rush in and die, dogs—I was a man before I was a king.*

...

*When I was a fighting-man, the kettle-drums they beat,
The people scattered gold-dust before my horse's feet;
But now I am a great king, the people hound my track
With poison in my wine-cup, and daggers at my back.*

—Robert E. Howard, *The Phoenix on the Sword*

Well, folks, here we are! This one has been a long time coming. The last *Age of Conan* sourcebook was originally released all the way back in 2009. Since then, my ongoing campaign set in the world has gone through many shifts, evolutions and iterations, and it was time to put those into print for folks who want to see where things are going. I've also been promising a bestiary for quite some time, and this work includes a wealth of new monsters for your D&D Conan games.

In here you'll also find new combat rules, including a change to the Chainmail combat system that eliminates the need to check tables for each attack, rules for using the miniatures and battle boards from the *Monolith Conan* boardgame with your RPG games, new rules for sorcery and summoning (partially adapted from the *Mongoose Conan* game), and more. I think this provides just as much utility across the board as my last two did, and I hope you enjoy it.

As a bonus, I've included an appendix on the ancient empire of Acheron and how to use it in game, as it has played a major role in my own. It's 100% pastiche work, but drawn from various and sundry canon and semi-canon sources, so I hope it works for most of you.

Until next time...enjoy!

J.V., February, 2020

BOOK ONE: MEN AND MAGIC

THE RULES OF SORCERY

THE RULE OF SUCCESS

Sorcery thrives upon success, not failure. When a sorcerer is successful in major undertakings, he becomes more powerful. Any time a sorcerer casts a spell of at least level 3 and it succeeds in what it was intended to do, he may gain a +1 bonus to cast the same spell again, cumulative, to a maximum +4 bonus. This bonus is negated if the sorcerer does anything besides casting the exact same spell under the exact same circumstances repeatedly.



THE RULE OF IMPERMANENCE

Almost every spell or magic item is limited in its duration or application. Magic is not a permanent force. If a sorcerer is reduced to 0 hit points, any persistent magical effects immediately end. This includes creations such as animated dead, which crumble to dust instantly, and curses such as awful rite of the were-beast.

THE RULE OF DEFENSE

As living batteries of magic, sorcerers have an innate ability to unleash a defensive blast of magic as a last resort. The sorcerer can choose to unleash this blast at any time, but upon doing so, the sorcerer is immediately reduced to negative hit points equal to one less than negative (half con + level). This means that they are one point from dead. In exchange for this sacrifice, they deal 1d6 damage for every level they possess to everything within a 20-foot area. The exact effect will vary depending on the sorcerer—a necromancer may summon a horde of undead creatures that erupt from the ground and tear at everything within range, while an elementalist may explode in a wave of fire.

If the sorcerer survives, they discover that their magic is completely gone. They may attempt, within 1 year, a saving throw vs. death, and if they succeed, they regain the spellcasting power of a first-level mage and progress again from there. If they fail, they are forever drained of magic.

THE RULE OF OBSESSION

Sorcery is an all-consuming obsession. Anything that dilutes that obsession is anathema to the sorcerer's power. If they fall in love, pursue a new career,

putting others before their pursuit of power, or taking on any allegiance besides sorcery makes it difficult to pursue his path. This means a -1 to -4 penalty to spellcasting rolls, depending on the level of commitment to the alternate interest. If, however, the sorcerer can manage to tie their new commitment to their pursuit of power, they may change this penalty into a bonus to casting rolls. The options for this rule are nearly endless, and are adjudicated by the DM.

THE RULE OF THE MASTER

The rule of the master applies only to a sorcerer who is currently in thrall to a master, in any regard. This could be a human teacher, a demonic patron, or any other who instructs them in their path, grants them power, or otherwise holds thrall over them. A master always gains +3 to charisma checks related to their thrall. In addition, the master may at any time choose to grant or take power to or from their thrall. For every 1d6 damage the master chooses to suffer, their thrall gains +1 to a spellcasting check. Likewise, the master can choose to drain life from their thrall, gaining +1 to a spellcasting check for every 1d6 life they drain. They may do this at will, and need not be in the presence of their thrall to do so. Their thrall gains a save vs. death to resist, but may choose to fail the save.

THE RULE OF THE SOUL

The moment a person undertakes the path of sorcery, their very soul is irrevocably altered and corrupted in a minute, but immutable, fashion. This is the factor that enables sorcerers to recognize one another, and to sense mystic energy.

SUMMONING REVISITED

Using the Summoning spells from D&D is a functional option for Sorcerers in a Hyborian Age campaign, but can result in odd summonings and creatures that not only do not fit the flavor of the campaign, but have no place in the Hyborian Age. What sorcerer worth his salt would “summon” Zingaran rogues, for example? And what the heck is a Harpy doing flying around in Conan’s world?

Summoning spells in Conan’s world should always call upon creatures of the outer dark—demons, aberrations, and other abominations.

Number Summoned: The number summoned is always a single creature, unless the sorcerer opts to summon from a lower table, in which case the number summoned is one plus the difference between spell level and table. Thus, a sorcerer casting Monster Summoning VII but using the Monster Summoning I table would summon seven of whatever creature he calls forth. (7-1=6, plus one). Likewise, a sorcerer casting Monster Summoning III but using the Monster Summoning II table would call forth two of whatever creature he summoned, and so on and so forth.

Hit Dice of Creatures Summoned: Regardless of the number of hit dice a standard creature of the summoned variety may have, the hit dice of creatures summoned via spell are standardized to the spell—total hit dice equal summoning level plus two. Thus, creatures summoned with Monster Summoning I all have 3 HD; Monster Summoning II calls forth 4HD creatures, and Monster Summoning VII calls forth 9 HD creatures.

Attacking with Natural Weapons: Using Chainmail Combat for natural weapons presents a problem, as the Man to Man tables do not account for such things as claws and teeth. If using Man to Man Combat rather than Fantasy Combat for creatures with natural weapons, every effort has been made to classify the creature's attack types and number of attacks. Where they are not listed, the following guidelines apply:

- Human-sized or smaller creatures with natural weapons should attack as though they were wielding similar weapons, though at a slight penalty. Claws or spines, for example, should be as daggers at -1. Biting should be as daggers at -1 (unless the creature grapples by hitting with two claws first, in which case treat a bite as a normal dagger attack).
- Creatures larger than human-sized, but smaller than giants should see claws and bites attack as normal daggers, with no penalty.
- Creatures of giant size or larger should treat natural weapons as short swords, always with appropriate mild penalties as determined by the DM.
- Creatures who attack with bare fists (“bashing,” in terms of later editions of the game) should be treated as using an appropriate blunt weapon at the DM’s option, again at minor penalties based on the creature’s size.



Random Summoning: Sorcerers cannot, under normal circumstances, control the kind of creature they summon with a summoning spell. They must *always* roll 2d6 and consult the appropriate table. This represents the summoning of the creature who is spatially and dimensionally closest in proximity to the sorcerer at the time of casting—that is the creature that will arrive. In some cases, summoned creatures with similar hit dice will be more or less powerful than others, and it's the luck of the draw which the sorcerer gains.

At the DM's option, if a sorcerer can by some means learn the true name of a specific creature, they can summon that specific creature by choice. Learning the true name of a creature, however, should *never* be an easy prospect, nor handed out lightly, and even bestial creatures of low animal intelligence will have a "true name," though with creatures that cannot communicate it may be impossible to learn this name. If a creature is summoned deliberately in this fashion and destroyed, the creature is gone and the sorcerer can never again summon them.

Also at the DM's option, using a true name to summon a creature can create a psychic bond with the sorcerer which results in damage if the creature is destroyed—perhaps the loss of an energy level, or the loss of up to 2 points of Constitution, permanently.

Test of Wills: Sorcerers who summon creatures from tables VI and VII are not guaranteed to be able to control the creatures they summon. Immediately upon being summoned, the creature and sorcerer must engage in a Test of Wills, this being an opposed Wisdom ability check. If the sorcerer wins, the creature is bound as normal. If the sorcerer loses, the creature is free to act as it will, which in the case of intelligent creatures such as demons, may not be in the sorcerer's best interest. If the sorcerer possesses the creature's true name, they roll 3d6 (totaled) for the test of wills instead of 2d6, and may reroll a loss if they choose.



Bargaining: If an intelligent creature is summoned, the sorcerer may choose to forego the test of wills, and instead attempt to bargain with the creature—such a tactic is often successful, depending on what the sorcerer is willing to offer, though the price is never slight.

SUMMONING TABLES

The revised summoning tables below make use of the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age* from Mongoose's *Conan RPG* line, the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Deities & Demigods* and *Monster Manual II*, and the *Call of Cthulhu Malleus Monstrorum* sourcebook, in addition to the standard OD&D books. Other outstanding options include Geoff McKinney's *Carcosa* sourcebook, and the *AD&D Teratic Tome*, which can be found floating around online.

Undead are not included on these tables as they are a function of necromantic creation, not summoning. The original sources are credited; statistics listed are for use with OD&D. For more detailed information, consult the original sources.

Sources are listed as follows:

Bestiary: Bestiary of the Hyborian Age (Mongoose Conan)

Deities: AD&D Deities & Demigods

MMII: AD&D Monster Manual II

Supplement I: Greyhawk

Supplement III: Eldritch Wizardry

CoC: Malleus Monstrorum Expanded (Call of Cthulhu sourcebook, 2006 ed.)

Those creatures taken from the Malleus Monstrorum should also be found in almost any version of the core Call of Cthulhu RPG, but the page numbers will vary by edition and printing.

MONSTER SUMMONING I (3 HD CREATURES)

2 – Bestial Things of Yb (Bestiary p. 7)

3 – Children of the Night (Bestiary p. 17)

4 – Forest Devil (Bestiary p. 32)

5 – Man-Brute (Bestiary p. 72 – Treat as 3 HD Ogre, D&D volume 2)

6 – Tentacle Spawn (Bestiary p. 109)

7 – Servitor Spirit (Secrets p. 100)

8 – Dimensional Shambler (CoC p. 34-35)

9 – Tcho-Tcho (CoC p. 80)

10 – Terror from Beyond (CoC p. 89)

11 – Gelatinous Cube (Supplement I, p. 33, 39)

12 – People of the Dark (treat as 3 HD orcs, D&D volume 2)

MONSTER SUMMONING II (4 HD CREATURES)

2 – Children of Yig (Serpent Men) (Bestiary p. 97)

3 – Swamp Demon (Bestiary p. 102)

4 – Fire Vampire (CoC p. 38)

5 – Hound of Tindalos (CoC p. 93)

6 – Carrion Crawler (Supplement I p. 33, 39)

- 7 – Giant Tick (Bestiary p. 49)
- 8 – Children of Arensuphis (Bestiary p. 64)
- 9 – Kushite Boar Demon (Bestary p. 94)
- 10 – Servant of Tsathoggua (As Dretch, MMII p. 38)
- 11 – Spined Devil (MMII, p. 49)
- 12 – Lesser Spawn of Shub-Niggurath (As Gibbering Moulder, MMII, p. 69)

MONSTER SUMMONING III 5 HD CREATURES

- 2 – Child of Set (Bestiary p. 73)
- 3 – Great Race (Deities p. 45)
- 4 – Nightgaunt (CoC p. 66)
- 5 – Star Vampire (CoC p. 88)
- 6 – Wraiths (D&D Volume 3)
- 7 – Night-Guardians (as gargoyles, D&D Volume 3)
- 8 – Shadows (Supplement I, p. 33, 34)
- 9 – Chakan (Bestiary p. 15)
- 10 – Giant Mantid (Bestiary p. 46)
- 11 – Jamankh’s Cursed (Bestiary p. 62)
- 12 – Lotus-Thing (Bestiary p. 70)

MONSTER SUMMONING IV 6 HD CREATURES

- 2 - Black Fiend (Bestiary p. 8)
- 3 – Ghoul (Bestiary p. 39)
- 4 – Giant Bat (Bestiary p. 41)
- 5 – Giant Centipede (Bestiary p. 41)
- 6 – Gorgon (Bestiary p. 52)
- 7 – Man-Ape (Bestiary p. 71)
- 8 – Riders of Ollam-Onga (Bestiary p. 87)
- 9 – Primordial One (Deities p. 46)
- 10 – Succubus (Supplement III p. 27, 33)
- 11 – Grey Ape (Bestiary p. 57)
- 12 – Intellect Devourer (Supplement III, p. 27, 38)

MONSTER SUMMONING V 7 HD CREATURES

- 2 – Servant of Bit-Yakin (Bestiary p. 57)
- 3 – Night-Weird (Bestiary p. 83)
- 4 – Yizil (Bestiary p. 126)
- 5 – Djinn (Vol. 3, p. 19)
- 6 – Giant Stygian Crocodile (Bestiary, p. 42)
- 7 – Servitor of the Outer Gods (CoC p. 71)
- 8 – Spider of Leng (CoC p. 56)
- 9 – Spectre (D&D Vol. 3)
- 10 – Hell Hound (Supplement I, p. 33, 38)
- 11 – Guardian of Jullah (Bestiary p. 59)
- 12 - Bodiless Slimer (Bestiary p. 13)

MONSTER SUMMONING VI 8 HD CREATURES

- 2 – Demon Scorpion (as King Scorpion, Bestiary p. 66)
- 3 – Foaming Blasphemy (Bestiary p. 31)
- 4 – Whore of Set (Bestiary p. 82)
- 5 – Smoke-Serpent (Bestiary p. 96)
- 6 – Spider-Thing (Bestiary p. 98)
- 7 – Uncanny Steed (Bestiary p. 112)
- 8 – Great Race (Deities p. 45)
- 9 – Cthulhuim (Supplement III, p. 27, 39)
- 10 – Demon Type I (Supplement III, p. 27, 30)
- 11 – Chthonian (CoC p. 23)
- 12 – Formless Spawn (CoC p. 100)

MONSTER SUMMONING VII 9 HD CREATURES

- 2 – Byakhee (Deities p. 44)
- 3 – Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath (CoC p. 83)
- 4 – Brylukas (Bestiary p. 14)
- 5 – Child of the Dark (Bestiary p. 16)
- 6 – Servitor of Quf-Jushke'een (Bestiary p. 93)
- 7 – Lamia (Bestary p. 68)
- 8 – Black Spawn of Jullah (Bestiary p. 11)
- 9 – Guardian Demon (Bestiary p. 59)
- 10 – Kelubar Demodand (MMII p. 34)
- 11 – Demon Type II (Supplement III, p. 27, 30)
- 12 – Black Ones (Bestiary p. 10)



BOOK TWO: MONSTERS & TREASURE

The monsters in this section are divided by Hit Dice, and alphabetized within those sections. This makes them easily correlate to the Monster Summoning lists in Book One.

3 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING I)

Bestial Things of Yb: These are hideously mutated degenerate ape-men, the victims of foul and demonic sorcery. All have random and bizarre mutations such as glowing eyes, re-curved legs, giant ears, climbing claws, natural weapons (claws, fangs, or horns), webbed appendages, multi-faceted eyes, regenerating skin, poison, or dense fur. DMs can choose up to 5 mutations for a Bestial Thing to possess; these should grant benefits such as bonuses to swimming, climbing, Wisdom checks to see, hear, smell, etc, higher AC than normal, or whatever else the DM sees fit to add to the creatures. Bestial Things of YB can climb and hide as second level thieves, are +1 to Initiative, have AC 7, 3 attacks, and any special attacks as appropriate to their mutations.

Children of the Night: These are a tiny, degenerate race of reptilian humanoids with fanged mouth and scaly flesh. They use primitive flint and bone weaponry, and their eyes glow with a feral light. They can Hide and Move Silently as a second level thief. They gain +1 to all saves against Petrification or any fear-related effect, are surprised only on a 1 on 1d6, have AC 6, and 3 attacks.



Dimensional Shambler: Dimensional Shamblers are 8-foot tall creatures with loose skin, covered in cancerous tumors and move with an unsteady, simian-like gait. Their heads and legs are vaguely insectoid in nature and their eyes are dull and dead. These creatures are so unnatural and hideous that anyone seeing one (except the sorcerer who summoned the creature) must make a Saving Throw against Paralyzation (Wands) or be unable to act for one round. Sorcerers with at least one point of Corruption gain +2 to this save. Dimensional Shamblers attack three times with wicked talons which are as un-penalized daggers and are AC 6.

Forest Devil: Forest Devils are roughly human-sized monstrosities covered in coarse fur with leathery skin beneath. They are covered in small spines and tend to travel in small packs. They hear noise and climb as third-level thieves, hide and move silently as fourth-level thieves, track as sixth-level rangers, have AC 7, and 3 attacks.

Servitor Spirit: These creatures manifest as wispy, humanoid shapes whose bodies from the waist down fade into mist. They attack with claws, hide and move silently as fourth level thieves, and are intelligent enough to communicate with and perform mundane tasks for their masters as well as engage in combat. In combat, they are difficult to hit due to their partially invisible and partially insubstantial nature; on every attack roll a d6: a result of 1 or 2 means the attack has passed harmlessly through the Servitor Spirit, dealing no damage. However, all attacks that do hit and damage the creature cause it to suffer -2 to all attacks and other die rolls (excluding damage) for the next round. This penalty is not cumulative for repeat hits. Servitor Spirits have only two attacks and are AC 5.

Tcho-Tcho: Another race of degenerate humanoids, the Tcho-Tcho average between 4 and 5 feet in height. They appear as a strange cross between men of the Far East (Khitai) and tribal Pygmies of the south. They are cannibalistic and file their teeth down to sharp points. Their weapons are poisoned, requiring a Saving Throw; failure means the weapon deals an additional die of damage from the poison. There is a 1-in-6 chance that any Tcho-Tcho summoned will be able to cast Necromancy spells as a 3rd-level Sorcerer. Tcho-Tcho have 3 attacks and AC 8. *Note: the Tcho-Tcho race is far more complex than the summoned monster detailed here; they could make for impressive adversaries, should an enterprising DM choose to research them from the works of H.P. Lovecraft and associated gaming supplements, and add a "Serpent-man-like" flavor to a campaign set in Khitai or dealing with the remnants of Lemurian civilization.*

Tentacle Spawn: An amorphous mass of faceless, mouthed tentacles with rubbery, slime-covered skin. When these creatures bite a foe, their poisoned saliva requires the victim to make a saving throw vs. Paralyzation (Wands) or suffer three dice of damage to Dexterity as well as normal (1d6) damage to Hit Points. Any creature whose Dexterity reaches zero is paralyzed and unable to move at all until Dexterity recovers (at one die per hour). A successful save negates Dexterity damage, but the victim still suffers normal hit point damage from the bite. These creatures are also bound to the portal from which they are summoned, so any enemy sorcerer who successfully casts a counter-spell against the portal will banish the creature immediately. Summoning multiple creatures (as per casting on this table from a higher level Summoning spell, above) creates multiple portals; each must be banished separately. Tentacle Spawn have AC 7 and 3 attacks.

Terror From Beyond: These horrific demons are inky, semifluid, jellyfish-like monstrosities which continuously quiver and trail nests of writhing tendrils, the central and thickest of which ends in a fanged maw. As with Servitor Spirits, damaging a Terror from Beyond requires a successful attack followed roll of 3-6 on a d6 or the attack passes harmlessly through its gelled form. Fortunately, they are slow-moving and unarmored. Since Terrors from Beyond use other sensory

organs to navigate, they are not affected by any condition that would normally blind, deafen, or cause damage based on sight or sound. They can move about in absolute darkness as well as absolute light. They are unintelligent and purely predatory, and require a saving throw against terror exactly like a Dimensional Shambler. They have 3 attacks and AC 9.

4 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING II)

Children of Arensuphis: These creatures were once men of Kush, whose bodies and souls have been corrupted by exposure to the Outer Dark—specifically, to the demonic machinations of the hunting god, Arensuphis. No longer men, they are now degenerate jaguar-things; lithe, dark-skinned men with yellow and black splotches on their arms and spine. Their long, thin-fingered hands are tipped with wicked claws, with faces that are somewhere in the blasphemous realm between human and feline.

They have a mouth full of needle-teeth, long, pointed ears, and green or yellow eyes that glow in the dark. Children of Arensuphis gain +1 to initiative dice due to their ability to pounce on foes, and they rage exactly as Cimmerians, though they need not make a roll to do so; this happens immediately as soon as combat is joined. They have exceptional hearing and can see in the dark, making it difficult to sneak up on them and meaning they never suffer penalties for blindness in natural darkness; they are surprised only on a roll of 1 on 1d6, regardless of the skill of their attacker. They attack 3 times, with two claws and a bite, each as daggers -1 and are AC 5.

Children of Yig: Serpent-men, or Children of Yig, are throwbacks from millennia before the Hyborian Age, and even before the Thurian Age that preceded it. They are servants of the Great Old One, Yig, whom some say is the same as Set the Old Serpent, whom some claim is the father of Set, and whom some say was deposed by Set. The Serpent-Men were thought long extinct, driven to destruction during the age of King Kull of Valusia thousands of years ago, but they have recently re-emerged as a threat. They appear as humans with the heads of serpents, and are vicious combatants, having been driven to near-barbarism from millennia of hiding in the shadows.

They possess the power to alter their form into that of any human being they desire, but are vulnerable to any sorcerer who utters the phrase, “*Ka nama kaa lajerama!*” or to any who possess a certain enchanted elder symbol and utter the same phrase. Hearing this phrase of power requires the Serpent-Man to make a Saving Throw against Wands or revert to their true form and suffer -2 to all die rolls (excepting damage rolls) for 1d6 rounds from fear. Some serpent-man sorcerers may possess charms that protect against this phrase of power. In addition, the phrase is only effective if the utterer has strong reason to suspect that the person with whom he is speaking or fighting is indeed a serpent-man.

Serpent-men are intelligent and canny, and will speak at least one language of men as well as their own; there is a 1-in-6 chance that any summoned serpent-man will be a sorcerer, able to cast spells from the Curses, Domination, Necromancy, and/or Summoning schools as a 4th-level Sorcerer. They have four attacks and use either weapons or their own vicious bite, which requires a save against Poison or the victim suffers 3d6 damage to Constitution in addition to normal hit point damage; if Constitution reaches zero, the victim dies immediately. Poison damage to Constitution is recovered at 1d6 points per day. A serpent man can only inject poison from a bite once every 1d6 rounds; after a bite they are “milked” and must produce more venom. Serpent-men in human form cannot inject poison. They have four attacks per round and AC 5.

Deep Ones: These creatures of the deep are servants of Dagon and Cthulhu, fish-men who attempt to mate with human women to produce male offspring that mutate at the end of puberty (between the ages of 18 and 21) into more of their degenerate race. They are related to the D&D creatures known as Locathah and Sahuagin but are more elite and insidious versions of these lesser fish-men.

The prior two races could be considered Deep Ones who have not yet quite completed their transformation, or who have transformed into a lesser sub-species.

Deep Ones are creatures of great strength and formidable warriors; they gain all the abilities of third-level fighting-men with strength 18/01, Dexterity 16, and Constitution 16. As such they attack 3 times, reduce opponents’ ability to hit them by 2, and gain +1 hit point per hit die. In addition, when battling foes of one hit die or less they gain an extra four attacks per round.

Unfortunately for them, they can only survive for short periods out of the water—after 1d6 rounds on land, a Deep One must make a saving throw against Wands every round or lose 1d6 Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution as it begins to “drown” from lack of water on its gills. In combat they use either their own claws or weapons such as spears and tridents with which to fight, and have AC 3.

Fire Vampire: These creatures are tiny (roughly 1-foot dia.) balls of living flame. They have a core of superheated plasma, like the heart of a star. They are servitors of the Great Old One Cthugha. They are not highly intelligent, but nor are they of base animal intelligence.

They can understand human speech but have no means to communicate in return unless some magical method is implemented. In combat, Fire Vampires attack with pure heat; all creatures facing a fire vampire are assumed to be AC 9; Fire Vampires need only a roll of 7 on 2 dice to hit in combat. The only defense against a Fire Vampire is to be protected from heat, magically or otherwise.

Fire Vampires also steal the life essence from their victims; every hit point of damage dealt by a Fire Vampire is transferred to the vampire, which can make them deadly foes and difficult to kill. They attack 4 times and have AC 4.

Giant Tick: This is a demon of the Outer Dark which resembles exactly what its name implies: a gigantic, blood-draining tick. They are two feet in diameter and leap upon their victims, inserting their razor-sharp proboscis into the skin and draining blood. Unlike most creatures of their hit die rating, Giant Ticks only attack once, but drain 3d6 points of blood on a successful attack.

If the initial drainage does not kill the victim, the Tick remains attached, automatically draining 1d6 points of damage each round until killed or the victim dies. After it kills a victim, there is a 3-in-6 chance that the tick becomes bloated and full, and just crawls slowly away, rather than attacking again.

Removing an attached tick from a victim causes 1d6 points of damage as the creature's head must be cut out, unless the tick is attacked with fire, a process that requires the Tick's victim to make a Saving Throw against Wands or also suffer 1d6 fire damage. Successfully attacking a tick with fire, however, will cause it to detach from the victim, after which it will either scurry away or attack the character that burned it (50/50 shot).

Giant Ticks are normally AC 2, but when attached to a victim their AC drops by two every round as they fill up with blood and become ever more sluggish.

Hounds of Tindalos: These creatures resemble desiccated hounds whose skin is covered in a pus-like mucous. They have long, whip-like tongues with barbs at the end, which they use to drink the life essence and sanity of their victims. In general they track and attack humans who have meddled with the gateways between time and dimensions, but can be summoned by unscrupulous sorcerers.

The hounds always emerge from corners; if a person is in a room that has no corners at all, they are safe from a hound—however, such places are rare beyond rare. In combat the hound strikes four times, one each with claws, teeth, and its lashing tongue (treat the tongue as a short sword -1).

If the tongue hits home, not only does it deal a normal 1d6 hit point damage, it also drains 1d6 Wisdom from the victim, permanently, as well as inflicting one point of Corruption on the victim, unless a Saving Throw vs. Spells is made. This is one of the few ways a non-sorcerous character can become corrupted. Successfully saving negates the Wisdom drain and Corruption. Hounds of Tindalos are AC 5.

Kushite Boar-Demon: These creatures of the Outer Dark resemble a twisted cross between humans and boars. Standing five to six feet tall and moving in a hunched, shambling mode, they are covered in tufts of wiry black hair, with the arms of a great ape. They have the heads of demonic boars, with feral, watery yellow eyes. Their primary weapon is their tusks, which are long and razor-sharp; these they use to gore and tear at their opponents.

What makes boar-demons so terrifying, however, is their ability to move without making a sound. They have the move silently and hide abilities of a fifth-level thief, and if they manage to sneak up on an opponent their first attack should be treated as a back attack, also at fifth-level thief ability. They attack four times; their tusks are scored as short swords. They are AC 6.

Lesser Spawn of Shub-Niggurath: This creature is a squalid mass of protoplasm and flesh, covered on its entire surface with eyes and mouths. When it lies perfectly still, it appears to be nothing more than a heap of innocuous slime or other wet moldy substance. Its gelatinous body is thick and viscous and its vital organs buried deep within the center of its mass, making it difficult to damage.

Worse, when it hits in melee combat, its mouth locks on and automatically deals an additional 1d3 damage every round thereafter—no more rolls to hit are necessary. A victim can make a saving throw against death every round to break free.

Once per round, the lesser spawn of Shub-Niggurath can expel a glob of acidic spittle, which deals 1d6 damage per round for 1d6 rounds, unless the victim makes a save vs. breath weapon. Otherwise, the Lesser Spawn of Shub-Niggurath is AC 3 and attacks four times, its mouths treated as hand axes.

Servant of Tsathoggua: These foul things have round, rubbery bodies and arms and legs that are long, narrow, and resemble moss-covered tree branches. They are covered with sparse, wiry hair and their mouths are full of tiny fangs. Not the deadliest of creatures in combat, they can, however cast magical spells: *Agonizing Doom*, *Darkness 5' Radius*, *Fear*, *Evil Eye*, and *Summon Vermin*. They attack three times, each time as a dagger -1, and have AC 6.

Spined Devil: Spined devils look like a cross between a human, a spined lizard, and a bat. They generally carry military forks which they use in combat. They can fly, making them difficult opponents in combat. Further, the spines that cover their body can be ripped free and hurled as though they were sling stones; these explode upon striking an opponent, dealing an additional 1d6 damage unless the target saves against Breath Weapon.

Even if the spine fails to damage normally, so long as the creature would have hit an unarmored opponent, the additional explosive damage is dealt. The creature can remove up to 2d6 of these spines per day. Otherwise, the Spined Devil has AC 6 and attacks four times.

Swamp Demon: Swamp Demons are the half-mortal pairing of a demon and a beast of the swamps. They tend to be vaguely humanoid with red eyes, vicious claws, and are covered with a layer of slime and muck. They carry with them a putrid mist of swamp steam wherever they go. They hide and move silently as a fifth-level thief and back stab as the same.

Often when summoned they will manifest in such a way as to gain a back stab for their first strike, leaping from a nearby pool or shadowy mass of plants to attack. If there is any sort of mass of plants or bog-like area nearby, they may after each sequence of attacks make an immediate Hide check to vanish from sight, allowing them to attempt to back stab again the next round (1-2 on 1d6 to surprise next round if successful).

They cannot be blinded, gain four attacks per round, and have AC 6.

5 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING III)

Chakan: The Chakan are primitive primates that dwell deep within the Pictish Wilderness and similar forested and jungle locales. They are fast and strong, with oversized canines, claws, and the ability to use primitive tools such as clubs and rocks. While they don't speak any human languages, their intelligence is of low-human/high-primate level. They are covered in brown or black fur and possess chinless jaws and a thick, protruding brow with tiny feral eyes. They are natural climbers with the ability to climb as a tenth-level thief. They can move through trees at the same speed as they move across the ground.

Their AC is 5, and they attack five times with claws, bite, or a primitive weapon. Treat claws as hand axes, bite as dagger, and primitive weapons as a club.

Child of Set: The Child of Set, also known as the man-serpent of Stygia, takes the form of a massive black serpent with the demonic-looking head of a man. It is said that their creation was overseen by Set himself in the Days before Days, when the gods of men usurped the position the Outer Gods once held in the Cosmos.

The demonic visage of the Child of Set shows no emotion whatsoever, but out of its hideous, fanged maw lolls a twenty-foot-long tongue. The creatures are highly intelligent and speak Stygian, ancient Acheronian, and one or more of the tongues of man. They also have a deep and abiding knowledge of sorcery, though they cannot cast most spells due to their lack of ability to hold material

components and perform somatic gestures. They can, however, whisper the spells to a willing sorcerer who makes a pact with them.

Their AC is 6, and they have five attacks, two of which are tongue lashes (light mace) and two of which are tail lashes (heavy mace), the remaining being a bite (short sword). They can grapple and hold targets they successfully strike with their tongue, requiring a save vs. death to escape. Grappled targets may take no action but to attempt a save vs. death to escape. While grappling an opponent, the man-serpent loses one of its five attacks, but may if it chooses use all four remaining attacks to bite the grappled opponent. Their bite is highly toxic, delivering an extra 2d6 damage on a successful hit, unless a successful save vs. poison is made at -2.

Giant Mantid: A Giant Mantid is quite literally a praying mantis that is roughly the size of a german shepherd. They are AC 3 and attack five times: four with foreclaws (daggers) and once with a bite (short sword). The final bite attack, however, requires a strike with a foreclaw to hold the victim in place.



Great Race: These alien horrors lived in the world many thousands of years ago, before humankind crawled from the primordial ooze. Once, they had a highly advanced scientific civilization, but a catastrophic upheaval changed the stars and rained destruction down upon them. A few remained, frozen in time, and are occasionally awakened. They appear as cone-shaped creatures, ten feet wide and ten feet tall, with six 10-foot tentacles writhing from their body. Two of these end in claws, one in ears, and one in a globe covered in eyes. The final two have fine manipulation digits.

Their AC is 5 and they attack four times times, twice with their claws (class 3/great swords) and twice with their fine manipulators (class 1/daggers or by weapon). Alternately, they can issue a *psychic blast*, which affects all creatures within a 4" (40ft) cone and deals 5d6 (totaled). A successful save vs. petrification halves the damage. If they issue this attack, they may not attack with tentacles, and they may do so only 1/3 rounds. The Great Race is immune to illusion, charm, enchantment, and mind-affecting effects.

Jamankh's Cursed: Jamankh's Cursed are half-men, half-hyenas that can be found south of Vendhya. They are in all ways treated as standard *D&D* gnolls.

Lotus-Thing: These horrific monstrosities are demonic spirits that inhabit vaguely humanoid bodies made of rotting plant materials. They are named for their traditional purpose of being summoned to guard groves of black lotus. These creatures are utterly immune to physical attacks except for fire (which deals double damage) and silver. They fight as trolls on the Fantasy Combat table. Any creature that comes within 10 feet of the lotus thing must make a save vs. poison at -2 or suffer as though exposed to black lotus.

The lotus thing has AC 7 and attacks five times. Any creature who is struck by the lotus thing must make a save vs. poison or suffer 1d6 points of Strength loss in addition to normal damage. Strength loss from the Lotus-thing poison returns at a rate of 1d6 per day, provided that the victim succeeds at a save vs. poison that day.

Nightgaunt: Nightgaunts resemble emaciated, black-skinned and featureless humans with long, clawed hands, a barbed tail, and membranous, bat-like wings. They are highly intelligent and devious servitors of the Outer Dark. It is said that they dwell within the land of dreams, where they guard the nightmares of humankind. When summoned, they seek only to inflict as much pain as possible through their ability to send their victims into tortured slumber where they confront their worst fears.

Nightgaunts have AC 4 and can fly with a speed of 24" and perfect mobility. In combat, they attack 5 times with claws (class 1/daggers) and once with a poison stinger on their tail (class 1/dagger). A strike with its tail requires a saving throw vs. poison or the victim falls into a comatose slumber for 6d6 minutes while wracked with horrific nightmares. While under the influence of these nightmares, the victim must succeed at a saving throw vs. spells or suffer the loss of 1d3 points of Wisdom, permanently. Sorcerers who suffer this attack but succeed at their saving throw instead gain +1 point each of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, but suffer a point of Corruption.

Shambling Boar-Thing: These monstrosities are found in jungle areas throughout the world, and are rumored to have been a sorcerous creation that was cast-off and flourished. They are hulking masses of muscle and fur who live hidden in the shadows, stalking and killing prey indiscriminately. They stand between five and six feet tall and are covered by tufts of wiry black hair with long, ape-like arms. They have feral yellow eyes and giant curving tusks emerge from their upper jaws, and the rest of their teeth are gagged and designed for tearing flesh.

They are AC 6 and move 13", with a climbing speed of 4". They attack four times with their claws (daggers/class 1) and once with their tusks (swords/class 2). Due to their thick hide, they reduce all damage dealt to them by 2 points. They can hide and move silently as a 5th level thief.

Star Vampire: The star vampire dwells in outer space and is characterized by its ravenous appetite for blood. It resembles a gigantic (12-feet across) starfish, and moves through the air by floating. It is normally invisible, but following a sanguine repast, the star vampire becomes temporarily visible from the undigested blood it has absorbed. The monster is always accompanied by a sardonic, preternatural titter which heralds its imminent arrival and marks its presence, even when it is invisible. After it has fed, the star vampire quickly departs, the eerie, ghastly laughter following in its wake. The occult book *De Vermis Mysteriis (Mysteries of the Worm)* contains a spell for summoning the creature, though doing so is often dangerous as the thirsty star vampire is likely to feast on its caller. In game terms, when summoned, a star vampire is compelled to appear, but gains a saving throw vs. spells at +2, and if it succeeds, may attack the sorcerer who summoned it.

The creature is AC 5 and has a flying speed of 24". In combat, it uses its enormous talons (class 2/swords) to capture its prey, grappling and crushing the unfortunate and then draining the victim's blood through its tubular suckers. It attacks 5 times, and if two or more talons strike, the victim is grappled and automatically suffers damage every round unless they succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification. Likewise, if they fail to save, they are drained of 1d6 points of Strength. They may attempt a new save each round to avoid further damage or level drain. Those whose Strength is drained to 0 in this manner or who die from hit point damage inflicted by the star vampire, die and rise as vampires within 3 days unless their head is removed. A victim who survives an attack by a star vampire regains lost Strength at a rate of 1 point per day. While invisible the creature is -4 to hit, being locatable only by the tittering it makes. Once it feeds, however, it can be seen by the blood that floods its system. Each round that it successfully feeds, the penalty to strike it is reduced by 1 until it is fully visible after 4 successful feedings.

6 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING IV)

Black Fiend: These demonic horrors are commonly called up as assassins from the pits of Hell. They favor the dark, and at a distance they can pass for human, as they stand roughly 6 feet tall, of a muscular, but relatively normal, build. Up close they have a classically demonic appearance, with curved horns, pointed ears, fangs, and claws. Many hide their features under cowls so they can get up close to their victims. They are of genius intelligence and most are spellcasters, who may be willing to teach their arcane arts to those who summon them, but at a price that almost always benefits the fiend.

Black Fiends have AC 3 and standard movement. They speak demonic, Old Stygian, Acheronian, and possess a mystical ability to speak and comprehend the language of any who summon them. They are immune to physical attacks save fire and silver. They attack four times with their claws (daggers/Class 1)

and twice with their horns (swords/Class 2). They have all the abilities of a 10th level assassin, and can cast spells as a 6th level sorcerer. They have instinctive knowledge of all spell effects of up to 3rd level, and have no limits on the number of spells they may cast per day.

Ghoul: Ghouls are treated in all ways as their cousins in *Volume 2*, including their ability to cause paralysis on a slash, save that they have 6 hit dice, attack 6 times, and are not undead, but rather are misshapen, grey humanoids of vast strength and power who feast upon human flesh. They are most commonly found in the ancient forests of Zingara and Argos, but can be found in similar remote areas in just about any area of the world. They speak their own language and are of average intellect.

Giant Bat: Giant bats have AC 3, move 5" on the ground and fly 24". They have the ability to navigate by sonar and do not rely on their sight, though if their sonar is fouled they can use their eyes just fine. This sonar, however, allows them to detect invisible and hidden creatures on a 1-5 on a d6. They attack twice with their foot claws (dagger/Class 1), twice with their wings (large clubs/Class 3), and with a bite (sword/Class 2). If they strike successfully with 2 foot claws and a bite, the victim is grappled and each round may attempt a save vs. petrification. If they succeed, they break free (but may suffer damage from falling if the bat flies away with them). If they fail, they automatically suffer 3d6 damage as the bat drains their blood.

Giant Centipede: These monstrous creatures are AC 4 and move 16" with a 16" climb speed, and can burrow 2". They attack only once but their viciously poisonous bite deals 6d6 damage and their opponent must succeed at a poison save or lose 2 points of Dexterity. Those whose Dexterity is reduced to 0 are rendered completely paralyzed. Lost Dexterity returns at a rate of 1 point per day.

Gorgon: Gorgons are lithe and stunningly beautiful she-demons whose ideal features and bodies are distracting. They have a midnight black third eye in the center of their forehead, which they use to paralyze or petrify their victims. Often summoned as playthings or assassins, they have a deep and unnatural hatred for the living, and often end up manipulating those who summon them, seducing their would-be masters into becoming love-stricken slaves.

Gorgons are AC 3 and have normal movement. They are immune to normal damage, but can be harmed by silver or fire. Their central eye is also vulnerable to normal attacks, but attempting to strike the eye carries a -5 penalty to attack rolls, and only a single attempt to strike the gorgon there may be made. On the fantasy combat table, they strike as wizards and are struck as dragons. They can see perfectly in absolute darkness, and attack six times with weapons, usually knives or short swords. They can also focus their black gaze upon a victim, who

must make a paralysis save or be immobilized as long as the gaze is focused upon them. While paralyzed, the victim suffers one point of Constitution life each round, while the Gorgon's hit points increase by 1d6 per point of Constitution drained. If Constitution reaches 0, the victim is turned permanently to stone. They are also spellcasters who cast as a 6th-level sorcerer and know *Charm Person*, *Evil Eye*, *Fascinate*, *Summon Vermin*, *Vile Weapon*, *E.S.P.*, *Evil Eye (greater)*, *Monster Summoning I*, and *Suggestion*.

Man-Ape or Grey Ape: Man-Apes and Grey Apes are treated statistically as Ogres from *Vol. 2*, with 6 hit dice, high animal intelligence, and 6 attacks, either with claws, teeth, or by weapon. Their natural weapons are treated as daggers (Class 1).

Primordial One These creatures are an alien race possessed of advanced science and supra-genius intelligence. They hate all intelligent creatures that are not of their species and will seek any opportunity to destroy as soon as possible. This includes sorcerers who call upon them and fail to control them, or who fail to banish them before the summoning spell expires. They are barrel-shaped cylinders with flowing, membranous wings. At the top of its body is a "head" which is covered by flowing cilia like those on a sea anemone. They have five globed eyes with red irises attached to five of the cilia, which give them 360-degree vision. A further 5 of these cilia have mouths resembling those of lamprey eels. At the base of their bodies are 5 tentacles that they use in combat or for locomotion.



The Primordial One is AC 6 and has a movement of 18". They attack 6 times with their tentacles (class 1/hand axe). They are immune to heat and cold-based attacks, cannot be surprised, and the thief's sneak attack is ineffective against them, as is the assassin's assassinate ability. Like the Great Race, they can issue a *psychic blast* in a 4" (40ft.) cone, dealing 6d6 damage (a save vs. petrification is allowed for half damage). If they issue this attack, they may not attack with tentacles, and they may do so only 1/3 rounds.

Riders of Ollam-Onga: These black-clad phantom horsemen ride demonic steeds and have a single-minded purpose to serve the sorcerer who summoned

them. They wear flowing cloaks of black with skeletal black claws emerging from their sleeves, and glowing red eyes of fire blazing from their cowls, which never fall from their shoulders, even when they ride at a full gallop in the wind. They are roughly human-sized and shaped. There are only seven of these riders in existence, and they are connected to the demon Ollam-Onga. It is said that if one is destroyed, the other six will collect the soul of a warrior recently slain and corrupt it into a replacement.

They have AC 0 and move as a heavy war horse. They attack four times, are treated as mounted warriors, and cannot be unmounted. Though their claws are small, they are treated as great swords (Class 3) weapons for purposes of hitting and dealing damage. A strike from these creatures burns with hellish fire and cold at the same time, though immunity to fire and cold is ineffective against them.

7 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING V)

Note: beginning at 7 HD, creatures may, at the DM's option, fight on the fantasy combat table. Their equivalencies are listed in their descriptions.

Bodiless Slimer: The bodiless slimmer is a horrible demon that lurks in the darkest corners of the world, waiting for the chance to maim and destroy at the behest of its dark masters. It is normally invisible and partially intangible, but constantly drips unpleasant and sticky slime while it mouths blasphemous obscenities which are just below human audible range, but make their way into the backs of the minds of anyone within 30 feet of it.

It is AC 0, and in standard combat slams opponents four times as a great sword (class 3), dealing acid damage on a successful strike. Each successful hit sees the slimer roll 2d6, keeping the better result. Alternately, it can spew a gout of acid at a single opponent within 20 feet. If it strikes, it deals 4d6 damage. Opponents can attempt a save vs. breath weapon for half damage. In fantasy combat it battles as a super hero and its breath weapon affects all within 30 feet and in front of it.

Its constant babbling of blasphemies and obscenities serves to sicken and demoralize all who hear them; those who hear it must succeed every round at a paralysis/petrification check or suffer -2 to all attacks and saves that round. New saves must be made every round so long as the slimer is present and alive; characters in a rage (Cimmerians and Nordheimr) will be knocked out of their rage upon hearing the babbling and failing a save; the penalty for exhaustion after coming out of their rage then combines with the penalty for failing the save.

Guardian of Jullah: Guardians of Jullah are massive, hulking apes who watch over the holy shrines and temples of the cult of Jullah. They are trained to have a

savage lust for human flesh. They are AC 5. In combat they attack six times with claws that are treated as swords (class 2 weapons). In fantasy combat they fight as ogres.

Night-Weird: Also known as night-gaunts and night-fiends, these rubbery bat-winged humanoids are a demonic presence from the inner reaches of the darkest souls, called up from the Outer Dark to return fallen souls to those unnatural spaces between spaces. They are roughly human in shape and size but have no discernible features of which to speak, save for a thin crease which could serve as a mouth if it were to scowl or grin.

They have AC 0, and because of their rubbery skin, reduce all damage dealt to them by 1 point. In combat they first attempt to grapple an opponent, making an attack roll against the opponent's Strength or Dexterity check and treating their grapple as a great sword (Class 3 weapon). If they succeed, the opponent suffers 4d6 damage from being crushed and rent. Enveloped opponents must succeed at a Petrification/Paralysis save at -2 or suffer -3 to all attacks and saves so long as they remain enveloped (including attacks against the night-weird and attempts to escape its grasp). Opponents killed by a Night-Weird disappear to the Outer Dark, and are reborn as a new Night-Weird an indeterminate amount of time later. The original Night-Weird normally (1-5 on a d6) disappears with them.



If the opponent wins the check, on the next round the night-weird simply attacks 5 times with claws as Class 1 weapons. In fantasy combat they fight as a roc.

Servant of Bit-Yakin: These demons are comprised of sinewy muscle and covered with gray flesh which is patched with wiry hair. They stand slightly taller than a man, and their face is somewhere between human and beast. Their oversized arms drag on the ground and end in a fistful of deadly, hooked black talons resembling buzzard beaks. Their eyes glow an unearthly yellow and strike the chill of fear into those who look upon them.

They have AC 2 and move 30 ft. per round. They can climb sheer surfaces and across ceilings at a rate of 30 ft. per round with no check necessary. They move silently as a 10th level thief. They may attack up to four times with claws as daggers (Class 1 weapons), but if two attacks strike a single target, that target is

held, and suffers an automatic additional 2d6 damage as the servant rends the target; this ends their attack.

Any creature within 30 ft. of a Servant of Bit-Yakin who can see their unearthly eyes suffer -2 to all petrification, paralysis, and fear saving throws, and must succeed at a petrification save or suffer -2 to all attacks so long as the Servant is in sight, from being struck with unnatural terror. In fantasy combat they fight as an ogre.

Servitor of the Outer Gods: A Servitor of the Outer Gods is a vaguely toad-like creature which seems constantly to be changing shape and appearance, one moment resembling a squid, the next an octopus, a sea anemone, back to a toad, and so forth, and which seems inexplicably to emit a sound like a haunting piping. They move by either rolling or slithering. They attack with 5 tentacles that are treated as staves (class 2 weapons), and are AC 0. They also regenerate 1d6 hit points per round. Alternately, the servitor can summon other creatures as per a Summon Monster 1 spell. It can summon every 1d6 rounds. In fantasy combat they fight as elementals.

Spider of Leng: These huge, bloated, purplish spiders are native to the Dreamlands and are creatures born of nightmare. They have long, bristly legs and their entire body is pustulant. Their color begins a pale, mottled violet on their abdomens and shades to indigo as it reaches their forebodies. Their legs and chelae are tipped in shiny black. They are highly intelligent, dangerous, and gigantic in size, growing to the size of bears, with even their children being the size of Shetland ponies. They are solitary creatures who are cannibalistic, feasting upon their own kind as well as any other meat they come across.

Spiders of Leng are AC 0 and attack with four sharp legs and a bite. On a successful bite, roll a d6. On a result of 1 or 2 they inject a lethal poison (save or die). They may also web their opponents as per the spell; after webbing they may not do so again for 1d6 rounds. In fantasy combat they fight as balrogs.

Yizil: The Yizil are desert ghouls. These monstrous humanoids are instinctual tomb robbers who habitually gnaw on bones. They are found only in the desert, but prefer rocky terrain and are not normally active during the day. They prey upon whatever they can find in abandoned tombs and live a twisted, horrible existence. Their mocking laughter is similar to that of a hyena and fills the air when they are on the hunt. Like all ghouls, they speak their own language of screeches, grunts, and growls. None not of their race has mastered the tongue, largely because they are not inclined to deal with other races, who they see as potential meals and nothing more. Often, they dress in the tattered remnants of funerary dressings that they find in tombs.

Yizil are clever and violent, hunting using pack tactics and surrounding their prey before moving in. They have AC 6 and attack with four claws as daggers (Class 1) and a bite as a sword (Class 2). If they strike with their bite, they latch on and automatically deal 1d6 damage to the victim every round until forced to detach (every time they are hit they save vs. death; a failure means they detach).

Alternately, the Yizil can spend the round cackling; all who hear their laughter must succeed at a save vs. paralysis/petrification or be paralyzed with fear. They may attempt a new save each round; they remain paralyzed until they save or until 1d6-1 rounds pass after the Yizil is no longer present. In fantasy combat they fight as ogres.

8 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING VI)

Cthulhuim: These creatures are in all ways treated as Mind Flayers from *Supplement III*, including hit dice, AC, and abilities, but hail from the Outer Dark and are servants of Great Cthulhu, high priest of the Old Ones. While they are capable of melee combat, they attack only 4 times using whatever weapon they have on hand. They much prefer to use their mind blast, brain eating attack, or sorcery.

Instead of psionics, their mind blast does 8d6 damage (totaled) and a save vs. spells halves the damage, and they are treated as sorcerers of 8th level (4/3/3/2 spells prepared). They can teach sorcery to those with whom they compact. In fantasy combat they fight as a Wizard and any result of 12 means they have latched onto a creature with their tentacles.

Chthonian: Chthonians are masses of tentacles surrounding a pulpy gray-black elongated sack of a body with no other distinguishing features, save a lump in the upper body, a container of sorts for the brain, ganglia, or whatever diseased organ governs this horror's loathsome life. They are a bizarre cross between a slime, covered squid and centipede, and can live for millennia in the dark places of the world.



In combat they are AC 0, move 40 feet and can tunnel through solid rock at the same speed, and are entirely immune to fire and heat. They regenerate 3d6 hit points per round. They are, however, vulnerable to simple water, which deals 1d6 damage per pint exactly as acid would a normal human, and suspends their ability to regenerate for 1 round.

They can use *Domination* (*Supplement III*, p. 15) at will, as well as *Command*, *Suggestion*, *Confusion*, and *Feeblemind*. They attack with 8 tentacles, and on a

successful strike automatically grapple an opponent (see *grappling*, part 3). A group of adult Chthonians gathered together can create powerful, even catastrophic, earthquakes, but the effects of these are left to the discretion of the GM. In fantasy combat they fight as dragons.

Demon Scorpion: These gigantic scorpions are jet black in color and when they move it is with a constant, disconcerting and repetitive clacking sound. Their bodies are the size of a horse, with a tail equal to the length of the body. They attack twice with claws treated as great swords (Class 3) and two-handed, and once with a stinger treated as a great sword (Class 3) and dealing a total of 3d6 damage unless the victim saves vs. poison, in which case it deals a normal 1d6 damage.

If they hit with a claw the target is held until it successfully escapes by rolling a number of dice equal to its number of attacks per round, adding strength bonus, and defeats the scorpion's roll of all 8 hit dice. So long as it is grappling an opponent, that opponent suffers an automatic 1d6 damage each round, and the scorpion may attack it with a stinger, rolling 3d6 to attack and keeping the best 2. In fantasy combat it fights as a Balrog and deals an extra 2d6 damage (for a total of 10d6) unless the victim saves vs. poison, in which case it deals only 8d6 damage as normal. In fantasy combat they fight as Rocs.

Foaming Blasphemy: These sad, horrible creatures were once possibly humans, but spent too much time in direct contact with the corrupting energies of Hell and the Spaces Between Spaces—the Outer Dark. They have constantly shifting and mutating bodily dimensions but always seem to maintain a vaguely humanoid shape of tendrils, eyes, mouths, and claws which shift and undulate.

In combat, the Foaming Blasphemy has AC 3 and attacks five times with claws (as daggers/class I weapons). They cannot be physically transformed by any means, magical or mundane.

Impart mutation: Thrice per day they can attempt on an attack to impart their mutation to another. In such a case, the person struck must make a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis. If they fail, they are immediately reduced to an amorphous, spongy mass that is so wracked with pain they cannot act in any way but to slowly slither around at 25% their normal speed. Armor, clothing, gear, and weapons become useless and slide off to the ground. They possess a natural Armor Class of 5 in this form, and lose 1 point of Wisdom.

Each round, the victim can attempt a new saving throw; success means they regain control of their form. Failure means they suffer another point of Wisdom loss. If Wisdom ever reaches 0, the victim is completely lost, forgets who they were, and becomes a new Foaming Blasphemy.

Drums of the Outer Dark: The Foaming Blasphemy can opt to forego its attacks for the round to grant power to a sorcerer engaged in casting a spell. If it does so, the sorcerer rolls 3d6 for their casting check, keeping the best 2d6 result. In fantasy combat, they fight as wights and may choose to impart their mutation as normal.

Formless Spawn: These creatures are the spawn of the Outer God Tsathoggua, the toad goad. These creatures are not toads like Tsathoggua himself, but are far worse. They are amorphous lumps of viscous black slime that take temporary shapes for various purposes, oozing along stone channels and worshipping onyx and basalt idols of their dark deity.

In combat they are AC 0 and attack 8 times with their pseudopod-like growths, which emerge and contract seemingly at random. These are treated as Class 3 weapons, and if 3 such pseudopods strike a single individual, that individual must succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis or be completely enveloped by the thing, taking 8d6 damage each round thereafter (save for half as if grappled). Only one such creature can be enveloped at a time, but when it dies it is completely digested, and another may then be swallowed. Swallowed creatures may attack the spawn from inside; they must still make attack rolls because moving while constricted is difficult.

They suffer only half damage from all physical attacks, and can ooze through the tiniest holes and cracks. They hide and move silently as an 8th-level thief. In fantasy combat they fight as wraiths. The first creature they hit is considered swallowed.

Smoke-Serpent: These demons of the Outer Dark are comprised of living smoke, often in shades of green, purple, or dark blue in color. They are of low intelligence, but are highly effective assassins.

In combat, the smoke-serpent has AC 0 and is immune to damage from weapons not magical or made of silver, until they successfully grapple an opponent, at which time they become partially corporeal, suffering half damage from normal attacks. All attacks against the smoke monster, however, require the attacker to make a saving throw against spells or they will strike through the monster, dealing half damage to it and half damage to its grappled victim.

The primary method of attack by a smoke-serpent is to grapple their victim. When making a grappling attempt, the smoke-serpent rolls 3d6 (totaled) instead of 2d6, and treat their attack as a Class 4 weapon (without the limitation of required reach). When they grapple an opponent, they deal 8d6 damage per round as normal (see "*grappling*," in part 3). Taking damage from an external source never causes them to lose their grapple, and if the grappled opponent tries

to break the grapple, the smoke serpent rolls 3d6 on their save, keeping the best 2d6. They fight on the fantasy combat table as a Roc

Spider-Thing: These horrific creatures are a twisted, demonic hybrid of spiders and humanoid demons. Their upper bodies are of vaguely humanoid shape, but with black skin, red eyes, fangs, clawed hands, and an utterly demonic visage with horns and sharply pointed ears. Their lower bodies are those of a black spider with the red hourglass of a black widow on their underbody and the fiddle markings of a brown recluse on their backs. They tend to haunt catacombs and caverns, where they set traps and tricks to slow adventurers and alert them to the presence of food.

In combat, spider-things have AC 5, and any attacks from normal weapons roll 2d6, keeping the *lower* of the two. Two-handed weapons roll but a single d6 instead of 2d6, keeping the better. They have the abilities of an 8th-level thief.

They are especially vulnerable to magic, rolling 3d6 and keeping the worst 2d6 on saves vs. spells. They are also vulnerable to fire and silver, taking an additional 1d6 damage from any such attack.

They attack 8 times with a broadsword (class 2; 2d6 keep best), or eight times with a longbow (class 2); they are exceptional archers. They may also, in lieu of attacking, use *web*, as per the spell, firing the stream of webbing from their abdomen. In fantasy combat, they fight as Ogres.

Uncanny Steed: This demon of the Outer Dark may appear as either a camel or horse, stark black in color and exceptionally muscular in form. In appearance, it in all way resembles an exceptional specimen of its normal species, but with an uncanny intelligence in its eyes. In combat, they are AC 2, and attack with four hooves and a bite. They are also sorcerers of 6th level ability (4/2/2 spells prepared) and they don't need components to cast. They can communicate telepathically, and can teach sorcery to those with whom they compact.

Whore of Set: Whores of Set are an ancient race of Set-worshippers who may once have been human but who gave their bodies over completely to the dark god in exchange for power and dominance over mortals. The god granted them power, taught them to enslave human men, and they in turn served his lust and became enthralled by his power and control. They traded their legs for the slithering coils of a 15-foot long serpent and their minds and hearts to the teachings of Set. They haunt the shadows of Stygian temples and tombs, and it is said that even the high priests serve the whores of Set.



In combat, they are AC 1, and attack with 4 claws (swords/class 2), a bash from their tail (greatsword/class 3/2d6 keep better) and a bite (sword/class 2). If they strike with their bite attack, the victim must save vs. poison or die. If they strike with two claw attacks, they can choose to forego the rest of their attacks to wrap their coils around their victim, grappling them and automatically dealing 2d6 damage, followed by an additional 8d6 damage (save for half; see *grappling*, later) each round. They regenerate 2d6 hit points per round, unless the weapon is wielded by a woman, in which case they do not regenerate the following round. They also possess all the abilities of a 6th-level thief.

Whores of set are also spellcasters, able to use magic as an 8th-level sorcerer (4/3/3/2 spells prepared), and focus on enchantment, mind control, and summoning magic. In fantasy combat, they fight as Lycanthropes.

9 HIT DIE CREATURES (MONSTER SUMMONING VII)

Black Ones: These creatures once inhabited an island off the coasts of Argos and Zingara known as the Isle of the Black Ones, in huge numbers, amidst the ruins of a vast marble city they built an age ago. They are native to the Outer Dark, however, and may be summoned directly from that black realm. They are black skinned and reptilian with features like fish, and elongated arms capped with vicious talons. They are wiry, but covered in rippling muscles, and a cold fire burns in their eyes, betraying their desperate hunger for human flesh.

In combat they are fierce and relentless. They have AC 2 and tear at their foes with 8 attacks from their talons and one from a bite. On their home island they can drown humans in the green pool at the center of their ruined city; those thus drowned are transformed forever into a lifeless statue of themselves, roughly the size of a human fist.

Once per day the Black Ones can use a thin flute to play a haunting tune that can produce any of the following effects at will: *charm person*, *command*, *confusion*, *feeblemind*. In fantasy combat they fight as wights.

Black Spawn of Jullah: These hulking demons resemble jet black apes the color of shadows. Their black fur constantly weeps human blood and thus appears matted and gives off a powerful, coppery odor. Their home realm in the Outer Dark is a sulfurous realm which also adds to the pungent odor they exude.

They have two overwhelming urges—to destroy and consume human flesh, and to sate their unholy lust on a virgin. They climb as easily and quickly as they move—18"/9" if attacking.

In combat they are AC 0 and attack 9 times with their vicious claws (swords/class 2). If they hit the same target with at least two claw attacks, they deal an additional 1d6 damage from rending.

They can forego their normal attacks to throw back their head and roar into the air. After doing this, 1d6 rounds later, an additional 1d6 carnivorous apes will arrive on the scene to fight alongside them (treat as ogres).

They can also thrice per day, tear open their flesh to spew forth 1d3 tentacle spawn. These creatures are 2 HD demons which attack with a tentacle and a bite. If their bite hits, victims must succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis or be paralyzed for 1d6 turns. In fantasy combat they fight as Super Heroes.

Brylukas: These enormous bat demons bear the features of a man, bat and bear. They exist for no other reason but to destroy. They are slightly smaller than a normal man in eight, but with a wingspan easily four times their height.

In combat, they are AC 0 and suffer half damage from all normal weapons, save fire, which deals double damage. They fly at a speed of 24"/12" and attack, and attack 9 times with their powerful claws. Their claws are serrated, causing wounds to continue to bleed, dealing an additional 1 point of damage per wound, per round, until the character takes a full round to bandage themselves and staunch the blood flow.

They are able to fly by and attack, meaning that unless a character holds an action to attack as the Brylukas swoops down, only ranged attacks can be made. They can attempt a grapple to catch hold of a victim, swoop up in the air, and drop them, dealing 1d6 damage per 10 feet of height attained.

They have the abilities of a 5th-level thief. In fantasy combat, they fight as Balrogs.

Byakhee use the statistics they are given in *AD&D Deities & Demigods*. They attack 9 times with claws (daggers/Class 1). They fight in fantasy combat as lycanthropes.

Child of the Dark: Also known as waifs of the Deeper Dark, these spectral entities appear as mummified sorcerers, but are in fact demonic entities from beyond. Each has a deeper connection to shadows, and most of their magic is based upon this connection, being in some way obscuring or divining in nature,

or directly related to the shadows themselves. Even the unholy light that shines in their eyes sheds no true light and seems somehow dark.

In combat they have AC 0, and whenever they are in dim light or a shadowy area, attacks against them are at -2. They can step into any nearby shadow and emerge from any other shadow they can see within 150 feet in lieu of their normal movement, which is 24"/12" and attack. They hide and move silently as a 10th-level thief, and have all the abilities of a 12th-level sorcerer (4/4/4/4/1 spells prepared). They can teach sorcery to those with whom they compact. They attack 6 times, and the damage they deal is from the ice cold of death. Anyone damaged by one of their attacks must succeed at a save vs. petrification/paralysis or be paralyzed for 1d6 turns. In fantasy combat, they fight as wights.

Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath: These amorphous, blasphemous, writhing masses are formed from ropy, black, earthworm-like tentacles with great puckered mouths appearing randomly throughout, dripping green goo. Beneath them thicker tentacles end in gigantic hooves on which they stamp and move. At a glance, these might resemble trees, but the moment they attack their dark nature is instantly revealed. They reek of open graves.

In combat they are AC 3 and attack 9 times with tentacles. Each tentacle that strikes automatically grapples an opponent, dealing an automatic 1d6 damage per round thereafter unless the grapple is broken. Within four rounds of being grappled, if the victim has not escaped, they are dragged to one of the sucking mouths, which drains 1d3 points of strength per round, which can never be regained.

They take only half damage from normal weapons, but take double damage from fire or acid and normal damage from cold. They can cast any summoning spell up to *Monster Summoning III*. They cast as 9th-level casters and need no components. In fantasy combat they fight as dragons.

Guardian Demon: These hideous demons are made up of an amalgam of rats, mites, bats, insects, and parts of humans. They are roughly amorphous and slide across turf like a shambling heap—a landslide of life with a purpose. They protect temples and holy sites of darkness.

In combat, they are AC 3 and attack with 9 claws. When a claw attack hits, the victim must succeed at a saving throw vs. death or also suffer 1d3 points of Constitution damage from blood drain, which the creature absorbs into itself, regaining the same in hit points. If a creature's Constitution reaches 0, they die. Constitution damage returns at a rate of 1d3 per day. In fantasy combat, they fight as elementals.

Kelubar Demodand: Except for having 9 hit dice, this creature is treated in all ways as its namesake in the *D&D Monster Manual II*, p. 34. It attacks 9 times—8 with talons and 1 with jaws. In fantasy combat it fights as a balrog.

Lamia: These seductive creatures at first glance resemble the Whores of Set, having the upper body of a seductive and sensuous woman and the lower body of a serpent stretching 20 feet in length. They have glassy violet eyes which never blink, and are always seeking another soul to corrupt and body to drain. Their hiss is charming and musical to hear, but their preferred victims are children.

In combat they are AC 2 and attack 9 times by weapon, or by a tail slap, grapple, and bite. If they manage to grapple an opponent, they sink their fangs in and begin to drink, draining 1d6 points of Constitution each round. For each 2 points of Constitution drained, the victim also suffers 1d6 points of damage to hit points. If Constitution or hit points reach 0, the victim dies and will rise within 3 nights as a vampire under the Lamia's control if a 2 is rolled on 2d6. Victims bitten by a Lamia may only attempt to break her grapple if they first succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis as they are enraptured in sheer ecstasy from the bite.

A Lamia can *charm person* at will simply by locking eyes with a victim (standard save vs. spell applies). To charm a victim, the Lamia must forego all other actions in a round. Usually they do this to draw a victim into their embrace (thus allowing a bite).

They can also take an action to gentle hiss and *charm* all children (pre-puberty) within 60 feet. Adults who hear the hiss may attempt a saving throw vs. spell to resist the effect. In combat they fight as Balrogs.

Servitor of Quf-Jushke'een: These creatures were created by the demon-god of the ghouls, and are hulking lumps of toad-like flesh covered in thorny protrusions. They are equipped with a gaping maw of fangs and crooked teeth. They have three sets of glowing, red eyes and a mass of slimy tentacles writhe where their forearms should be. They move by a waddling gate or by slithering, both at a speed of 18"/9" and attack.

In combat they are AC 3 and attack with 8 tentacles and a bite. When they hit with a tentacle, the victim is automatically grappled, suffering 2d6 damage from crushing automatically each round (save for half as per *Grappling* in book 3). Any creature struck by a Servitor's tentacles must also make a save vs. petrification/paralysis or be affected as per a *charm person* spell and be obsessed with attempting to mate with the Servitor.

BOOK 3: UNDERWORLD & WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

TACTICAL MOVEMENT USING THE MONOLITH BOARD GAME

The *Conan* boardgame by Monolith provides an outstanding resource for miniatures tiles, and terrain for your *Age of Conan D&D* game, and the use of miniatures can provide a fun and dynamic visual element for combat in the game. Using these tiles and miniatures does, however, require a few major changes from the core D&D rules.

WHY NOT JUST USE STANDARD MOVEMENT?

In truth, you could use the standard inches-based movement rules with the *Conan* boardgame, miniatures, terrain, boards, and tiles with no issues. You'll just need a tape measure to track the inches from one space to another, remembering that characters can generally move around 12" when lightly encumbered, and that a character can move half that (6") and still make an attack. If using this method, no changes to the standard rules need be made. Just use the boards, terrain, and miniatures for a visual and go!

ADAPTING TO MONOLITH ZONES

An alternate method is to use the Monolith boards to their fullest ability. To this end, each board is marked with handy "zones," each of which has a white dot in the middle of it. This *greatly* simplifies movement within the game. When using this method, the following rules apply:

1. Characters may move within a given zone at no movement cost whatsoever; a single zone is considered "minor movement." Any monsters within the same zone as a character are considered within melee range.
 - a. The one exception is moving across a "border," such as a closed door or across an area designated by the DM as difficult terrain. Such terrain requires 3" to move through within a zone. Thus, opening a door to enter a hut within the same zone as you requires 3" of movement. If the heroes are in a tavern, the DM could decide that moving across the bar or across a set of tables requires jumping up on them, and requires additional movement in 1" increments.
2. Movement between zones requires 6" of movement. Thus, if your hero has 12" of movement, he can either move one zone and still attack, or move two zones without attacking. He may also enter and exit a threshold (as above) and still attack.

3. Characters may not enter a zone unless their hero's entire base can fit within that zone. If a character cannot fit their entire miniature's base within a zone, the zone is considered "full"; there is simply no room to maneuver for another combatant. The DM may further break this down to separate "indoor" from "outdoor" areas—that is, if an outdoor area is full, but there is a hut in the area, no more characters may enter the zone until one or more characters enter the hut, opening up more space outdoors. Likewise, only so many miniatures may be inside a hut, as determined by how many bases can fully fit within the (sub)area covered by the building.
4. When determining range for ranged attacks, assume each zone counts as 6" of range. Thus, if a monster is 2 zones away, it is considered 12" distant.
5. When determining line of sight for ranged attacks, trace a line from the white dot in the starting zone to the white dot in the targeted zone. If there are no barriers, buildings, or other terrain in the way, the shooter has line of sight and can shoot. If not, they must move to a different zone where line of sight exists.

Within the scope of these basic guidelines, everything else works exactly as outlined in the *D&D* rules. Any other maneuvers, bonuses, and penalties to create dynamic combat situations are left to the discretion of the DM and players.

ALTERNATE COMBAT SYSTEM

The core combat system as presented in *Age of Conan* is based off of the Man to Man rules in *Chainmail*. This alternate system eschews the requirement for consulting tables in man to man combat, replacing them with a simple addition formula that allows for speeding up combat significantly. If using these rules, the "Troop Type" combat and "Fantasy" combat systems still use their respective tables, as these provide a specific flavor for combat, and referencing those tables is a one-time thing at the beginning of a given combat, so it's less onerous than the Man to Man tables.



BASIC CALCULATION

The basic calculation for combat using the alternate system is as follows:
 $2d6 + \text{Strength (or Dexterity) bonus} + \text{Weapon Class} + \text{Opponent's AC} \geq 14$

Characters still gain multiple attacks based on their "Man" rating, so level does not factor into the hit probability. Strength and Dexterity bonus are as determined during character creation and listed in *Men and Magic* and *Supplement I*, respectively. Strength is used for melee; Dexterity is used for ranged attacks.

BOXCARS AND SNAKE-EYES

A result of boxcars (unmodified 12) always hits, and a result of snake-eyes (unmodified 2) always misses.

WEAPON CLASS

Every weapon under this system is granted a weapon class based largely on the size and heft of the weapon. Larger weapons tend to blast through armor more easily, so they have a higher weapon class. Weapon classes break down as follows:

Class 1 Weapons: knives, daggers, rapiers, hand axes, short swords, and other lightweight weapons which can be wielded with one hand and some degree of finesse. Short bows and light crossbows are also considered Class 1 weapons. The natural weapons of most creatures ranging from small to large are also considered Class 1. Creatures of tiny or diminutive size have Class 0 or even -1 weapons, at the DM's discretion.



Class 2 Weapons: Standard medium-sized weapons such as a mace, flail, warhammer, one-handed battle-axe, quarterstaves, broadswords, scimitars, sabres, and longbows, composite bows, or heavy crossbows. The vast majority of melee weapons should fall into the Class 2 category. Giant creatures like Jungle Dragons or giant serpents may have Class 2 natural weapons.

Class 3 Weapons: Heavy, two-handed weapons such as great swords and great axes. Short spears are also class 3 (but class 1 when hurled). Enormous natural weapons such as the tusks of a full-grown elephant are Class 3.

Class 4 Weapons: Long spears and pole arms are considered Class 4 weapons.

ARMOR CLASS

Armor Class in this system now runs from 10 to 0 instead of 9 to 2. The breakdown of AC is as follows:

Armor	AC
None	10
Shield Only*	9
Leather or Padded	8
Studded leather or Ring Mail	7
Scale Mail	6
Chain Mail	5
Splint or Banded Mail, Bronze Plate and Mail	4
Steel Plate and Mail	3
Field Plate	2
Full Plate	1

*A shield always improves AC by 1; thus steel plate and mail plus shield = AC 2, etc.

Under this system, the minimum AC a character or monster can have is 0. Any AC benefits that would reduce the AC lower than 0 instead serve as a penalty to the opponent's "to hit" roll.

Thus, a character with full plate and a shield would normally have AC 0. Let us surmise that said character obtains a superior suit of full plate which provides AC 0 on its own. The character's shield would then reduce AC to -1; instead, the AC remains 0 and those trying to strike the hero suffer -1 to their attacks.

WEAPON SIZE, FINESSE, AND COMBAT STYLES

Characters wielding class 1 weapons in melee combat with opponents wielding Class 3 or Class 4 weapons may make a single attack (as part of their normal attack routine) at the beginning of each melee round, before the Class 3 or 4 wielder strikes, regardless of initiative results.

Likewise, when a creature wielding a Class 4 weapon is battling a character with a class 1 or 2 weapon who moves inside the reach of the Class 4 weapon, The Class 4 weapon is treated as Class 1 as it is awkward to use in close quarters.

Combat styles are unaffected by these rules, save that the Zingaran two-weapon fighting style cannot be used with weapons of higher than Class 1. To fight with dual weapons, the Zingaran's weapons must both be of class 1 category.

Any weapon that is class 3 or class 4 allows for rolling two dice for damage, keeping the better result, save for those situations when a class 4 weapon is considered class 1 due to being in close quarters, as above.

MONSTERS AND ABILITY SCORES

Monsters, obviously, don't have ability scores. As a general rule, this is fine and tends not to unbalance the game. Simply roll 2d6 + weapon class (usually 1 or 2) + AC for the monster's attacks. As always, boxcars always hits and snake eyes always misses.

While this would seem at first to give player characters an unfair advantage, PCs fight many more monsters in the course of a typical adventure than monsters fight PCs. As such, the scales are balanced simply in terms of how many hits the PCs suffer.

If the DM wishes, monsters can add 1/4 their Hit Dice (rounded down, maximum +3) to attack rolls as a rough approximation of the combat prowess that Strength or Dexterity scores represent in PCs.

SITUATIONAL BONUSES AND PENALTIES

The DM may, at their discretion, apply situational modifiers for circumstances such as attacking unseen from behind, flanking a foe with the aid of an ally, being blinded, attacking a nominally helpless foe, etc. Generally speaking, such modifiers should range from +4 to -4 in severity. The Fighting-Man's ability to impose penalties to the "to hit" roll of their opponent based on high Dexterity remains in play and is considered just such a situational benefit.

HIGH LEVELS AND HIGH HIT DICE

As the combat rules stand, characters reaching very high levels, or monsters who have very high hit dice, stand a chance of dishing out massive amounts of damage in a single round, which will speed up combats, but can also result in the perception of "one hits" from player character points of view.

To this end, it's important to put a cap on the number of attacks a hero has in a game. After reaching the highest possible level, characters gain additional pips they can divide up as they like among their various attacks. See the following table for the maximum number of attacks and their fantasy combat equivalency each hero can achieve, and their rate of further "pip" advancement. These pips apply only to individual, man to man combat; fantasy combat uses the listed rating for fantasy combat on the fantasy combat tables. Thus, a 16th level wizard fights in man to man combat at 5 attacks +1 pip. In fantasy combat, on the other hand, they fight as a Wizard +2.

Basic equivalents for fantasy combat vs. "man types" are as follows:

Hero: 4 men

Wizard: 5 men

Superhero: 8 men

Class	Max. Atk	FC	Pips at
Fighting Man*	8	Superhero	+1/2 lvl
Thief**	8	Superhero	+1/3 lvl
Sorcerer	5	Wizard	+1/5 lvl
Monsters	8	As Table	+1/4 HD

*Includes Borderers and Monsters

**Includes Assassins and Skalds

GRAPPLING

In the "Compleat Chainmail Combat System" (also known as *Using Chainmail to Resolve OD&D Combats*), grappling requires rolling 1d6 per hit die for monsters vs. 1d6 per "man type" for PCs, and seeing which is greater. It's an interesting system but it requires changing up systems in the middle of combat. As such, the following revised system is now in play:

To grapple an opponent, the monster or PC rolls a normal attack roll, ignoring the armor of the opponent, who is treated as AC 10 (no armor/AC 9 under the old system). Fighters with high Dexterity may still apply a penalty to opponents' hit rolls as standard. A successful hit means the opponent has been grabbed. A grappling attempt is the only strike a character can make in a round, regardless of how many attacks they have.

Some monsters have special attacks which automatically result in a grapple when a successful attack is made. In this case, the monster can both grapple and complete its attacks.

DAMAGING A GRAPPLED OPPONENT

While grappling an opponent, both parties engaged in the grapple can automatically deal 1d6 damage per attack they normally have to the other each round, without the need to make an attack roll. The recipient of the damage is entitled to a save vs. death to halve the damage delivered.

Alternately, the character who initiated the grapple can attempt to render the grappled opponent incapacitated. The grappled opponent must succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis or be rendered unconscious. This can only be done if the grappled opponent is of humanoid shape, alive, and the same size as the grappler.

BREAKING A GRAPPLE

Breaking a grapple requires one of several instances to occur. When the party who initiated the grapple chooses to end it, the grapple automatically ends. If the party initiating the grapple suffers damage from an external source (i.e. not the grappled person), they must succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis to maintain the grapple. If they fail, the grapple is broken.

Finally, the grappled party can attempt to break the grapple with an attack roll against the person who initiated the grapple. This attack roll is in lieu of dealing automatic damage. If they succeed, the person who initiated the grapple suffers 1d6 damage as per any normal attack and must succeed at a saving throw vs. petrification/paralysis to maintain the grapple, with a penalty equal to the result of the damage die.

MODIFYING FANTASY COMBAT

Throughout the course of play, some modifications to the fantasy combat rules have proven useful. The following "tweaks" to the system are highly recommended to speed up play, create more dynamic heroism, and account for level discrepancy in parties.



- When a character hits on the Fantasy combat table, they deal a number of dice of damage equal to their combat rating—thus, a "Hero" would deal 4d6 damage on a successful hit, instead of 1d6.
- The above may not apply when the villain being battled is a main villain of an adventure, or "big bad." In such a case, the damage dealt is a mere 1d6 (and it may be a good idea to simply use "Man to Man" combat for big bad types, as opposed to fantasy combat, since Man combat is much more dynamic and exciting, whereas fantasy combat is heavily abstracted).
- Characters who are less than Hero level and thus cannot normally battle on the Fantasy table, may attempt special abilities to deal damage. An assassin from *Supplement II*, for example, may make an assassination attempt against a fantasy creature even if they are not yet Hero-1 level; success indicates they deal 1 die of damage. A thief may, if they can get into position, attempt a backstab against the normal AC of the opponent, with success indicating 1 die of damage. Only one such attempt may be made each round. Against "big bad" level villains, the attacker with less than Hero status must roll a natural (unmodified by weapon class or other bonuses) result of 12 in order to deal damage.
- Magic and spells may likewise still be used against creatures on the Fantasy table, even if the spell caster is not of Hero-1 or higher level and thus would not normally be able to battle. Such spells, however, deal only 1d6 damage.

APPENDIX: NOTES ON THE KINGDOM OF ACHERON

Author's Note: Much of the information in this section is drawn whole cloth from my Age of Conan RPG campaign; some is invented by me, some is taken from various sources such as Lovecraft, the Red Sonja novels published in the 80s by Tor, the Conan wikis on Fandom.com, and the excellent adventure modules by Thulsa at Xoth.net's Hyborian Age site.

The three primary sources for this appendix are the entries for Stygia, Acheron, and Xaltotun at conan.fandom.com; the Acheron entry at aoc.fandom.com; and the Acheron entry at hyboria.xoth.net, and more information can be found therein. Some text has been taken verbatim from these sources.

I have endeavored herein to flesh out Acheron somewhat to make it a more three-dimensional civilization which flourished in the earliest days of the Hyborian epoch, and whose fall resulted in the modern Age. In this regard, I have made certain changes—most notably, that Yig and Set are two different deities, and the Acheronians in fact worshipped Yig, though those who have encountered modern Hyborians such as Xaltotun use Set's name for simplicity's sake. It is my hope that others might find it useful in their own games, but it is 100% pastiche work.

BACKGROUND

"It was a black reality, an empire of black magicians, steeped in evil now long forgotten. It was finally overthrown by the Hyborian tribes of the west. The wizards of Acheron practiced foul necromancy, thaumaturgy of the most evil kind, grisly magic taught them by devils."

– Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*



Acheron was a thoroughly degenerate and corrupt, but advanced and highly civilized sorcerous empire that existed many millennia ago, between the end of the Thurian Age and the dawn of the Hyborian Age. It arose following the cataclysm that ended the Thurian Age, when Lemurians fleeing the sinking of their own continent fled West to establish a new empire.

The empire of Acheron was said to have flourished for 2,500 years, and to have fallen 3,000 years before the time of Conan, setting its founding roughly 5,500 years before the Hyborian Age we know, as described on xoth.net. It was originally

centered in the areas currently controlled by Aquilonia and Nemediia, but with outposts stretching as far as modern day Zamora and Turan, and as far south as Stygia, which is one of the few surviving kingdoms as old as Acheron. As the Hyborian peoples swept south, the empire was gradually pushed further east, much as the real-world Roman Empire was driven from Rome by the incursions of the Germanic tribes.

Stygia was either a sister kingdom, a province, or a rival to Acheron (it's never made completely clear), but somehow survived (and even thrived) in the wake of the Hyborian barbarian uprisings that swallowed up and buried ancient Acheron.

The vampire princess Akivasha from *The Hour of the Dragon* is said to be a Stygian princess who died 10,000 years before that novel. This places her not only older than Acheron, but as old as the Thurian Age, which posits an interesting problem as during the Thurian Age, Stygia was a "pre-human" kingdom.

Acheron was known for its purple towers, sorcerer-kings, and worship of dark gods, some of which seem to have analogues in the Hyborian Age.

HISTORY AND POLITICS

The people of Acheron were not Hyborians, but rather ethnic Lemurians, who had emigrated from the east sometime after the cataclysm. When the Hyborians who founded the western kingdoms arrived, they found a developed and complex civilization, with standing armies, longstanding urbanism, and strong religion, that overcame them and enslaved them, though not without effort.

The wizards of Acheron, ruled by their king Bel-Hissar and guided by Xaltotun, their high priest, practiced foul necromancy, thaumaturgy of the vilest kind, grisly magic taught them by devils. Many barbarians, both men and women, died screaming on the altar. Their heads were piled to make a pyramid in the great square in Python, the capital city, when the kings returned from the west with their spoils and naked captives. When the barbarians finally made their bloody war on their southern enemies, Acheron was destroyed by the forces of Aquilonia and Nemediia mainly.

POPULATION AND CULTURE

The ancient culture of Acheron was very developed. Python, the capital, was said to have been filled with beautiful, tall, purple, towers, but little more than haunted ruins now remain. It was similar to Stygian culture, which was also made up of closely related ethnic Lemurians and it was very entrenched with similar sorceries and likewise also in league with dark powers. The descendants of the people of Acheron are more plentiful than people suppose, dwelling in the

fastness of the hills, in communities in the great cities, and scattered as priests, menials, secretaries, and scribes.

THE FALL OF ACHERON

At some point roughly 3,500 years before the time of Conan, Hyborian armies from Aquilonia and Nemedra, along with hordes of barbarians from the north, swept south and destroyed Acheron. In the *Red Sonja* comics, Sonja and Conan themselves played a role in this destruction, having been sent back in time via the Mirrors of Tuzun Thune, with Xaltotun one of the last of the sorcerer-kings to fall. Xaltotun himself, according to the *Red Sonja* comics, fled Python upon its fall and made his way to Stygia, where his own servants poisoned and mummified him.



THE GODS OF ACHERON

*Author's Note: The deities and much of the history of Acheron presented here are entirely invented for the game, and based on names dropped in various and sundry third-party sources and novels. Yig is from the Cthulhu Mythos, Omm is from an adventure published at xoth.net, and Urmu is introduced in the novel *Red Sonja Against the Prince of Hell*, by David C. Smith & Richard L. Tierney, though their backgrounds as Acheronian Outer Gods is my own invention.*

OUTER GODS VS MODERN DEITIES

The Deities of Ancient Acheron are known as Outer Gods, alien beings of immense power, far surpassing that of the modern deities of the Hyborian Age. These Outer Gods were driven into eternal slumber tens of thousands of years ago, before even the Thurian Age of Kull, when a great cosmic Cataclysm changed the very stars in the sky.

They can, however, still communicate in dreams with their corrupt and degenerate followers, who are always seeking to awaken the Outer Gods once more.

These followers believe that when the time is right, the Outer Gods will return and humanity will resume its rightful place as laborers, chattel, and even food for the Masters, with the sole exception of their devoted servants, who will be elevated to the level of gods among men, ruling over the rest of the slaves with a cold and uncaring totality.

Some scholars believe that all sorcery has its wellspring in these ancient demonic beings, though this matter is still in heated dispute. Ask ten sorcerers and you will get ten different answers. Many, however, believe that the power they receive from sorcery is worth the risk of one's immortal soul. After all, one Hell is no worse than the next, so what does it matter if magic comes from Set directly or through Set from Yig?

OUTER GODS RESURGENT

As the ancient myths of Acheron arise from the mists of time to become fact once more, much previously lost knowledge about this lost kingdom remains to be rediscovered. Many of the alien beings worshipped by Acheronian sorcerers are the precursors and parents to the deities of the current Hyborian Age. At least several of the great Outer Gods of Acheron are known or have been rediscovered:

Ahriman: The god of lies, betrayal, murder, and necromancy. The jewel known as the Heart of Ahriman hails from ancient Acheron, and grants great power to those who know how to wield it, including the power to raise the dead, travel into the astral plane, to scry upon others, and to greatly enhance the powers of any sorcerer who wields it.

Baal: Another deity said to be associated with the sorcerer Xaltotun, Baal is a demon of the Outer Dark that resembles a twisted cross between a cat and a toad. His sphere of control is stealth, invisibility, seduction, alchemy, and science.

Omm: The arachnidian deity of night, stealth, and treachery. The precursor to and father of Zath. Omm's icons tend to be centaur-like representations of half-spider or scorpion/half-human creatures. Omm is a sensual deity who encourages its followers to engage in the most depraved acts of physical pleasure, combining pain and torture with pleasures of the flesh, and holds no sacrifice so great as the betrayal of a beloved to the god's whims.

Much as with Set and Yig, the Acheronian spider-god Omm was supplanted by the later spider-god Zath, worshipped in modern Zamora.

Tsathoggua/Zhothaquah: The toad-god worshipped in the Hyborian Age by degenerate cults, without an organized following of its own, may well have been an ancient Acheronian deity. His are of control seems to be dream, sleep, and illusion, and he is mentioned in the Pnakotic Manuscripts and was certainly worshipped by the ancient Atlanteans during the pre-Acheronian Thurian Age, preserved in the Commoriom myth-cycle of that era (according to H.P. Lovecraft).

Urmu: The vulture-god of Acheron, Urmu may be in some way related to the southern Stygian deity Nekhbet, but no clear correlation aside from similar iconography has been established. Urmu is a patron of necromancers and all those who worship death, decay, and entropy. It asks only one thing of its followers: sacrifice of mortal blood and flesh, and Urmu's followers engage in cannibalistic practices, leaving their victims to rot for weeks before feasting on their spoiled flesh.

Yig: The god of serpents, the precursor to and father of the great god Set, who joined with the modern Hyborian gods to lead men to overthrow his father and its ilk. Yig is the primary deity of the Acheronian pantheon, the World Serpent who encircles the world in ancient slumber, but who seeks to reawaken and poison the hearts of men.

It is often believed that the serpent-god Yig is the same as the modern Set; this is a mistaken belief, and true priests of Set know that Yig was a precursor to Set, possibly the serpent-god's father, who was supplanted by the latter. When it is said in *The Hour of the Dragon* that Xaltotun is a Set-worshipper, as were the sorcerer-kings of Acheron, it is possible and even likely that the ancient wizard is simply using the modern equivalent to avoid the need for explanations to his "primitive" Hyborian allies.



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