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**DCC
RPG**



Black Sun Deatherawl

Written by James Mac George



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Lastly, the sincerest of apologies to Gustave Doré.

To hear what life under the Black Sun sounds like, follow this link:
www.tinyurl.com/blacksundeathcrawl

Time is Entropy

Gravity is Death

The Cursed Creed



In the Beginning...

There was the nothing.



Then came the Twin Suns

Light Sun

Black Sun

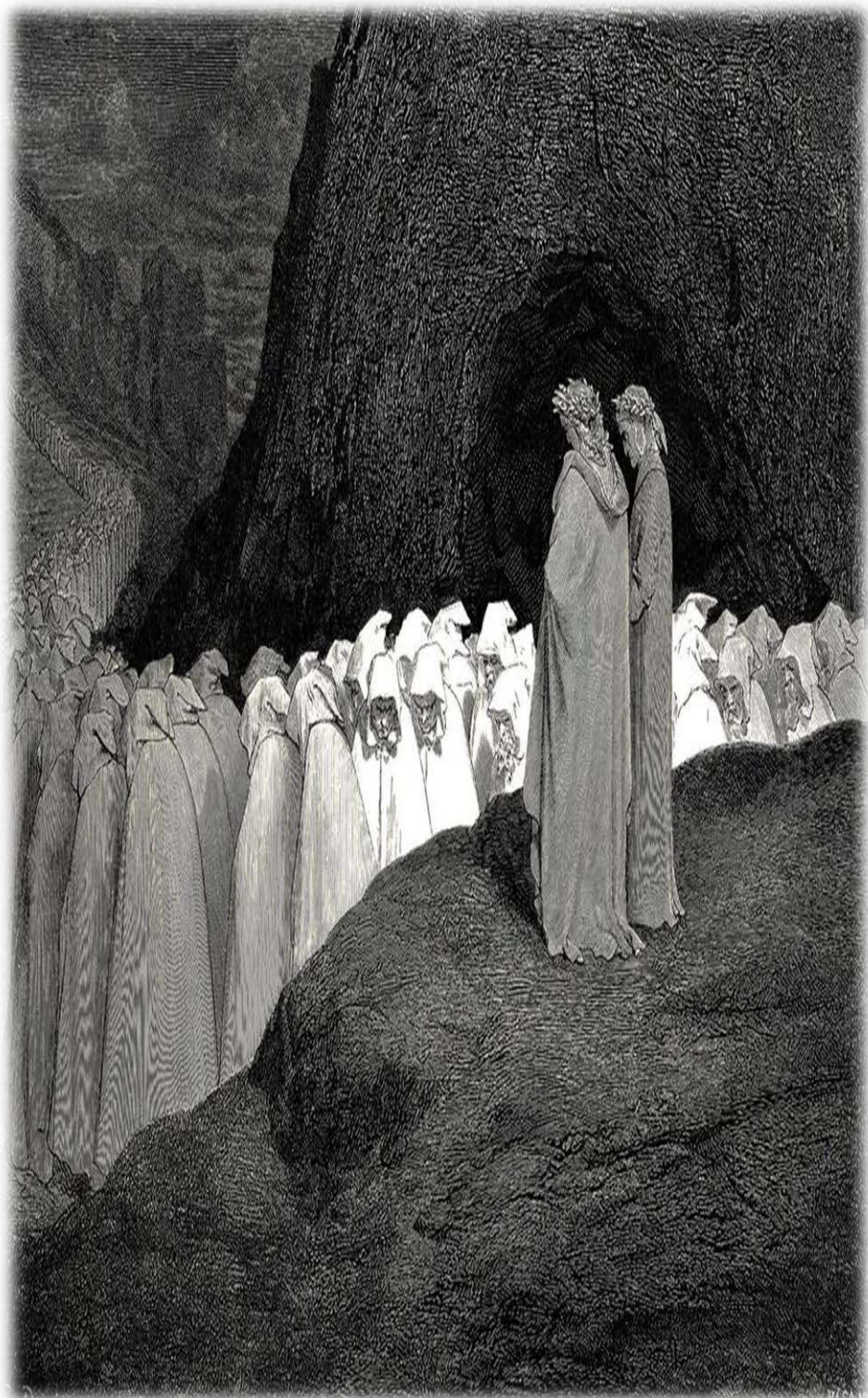
And where they met there was life



But the Black Sun did ascend, and
bring with it suffering eternal

The door between the All and the
Other slammed shut

All that was good fled in the face of
Terror Itself, hoping to trap the
Black Sun within a prison of
existence



Now there is a grinding certainty to
life

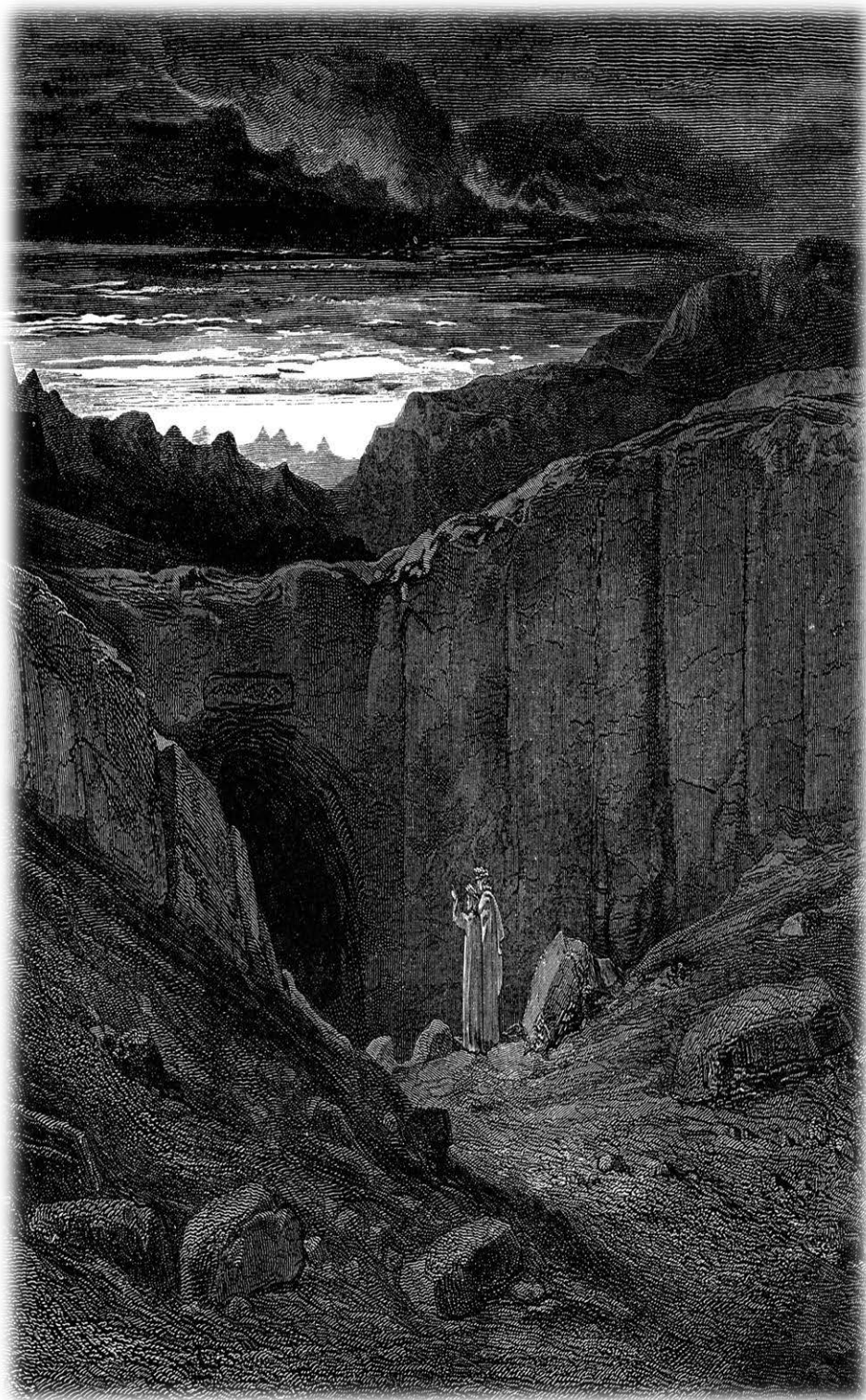
Day over day

Those that stand out are measured
and worn down

Eroded by the unrelenting pressure
of existence, until only a smooth
surface remains

Even memory fades, yet existence
continues on

Ultimately undisturbed



Now we, The Cursed, are
condemned to this bleak existence

We measure days in terms of length
and depth

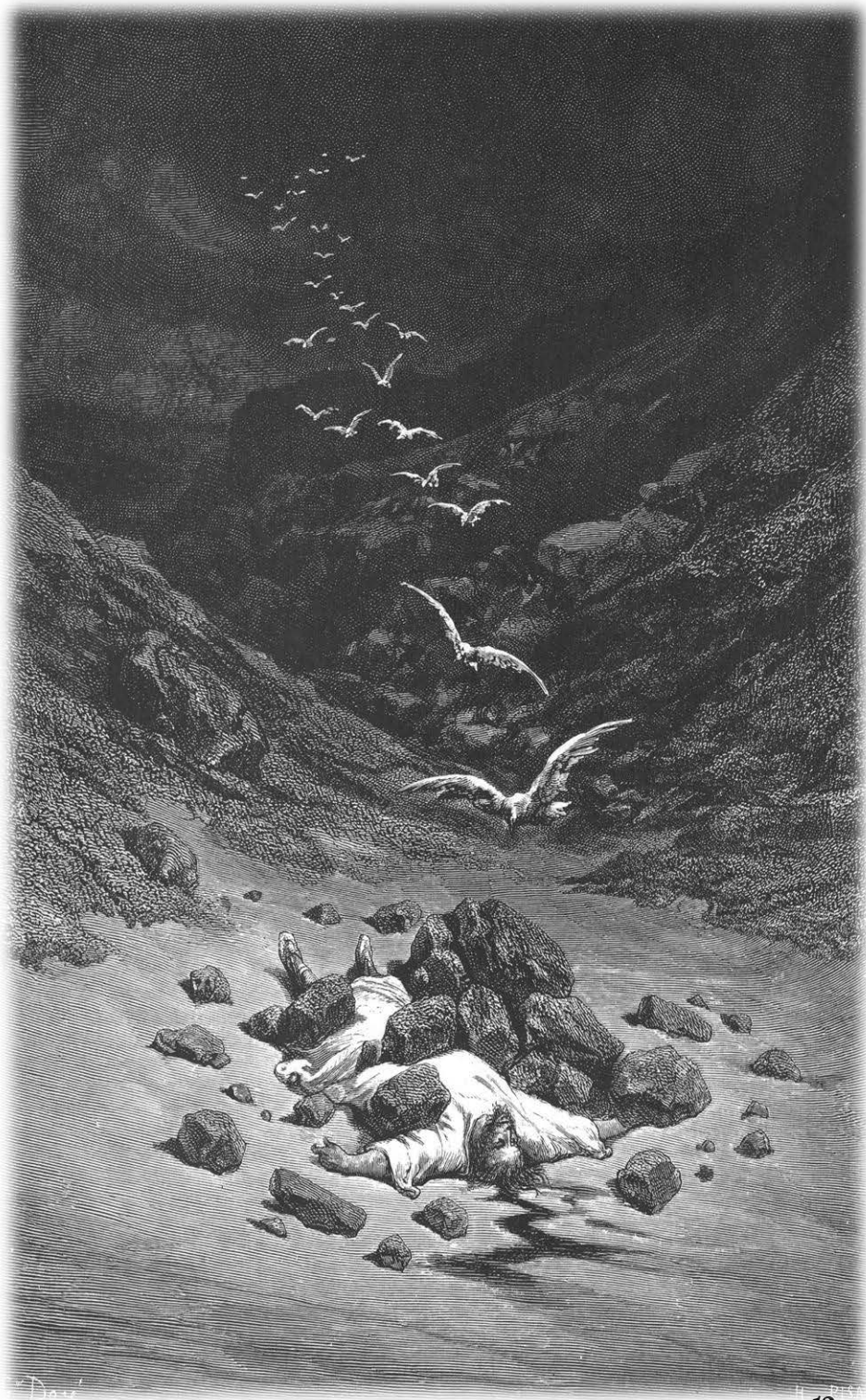
The lengths we are willing to go to
survive

The depths to which we will sink

There used to be Life

Now there is only the Black Sun and
Its Black and Terrible Thoughts

We dig deep to escape Their Wrath



The charred remains of What Was
surround us

Scattered like spoiled meat upon
this darkling plain

As the Black Sun looks down with
sanguine menace

Once we had names

Once we were people

Now we are only The Cursed

Pray for us



The World

The Black Sun squats in
the center of a black and
broken land, Its baleful
gaze so strong that It has
pulled reality itself
around it. Now It shines
down upon everything,
crouching in the center of
a hollow universe.

Day by day, the All is
constricted, pulling
tighter and tighter
around the Sun, and one
day All will be pulled
within it, finally ending
Its Eternal Evil.

The only living beings that
survived Its Ascendance
were those able to escape
to the cool darkness of
the Underground.
Condemned to eternal
suffering by the Black
Sun, they dig and hide
and try and escape
Wrath.

Light is an inexorable
force, though, and the
Black Sun's light has
been chasing the
survivors ever since.

The unknown irony of
the Cursed's existence is
that their digging is
loosening the bolts to the
prison door - the
Firmament that traps the
Black Sun is weakening.

Day by day, the beast
rattles the cage, and the
Black Sun's Unholy Light
worms its way closer and
closer to freedom as the
last layers of the earth
are corrupted.

Soon, it will be free.

And yet the Cursed dig.

Not because they hope to
escape...

Not because they hope to
find a better life...

Not because they hope...

But rather, because they
have forgotten what it
means to do anything
but dig, fight and flee.

Life itself can be a curse.

Black Thoughts Init +6; claws +3 (1d6, special: Will save DC 10 or overwhelmed by suicidal thoughts, incapacitated for 1d6 rounds) melee; AC 13; HD 2d6; MV 60'; ACT 1d20; SP noncorporeal (able to move through solid objects not made of Blackstone), 50% chance of Surprise; SV Fort 0, Ref +4; Will 0

Black Thoughts worm and slither, sliding through the cracks. They can be driven off, and sometimes even destroyed. Thin and flimsy things, they flutter and shiver, preferring to take their enemies unaware, while they sleep or are otherwise distracted.

Terrible Thoughts Init +0; fists +7 (1d12) melee; AC 24; HD irrelevant; MV 5'; ACT 2d12; SP indestructible; SV Fort +12, Ref -10, Will +5

Terrible Thoughts break and smash. Huge and Solid, they cannot go where the Cursed have not already been to loosen the earth for their passage. They cannot be destroyed, only escaped.

Oblitus Omega

There is a tale, told in hushed whispers among the rare gatherings of the Cursed. A tale of time's event horizon, when the Multiverse will succumb to heat death, leaving nothing but the cold dead space of the Black Sun's inevitable victory – Ultima Null. Through this frigid expanse, they say, floats Oblitus Omega, the Last God.

Driven to insanity and desperate to escape his isolation, they say, he drew upon all his remaining power and hurled himself backwards in time.

Ricocheting across multiple timelines, his madness infected time itself and causes anomalies in causation whenever he intersects with reality. Someday, the legends say, he will shatter time itself, and the Cursed will be free.

There is a 10% chance per half hour of game play that Oblitus Omega will manifest.

The first time the group encounters Oblitus Omega, he is at his nadir, having encountered the group twice before, as he perceives time. A mewling wretch, blackened and raw, bits of divinity fall away as he fights like ashes from the flame.

He begs and pleads for the characters to stop hurting him, wailing that they are killing him, though they have never met.

Oblitus Omega (1st Encounter) Init -1; fists +1 (1d4 x 2) melee; AC 10; HD 1d10; MV 20'; Act d16; SP Summon Monster; SV Fort -2, Ref -1, Will +5

The next encounter, both the group and Oblitus Omega will recognize each other, as this is the second encounter for both, but from different directions as they perceive time.

Oblitus Omega (2nd Encounter) Init +1; fists +3 (1d6 x 2) melee; AC 14; HD 2d10; MV 30'; Act d24; SP Summon Monster; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5

In the final encounter, Oblitus Omega is still flush with power, a hypercolor caul of liquid time enveloping him. He does not recognize the party, and can be negotiated with. However, if the group does not fight him after doing battle twice before, Time Itself is fractured, which splinters the reality prison, freeing the Black Sun and destroying all life.

Oblitus Omega (3rd Encounter) Init +3; fists +1 (1d10 x 2) melee; AC 16; HD 4d10; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP Summon Monster; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +5

Teeth Init +2; bite +1 (1d4) melee; AC 14; HD 1d10; MV 30'; Act d20; SV Fort +2, Ref+4, Will +0

No one is sure what these creatures are, or where they came from. Perhaps they are another foul minion of the Black Sun, although they do not seem to work in tandem with the Black and Terrible Thoughts. Perhaps they are some sort of opportunistic interdimensional predator, drawn to the stench of universal carrion.

Regardless of their origin, they live in the darkness, unseen save for their massive set of teeth. Packs of these foul beasts (1d6) frequently can be found feasting on the carcasses of the fallen, but have been known to strike at the unwary.

Slaves Init +0; fists +1 (1d4) melee; AC 10; HD 1d6; MV 20'; Act d20; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0

Under the best of circumstances, the line between sanity and what lies beyond is razor thin. The oppressive yoke of the Black Sun skews that line, and even the most sure-footed can lose their way. Slaves believe that the only way they can be free of the curse of existence is to release the Black Sun from its prison. They believe they must dig, not to escape, but to crack the foundations of the All's mortar so their God may escape.

Direct exposure to the light of the Black Sun causes agony and death, stretched into infinity by the weight of its Thoughts.

The Black Sun is far too sadistic to simply allow Death to come so gently, however. Before Death comes physical and mental deformity. The Black Light worms its way inside everything, corrupting what it does not destroy.

If a character is exposed to the Black Light, roll 1d4 on the following chart, adding +1 for every additional sixty seconds (six rounds) of exposure

Black Light Exposure Corruption Chart

1. Migraine: Exposure to light brighter than a lantern causes excruciating pain, -1 to initiative for 1d6 hours.
2. Muscle Melt: Some muscle mass turns to liquid, -1 to Personality, -1d3 to Strength
3. Cave Blind: Eyes turn milky and full of cataracts, -4 Agility.
4. Skinscab: Skin becomes scaly and scabrous, -1d4 to Personality for 1d4 days, after which scabs fall off revealing skin colored: 1. Fiery Red 2. Ebon Jet 3. Bone White 4. Pus Yellow.
5. Extended Limbs: Muscles lose tensile strength as they are stretched along lengthened bone. Gain 2d4 inches in height, lose 1d6 Strength.
6. Radsick: Nausea, Headache, hair falls out over 1d2 weeks. -2 Stamina, -2 Personality. Permanent.
7. Thought Infection: Overwhelmed by crushing depression. Each day, make a Will Save (DC 12) or lose 1 point of Hope.
8. Hell Symphony: Unceasing cacophony prevents sleep. Fort Save (DC 13) daily or lose 1d2 points of randomly determined physical stat.
9. Quadrupedal: Characters limbs are twisted so they bend the wrong way. They must move around on all fours, scuttling like a crab: +1d3 to Agility, -1d8 Personality.
10. Wormtongue: Tongue becomes metasentient and begins communicating with the player (note player, not character) via notes from the judge, prophesying doom.

11. Skinseal: the character's skin begins to grow, gradually sealing over all orifices. The eyes are the first to go, followed by the nose, mouth and finally the pores of the skin. The character may use a sharp object to cut open their orifices, but suffer a permanent reduction of 1 hit point as they continually cut themselves in order to remain functional.
12. Liquid Brain: A part of the character's brain liquefies and runs from their nose and mouth, -1d8 Intelligence. If the liquid can be collected and ingested, regain the Intelligence, but only until it is passed from the system via urine, at which point it may be collected again, ad infinitum.
13. Limbwither: A randomly determined limb shrivels and falls off over the course of 1d6 hours, causing a loss of one half (rounded down) of the character's Strength (if arm) or Agility (if leg), spread evenly across that timeframe.
14. Shrinking Skin: The skin shrinks around the body, causing blinding pain as it slowly pulls and finally tears over the course of a week, causing 1d6 points of Stamina loss. For every 2 points of Strength above 10, add plus 1 to the roll. Immersion in water for at least one hour a day will make the skin elastic enough to avoid this consequence.
15. Devolution: The character devolves into a race of its ancestry (1d4: 1. Dwarf 2. Elf 3. Human 4. Halfling) and receives all the appropriate abilities (if Human, gain two levels). They also become overwhelmed with grief as they truly understand their plight for the first time. -6 penalties to all rolls going forward.



Truths

Identity is Irrelevant in the Face of Oblivion

**Characters have no
names, no races. They
are only the Cursed.**

Only the Strong Survive

**Roll 4d6 and drop your
lowest die when
determining your
attributes.**

**Knowledge
Has no
Meaning in a
Fallen World**

There are no Wizards.

**Possessions
Have No
Value in an
Impermanent
World**

There are no Thieves.

**If There Is a
Higher
Power, It
Does Not
Care**

There are no Clerics.

Life is Endless Conflict

**All Characters start as
1st level Warriors with
no equipment.**

Corruption is Inherent to Our Nature

**Upon creation, each
character should roll
1d6 for Black Light
Corruption. If they roll
a 6, take the result and
roll again.**

Entropy is Absolute

Each half hour of real time game play, each player rolls a cumulative 1d2 on the Black Light Corruption Chart as Black Light seeps into the earth (1d2 after the first half hour, 2d2 after the second, etc). Attributes bottom out at 3, except Hope, which can only drop below 3 by choice (see below).

Existence is Random and Without Meaningful Purpose

**During the Entropy
Roll, if the die comes
up 1, gain a level.**

Any Respite from Reality is Temporary

Blackrock is a rare metal that can hold back the rays of the Black Sun for longer than normal earth (approximately 6 hours). Normal, solid earth only provides 1 hour of resistance. Six hour rest restores HP equal to the character's Stamina attribute score, and 1 randomly determined stat point (never exceeding the original total), 1 hour 1/6 of that amount, but with no stat regeneration.

Everyone Digs Their Own Grave

**Anyone with a 0
Strength modifier can
dig 5 cubic feet per
hour. For every point
of Strength modifier,
add (or subtract) 2
cubic feet.**

There is No Luck. Only Hope can Save Us, and It is Finite

**Rather than a Luck Attribute,
there is Hope, which may be
burned in the same manner
as Luck. However, Hope does
not regenerate. If the
character's Hope reaches
zero, they have given up
utterly and commit suicide,
finding peace at last.**

Cull the Weak

Characters may steal Hope from another character. In order to do so, the player should pass the judge a note, indicating what they will do to another character in order to do so. This can be something as simple as stealing their food in the middle of the night (1 point) to tripping another character as they flee to allow them a greater chance of escape (6 points). The amount of Hope stolen depends on the action taken, the description given, and the discretion of the judge.

Note: Characters with Hope scores of 3 or less may not have their Hope stolen. The final 3 points may only be burned by choice.

**We Are
Exceptional
Only in the
Manner In
Which We
Choose to
Exit This
World**

**Mighty deeds of arms only trigger
if the character is burning his
final point of Hope.**

Only We Can Choose When the Suffering Ends

When a character's hit points fall below zero, they leave the game for one round, before being returned to life, all hit points restored. They may not roll another character, and must roll 1d6 on the Black Sun Corruption Chart.

Only when their Hope attribute reaches 0 may they actually perish.



The Curse

No one knows how long it has been since the Black Sun ascended, crushing the surface to a deathly smooth plane of despair. Since that time existence has suffered from a rolling apocalypse as the light from the Black Sun has wormed its way through the earth, down through the nigh-infinite sewers and dungeons and caves, bringing death and despair to all reality.

Perhaps you are one of the few who were born on the surface, or perhaps you were born underground. It no longer matters to you, if it ever did. Your life has been worn down to its most essential elements – fighting when you must, hiding when you can, searching for food and water, and digging. Always digging.

You travel with others that come and go as the whims of fate dictate, and your lives have been measured in screams and blood and dirt. It has been ages since you've eaten, and you've forgotten when you last tasted water. You allow yourself a brief indulgence to think wistfully that, in the Time Before, the lack of food and water would have debilitated, or even killed you.

Now, though, it just brings torment as you suffer from dehydration and starvation without the release of death. You have the barest recollection of something called sleep, but the word has no meaning anymore, and it slips from your mind, unable to find purchase.

Your crooked, calloused fingers push, then pull you along, the earth sliding around you, and you can sense the rest of your group burrowing nearby. Suddenly, you feel your hands break through and you feel the air upon them. For a moment, you are consumed by raw terror and draw back – open space means Black Light means pain. Timidly, you test the open space before you with the very tip of your finger, but feel nothing. Joints pop and muscles stretch as you emerge from the earth, naked and shivering. The earth collapses behind you, swallowing your tunnels, but you hardly notice. Slowly, your center of gravity adjusts, and for the first time in ages, you stand straight. Your mind struggles to take in the size of this cavern as your eyes roll back and forth, unaccustomed to such scope. You wince at the light provided by softly glowing rocks, scattered throughout

the cave walls. Distracted, you do not notice a group of small creatures, covered in hair, until they are almost upon you.

“Who... who are you?” they ask. Their words are strange, but intelligible. It’s a far less efficient language than the one the Cursed have developed, but similar enough that you can understand and be understood, should you choose to communicate.

Encounter One:

The group has broken into the outskirts of the underground city, Silverside. Populated by dwarves, this city is hidden so deep that they have remained blissfully unaware of the havoc wreaked upon the world above. After a brief conversation, the group will be attacked by a group of four Black Thoughts.

With your attention focused on these strange creatures, you almost miss the telltale fluttering in your eardrums which heralds the arrival of Black Thoughts. Bursting forth from the recently collapsed tunnels, they utter a keening whine, which you know all too well to be the summoning

for Terrible Thoughts, the unstoppable behemoths which follow wherever the Cursed dig.

Dwarves Init +0; mace +1 (1d6) melee; AC 12; HD 1d10; MV 20'; Act d20; SV Fort +1, Ref+1, Will +0

Should any of the dwarves survive, they will offer to lead the group back to their city to convince the elders of the danger.

City... you roll the word around in your mouth, tasting all the implications. Civilization, as yet untouched by the apocalypse. Food. Shelter. Comfort. You sense there are more words, things that you have forgotten. Perhaps you could remember them here? Could this be a place worth fighting for?

If none of the dwarves survive, the group finds itself alone on the outskirts of the city.

Is this... Is this a city? You struggle to provide context to a concept which has long since lost any meaning. You're unable to take in the entirety of the scene before you, instead compartmentalizing it. A stalagmite sweeping upwards. A small, squat creature bristling with hair walking, head down. A

beast, weighed down with sacks of goods. Curious eyes. Pity. You see these things, but they exist separate from each other, with no connection. Did this all mean something at one point? You can feel the tug of the familiar from somewhere deep within, but when you reach for it, it is gone.

Should they approach, they are met with stares from the populace, and provided they commit no violence against the populace, they will have cloaks thrown across their shoulders, and brought to see the council of elders.

The city itself is small by dwarven standards, but elegantly designed, with buildings shaped into being within stalactites, stalagmites and other rock formations. The elders offer the group food and water and tell of how they have suffered increasing attacks in recent days, from creatures unknown to them, but all too familiar to the group – Black Thoughts. With those foul beasts, the group knows, always come Terrible Thoughts. As the group talks with the Elders, a messenger enters the room, covered in blood. Six giant monsters have

assaulted the city, which the group recognizes from the description as Terrible Thoughts. Recognizing the situation as dire, the elders will ask the group to lead a group of women and children away from the city. If they refuse, or have avoided contact with the Elder Council, they will witness the destruction of Silverside from the safety of the far side of town. A stalactite building hurled from the battle crashes into the ceiling above the group, and the people from Silverside are lost. Anyone who fails a DC 12 Reflex Save is pinned under a large chunk of rock. They can amputate their leg, reducing Stamina and Agility by $\frac{1}{4}$ (round down), otherwise they must be left behind.

Encounter Two:

The group notices a trail of blood before them. Should they follow the trail, they come across a family of dwarves who managed to escape.

The trail of blood quickly leads you to a dwarven family. The father has taken a horrific wound to his side, his armor deeply dented and blood spilling freely to the earth from beneath. His wife and child have been

injured as well, and while their faces speak volumes of pain and despair, they are half supporting, half dragging the father. The mother introduces herself as Sera of House Onyxfall, Paragon of Silverside. She begs for the group to help her carry her husband, Gramlo and beg the group group to protect them as they journey to their sister city, Deepfall Cove. The son introduces himself as Creg, and shows them a map of the caves between the cities. The father begins to cry out, delirious from the pain, gibbering nonsensical rhymes and stroking his son's head. You feel the telltale umblings of a Terrible Thought heading your way, and you realize that these people will not be able to escape if they continue to support the father.

Encounter Three:

You round a corner, and suddenly catch a glimpse of a weak and flickering blue light ahead. As you get closer, you make out a shabby, human-shaped apparition, crumpled in the corner like so much discarded refuse. A pack of teeth surround it and are tearing it apart as the group

watches. One by one, the teeth turn their attention to you, then charge.

After combat, the figure calls out to the group.

As you approach, the figure raises its head and sees its face is smooth and devoid of gender and detail, more a memory of a form than an actual being. It reaches out a ghostly hand, and in a weak voice calls out.

“Are... are you them? Am I me? I used to be, but I’m not sure anymore. I used to help; I was helpful, wasn’t I? Did I make things better? I feel like I don’t know anything anymore, but maybe I can help you? Maybe? I think I’m losing myself, am I still here? You can see me, can’t you? Will you let me help you?”

This is an avatar of a god that has long since fled this plane, abandoning its avatar like it abandoned its worshippers. Blind and decrepit, the avatar’s potency is all but exhausted, but it offers to heal the group nonetheless. It is able to heal one group member for one hit point of damage before it flickers out of existence, crying

ephemeral tears, faced with oblivion and no hope of being reunited with its creator.

Encounter Four:

A small pool of fetid water dominates the area, and an old man leans over it, his back crooked with age as he drinks from cupped hands.

Stirner, 1st level Mage Init +1; dagger +1 (1d4+1) melee; AC 11; HD 3d4; MV 30'; Act d20; SP Spellcaster; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4 Spells: Choking Cloud, Feather Fall, Force Manipulation, Read Magic, Ventriloquism – Spell Check d20+3
Note: Stirner will go out of his way to present himself as a harmless, if eccentric, old man, and will not reveal his magical abilities unless attacked.

Stirner is a recluse who abandoned the surface years ago, preferring the freedom to conduct his experiments into the nature of life and death that solitude allowed. As such, he was spared the fate of so many when the Black Sun ascended. Having long ago sold his soul to some dark, extinct power, he lives on, driven mad by isolation and his own eldritch might.

Recently though, the focus of his experimentation has changed. He has managed to capture several Black Thoughts and a single Terrible Thought, and has been studying them, in hopes of gaining a deeper understanding of the Black Sun. He wishes to pit the characters against the Terrible Thought, believing it will somehow further his research.

He claims to have mined enough Blackrock to create a shelter, but lacks the strength to actually build it. He took in another group of Cursed, he says, who turned on him and drove him away from his stockpile. In exchange for the group's help in driving off the rival group, he offers them respite.

This is a mixture of truth and lies. He does have a large amount of Blackrock, but he has already built the shelter and bolstered it with magic to keep the Terrible Thought captive. He will lead the characters through a maze of tunnels, shutting doors built into the rock as they go. A successful Will Save (DC 10) from anyone who asks about the composition of the walls and/or doors allows them to

detect the glamour that hides the fact that this entire area seems to be made of Blackrock. Stirner will gift the players with armor and weapons of the players' choice as they travel. If the group becomes suspicious or notices the Blackrock, he will surreptitiously release a Black Thought from a bottle that once held a genie, and cower while the group fights it.

Finally, he leads the group to a door beyond which, Stirner tells them, hides the other group of Cursed, but in fact holds the Terrible Thought. Once through the door, Stirner will lock the door behind them and observe via magic. The room is 15x15 and sheathed entirely in Blackrock, otherwise featureless. The first time the Terrible Thought misses an attack, its fist punches a hole in the wall, allowing the opportunity for escape. However, the hole created is too small to fit through if the characters are carrying any items or wearing any armor. All must be discarded in order to escape.

Encounter Five:

The group reaches Deepfall Cove. A small city, it sits on the shore of a massive underground sea. The elders are incredulous that Silverside could have been destroyed, and send the group away to debate.

As you leave the Elder's Cave, you are greeted by a crowd of onlookers. In their eyes, you see a mixture of curiosity, pity and horror. You no longer belong to this, or any society - that much is certain. These people, with their homes, their food, their creature comforts – they are all just dressing, distractions from the unrelenting horror of existence. They have managed to avoid it for this long, but reality will catch up with them eventually. Everyone will know what you have learned, even if it is only in their final moments.

Terrible Thoughts collapse the ceiling of the cave in which Deepfall Cove sits, exposing the city to a sustained burst of Black Light, then attack, along with a horde of Black Thoughts.

Around you, the townsfolk twist and unravel as the light of the Black Sun shines down upon them. Of the crowd, a handful survive the initial onslaught, and they turn their eyes to you, and in them you see understanding – and at last, recognition. They, too, are Cursed now.

There are not enough boats to evacuate the city, and there is nowhere else for the inhabitants to go.

Appendix Ω

Refrain

The Cancelled Earth, Cities Last Broadcast
The Empty Hollow Unfolds, Raison d'être
Covered in Scars, Angel of Decay
Embracing the Shadows of Self Doubt,
ApollyoN

Movement

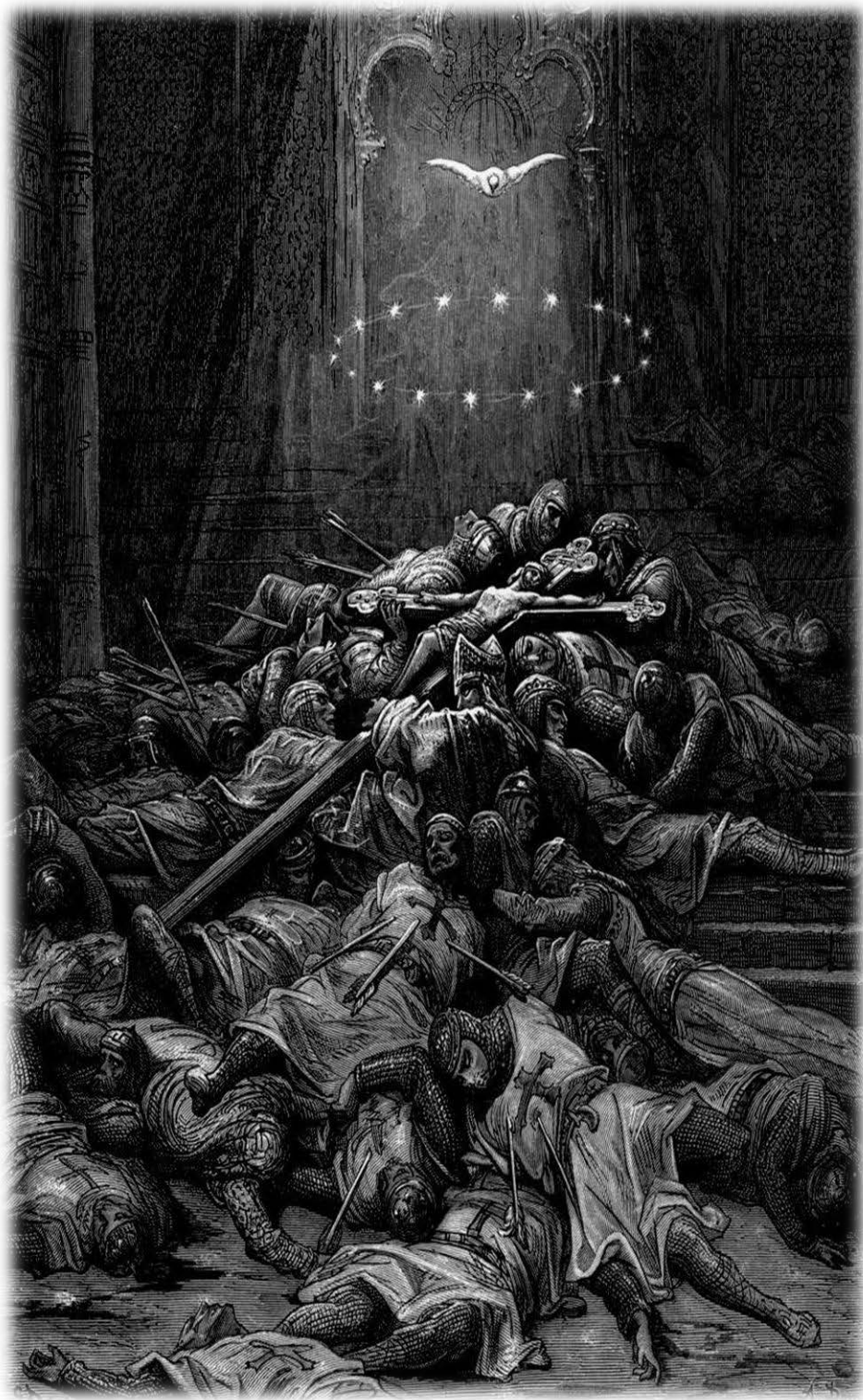
The Seventh Seal, Ingmar Bergman
Melancholia, Lars von Trier
Begotten, E. Elias Merhige
The Mist, Frank Darabont

Stasis

Gustave Dore
John Martin
H.R. Giger
Zdzisław Beksiński

Insight

The Case Against the Human Race,
Thomas Ligotti
The Night Land, William Hope Hodgson
The Road, Cormac McCarthy
The Stranger, Albert Camus



CURSED

WARRIOR

LEVEL__

AC ____

HP ____

____SPEED

____iNt

STR ____

AGi ____

STA ____

PER ____

iNt ____

HOPE ____

____ REF

____ FORT

____ WILL

WEAPONS

BLACK SUN
CORRUPTION

ARMOR

CHARACTER
DETAILS

EQUIPMENT

Designation of Product Identity

All place names, character names, names of organizations and similar proper nouns introduced in this publication are product identity, including but not limited to The Black Sun, The Cursed, Black Thoughts, Terrible Thoughts, and Oblitus Omega. All text that does not describe a discrete game element is product identity.

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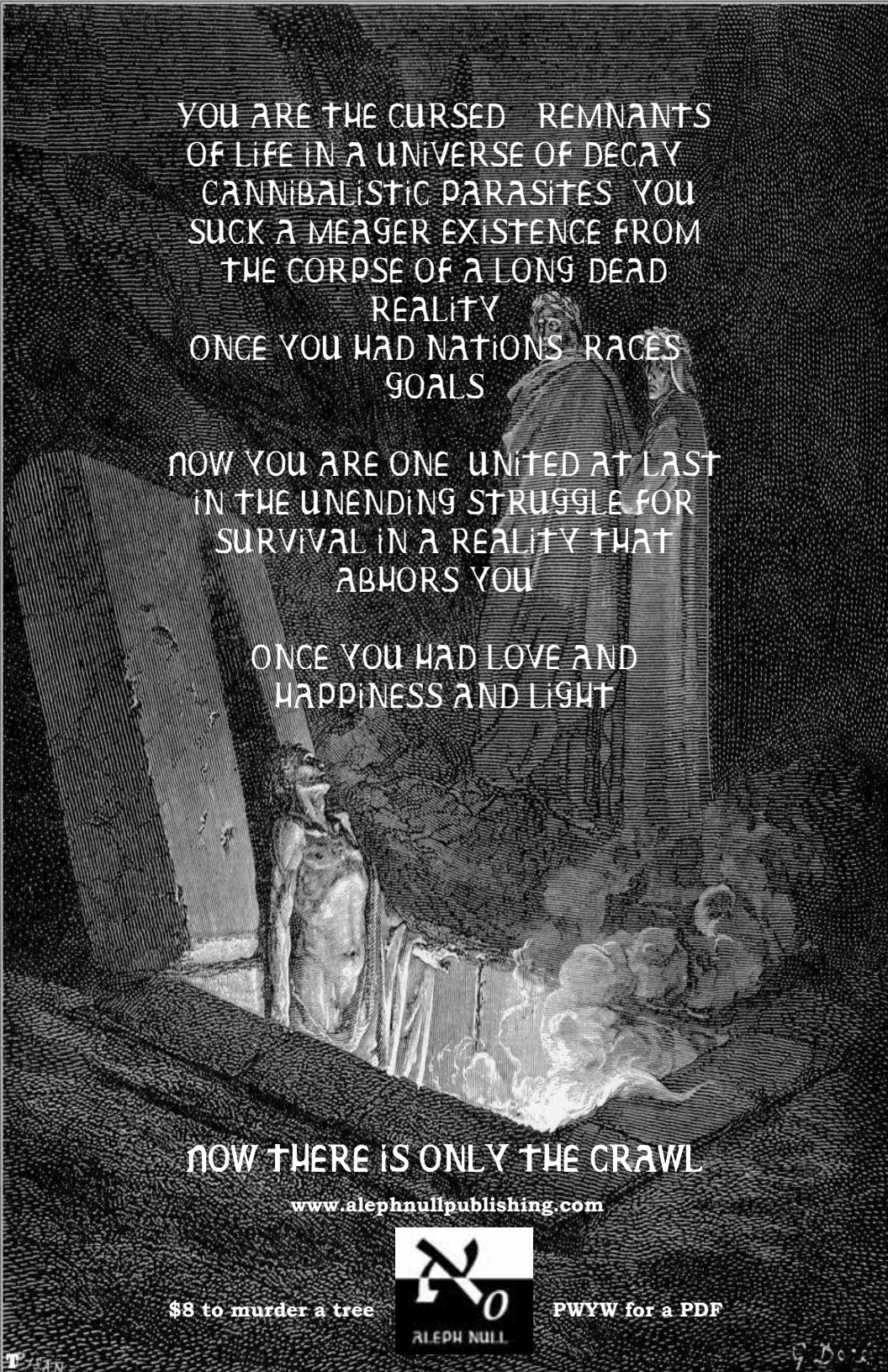
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