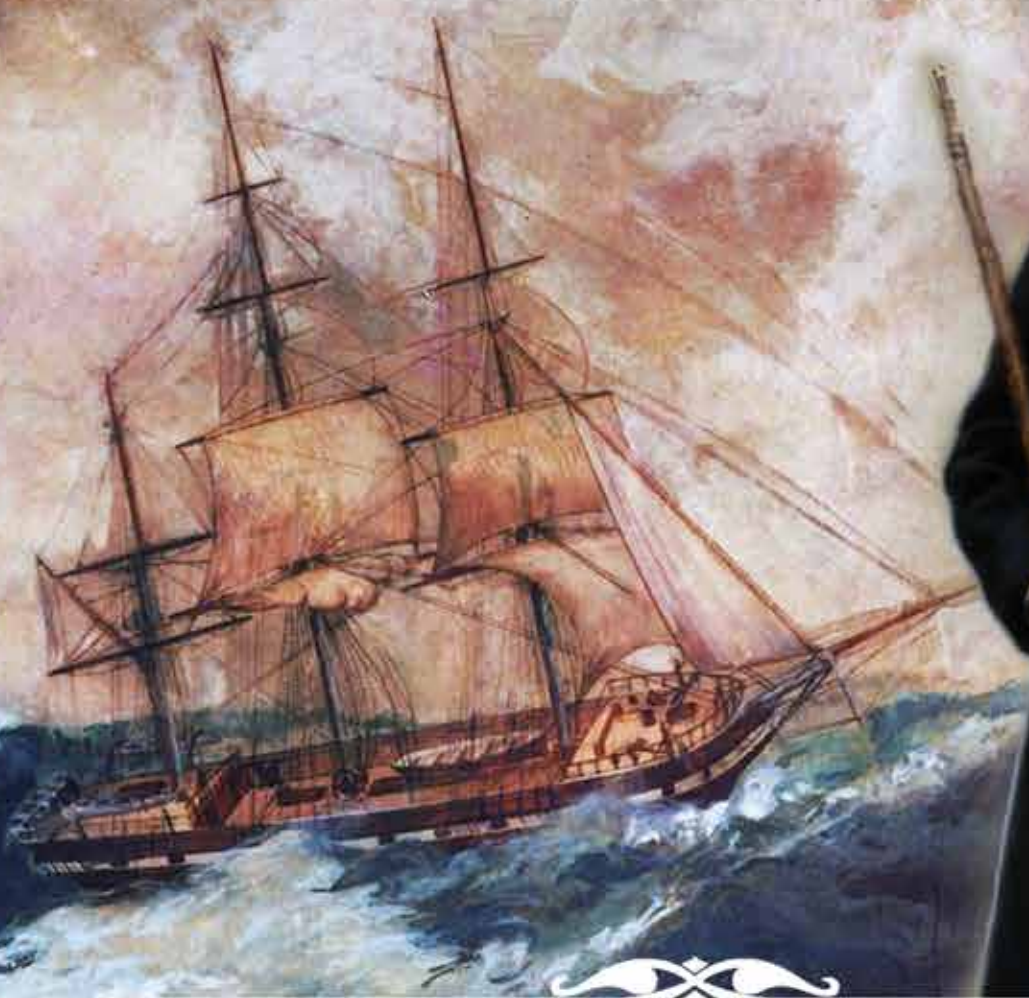


A GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

The Colonies



AN ADVENTURE PATH FOR

Shadows
over
Vathak

A Campaign Setting Book of Lovecraftian Survival Horror

JOHN BENNETT AND RICK HERSHEY



Shadows over Vathak Setting

Shadows
over
Vathak

THE COLONIES

GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

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The roar of the crowd rang in his ears as Stephan stepped into the long dressing room adjacent to the performance tent. "Th-th-that was a really gr-gr-great sh-sh-show," stuttered a small voice from behind him.

Stephan's mouth wrapped itself into a grimace as he stared at the stunted, twisted creature that just spoke to him- a cambion, creatures warped by the growing influence of the Old Ones. Termine gazed up at him with too large eyes, drool at the corners of her slack jaw, her small body a grotesque caricature of the human form. Stephan ripped one of the towels she held from her hands, giving her a swift kick before wiping the sweat from his face. He did not even notice the malicious look Termine gave him before scuttling away and ducking behind a slender woman in tight fitting red and blue leathers sitting on a nearby stool, applying make-up.

The woman sighed, ruffling Termine's lank, stringy hair before turning her attention to Stephan. "You could be a little bit nicer to her," the woman, Arda, said.

Stephan tossed the towel onto the ground and Termine quickly darted forward to pick it up, just narrowly avoiding another kick from Stephan. "By the One True God, Arda, she's disgusting," Stephan said before continuing. "Cambions are monsters, you know."

"No more than some," Arda replied, her eyes narrowing.

A thin smile crept across Stephan's face as he studied Arda before walking over to her. "So, are you coming to my room again tonight," Stephan spoke, reaching out a hand to trace Arda's face.

Arda recoiled from his touch. "That was a mistake that won't happen again."

"Suit yourself," Stephan spat back before strutting off.

Later, Stephan reclined on his narrow bed, a cup of wine in one hand. As one of the Traveling Golden Wonders top performers, he was granted the luxury of his own wagon to use as living quarters. Hand drawn posters exclaiming his feats of derring-do hung on the crowded walls containing rows and rows of knives of various sizes and shapes. He idly flipped a long dagger in the other hand, reflecting on his performance when his door suddenly rattled, jolting him from his thoughts. With a smile and a gleam in his eye, he dropped the dagger, swinging his lean body off of the bed. He grabbed an empty wine cup and a jug of cheap wine as he headed for the door.

"I knew you couldn't resist, my darling," Stephan said playfully as he fumbled the door open.

The empty darkness of night greeted him on the other side of the door. Confused, he gazed about. Thick clouds crawled around the moon, creating a blackness that painted the nearby wagons in silhouettes of ever deepening shades of grey and black. "Arda," Stephan spoke into the night.



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Smiling a predatory smile, Stephan slipped quietly outside. "Playing hard to get, are we? I hope you're wearing you're wearing that tight, leather outfit," he said as he peered into the shadows.

A tittering laugh sounded from somewhere nearby and Stephan quickly followed it. When he came to the spot where he thought he heard it, he once again looked around. Seeing nothing but a clutter of wagons, he frowned. "C'mon Arda, let's go inside. I have some nice wine," Stephan said, shaking the wine jug

More tittering laughter.

Sighing, Stephan followed the sound, now becoming slightly annoyed. Why did women have to be so complicated, he thought? The sound of laughter led him farther away from the wagons to a small copse of trees. "So you want to meet here? That's fine with me," Stephan said, taking a gulp of wine straight from the jug

A tree limb suddenly crashed next to him, causing Stephan to jump and spill wine on his worn night shirt. Cursing, Stephan fumbled with the stain when another branch and then another fell next to him. The branches were not broken at their ends but sliced cleanly as if by a large, sharp blade. "Ok, Arda, enough with the games, this isn't funny," Stephan said, fear quivering in his voice.

"What's not funny?" said a girlish voice from behind him.

Stephan spun around. Coming out from between two trees was Termine. "What are you doing here?" Stephan asked, his fear replaced with anger.

"You aren't very nice," Termine said, her voice clear, her stutter gone, a fact not lost on Stephan.

Stephan stepped back, prepared to leave when again from behind him, he heard another tree branch falling to crunch on the dead leaves on the ground.

Slowly, Stephan turned. Seeming to suddenly materialize out of nowhere, stood what appeared to be a man in gruesome armor. It stood seven feet tall, smashed bits of daggers composing its body. A long cape of blades tarnished with dried blood hung from the creature's shoulders. Two hollow, black eyes sat in an expressionless face under a circlet fashioned from rusty daggers.

"What in the name of the One True God?" Stephan chokingly whispered.

The creature lumbered forward, raising a hand where each finger was a long, sharp knife.

"No one makes fun of me, no one!" screeched Termine from behind Stephan, the last words he ever heard as the creature's clawed hand slashed down.



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AN INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of Shadows over Vathak, a realm where the abominations known as the Old Ones seek to destroy humanity. It is a world of darkness and despair, where even the light of the One True God is often corrupted and twisted to serve sinister ends. As a GM your players may be heroes representing a bright point of light in the encroaching shadows of evil or they might just be survivors, getting by day by day however they can, survival their only goal. In Vathak, even joy is mingled with the bitter ashes of despair and hopelessness.

What you have here is additional GM information to augment the material presented in the Shadows over Vathak Campaign Guide. New locations, monsters, and more are detailed in the pages of this book, tied to one of the specific regions of Vathak. Even if your campaign does not take place in this region of Vathak, that does you cannot use the material in this book. While the material here in is based on a specific region, it is also designed to fit the overall themes of Shadow over Vathak as a whole. As the GM, you should modify the material in this book as you see fit to create the story that you want to tell. Additionally, the material presented in this book can be ported over to whatever campaign world you are using.



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GMING A GAME IN SHADOWS OVER VATHAK

As detailed in the *Shadows over Vathak Campaign Guide*, *Shadows over Vathak*, while labelled as a Lovecraft and Survival horror mash-up, lends itself to many different styles of horror. When running a game set in the world of Vathak, it is important that you convey the style or styles of horror you will be using to the players so that they can make appropriate characters. Additionally, you should preview the material in the *Player's Guide for the Colonies*. The material in that book is meant to be synergistic with material in this book.

Regardless of the campaign style, it is important to note that *Shadows over Vathak* is a campaign world best suited to seeing human nature and alignment in shades of gray. The evil of the Old Ones and the remnants of the former vampire rules are not the only villainy to be contested. While paladins and other holy warriors of the One True God fervently strive to stem the rising tide of evil, many who espouse the One True God's edicts are not entirely virtuous. Neither are members of the nobility, town guard, and any of the other NPCs your players encounter. While *Shadows over Vathak* does not modify spells like detect evil and their like, these spells are not always entirely useful and just because a NPC detects as evil does not mean they are walking XP for overly zealous PCs. One of the main themes in *Shadows over Vathak* is survival horror and exploring how humanity either comes together or falls apart when confronted with the threat of extinction. When designing NPCs, realize that in Vathak many people are simply trying to survive day by day which often drives people to do acts that they normally would not even have considered before.

THE COLONIES HISTORY

What is commonly known as The Colonies was once a single fishing village named Skalan. The native romni inhabitants discovered the island's waters held a bounty of fish. Few Skalaners dared the dark, tangled depths of the island's forested interior and tales of strange creatures prowling the Telgotha Forest and the jagged peaks of the Kardathan Mountains kept the villagers close to the shore. Bands of explorers occasionally stopped in Skalan before delving further inland, driven by rumors of treasure and mysterious locations, but none ever returned to the village. Their disappearances only fueled the island's dark reputation and kept Skalan from expanding.

It was not until the time of the "Great Cleansing" that Skalan came into its own. The influx of non-human races and fringe religious groups (mostly followers of the Elder Gods) fleeing vindari expansion quickly created numerous small settlements around Skalan. Like the original Skalaners, these new settlements clung to the island's coastline, living off the sea. Their presence, however, attracted numerous pirates and other marauders who sought easier targets than the better armed vindari. Despite these many attacks, the Colonies persisted and even came together as one to destroy a vindari fleet, led by a dread inquisitor name Barnabus Thalvy who threatened their sovereignty. Barnabus's defeat left the Colonies safe from vindari expansion for a number of years.

While the rising of the Old Ones threw the mainland of Vathak into chaos and turmoil, in an unintended consequence, it set off a new era of growth in the Colonies. It was not just dissidents of vindari rule that were arriving, but the vindari themselves, fleeing the destruction. Initially, the Colonies inhabitants viewed the vindari refugees as outsiders and a potential threat. Many loathed the churches they saw springing up to the One True God. Skirmishes between the two



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sides occurred and the vindari quickly learned to adapt and live as neighbors and not as potential conquerors. Eventually, the vindari earned acceptance as they joined in the island's defense. The fairly recent battle against the Crimson Wave pirates assisted the vindari in integrating themselves into positions of power.

Skalan, itself, became a thriving city of clay, brick, gray timber, and ashen stone when open trade began with outside nations. Along the eastern edge of the island, the Dark Sea brings trade from foreign lands and distant shores. The harsh approaches to the island, and natural hostilities and prejudice from mainlanders make sea trade a desirable alternative. Ships come and go almost daily, making the Colonies the largest port destination in Vathak. All of these captains, ships' crews, scoundrels, and traders need a decent place to eat, sleep, and spend their coin allowing the Colonies to grow.

Today, the Colonies are a place for pilgrims to seek refuge from vindari rule and to explore religious beliefs beyond the imposed One True God. It is the last place to rest and stock up before sailing to foreign lands, and it is the final

stop for merchants and traders wishing to import or export their goods. As such, most cities have a well-constructed fort and a large garrison. Historically, even these provisions can't prevent the occasional pirate raids or foreign conflicts from getting out of control. Of all the Vathak provinces, none have suffered ransack, marauders, or burning as much, or even as often, as the Colonies. Still, bandits and marauders are not the most dangerous threat to colonists. With the emergence of the Old Ones, many of the ancient vampire clans have found a need to find new hunting grounds and refuge from the plights sweeping the mainland. Living in the cities, they fight to keep their dark secrets and hunt the outcropping farmlands when the taste for blood becomes uncontrollable. However, their numbers are rising, and it's getting harder to hide their trails, not to mention the increasing numbers of lycantropes moving to the island for the same reasons as their vampire enemies.

Cities

SKALAN

CAPITAL OF THE COLONIES

N Metropolis

Corruption +2; **Crime** +5; **Economy** +7;
Law +1;

Lore +4; **Society** +8

Qualities holy site, magically attuned,
notorious, prosperous, strategic loca-
tion, tourist attraction

Danger +20

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Council

Population 55,000 (31,000 Romni; 10,000
Vindari; 8,000 Bhriota; 2,000 Cambion;
1,000 Svirfneblin; 3,000 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Cordella Vanheart (LE female romni
aristocrat 4/sorcerer 3)

Baron Hellheimer (NG male vindari
aristocrat 9)

**Entertainment Guildmaster Narcil
Forthwright** (CN male dhampir bard 6)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 33,600 gp; **Purchase Limit**
220,000 gp

Spellcasting 9th

Minor Items Nearly All; **Medium
Items** 4d4; **Major Items** 3d4

The largest of all the cities in the Colonies, Skalan extends outwards from the Bladling Cliffs, along the Coast of Saints. As the city is sectioned haphazardly into districts by the remains of old walls once circling the city, before its growth required new fortifications, visitors can easily get

lost in the maze of streets. Nearly all the shops here cater to the hundreds of travelers that frequent the area. There are plenty of inns, taverns, theaters, and gambling houses in Skalan. The red light district of the Colonies is found here and all manner of pleasure can be purchased, for the right price. In addition to serving as a watering hole for weary sailors, Skalan is also home to warehouses, where trading houses and wealthy captains are able store goods pending their sale. Traders not so affluent can often rent space for a price.

TOMAINI

CG Small town

Corruption -2; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +0;
Law +1;

Lore +2; **Society** -1

Qualities: insular, magically attuned

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Magical

Population 1,300 (1,000 Romni; 100 Vin-
dari; 100 Cambrion; 100 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Baron Talandrel Tomaini (NG male
romni wizard 14)

Hrak of the Crab Family (CG male
cambion druid 4)

Madam Constance Delfrey (CN female
romni rogue 7)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,200 gp; **Purchase Limit**
6,000 gp

Spellcasting 7th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6;

Major Items

None

The city of Tomaini is named after its founding family, the Tomaini, of the Tomaini Traveling Side Show.



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This group of itinerant romni was once a popular circus, displaying oddities and performing amazing shows across Vathak. With the rise of the Old Ones, many people turned away from such frivolous entertainment, and the Tomaini family came to the Colonies for seclusion. Since then, many performers now make their home here. Tomaini is the home-base for a variety of show-folks, such as: Priscilla the Ape Girl, the Stone Man, the Crab family, and Dotty the Mule. In other places, these strange people would have met with some degree of social rejection, but in Tomaini they are treated as average folk bonded by the nomadic lifestyle of the traveling show. Visitors can see nightly performances from various residents at a handful of makeshift tent shows, and of course the crude theaters. Those with a more bizarre taste can visit the curiosity shops and pick up some arcane or grotesque items, or seek out one of the many fortune telling madams of the city.

REIFSWALD

CG Large town

Corruption +2; **Crime** +3; **Economy** +4;
Law -10;

Lore +0; **Society** +1

Qualities: pious (the Elder Gods), prosperous, strategic location

Danger +5; **Disadvantages** cursed

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Secret Syndicate

Population 2,500 (2,000 Romni; 400 Vindari; 100 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Father Balthazul Nefarion (LE male romni bard 10)

Mistress Felicia Thurgood (LN female vindari aristocrat 6/expert 6)

Dockmaster Karn Nyatho (NG male bhriota fighter 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 15,000 gp

Spellcasting 6th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4;

Major Items 1d4

This once dense coastal area was quickly cleared when the Church of the Unspeakable Masses came to the Colonies seeking refuge from the oppressive vindari. They constructed a huge temple to the Elder Gods out of the timber and stone gathered from clearing the land, followed by bunk houses and general gathering lodges. Over the years they have built mass temples across the island and have accumulated numerous followers from both Vathak citizens and the foreigners who frequent the island. Although many consider the Church of the Unspeakable Masses to be harmless, others are fearful of their presence and more so, their devout worship of the ancient deities. Rumors abound of dark rituals and secret meetings of the church and their quest to awaken these sleeping gods to fight the emerging Old Ones.

Reifswald also has a growing fishing industry with an organized fleet of the Fishing Guild controlling its waters. The bountiful seas are considered a blessing from the Elder Gods, and the Fishing Guild encourages membership in the Church of the Unspeakable Masses to continue this blessing.

HUNSTANVANIA

N Large city

Corruption +0; **Crime** +2; **Economy** +5;
Law +2;

Lore +5; **Society** +2

Qualities academic, holy site, prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction

Danger +10



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DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Autocracy

Population 18,000 (14,000 Romni; 2,000 Vindari; 500 foreigners; 1,500 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Captain of the Guard Marko Tellbith (LN male svirfneblin fighter 5)

High Priest Westerton Pollux (LG male vindari cleric 10)

Lord Mayor Hamon Le Strange (N male vindari aristocrat 4)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 12,800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp

Spellcasting 9th

Minor Items 4d4; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

Initially known as New Hunstanvania, to distinguish it from the adjacent village from which it took its name, this resort town long ago eclipsed its neighbor in size and population.



Bordered by the River Hun, Old Hunstanvania has its share of charms, including: cliff top walks past the Perkola lighthouse, the ruins of St. Vermain's Chapel, and Old Hunstanvania Park, home to Blackwood Hall and the estate of its most famous resident, Heinrich Le Strange. It was Heinrich who had decided to develop the area south of Old Hunstanvania into a sea-bathing resort. He persuaded a group of like-minded investors to fund the construction and build cobblestone streets to the nearby city of Skalan for ease of travel. Once the money was secured, Heinrich sought out his friend, Velheim Warwort, already a renowned architect, to help him bring his vision to life. Le Strange, who was himself an amateur architect and painter, prepared a layout for the resort showing shops, inns, and a church; then he consulted with Warwort who shared his passion for the 'Old Vathak' style. The first of their many buildings to be erected was The Royal Hotel, initially called Le Strange's Folly by some, since it sat alone on the rolling green slope for several years before the rest of the town was constructed. However, once it was joined by the first of many curio shops, luxury trades, and posh villas, the town quickly formed in and many

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began to flock to the resort. Le Strange's venture was a great success, and soon the Colonies witnessed an influx of nobility and gentry from the mainland. Le Strange, as the primary landowner, became the governing force of both Huntsvanias; but, sadly, he died the same year he realized his dreams. All of his properties were left to his son, Hamon, allowing him to reap the rewards of his father's hard work.

GERMALBORIA

LN Hamlet

Corruption -2; Crime -3; Economy -2;
Law +0; Lore -1; Society -6

Qualities insular

Danger -5; Disadvantages cursed

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Autocracy

Population 76 (76 *Vindari*)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Baron Voltagia (LN male *vindari* ranger 4)

City Watch Captain Felix Delthourux
(CN male *vindari* fighter 6)

Merchant Thorum Blackfell (CE male
vindari/werewolf ranger 8)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 200 gp; **Purchase Limit**
1,000 gp;

Spellcasting 2nd

Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** None;
Major Items None

Germalboria enjoys a continental climate, with a warm summer, mild winter, and spring and autumn marked by copious rainfall. The farmers generally grow more food than they can consume (in years past, Germalboria supported a much greater area than it does now), and have built up a healthy reserve over the years. Germalboria is a much safer city than many others, as the militia and guard keep the settled area of the land clear of most dangers. However, they do not

venture into the swampy forests to the southeast, an area that has been plagued by lycanthropes.

Nearly all of Germalboria's inhabitants are serfs bound to the land of their lord, Baron Voltagia. They are skilled farmers and shepherds, and generally content with their lot—compared to other places, they have it very well. Baron Voltagia is a fair ruler, and few serious threats exist in Germalboria to torment them.

TIADORE

N Small town

Corruption -2; Crime +1; Economy +0;
Law -1; Lore +4; Society -2

Qualities notorious, racially intolerant
(romni)

Danger +10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Magical

Population 1,300 (1,000 *Vindari*; 100
Romni; 100 lycanthropes; 100 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Lord Vance Krynvalt (LE male *vindari*/
werewolf ranger 14)

Hevestus Morgana (CG male *romni*
gunslinger 4)

Mayor Bernard Tonburn (LN male
vindari aristocrat 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,300 gp; **Purchase Limit**
7,500 gp;

Spellcasting 5th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6;
Major Items None

Tiadore is a civilized place, but just beyond the borders of the city grow ancient and unexplored forests and steep foreboding mountains. It is a poorly-kept secret that traveling across these woods alone or in small company is not very wise. Here live a



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great number of wild animals, especially warts-hogs, wolves, and bears. But, nobody knows that the woodland gives shelter for many lycanthropes as well, or that more than half of the villagers in Tiadore are lycanthropes.

Near Tiadore, hunts a small, but vicious pack of werewolves led by onetime nobleman Vance Krynvalt. They mix the natural bestiality of their kind with a pathological hate for the romni, a prejudice sadly spreading among the region's inhabitants, human or not.

DALLOWICH

LN Hamlet

Corruption 0; Crime -4; Economy -2;
Law +1; Lore 0; Society -4

Qualities academic

Danger -5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Overlord

Population 57 (45 Dhamphir; 12 Vampires)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Master Vayden Delois (LG male dhamphir monk 8)

First Initiate Berman Sprogue (N male dhamphir monk 3/rogue 1)

Second Initiate Petal Freund (LN female vampire aristocrat 4/monk 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,000 gp;

Spellcasting 3rd

Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** None;

Major Items None

Tightly fitted wooden houses, most little bigger than shacks and lacking windows, crowd around a large two story building in Dallowich's center. During the day, the hamlet appears deserted as its light sensitive citizens rest, only coming out at night. Situated well away in a

remote location removed from any major roads, few in the Colonies even know of Dallowich's existence. Curious visitors find the doors stoutly barred and no sort of knocking will get anyone to open them. Rumors abound that the citizens are albinos or else infected with a deforming disease. Others speculate that Dallowich is home to one of the many small cults flourishing in the Colonies.

Truthfully, Dallowich consists of dhamphirs and vampires seeking to overcome their bloodlust through meditation and physical training. Founded by a dhamphir named Vayden Delois, Dallowich frequently sees its residents coming and going. New arrivals take over the houses vacated by others who have already left. Vayden leads regular exercises at nights with his disciples, labelled as initiates who rise in rank as they learn to control their natural tendencies. No businesses or trade exists in Dallowich, replaced instead with continuous rigorous training for self-control.

HALSBURG

NE Small Town

Corruption -1; Crime +1; Economy +0;
Law -1; Lore +4; Society -2

Qualities academic, notorious

Danger +10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Magical

Population 205 (115 Romni; 45 Vindari; 23 Dhamphir; 13 Bhriota; 9 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Lord Ivar Von Houlsmann (NE male vampire alchemist 12)

Guard Captain Reska Dorwanni (CE female dhamphir antipaladin 8)

Researcher Klaus Steinburger (CN male vindari wizard 10)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,300 gp; **Purchase Limit** 7,500 gp;



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Spellcasting 6th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6;

Major Items none

Disguising himself as an affluent “lord” from the mainland, the vampire, Ivar von Houlsmann, established Halsburg in the island’s interior near the Telgotha Forest to be away from the prying eyes of humans and his kin. A researcher of the necromantic arts, Ivar put out word amongst certain circles that likeminded individuals were welcome to join him in his research located in a stout keep with a well-equipped laboratory. Thus, Halsburg attracted a citizenry composing of mostly necromancers and others specializing in the darker arts. While the majority of researchers work on their own foul experiments, Ivar fosters a sharing of information and knowledge, creating a truly hideous collective of practitioners of the blackest arts.

Harboring a well-deserved evil reputation, visitors to Halsburg typically come to trade in forbidden goods and magic with the numerous small shops catering to such business. A

heavily armed town guard regularly patrols the streets to keep the peace, particularly from overzealous outsiders and experiments gone wrong.

NOORDIN

CN Village

Corruption +3; **Crime** +5; **Economy** -5;
Law -8; **Lore** +1; **Society** -6

Qualities notorious, rumormongering citizens

Danger +30; **Disadvantages** anarchy

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Anarchy

Population 176 (68 Romni; 43 Vindari; 18 Svirfneblin; 15 Bhriota; 13 Cambion; 12 Dhamphir; 17 other)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Moonfather Hersh Himble
(CN male cambion rogue 7)

The Goodly Wife Largle (CN female bhriota barbarian 4)



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Rimwald, God of Snakes (CN male
vindari expert 2/sorcerer 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 650 gp; **Purchase Limit**
3,750 gp;

Spellcasting 3rd

Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4;
Major Items None

Hidden away deep in the Telgotha Forest and protected by alien technology, Noordin serves as a penal colony for victims of Mi-Go experimentation whose brains were not suitable for extraction. Its mad, crazy, and often violent citizens live out a mockery of human existence amongst a collection of tumbling shacks and lean-tos. No government rules, only gangs, the current ones being the Moon People, the Good Family, and the Disciples of Rimwald. They fight, steal, and sometimes even trade, their minds horribly damaged.

The Mi-Go monitor them with devices set throughout the village and they have erected a camouflage device around Noordin's perimeter to hide it from outsiders. Occasionally a few villagers make it outside or visitors accidentally enter. The Mi-Go tend not to interfere during these occurrences. To them, Noordin serves as a social experiment that they eagerly study for their own strange purposes.

VALENCOURT

CE small town

Corruption +3; **Crime** +2; **Economy** -2;
Law -9; **Lore** +1; **Society** -9

Qualities insular, rumormongering
citizens

Danger +20; **Disadvantages** hunted

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Secret Society

Population 1,400 (937 Romni;
413 Vindari; 50 others)

NOTEABLE NPCs

Mayor Yohan Krutz (CE intellect de-
vourer)

Guard Captain Treles (CE intellect
devourer)

Ona Hershel (NG female vindari bard 5)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 800 gp; **Purchase Limit**
5,000 gp;

Spellcasting 4th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6;
Major Items None

Valencourt rests on a small peninsula on the island's eastern coast. A haven for artists, Valencourt boasts cobbled streets surrounding numerous water fountains and gorgeously carved statues. A well trained militia regularly patrols the high town walls, safeguarding the citizens from the worst monstrous elements found in the Colonies. Recently, however, a swift night time raid from pirates shattered Valencourt's idyllic life. The raid happened so quickly that many of the citizens do not even realize it has occurred. All they know is that the mayor has decreed an escalating number of bizarre and harsh laws brutally enforced by Guard Captain Treles and his men.

In truth, the pirates themselves were victims to a group of intellect devourers who took over their bodies and now have implanted themselves into positions of power within Valencourt. The intellect devourers revel in their new found power, delightfully concocting new horrors and hedonistic pleasures to heap on Valencourt's citizens. A prominent bard, Ona Hershel, recently formed a resistance group to work against the mayor. Unfortunately, she is unaware of his true nature or that her group has already been infiltrated by the monstrous creatures.



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Lands

The island of the Colonies consists of dense overgrowth and heavy forests. Very few attempts to explore the impenetrable internal regions of the island have been attempted, with most towns and cities remaining on the island's coast. Although, hunting does occur here; fishing is the main source of sustenance for the populace with trade being second greatest avenue.

THE BEAUMONT

STATUES

It is unknown who erected these statues or when these statues were erected, but their existence predates any known inhabitants of the island. Discovered during one of the few expeditions into the island's interior, explorer Francis Beaumont came upon the two figures standing in a large unkempt field. They are an intricate, life-sized, and exquisitely rendered likeness of an eternally loving couple.

The statue itself is a marvel to view—every tiny detail, every fold of fabric, and bulge of vein under skin is delicately and perfectly carved. If it were not for their slightly weathered state, you might expect them to take a breath or turn their eyes to you at any second, even in the bright sunshine.

THE KARDATHAN

MOUNTAINS

This small mountain chain can be seen from all points of the island. For such a small formation, the Kardathan ranges are extremely tall, with steep



peaks and sharp outcroppings. Recent deposits of gold, silver, and iron have been discovered in the region which has led to a few brave souls attempting to set up camps and mine for the minerals. None, however, have returned sporting their wished for wealth. The Kardathan Mountains do have one permanent resident: Dr. Moradein. The good doctor had received a lot of notoriety, a few years back, when he was accused of a series of gruesome child murders in the province of Moorhaven. Only pieces of the corpses were found, but examination indicated a hand skilled in the dismemberment of bodies and an intimate medical knowledge of anatomy. Not enough evidence was found to convict Dr. Moradein, and rumors abound of his friends

in high position. Regardless, he was ostracized by the community and eventually found his way to the Colonies. The last remnants of his fortune were spent building the small castle on the foot of the Kardathan Mountains.



THE HEADS OF THE ELDER GODS

One of the strange practices of the Church of the Unspeakable Masses, a religious sect devoted to worship of the Elder Gods, is the creation and coastal placement of thousands of stone monuments depicting the busts of various Elder Gods. The individual looks of each head varies, but for many foreigners the sight of them is frightening. Deformed and tentacled, alien and horrific, these idols line the coast staring off into the Black Seas.

TELGOtha FOREST

Telgotha Forest is a dense mass of oak trees with twisted trunks and gangly roots breaking the topsoil, massive rocks and boulders littered between them. Travel through the forests is limited, as becoming lost is far too easily accomplished. Telgotha Forest also goes by another name: the Crying Baby Woods. A young slave woman from foreign lands had escaped her captors and was making a hasty retreat through the forest with her newborn baby. Lost, confused, and within hearing range of the slavers' hounds, the young woman did her best to silence the crying infant. Upon coming to a small stream, the woman did the unspeakable and drowned the baby in the stream, preventing it from giving away their location.

The slavers never did find the young woman, but they did discover the infant's body. Legend says that the cries of the child can still be heard during the night; the wails becoming so horrific, many travelers have lost all hope upon hearing them, ending their own lives to silence the eternal screams.

LAKE PETHEGAS

When the bhriota first encountered the lake, they called it "Thu'ktulu," meaning "evil." Within the swampy lake, bogs gurgle with reddish water that the bhriota saw as the flesh and blood of their ancestors. Small streams around the Lake Pethegas occasionally turn red also, giving the appearance of flowing blood. At night, glowing swamp gas dance on the surface of the lake, and decaying stumps glow from phosphorescent mold. A deep moaning can often be heard throughout the area, and other sounds seem strangely muted.



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Important NPCs

The Colonies is rife with personalities both good and evil, noble and foul. Below are just some of the NPCs that influence affairs in the region.

BARON STROAN

HELLHEIMER (SKALAN)

Baron Hellheimer (NG male vindari aristocrat 9) appears as a handsome, middle-aged man, his short cropped hair and goatee only lightly tinged with grey. His family originally fled to Skalan to escape the onslaught of the Old Ones. As nobles, they quickly threw themselves into Skalan politics, spearheading a rising vindari coalition. With access to wealth and influence on the mainland, they asserted their position by assisting in destroying the fleet of the Crimson Wave pirates. Many of the original romni inhabitants feared the vindari influence but so far the Hellheimers have balanced the overzealous qualities of the One True God and the many other religions flourishing in the streets of

Skalan. Baron Hellheimer is a deft politician that so far has remained above the usual corrupt politics that often plague the city. His main goal is the continuing protection of Skalan both from foreign invaders and the scourge of the Old Ones. To this



Hellheimer

end, he has created a number of small, specialized forces to aid in the city's defense. Some of these forces regularly patrol the waters around Skalan, rooting out bands of pirates while others protect the streets, destroying threats that are beyond the abilities of the city guard to handle. The baron realizes that numerous thieves and smugglers regularly break the laws so he walks a thin line, stopping the worse elements but foregoing all-out war. He keeps his enemies at each other's throats, knowing that if he were to be too heavy handed they would rise against him and the city would burn as a result.

Baron Hellheimer often seeks out adventurers to take on various dangerous tasks and rewards them well. He can be a staunch ally to those that show him loyalty and promote Skalan's interests. Currently, he is dealing with ramifications of the small churches appearing in the city belonging to the Church of the Unspeakable Masses. While he openly welcomes all religions, he has a natural distrust of those who meddle with ancient powers.

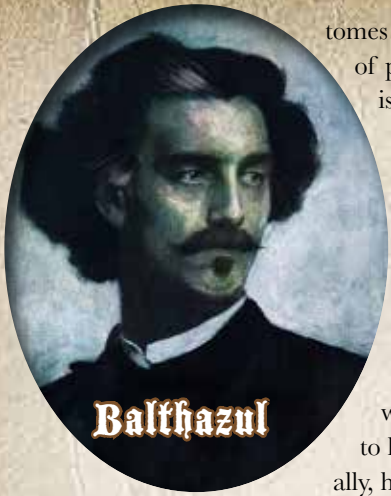
BALTHAZUL NEFARION

(REIFSWALD)

The enigmatic leader of the Church of Unspeakable Masses, **Balthazul Nefarion** (LE male romni bard 10) wears a short beard with his moustache curled upward and glossy black hair tinged with grey. He oversees the entire operation of the church, from recruitment to the missions they perform. Speaking in a thick, husky tone, his natural charisma instills obedience in his followers, aided by his bardic abilities and spells. He teaches his followers that the Elder Gods are the true masters of Vathak and that they must purge the land of the influence of the One True God and the cults of the Old Ones. He realizes that direct confrontation is impossible at this point so he operates a secret war, undermining the influences of other religions while collecting magical



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Balthazul

comes and other items of power. Balthazul is not above using adventurers and others to further the goals of the church, especially when he wishes to conduct missions that he does not want traced back to him. Additionally, he finds it useful to have people to undertake particularly dangerous missions without risking himself or valuable church resources.

Secretly, Balthazul is a puppet being manipulated by alien Mi-Go who harvest the knowledge and memories of upper-ranking members, including Balthazul. Whether this is just natural Mi-Go curiosity or something more sinister, no one has discovered yet. However, Balthazul fervently believes in what he preaches and that he is a herald of the Elder Beings.

LORD MAYOR

HAMON LE STRANGE (HUNSTANVANIA)

Hamon Le Strange (N male vindari aristocrat 4), is in his middle years, though a hard life of debauched luxury makes him appear much older. The son of Heinrich Le Strange who made Hunstanvania the place it is today, he has lived his entire life off of the fruits of his father's labors. Possessing no particular talents and lacking ambition, he contentedly hosts wild parties at his manor house for many of the displaced vindari nobility. This has allowed him to cultivate an extensive network of acquaintances, allies, and contacts which he eagerly exploits to his advantage. Many of the choicest bits of gossip and rumors about the

Colonies reaches his ears, making him a wealth of information regarding all facets of life in the Colonies, whether it is who is bedding who, who is plotting to poison their enemies, or when a certain ship containing illicit cargo will arrive. Many pay for this information and his parties, for all their decadence, serve as an excellent place to gather information about current happenings. Somewhat jaded now, Hamon frequently demands favors or sets tasks to those seeking to querying him for information over money.

VANCE KRYNVULT (TIADORE)

Once a minor noble from the mainland, **Vance Krynvalt** (LE male werewolf/vindari ranger 14) lived in southern Grigoria. Learning to fight at a young age, Vance battled against incursions of the Spawns of the Old Ones, bhriota raiding parties, and other horrors that plague Vathak. After an ill-fated encounter with a pack of werewolves, the infected Vance was forced to give up his title and lands and escaped to the Colonies where he settled in Tiadore. Once he realized that there were others like him there, he formed them into his own pack. He bears a particular grudge against the romni, a natural

prejudice of his furthered by a personal tragedy in his past, and hunts them mercilessly.



Le Strange

A broad shouldered, intimidating man with long, thick hair and a scruffy beard,

Vance acts the typical noble gentleman to outsiders and the other residents of Tiadore. Only in his wolf form does he unleash his animal fury



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Reynvult

and his hunts draw the ire of many of the nearby werewolf packs who caution more restraint. As an inflicted werewolf, Vance realizes he will never get true respect from the pureblood werewolves but so far has thwarted their attempts to topple him from power. The other werewolf packs seek a group strong enough to dispose of Vance before his activities start an island wide werewolf panic.

IVAR VON HOULSMANN (HALSBURG)

Ivar von Houlsmann (NE male vampire alchemist 12) performs his experiments from a small stone keep in the heart of necromantic Halsburg. An emaciated, bald vampire, Ivar is obsessed with the next evolution of vampires. Having witnessed his own master destroyed by a Spawn of the Old Ones, Ivar believes that for vampires to defeat the Old Ones and reconquer Vathak, they must evolve. An outcast even amongst other vampires, Ivar collects necromancers, alchemists, and others wishing to explore dark and often immoral experiments. He hides his true identity as a vampire, assuming the title "lord" and claiming to be descended from an ancient and extinct vindari noble family. So far, he has only succeeded in creating the weak and degenerate vampplings which he then set loose on the island.



Ivar

Ivar toils away in his foul lab, using alchemy to engage in vampire eugenics. Still, he is sought out for his vast knowledge in combining reagents, alembics, elixirs, and other tools to advance the sciences of life, death, and reanimation. He employs agents to search out the rare materials many of his experiments need, using proxies to shield himself from unnecessary questions.

VAYDEN DELOIS (DALLOWICH)

Vayden Delois (LG male dhampir monk 8), an austere, gaunt dhampir with long, braided hair, leads a small pseudo-monastery from the hamlet of Dallowich. Raised in a bloody and vicious vampire clan, Vayden turned against his family after they murdered his sister as part of a blood sacrifice. Abhorring his need for blood, Vayden set about a path of self-meditation and discipline to control what he felt where unnatural urges. His story eventually circulated its way around the various vampire clans living in the Colonies and while most ignored it, a few, mostly dhampir that had been cast aside, showed interest. Eventually, prospective disciples flocked to Vayden's remote home near the forested interior of Skalan and a quasi-sort of monastery and village arose.

Vayden teaches dhampir and a few true vampires, as well, how to embrace their human side through a series of rigorous physical exercises and meditations designed to purge the desire for human blood. He encourages his disciples to come and go as they wish, realizing that the path he proposes goes against their basic instincts. In his heart, he still grieves for his lost sister and loathes the bloodthirsty monsters that took her, harboring resentment to this day against vampires. Because his

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disciples come from diverse backgrounds, he possesses information regarding the various vampire clans in the Colonies and their doings.

TEN KNIFE KING (TOMAINI)

Responsible for a string of murders all over Vathak, the vile serial killer known as the Ten Knife King is the eidolon of a stunted, twisted female cambion, **Termine Hurgle** (CE female cambion summoner 11). Born into a life of abuse like most cambions, Termine's life consisted solely of hard labor and physical and mental abuse. One day, the teenaged Termine (a name given to her by a kindly cleric who took her in and she later murdered) heard a whispering in her head, offering her a dark power to take vengeance on those that caused her so much suffering. Thus, the Ten Knife King was born- a tall, thin, steel colored being with a crown of rusty daggers, a cape of broken, bloody blades, and knives instead of fingers.

Termine desperately wants to fit in and find a family, however she is a cruel, capricious, and jealous creature. She becomes possessive of those around her and when she feels betrayed by them, the Ten Knife King appears to wreak her vengeance. Despite the reputation the King has, so far, no one has suspected Termine. First, she is a cambion and therefore below most people's notice. Second, she goes to great lengths to hide her magical ability, often taking jobs doing physical labor. She has recently arrived in Tomaini, a small town that is home to a number of outcasts including other cambions. Termine thought she would find the home she desired here, but already, there have been an increasing number of instances where she has felt slighted, cheated, ignored, and mocked and so the Ten Knife King is once again on the loose.

Suggested evolutions for the Ten Knife King: claws, frightful presence, rend.

HEINRICH BLOODMOON (TELGOtha FOREST)

Heinrich Bloodmoon (N male natural werewolf oracle [nature] 9) leads one of the Colonies largest and most powerful werewolf packs, the Bloodmoons. While natural werewolves tend towards more evil alignments, in no small part due to once being the servants of the Vampire Lords who used them to sow terror and murder, Heinrich believes in a different destiny. To him, werewolves are natural creatures and like wolves, they should behave as such- hunting when hungry and not out of a desire to commit acts of cruelty and murder. Not a friend to nonlycanthropes by any means, he never the less encourages restraint when it comes to killing sentient creatures for food.

A very cautious leader, Heinrich often liaises with other werewolf packs, attempting to impose his beliefs on them. He realizes that people fear werewolves, and rightly so, but as werewolves are fewer in numbers, they are vulnerable. His ideology has rubbed some of the werewolf packs the wrong way, particularly his nemesis, Vance Krynvult of Tiadore. Lately, Heinrich has become increasingly worried about the Church of Unspeakable Masses. Their talk of the unnatural Elder Gods and the hideous statues they build oppose his own world view. He has sent a number of werewolves undercover as spies to find out more about the church.



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Organizations

Detailed below are new organizations to supplement the material already detailed in the Shadows over Vathak Campaign Guide.

VAMPIRE CLANS OF THE COLONIES

The Vampire Lords long ruled over Vathak and only the arrival of the vindari with their clerical magic and superior weaponry were able to break their unholy hold over the land. During the vindari conquest, many of the Vampire Lords fled deep into the Filth Reaches to brood and plan their reconquest over Vathak. However, they could not have expected the sudden awakening of the Old Ones and the spawn that suddenly poured out from deep below the earth. This savage assault destroyed most of the Vampire Lords and sent the survivors fleeing to other parts of Vathak.

The vampires' numbers greatly reduced, many of the clans relocated to the Colonies, a place so far untouched by the merciless Old Ones and their ilk. Many settled in the city of Skalan to blend in with the teeming hordes of humanity. There, they eke an existence that pales to their once glorious reign. Most of the vampires conduct their feeding on nearby farms or upon the refuse and homeless of Skalan so as to not arouse suspicion. However, even they cannot truly go unnoticed.

The vampire clans that remain have varying views as to their current state. The proudest of the clans still seek a return to power. Haughty and noble, they believe they are the true masters of Vathak, their feedings becoming more brazen as the years pass. They enmesh themselves in Skalan's

aristocracy in an effort to regain some of the power and influence they once wielded. These clans rule from the shadows through proxies, maintaining a veneer of civility over their true, bloodthirsty nature. Other clans, however, believe that to survive they must hide themselves. A large number of dhamphir are born into these clans as the vampires attempt coexistence with the humans. Still, there is no love lost and given the chance, any vampire will happily drink the blood from a stranger if he or she can get away with it.

All vampire clans keep a distance from the werewolf packs that have also moved into the Colonies, ceding to them the forested depths of the island's interior. Clashes between the two groups often arise when they meet. The vampires see themselves as the masters of the werewolves, which the werewolves gladly contest, and any such werewolf that does not believe that is an insult to vampire pride.

Some of the names of the vampire clans are: Baasch, Dieter, Feldt, Gehring, Jager, Raskoph, Wegener

Note that to hide their identities, the vampire clans dropped the "von" in front of their names which indicated a member of nobility. Vampires only add the "von" when dealing with other vampires.

WEREWOLF PACKS OF THE COLONIES

With the vindari conquest and the rising of the Old Ones, the werewolves of Vathak finally threw off the yoke of slavery under the Vampire Lords. Long used as servants by the vampires, the werewolves fled to various parts of Vathak after the destruction of their masters. A large number settled on the Colonies, quickly claiming the untamed forests and rugged mountains of the island's



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interior. They prowl and slink amongst the trees and stones, always hunting and making traveling through these areas a dangerous endeavor.

Organized into packs, the largest being the Bloodmoons, the werewolves of Vathak range throughout the island's interior, occasionally raiding small farmsteads near the coastal areas. The presence of their former masters, the vampires, in the densely populated cities, helps keep them in check, with the exception of Tiadore. Natural born lycanthropes make up a majority of the werewolf population as most of the packs wish to keep the bloodlines pure. Afflicted lycanthropes exist, either granted their condition as a gift, or usually as survivors of a werewolf attack. The afflicted struggle to find acceptance amongst the purebreds- treated as inferior and occupying the lowest stations in a werewolf pack's hierarchy. Often, the tales of rampaging werewolves told around the hearthside are in reality afflicted werewolves unable to find a pack to join and succumbing to their own violent natures.

The werewolves meet twice a year on the Summer and Winter Solstices on neutral ground. Hunting grounds are decided and issues threatening all packs discussed. Currently, Heinrich Bloodmoon presses the werewolf packs to curtail their more murderous impulses to avoid unwanted attention from the growing human population. Additionally, he is concerned about the rising prominence of the Church of the Unspeakable Masses and seeks to discover their true goals. Other packs instead urge vengeance against the vampires and dominance over the Colonies. Vance Kyrnvult and his pack of mostly afflicted lycanthropes are amongst the most vocal supporters of continued aggression. He cites his dominance of the town as Tiadore as an example of what the werewolves can accomplish. This angers Heinrich Bloodmoon, causing the two groups almost coming to blows many times over the last few years.

Most werewolves living in the Colonies use conventional first

names but retain their pack names as surnames. Afflicted lycanthropes are told to keep their birth names until truly accepted by a pack. Some examples of the werewolf packs are- Bloodmoons, Bloodymaws, Darkhunters, Fangrippers, Moonstalkers, Nightclaws, and Shadoweyes.

THE CHURCH OF UNSPEAKABLE MASSES

Residing within the Colonies and openly acting as an accepted religion, this strange gathering of worshipers has led many in Vathak to question the motives behind this organization. Beyond some of the strange practices displayed by the church (the creation and placement of thousands of alien statues), the followers speak little to outsiders. The most common question of their secretive doctrines brings about a reply that speaks of the church being an intellectual collective for the evolved members, and fanatical talk of becoming the "strength and the energy" of a quickly approaching "new age".

Regardless of race or political affiliation, the members of the unspeakable masses are not interested in what they consider a "petty turf war" of antiquated traditions against the Church of the One True God and the followers of the Old Ones, although both these groups consider the belief in the Elder Gods to be an attack against their beliefs. The truth is the Church of the Unspeakable Masses believes the Elder Gods to be the true rulers of Vathak and the enemies of the Old Ones and the One True God. They secretly plot against the other religions, causing discord amongst their followers, and manipulating them with strange magics learned from the messengers from beyond the stars.

The cult prizes obedience and loyalty in members, allies, and subordinates. The litany "the Elder Gods are father, we are their children"



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punctuates every rite and prayer. Cult members take what they can when they can, but they are careful about violating local laws and risking exposure and bad publicity for the church. Members are extremely secretive and willing to lie, but if forced to swear a pact, they keep their word. Working covertly behind a mask of good works, the cult uses any means to discredit and destroy enemies; it is merciless in punishing failure and pitiless when harm comes to those in the way of its goals.

The Church of the Unspeakable Masses has its public center in Reifswald, a city in the Colonies, where all wait on the promises of the Elder Gods. However, the true headquarters of the church is the labyrinthine underground fortress deep below the main structure. Here willing supplicants and unfortunate captives alike submit to a soulcrushing indoctrination that strip members of independent thought and identity, making them one with the will of the Mi-Go, though exceptional individuals become subtler instruments for removing obstacles to the Church of the Unspeakable Masses' divine design.

THE MANY MASKS

While the dank, fog shrouded streets of Skalan cloak many notorious thieves' guilds, none is more mysterious than the organization known as the Many Masks. The Many Mask rogue archetype is presented in the Player's Guide for the Colonies- a rogue specializing in hiding her true identity to don new ones to reach her objective, whether it is assassination, infiltration, or spying. These rogues operate out of Skalan, organized into cells specializing in one particular activity such as assassinations or infiltrations, though some members operate solo or in pairs. The Many Masks organizational hierarchy is difficult to determine as members keep their true identities secret from one another. The identities they do adopt change so rapidly that it is nearly impossible for rival guilds to keep track of any possible leaders.

The Many Masks operate out of Vathak's larger cities as well, though the cells are much smaller. The Church of Unspeakable Masses frequently makes use of the Many Masks to secretly sabotage members of rival religions. Some Many Masks fear that these members have become corrupted by the church and a schism is slowing growing within the guild between the church's ideology and their's. It is believed that the Many Masks originally came to Skalan from far overseas where they worshipped a strange god with many heads and limbs. Whether their purpose is derived from worship of this mysterious god or the accumulation of wealth is so far unknown.





Life in the Colonies

THE PEOPLE

No other place in Vathak experiences such a mixture of different beliefs, races, and ethnicities living side by side like the Colonies. Here, churches of the One True God compete with the Church of the Unspeakable Masses for worshippers while bhriota, romni, and vindari engage in trade with one another. Dozens of different languages are spoken daily over dozens of uniquely prepared meals. Ships from all over the world continue to import new sights and wonders into the Colonies.

Still, even with so many cultures living together, those that live in the Colonies tend to share traits formed from life on the island. Comprised of former and current refugees, the people of the Colonies show great resiliency in times of stress as life here can be as dangerous as the horrors they fled. When trouble arises, the people of the Colonies know they must band together to defeat it. This attitude leads to another trait of their's- an acceptance of different beliefs and ways of life. In general, the populace of the Colonies resists those elements which impose upon a person's system of beliefs. They remain more open and tolerant of the new cultures that constantly disembark on the island's shores. Sadly, however, amongst certain circles of vindari, this noble trait is gradually eroding as old prejudices and vindari pride reassert itself.

Most of the population engages in some form of fishing or



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sea trade, especially in Skalan where ships from all over the world come and go daily. Reifswald, in particular, owns a large fishing fleet. Others engage in supporting the sea trade industry- operating warehouses and shops as well as running taverns, inns, brothels, and other forms of entertainment for the deluge of sailors. The few that live of the land tend relatively small farms. Logging is nearly unheard as most who attempt it ultimately disappear.

People born in the Colonies or have lived there for enough time wear loose fitting pants with billowing shirts and blouses of bright colors. Nearly everyone wears some form of silver jewelry and carries a silver coin out of superstition. Both sexes tie back their long hair with ribbon for the poor and intricately curly hair nets for the rich. Vindari men keep their austere beards and goatees closely cropped while the romni adorn their's with beads and other small baubles. Generally, newly arrived foreigners adapt to the style of dress within a generation or two to help them fit in better.

There is a frequent superstition in Skalan to avoid individuals wearing out of fashion and older styles of dress, fearing that they are vampires because of a false belief that these immortal creatures are slower to adapt to the changing world. Typically, these individuals are from other parts of Vathak or the more remote villages along the coast who cannot keep up with the constantly changing fashion trends of Skalan's elite.

Holidays, Festivals, and Traditions

Though many in the Colonies still cling to their ethnic identities and roots, a number of new holidays, festivals, and traditions have sprung up on the island, celebrated by all.

ST. BARNABUS DAY

The end of August sees the festival mockingly called St. Barnabus Day in celebration of the defeat of a vindari fleet led by Barnabus Thalvy. Storytelling contests about the battle start around noon and then culminate in a reenactment of the battle in the evening. Larger settlements like Skalan boast multiple reenactments staged by different and highly competitive performance groups. Prizes, contracts, and other honors go to the victors of these retellings. Another popular feature is the creating and donning of the Barnabus Mask. Families work together in crafting a fearsome mask to depict Barnabus which is then worn by the head of the family. The children chase "Barnabus," pelting him with small stones in exchange for candies and gifts.

FESTIVAL OF THE SPIRIT LIGHTS

The original romni inhabitants created this day long festival to ward off the evil spirits they believed lived in the island's interior. Celebrated in the beginning of Noiembrie when the long nights arrive, participants burn incense believed to be noxious to evil creatures while they

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craft monstrous looking fetishes to scare the evil spirits away until the days start becoming longer again. Many of the romni living on the Colonies still practice this tradition and with the rise of dark things within the island's interior it has been picked up by many other racial groups as well. The vindari nobles of Hunstanvania make light of the festival, instead donning fiendish looking costumes while engaging in debauched acts. Both the vampire clans and werewolf packs scoff at the notion of a festival to repel evil, engaging in particularly vicious hunts during the moonlight hours.

SZAL'DISHOR

THE BOUNTY RITUAL OF REIFSWALD

The Church of the Unspeakable Masses conducts a monthly ritual in Reifswald to gain the sea's blessing for a bountiful harvest of fish. Participants drape themselves in nothing but seaweed as the procession winds along the beach. A senior church member recites a complex litany in the supposed mother tongue of the Elder Gods, invoking the sea to bless Reifswald with an abundance of fish in the coming month. This ritual appears to be working so well that the local Fishing Guild actively (and occasionally, forcefully) encourages membership into the Church of the Unspeakable Masses. In reality, the ritual is a farce perpetuated by the Mi-Go who secretly send women to mate with a colony of Deep Ones. The Deep Ones in return drive fish into Reifswald's waters. They are traditional enemies of the skum living in Lake Pelthagas who serve different masters. The Mi-Go benefit from increased membership into the church and thus more members for their experiments.

THE FULL MOON HUNT

The monthly full moon holds special significance for the were-

wolves of the Colonies. They believe it endows them with extra strength as evidenced by the fact that it causes the afflicted to transform. The light of the full moon fills the werewolves with a primal yearning for blood and flesh, making them particularly aggressive. On the night of the full moon, all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks against werewolves are made with a -4 circumstance modifier. Occassionally, the Bloodmoon pack hunts down overly aggressive and violent afflicted lycanthropes in their efforts to change werewolf society. In Tiadore, home to many afflicted werewolves, the citizens lock and bar their doors from sundown to sun up. Travelers know to congregate in larger groups, burning a giant fire through the night. The brave few who make a living hunting werewolves prepare themselves for a busy night.

"COME AS YOUR ARE"

In the Colonies, where fear of dark forces hidden in human form is justifiably rampant, it is common courtesy when chancing upon other travelers at night to utter the phrase, "Come as you are" especially when they ask to share one's campfire. It is believed that the words hold power to cause an individual to reveal its true form such. The belief continues to spread, in no small part to the more violent werewolves who willingly oblige the utterer of the phrase.

WIDOW WALKS

Over the many years, a unique architectural design appeared on many of the large houses in the Colonies. Omniously dubbed "widow walks," these small open porches sit atop homes overlooking the seas. Created by the wives of sea captains keeping a look out for their loved ones, the name widow walk derived from the many black clad widows pacing the porches, scanning the horizons for husbands that will never return.

Many believe that even after they die, the widows still keep watch, leading to rumors of numerous haunted houses.



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Adventure Locations

Though many took refuge on the Colonies to escape the vindari and the Old Ones, it still remains as dangerous as any of the other regions in Vathak. Below are some unique adventure locations that can be fleshed out as you see fit. Players may make a Knowledge (local) check while in the area indicated in the parentheses or a Diplomacy check to gather information about the location. Each location comes with a result for a failed check, a successful check, and further information for the GM to develop the location further. The results of a failed check are learned on a successful check though it works best if you just present the information and let the PCs come up with their own conclusions about which information is correct.

LEPSTENSTALER HOUSE

(SKALAN; DC 25)

A small manor house located in one of the upscale districts in Skalan, the Lepstenstaler House is a famed restaurant known for offering unique cuisines to its guests.

Failed Check: The Lepstenstaler House boasts a unique culinary experience, offering up dishes cooked from rare creatures, some thought to be extinct. Once a year, they organize a special dinner for 1,000 gp, serving an exceptionally rare and dangerous creature which in the past has featured such wonders as dragon steaks. Its cooks come from many far corners of the world and supposedly are magically forbidden from speaking any of Vathak's native tongues. Some doubt the veracity of the restaurant's claims of serving

exotic creatures, but despite its steep prices, the nobility eagerly fills its tables.

Successful Check: A series of inquiries through what appear to be proxies and dummy shipping businesses leads to a reclusive group of pirate slavers known as the Bloody Chains. Sailing the world, they fill their hull with strange humanoids from far off lands that are sold to the secret vampire owners of the Lepstenstaler House, the Struckers. The Struckers offer their own exclusive dinners to their vampire clientele, feasting on the blood of exotic humanoids from all over the world in the renovated crypts below the manor. The restaurant above is merely a convenient front and something of sick vampire joke. The Struckers delight that the human patrons pay large sums of money to eat heavily seasoned dishes of beef, chicken, and pork.

Further Information: The Struckers, led by their patriarch Damon Strucker (LE male vampire rogue 9) jealously guard the secret of the Lepstenstaler House. They employ undead guardians to protect the crypts, including a trio of mummies and a flesh golem. Vampire spawn guard a series of prison cells where captured humanoids are fed, fattened, and sometimes even breed. Once a month, the Struckers host their dinners in the dead of night. Guests enter the crypt through a secret entrance in the garden house. Many of Skalan's elite vampire nobility attend to feast on unique delicacies.

RED ROSE MANOR

(HUNSTANVANIA; DC 22)

Rumors abound about Red Rose Manor, one of the Colonies most infamous locations. A large, sprawling manor house located in Hunstanvania, the numerous owners over its long history mysteriously disappear whenever the red roses in its gardens bloom, giving it the gruesome nickname, "the Bloody Manor."

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Failed Check: Many citizens confirm the following fact- built centuries ago over an ancient bhriota burial ground, the original owners engaged in despicable human sacrifice to gain magical power. The souls of those killed inhabit the house, trapped, reliving their torture over and over. Ghostly lights flicker in the windows and the apparitions of its blood drenched victims float through its courtyards. The manor has passed through a number of owners, all who have mysteriously vanished when the red roses bloom in the gardens and the walls weep blood.

Successful Check: Inquiries lead to a local historian, Eras Altbaum. Eras recently did extensive research on Red Rose Manor for a pair of vindari clerics. He managed to track down previous owners, verifying that they did not “disappear” but instead left quickly and quietly after experiencing strange incidents in the manor. When the red roses in the gardens bloom, the walls do weep a reddish, sappy substance that looks somewhat like blood. There is no evidence corroborating the rumors that the manor is built on any sort of burial grounds. Instead, its first owner, a rich wizard named Renald Houssman cleared a grove of ancient oak trees to build the manor.

Further Information: Renald Houssman fell in love with a dryad living in the oak grove, a love that proved false. The dryad and her sisters attempted to bewitch Renald into their plaything but failed. In his fury at the betrayal, Renald built the manor house on the grove, using its trees in the construction. With ritual magic, he bound the dryads' souls to the manor house, creating it into a sentient creature. The magic invoked severely taxed Renald and he died soon after but the manor still remains bound to him. It sees any living creatures that enter the house as intruders and reacts to expel them. The souls of the enslaved dryads manifest, causing the red roses to bloom and sap to ooze from the walls built from their trees. Only if their spirits are freed can the house truly be put to rest. Recently, a pair

of vindari clerics attempted this feat but have not been heard of in weeks. Whether they fled like so many others or have become imprisoned in the house remains a mystery.

UNDERWATER CAVES OF LAKE PELTHAGAS

(GERMALBORIA; DC 20)

Strange sights and sounds drift about the forbidding, swampy Lake Pelthagas. Few venture to this area, known as “Thu’ktulu,” meaning “evil,” in the bhriota tongue. Its waters flow a reddish color, adding to its dark reputation.

Failed Check: Local legends claim the souls of those who wandered into the swampy lake and died are forever trapped below its surface, appearing as lights to lead others to their doom. The blood of these victims turns the waters red, cursing the lake. Other strange beings lurk about the haunted shores.

Successful Check: Recently, a local druid named Drina Lapaz (N female romni druid 5) with a natural affinity for swamps dared the lake, despite its fell reputation. The reddish water is due to the large amount of algae in the lake and the lights are nothing more than swamp gas. She discovered some strange, large fishlike scales that she cannot attribute to any creature she knows of. Perhaps a large creature dwells in the lake.

Further Information: A small tribe of skum inhabits a series of caverns along the lake's northern shore. Servants of the Old Ones in Vathak's proto history, the ageless creatures spent millennia in a deep slumber. The awakening of the Old Ones revived the tribe, now greatly reduced in number, from their sleep. The scale Drina found belongs to a skum sent to out to explore. It is only a matter of time before the skum become a threat



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to nearby settlements, raiding to capture wives and sacrifices for their dark masters on altars carved from strange, alien stone.

THE SILVER TOWER (ANYWHERE IN THE COLONIES; DC 30)

Deep in the Telgotha Forest rests a single, slender tower constructed from a reflective silvery metal. No apparent doors or windows mar its seamless surface and no vegetation grapples it in a green embrace. The dense forest crowds the tower, hiding it from casual view. Many who dwell in the forest are unaware of its existence. The werewolves fear the tower, its silver surface an anathema to them.

Failed Check: The Silver Tower features in a few local stories. Some believe that it contains a great treasure while others that it is a prison for a monster. A woman spins the story of how she found the tower and a group of feylike beings brought her inside. They made her their queen but she had to remain inside the tower, its interior shrouded in neverending twilight. One day, she wished to see the outside and snuck out but when she went to return, she could not find the entrance again.

Successful Check: There is an old man, largely regarded as crazy, who claims that he visited the Silver Tower 200 years ago. His family lived in a farm near the Telgotha Forest's borders and one day while out collecting wood, he became lost. He believes he wandered for days before he came upon the tower. At his touch, a portal magically slide open and he entered into an interior much larger than what would be expected. Everything inside seemed to be fashioned from the same silvery material. He does not remember much except that he spent days inside of the tower before finding his way out. When he finally did, he discovered to his horror that the world had

changed around him and 150 years had gone by.

Further Information: The Great Race of Yith built the tower long ago on Vathak before recorded history as a research station. The tower is a prototype device to assist the Yithians in harnessing their psychic power to transfer their minds across millennia. Residue of their immense psychic energy still lingers, causing those who enter the tower to experience erratic shifts in time, either forward or backwards days, weeks, months, or even years. Its interior utilizes reality distorting technology to make it larger than could be possible from its outside appearance. Age and neglect ruined most of the equipment inside, though some of it still works, drawing alien creatures from other times and dimensions into the tower.

THE MUDERS IN TOMAINI (TOMAINI; DC 25)

Failed Check: While a few rumors swirl around about a string of grisly killings happening in Tomaini, city officials deny them. Tomaini attracts certain vagabonds by nature and it is not uncommon for people to suddenly leave town. If such a thing were occurring, certainly someone as powerful Baron Talandrel Tomaini would do something about it.

Successful Check: Talking with city officials only leads to dead ends but a series of inquiries with those spreading the rumors in Tomaini lead to an alcoholic vindari cleric, Thademus Bract. Thademus claims he travelled with a troupe of performers, the Golden Travelers of Wonder, as a spiritual advisor, though he was really as much as an outcast as them for his drinking and philandering ways. In the Colonies, and particularly Tomaini, Thademus says the troupe found great success, performing for nobles in both Skalan

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and Hunstanvania. When the first performer disappeared, no one thought too much about it as old Klaus, the "Lion Claw," had been talking about retiring for years. But then there was a second and a third unexplained disappearance. The troupe found the body of the fourth person, Yolontra Songbow, mutilated almost beyond recognition, having been stabbed multiple times. The troupe's leader, Petra Golden, refused to go to the authorities with the murder, even after the fifth and sixth bodies were found. She feared if word got out, people would stop coming to see their shows. After that, Thademus left the Golden Travelers of Wonder, fearing his own life was in danger.

Further Information: Thademus is known as a drunkard, who only discusses what he has seen when in his cups. Unable to function normally, Thademus is bound to the brothels and taverns of Tomaini, always looking over his shoulder. What he says is true, however. A few months before arriving in the Colonies, the troupe picked up a wretched cambion named Termine Hurgle to do laundry and other menial tasks. Termine quickly bonded with the troupe but she is a jealous creature, quickly interpreting any slight as utter rejection. When in a rage, her eidolon, the notorious being known as the Ten Knife King, enacts gruesome vengeance on her behalf. So far, no one in the troupe know is behind the killings or even suspects the lowly Termine being capable of such power and wickedness. Petra Golden, the troupe leader, does her best to try and cover the disappearances and murders, bullying and intimidating the other performers into staying quiet while she tries to identify the murderer. Tensions are beginning to mount within the troupe and Petra, herself, is slowly becoming unhinged by the recent events. Meanwhile, Termine goes about her business as usual, killing those she feels have betrayed her friendship.



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Adventuring in the Colonies

The Colonies is a unique region amongst the six that compose Vathak in that it has yet to be ravaged by the awakening of the Old Ones. Instead, it acts as a refuge from those fleeing the destruction occurring on the mainland. The Colonies, therefore, serves as a stepping stone region for players and GMs alike to transition from traditional romantic gothic horror to the more prevalent cosmic and survival horror affecting the mainland. In the Colonies, classic monsters like vampires and werewolves are the main threat with the emerging dominance of the Church of the Unspeakable Masses standing in for the elements of cosmic horror.

The Shadows over Vathak Campaign Guide contains an adventure generator to assist GMs with crafting suitable adventures that fit the various horror themes of Vathak. Listed below are some other broad ideas based on the central conflicts within the region.

GOthic HORROR

The Colonies lends itself well for adventures based in the gothic horror tradition due to the plethora of vampires, werewolves, and other foul creatures that have sought refuge on the island.

Various vampire clans live in secrecy throughout the Colonies but congregate in higher numbers in the more populated areas such as Skalan.

Their numbers greatly reduced by the Old Ones, the vampires attempt to hide amongst the general

populace. However, the clans have different ideas about how they should live amongst humans with some infiltrating high levels of society to gain power and influence in an effort to take control of the island. Urban bases adventures could involve the PCs infiltrating Skalan's high society while they uncover the truth about the vampires' plot to take control of the city as well as explorations of the sewers and catacombs below the city streets.

The werewolves fled to the Colonies after the Old Ones destroyed their vampire masters, finding suitable hunting grounds within the dreaded Telgotha Forest from which they can attack various settlements. While the natural werewolves live in packs, they leave a number of afflicted lycanthropes in their path. These wayward children find little acceptance with werewolf society. Left to fend for themselves, they engage in murderous sprees before being finally hunted down. Often, these werewolves do not realize what they have become, making identifying them difficult. Adventures in this vein find the PCs often investigating possible cases of werewolf attacks and using their skill to identify the perpetrator. Of course, there are sadists, not all of them human, who mask their activities under the pretense of werewolf activities to throw others off of their scent.

Foreign ships arrive daily in the massive port city of Skalan, allowing GMs to inject classic horror monsters from other cultures. A cargo ship might carry the sarcophagus of an ancient mummy bound for one of Skalan's museums or the home of a private collector. Red caps or other murderously mischievous fey arrive in a ship missing its crew. Now loose in the city, they run amok unless someone can find and stop them. A displaced rakshasa finds the decadent nobility to its liking and decides to make its home in Hunstanvania, influencing the elite into greater and greater acts of debauchery.

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SURVIVAL HORROR

Though inclined more towards classic horror, the Colonies can still support its fair share of survival horror.

In a survival horror campaign, the vampires and werewolves have less of an interest in staying hidden or it could be that a new, more aggressive group, has arrived. Vampires and werewolves make excellent antagonists in a survival horror campaign as their very attacks have the ability to transform others into monsters like them. Witnessing the claw marks on a friend or ally can send your PCs into a panic, forcing them to make tough moral choices. In these adventures, the forces of darkness threaten to overwhelm the smaller settlements. Additionally, social creatures like the vampires enjoy throwing high profile parties, parties where the “guests” are the main course.

Pirates and marauders still plague the Colonies.

When desperate, they often turn to raiding the coastal towns. In the past, the island staved off an invasion of vindari warships and the dreaded Crimson Wave pirate fleet. Perhaps the souls of these would be conquerors do not rest easy, rising once again as undead to resume their conquest of the Colonies. Skeletons man cannons while zombies shuffle about under the commands of their wight captains.

In Tomaini, the Ten Knife King stalks the streets.

An eidolon made from daggers, this creature slays at the behest of its master, a jealous cambion named Termine Hurgle. A malevolent and pitiful creature, Termine targets those she feels have slighted her. This scenario can be played as a psychological horror investigation where the enemy is revealed at the end or emulate classic slasher horror. In the latter, no matter how many times the PCs defeat the Ten Knife King, he keeps returning day after day to kill until they can discover who is summoning him.

COSMIC HORROR

Elements of cosmic horror exist within the Colonies.

The Church of the Unspeakable Masses continues to gain in dominance over the zealous fanaticism of the vindari's worship of the One True God. Secretly working to overthrow both the One True God and the Old Ones, the church hides its motives under a mask of civility and humanitarianism efforts. However, even its senior church members do not realize they are being manipulated by alien Mi-Go scientists. It is unclear what the Mi-Go's true purpose is and why they instruct the church members to build hideous statues of alien creatures along the coastline. The Mi-Go pose a subtler threat than the rampages of the Old Ones. The PCs will have to investigate the church, slowly peeling the layers away until they find the true masters behind the Mi-Go's plot.

The Old Ones are coming! Just because the Colonies serve as a refuge it does not mean that the Spawns of the Old Ones have turned a blind eye (or thousands of them) towards the Colonies. As a GM, you have many options to set up how the Spawns of the Old Ones begin to appear on the island. Perhaps it is as innocuous as aberrations arriving on a vindari ship or as dramatic as a living island Spawn of the Old Ones begins drifting towards the coast, hundreds of mutant aberrations circling its pulpy, festering flesh.



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Alternative Vampire Abilities

Based on numerous folk stories, old wives' tales, rumors, myths, and legends, many in Vathak believe that all vampires share the same abilities and weaknesses. Garlic, running water, and holy symbols keep vampires at bay, but beware as they can control the creatures of the night such as bats and wolves. Vampires ensorcell victims with their stares to feed on their blood and cannot enter a home unless invited. Scholars, and in particular, vampire hunters, know these common beliefs held about vampires are not always necessarily true.

Vampires' powers and weaknesses vary, though members of a clan usually demonstrate similar abilities. Though undead creatures, some of this variance is due to evolution, often perpetuated by the vampires themselves. Give a creature both immortality and magic and anything can happen. Another reason for differences lies within the individual becoming a vampire. It is a common misconception that one only becomes a vampire when bitten by another vampire. Wicked individuals sometimes return to unlife as vampires, whether through a curse or their own evil soul being strongly tethered to the world. These creatures display weaknesses and powers unique to them based on behaviors and events in their previous lives.

Within the Colonies, numerous clans of vampire live that have come from all different regions in Vathak. No two clans are exactly alike, displaying wide variances in their abilities based on the progenitor of that particular clan. This makes tracking down and destroying these

fiends difficult as what harms one vampire may not hurt another.

Below is listed a number of variants to the standard vampire template found in the Pathfinder Bestiary. It is designed as a toolkit to allow you to create truly unique vampires, whether it is for a single vampire or to show the differences between various clans. There is no rule for how many weaknesses and powers you can swap out, but the more you do, the more difficult it will be for your players to defeat the creatures. In this case, it is recommended to let your players slowly learn about the unique vampires and research the appropriate methods to defeat them. Additionally, it is important to think of the vampires' personalities when swapping out the various abilities. If the vampires' demonstrate a weakness for music instead of running water, then why is that? Use the vampires' abilities to assist in building their personality, background, and mannerisms.

VARIANT DEFENSES

DR 10/magic and cold iron: People who become vampires due to a curse from a powerful hag or perhaps as a bargain struck with a malevolent fey tend to share these creatures vulnerability to cold iron instead of silver.

DR 10/good aligned and silver; Immune fire; Resist cold 10: Powerful, evil outsiders that curse individuals with vampirism also impart them with their own potent defenses.

DR 10/adamantine: Certain curses place a person's soul into a new body, sometimes new constructed, to live on in undeath much like a golem.

DEFENSIVE ABILITIES

Swarm Shape (Su): When a vampire is reduced to 0 hp, it transforms into a swarm (bat, centipede,



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or rat, see Pathfinder Bestiary) and attempts to escape. For every 4 HD the vampire possesses, it gains an additional swarm (an 8 HD vampire would transform into two separate swarms, for example). The swarms do not have to be the same creature type and can be attacked. At least one swarm must reach the vampire's coffin home within 2 hours or the vampire will be utterly destroyed. Once at rest, the vampire is helpless. It regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round. This ability replaces the gaseous form portion of the standard vampire's defensive abilities.

VAMPIRE WEAKNESSES

The weaknesses listed below can replace any of the weaknesses listed in the standard vampire template. Choices should be tied into a vampire's personality and back story, offering a glimpse into the creature's history and current motivations. A weakness that makes a vampire recoil works the same as described for holy symbols and mirrors in the Pathfinder Bestiary.

- Cannot pass within 30 ft. of certain buildings such as a church, cemetery, house with a prominently displayed holy symbol, or similar building important in the creature's former life.
- Recoils at the sight of fire, such as a torch thrust in its direction.
- Vulnerable to a particular spell or school of magic.
- Recoils in the presence of a particular animal.
- Cannot move around during particular hours of the day such as the hour of its original death.
- Recoils at the sight of people with a particular feature- eye, hair, and/or skin color.
- Recoils when hearing a particular sound, piece of music, or words spoken in a certain language.
- Cannot feed on people of a certain

gender and/or with particular features.

- Recoils as the result of a certain Performance skill check equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the vampires HD + Wis modifier.
- Cannot feed on people of a particular alignment.
- Gains the old or young template during certain dates of the month.
- Recoils at the scent of certain smells.
- Requires its coffin to be made from a very specific and rare material.
- Must feed on a particular race or subtype.
- Is vulnerable (taking 50% extra damage) during a particular hour, day or month.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Another effective way to make vampires unique is to alter their special attacks. Below are listed new special attacks. It is recommended to change an existing special attack with a new one instead of adding to the vampire's already potent array of abilities. Recommendations for the special attack to be changed are listed in parenthesis. "Universal" indicates changing an attack of your choice.

Blindness/Deafness (Su): A vampire's stare is a dangerous thing. The vampire can target an individual creature and it must succeed on a DC Will save equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the vampire's HD + Cha modifier or instantly be effected as though by a blindness/deafness spell (caster level 12th). The ability inflicts both blindness and deafness. This ability replaces the dominate ability.

Undead Lord (Sp): Certain vampires master control of the undead. These vampires can 3/times a day cast animate dead using $\frac{1}{2}$ their HD as the caster level. This is replaces the children of the night ability.

Blood Spray (Su): Not all vam-



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pires completely consume the blood they drain, instead keeping a reservoir to attack enemies. Every 1d4 rounds, a vampire can spray blood at creatures in a 15 ft. cone. The affected creatures must make a DC Fortitude save equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the vampire's HD + Cha modifier or become nauseated for 1d4 + the vampire's Charisma modifier rounds. Creatures that make their save are instead sickened for 1 round. This is a universal ability.

Unholy Stigmata (Su): Particularly vicious vampires with quarrels against the gods express their displeasure by secreting their own life force as a move action. Activating stigmata causes bleed damage equal to half the vampire's hit dice and this bleed damage is not halted by curative magic. While the unholy stigmata is bleeding, the vampire gains a profane bonus. Each time a vampire activates its unholy stigmata, it decides if the bonus equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ its hit dice applies to attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, Armor Class, caster level checks, or saving throws; to change what the bonus applies to, the vampire must deactivate and reactivate his stigmata. This is a universal ability.

Unholy Aura (Su): Renouncing all gods, these vampires emit an uncontrollable aura of violent energy. These creatures deal 1d6 points of negative energy for every 5 hit dice they possess with a 10 ft. radius. The negative energy can only be used to harm living creatures and cannot heal creatures with a negative energy affinity. This is a universal ability.

Foul Blood (Su): Attacking these vampires releases an especially virulent blood. When struck by a piercing/slashing weapon, the spray of blood deals 1d4 points of unholy damage for every 4 hit dice the vampire possesses. Additionally, an affected creature must make a DC Fortitude save equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the vampire's hit dice + Charisma modifier or become sickened for a number of rounds equal to the vampire's hit dice. This is a universal ability.

Blood Drain (Su): Not all vampires feed on their victim's Constitution. These alternative blood drain abilities work as the standard vampire template except they target a different ability score than Constitution.

Strength: The vampire gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls for 10 minutes.

Dexterity: The vampire gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC and a +1 bonus to CMD and Reflex saves for 10 minutes.

Intelligence: The vampire gains telepathy and can use detect thoughts as a spell like ability for 10 minutes.

Wisdom: The vampire gains a +1 bonus to channel resistance and Will saves for 1 hour.

Charisma: The DC of the vampire's dominate ability and any mind-affecting spells or spell-like abilities is increased by 1 for 10 minutes.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Not all vampires share the same special qualities. Sometimes it is the environment that shapes their special qualities or it could be tied in with their past. It is recommended to change an existing special quality with a new one.

Change Shape (Su): A vampire can use change shape to assume the form of the base elements, as elemental body II. This ability modifies a vampire's change shape ability.

Fly (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can summon forth a pair of spectral batwings allowing it to fly (caster level 5th) as per the spell at will indefinitely. A vampire with this ability only assumes gaseous form when reduced to 0 hit points in combat.

Moonlit Translucence: Under the light of the moon, the vampire appears almost translucent, granting an additional +4 racial bonus to Stealth checks.



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No Footsteps: The vampire does not leave behind any footsteps.

Stench of the Grave: The stench of rot and decay clings about the vampire. Creatures with 10 ft. of the vampire must make a DC Fortitude save equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the vampire's HD + Cha modifier or become sickened by the smell for 1d4 rounds. A creature that makes its save is unaffected by the same vampire's smell of the grave ability for 24 hours.

ABILITY SCORES

Unlike most other undead creatures, the vampire species shows the ability to evolve over generations to hunt the prey in their particular regions, leading to differences in their physical and mental attributes.

Brutes: Muscular brutes lack the intelligence and finesse of other vampires, making up for it in raw physical power and fiery personalities.

Str +10, **Dex** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** -2, **Cha** +6

Stalkers: Stalkers hunt more like animals, savagely attacking their prey without warning, lacking the suave grace of more refined vampires.

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Int** +4, **Cha** +2

VAMPIRE POWERS WITH AGE (OPTIONAL RULES)

As an optional rule, a vampire can become more powerful with age. In Vathak, particularly old vampires became Vampire Lords, siring numerous scions that inherited their unique traits. The Old Ones awakening destroy most of the Vampire Lords but it is believed that some still lurk, hiding away in crumbling ruins awaiting their day to return to power.

The easiest way to represent an older, more powerful vampire is to simply apply the advanced creature template. However, it is this author's opinion that the advanced template does not scale well (offering much more to lower CR creatures than

higher ones) plus it is boring. However, if you use it in conjunction with some of the below guidelines, it should allow you to create truly fearsome foes.

DEFENSES

As a vampire becomes older, reduce the number of weapons that bypass the vampire's damage reduction or change "magic" to "epic."

WEAKNESSES

Decrease the number of weaknesses a vampire has and/or increase the DC Will save for the vampire to avoid recoiling from certain objects.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Applying the advanced creature template will increase many of the DCs for a vampire's special attacks.

Blood Drain (Su): This works like the standard blood drain ability but either the benefits to the vampire are doubled or the vampire deals ability to Constitution and one additional ability score.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

Dragon Form (Su): In addition to the vampire's standard change shape ability, the vampire can assume a dragon form, as per form of the dragon II.

Killing Gaseous Cloud (Su): The vampire's gaseous form acts as a cloudkill spell (caster level 9th).

Frightful Presence (Ex): The vampire gains the frightful presence ability which functions as detailed in the Universal Monster Rules.



New Monsters

VOLWEARM

The creature's wolflike head reaches forward on a thin, long neck uncoiling from its long, cylindrical and segmented fur covered body.

VOLWEARM CR 3

XP 800

NE Alignment Large Magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 34 (4d10+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., **burrow** 40 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks extended reach, sweeping headbutt

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20 (cannot be tripped)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +2 (+6 scent tracking); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Survival when tracking by scent

ECOLOGY

Environment cold or temperate forests

Organization solitary or pair

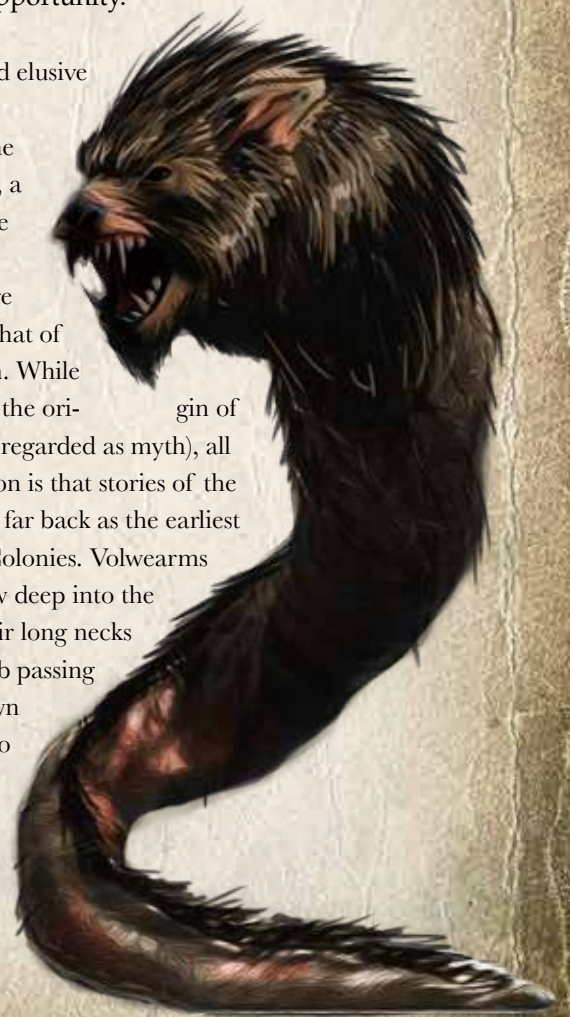
Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Extended Reach (Ex) A volwearm's long neck rests coiled under its head and between its body. As a move action, a volwearm can uncoil its neck, gaining a 15 ft. reach. It is another move action to recoil the neck. Because a volwearm's neck is sensitive and vulnerable while extended, all critical hits against it gain a +4 circumstance bonus to confirm.

Sweeping Head (Ex) Volwearms utilize their long necks to avoid multiple creatures swarming them. As a full round action, a volwearm can extend its neck and make a bull rush attempt against all opponent's within its 15 ft. reach. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The rare and elusive volwearm stalks the depths of the Telgotha Forest, a hideous creature combining the predatory nature of a wolf with that of a massive worm. While scholars debate the origin of the beast (often regarded as myth), all they can agree on is that stories of the volwearm go as far back as the earliest settlers of the Colonies. Volwearms prefer to burrow deep into the earth, using their long necks to suddenly grab passing prey to pull down into their hole to be devoured. In combat, volwearms



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attack with their sweeping headbutt to prevent enemies from swarming them. They then try to pick off a creature, one at a time. Instinctively aware of the vulnerability of their long necks, a volwearm's typical attack pattern involves extending its neck to attack a foe on one round and then recoiling it the next. Incredibly fast creatures for their size, Volwearms prefer hit and run tactics, using their reach ability to kill opponents. Generally solitary hunters, volwearms seek out a mate during mating season which occurs once every few years and never travel in packs.

VAMPLING

Two stubby legs support a short, corpse pale, bloated body; the creature's red eyes set in a batlike face with a mouth full of sharp teeth.

VAMPLING CR 1/2

XP 200

NE Alignment Small Aberration

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

hp 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity; DR 2/magic or silver; Resist cold 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses positive energy

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 10 ft. (Poor)

Melee bite +3 (1d4 plus latch)

Special Attacks blood suck, gang-up

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +0)

At will—bleed (DC 10), death-watch

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +0; **CMB** -1 (+3 when latched); **CMD** 12

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +4, Fly +0, Stealth +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common

SQ negative energy affinity, positive energy death throes

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization pair, mob (3-12), infestation (13-20)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Suck (Ex) A vamppling can suck blood from a grappled opponent; if the vamppling establishes a grapple with its latch ability, it drains blood, dealing 1 points of Constitution damage. The vamppling heals 1 hit point or gains 1 temporary hit point for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its full normal hit points) each round it drains blood.

Gang-up (Ex) Vampplings work together to feast on larger foes, ganging up on their prey to feast. Up to two vampplings can utilize their latch ability on a medium size creature. The vampplings gain a +4 bonus to the CMD. An additional two vampplings can latch onto a target per size category larger than medium.

Latch (Ex) When a vamppling hits with its bite attack, its small teeth bit into the target effectively grappling its prey. The vamppling loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12. A vamppling has a +4 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it latches on. If its prey manages to win a grapple



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check or Escape Artist check against it, the vampling is removed but deals 1 point of damage when it is removed due to its teeth.

Positive Energy Death Throes (Ex) Partially as a result of failed experimentation, vamplings are dangerously affected by positive energy and are damaged by it the same as undead creatures. A vampling who is brought below 0 hit points due to positive energy immediately explodes, dealing 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage to any creature in the same and adjacent squares.

Ivar von Houlsmann's experiments into creating a new, stronger form of vampire yielded the creatures known as vamplings. Not undead, but infused with vampire blood, these diminutive creatures share some vampire traits, such as their need to feed on the life force of the living. Considered a failure due to their small size and weakness, Ivar left the vamplings deep in the Telgotha

Forest to die. However, he failed to realize that the vamplings breed rapidly. Stupid creatures, they form small colonies, attacking any living creature they come across. Vampplings display no sense of tactics, preferring to swarm over larger opponents. Thus vampplings tend to live short, brutal lives, most dying within a few years. They are beginning to expand further outside of the Telgotha Forest. If they were to infest a ship leaving the Colonies, it would be dire news indeed.



Game Master's Guide to the Colonies

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shadows over Vathak

A Campaign Setting Book of Lovecraftian Survival Horror



Welcome to the world of Shadows over Vathak, a realm where the abominations known as the Old Ones seek to destroy humanity. It is a world of darkness and despair, where even the light of the One True God is often corrupted and twisted to serve sinister ends. As players, you may be heroes representing a bright point of light in the encroaching shadows of evil or you might just be survivors, living day by day however you can, survival your only goal. In Vathak, even joy is mingled with the bitter ashes of despair and hopelessness.

Whether you were born in the Colonies or arrived some time ago, you know that the Colonies are a unique region amongst the six that form the land called "Vathak." A large island named Skalan bordering the Dark Sea, the Colonies serve as a link between Vathak and the foreign lands beyond the sea. Trade is the lifeblood of the Colonies- in particular, the large port city known as Skalan from which the island gets its name. Additional towns dot its coastlines while heavy trees form its inhospitable interior.