THE GHOSTS OF ANIEL

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. , and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

INTRODUCTION

The Ghosts of Aniel is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure suitable for four 6th-level characters. The difficulty of the adventure can be adjusted by changing the level of the principle foe or by altering the number of his phase spider servants. To tailor the encounters to groups of different levels, refer to table 4–1 on page 101 of *The Dungeon Master's Guide*. The adventure is set in the Celadon forest, but it is easily adapted to any forested region in an existing campaign. Maps of elven dwellings similar to Revan's are available for download at http://www.wizards.com/dnd/DnD_MW_Intro.asp.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Aniel (an-EE-el) is an elven hamlet in the Celadon Forest. Like most elven communities, it has limited contact with the outside world, but a few weeks ago all contact with Aniel stopped. None of the elves were seen in the communities surrounding the forest, and no one heard anything from them. The group sent to investigate returned with tales of finding Aniel abandoned but also of strange and terrible things happening there; whispering voices, moaning sounds, objects moving of their own accord. It seems clear that Aniel is haunted.

Although the locals fear to return to the haunted village, they feel something must be done. If the elven hamlet is haunted, the ghosts there must be laid to rest, and the mystery behind the town's demise must be solved. Whatever fate befell the town might affect other settlements, so a new party must investigate.

The characters discover the hamlet is abandoned and haunted, although not necessarily in the way some think. There is actually only one ghost in Aniel, the spirit of a vengeful elf. The other inhabitants of Aniel are victims of this ghost, who used magic to transport them to the ethereal plane, trapping them there until they are rescued. The characters must find a way to overcome the ghost and his minions and return the people of Aniel to the material world.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters can become involved in this adventure in a number of ways. The simplest is for them to receive a request for aid from the people living in the area around the Celadon Forest. They might be passing through and hear stories about the haunted elven settlement of Aniel and realize that the surrounding areas might also be in danger. If the group has adventured in the area before, the local folk ask them to go to Aniel and find out what's happening.

Characters might be traveling through the forest headed elsewhere and stumble upon Aniel. The abandoned hamlet offers a mystery that some adventurers will be eager to solve.

An elf or half-elf player character might know of Aniel or even have friends or family there. The group might be in the area planning a visit, only to discover that something terrible has befallen the village. Other characters might have friends living in Aniel who are now among the missing.

BACKGROUND

The village of Aniel was home to an elf named Navae, a student of the arcane arts. Navae was fascinated by a magical gemstone called the galadiir, owned by Revan, Aniel's greatest wizard and Navae's teacher. Navae's fascination with the gem's secrets became an obsession when he discovered that the galadiir was won in a battle with the Drow long ago. Navae nursed an unhealthy interest in the dark elves from the time he first heard stories about them as a child. He longed to possess the galadiir and unlock its secrets, but his teacher Revan told him it was not something to be toyed with, and instructed him to leave it alone.

In secret, Navae sought out forbidden lore and became corrupted. He came to worship the spider-goddess Lolth, and she granted him powerful allies, phase spiders he could command. He dreamed of when he would be a great and powerful wizard, ruling over others. He decided that the key to his power was to possess the galadiir, so one night he crept into Revan's home to steal it. Unfortunately for Navae, a hunter named Tarien noticed his suspicious behavior and followed him. Tarien called out as Navae laid hands on the galadiir, waking Revan. In the struggle, Revan was bitten by a phase spider and fatally poisoned, but Tarien struck Navae a fatal blow.

Clutching the magical gemstone in his fist, Navae cursed Tarien. "I may be dragged into death," he said, "but where I go, you will all soon join me." The galadiir flared with power, and Navae died. Tarien went to Revan's aid, but he was too late to save Revan's life. His people buried Revan with honor, while Navae's body was cremated and the ashes scattered.

Three days later, the people of Aniel awoke to find that the world had become gray and lifeless, and they were unable to touch anything. They found themselves trapped on the ethereal plane, unable to touch or communicate with the physical world. Navae returned as a ghost, using his powers and his spider minions to terrorize the people of the village, who were unable to call for help. They tried when visitors first came to Aniel, but Navae frightened them away. They mounted an attack against the ghost, but everyone in the attacking party died except for Tarien, who was badly wounded. Tarien managed to kill Navae yet again, but the ghost simply reappeared a few days later, as powerful as ever. Now the only hope for the people of Aniel is that someone will come to save them.

Aniel (hamlet): Conventional; AL CG; 100 gp limit; Assets 750 gp; Population 146 (146 elves, 4 half-elves).

Authority Figure: Tarien, male elf Rgr3 (formerly Revan, male elf Wiz6)

Others: Brd1 (2), Clr1 (2), Ftr2 (2), Rog1 (1), Sor1 (2), Wiz2 (1), Wiz1 (2), Adp 2 (1), Adp1 (2), Exp4 (1), Exp2 (2), Exp1 (4), Com6 (1), Com3 (10), Com1 (110), War3 (1), War1 (2).

Notes: Aniel is a small elven community in the depths of the forest. The homes are built on the ground or in the tree branches to blend harmoniously with the environment. There are thirty homes in Aniel, scattered around an area of ten large trees. many of the highest level characters in Aniel have recently died because of Navae.

Wilderness Encounters

Characters may encounter dangerous creatures while traveling through the forest to Aniel. The Celadon Forest is filled with wildlife, although elven hunters normally keep dangerous creatures away from the trails. It takes the characters eight hours to reach Aniel from the outskirts of the forest, and there is a 1-in-10 chance of an encounter each hour they travel through the woods. If an encounter is indicated, roll on the Celadon Forest Encounters Table to determine what the characters run into.

Celadon Forest Encounters

1d10	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	EL
1	Dire boar	1	4	4
2	Ettercap	2	4	5
3	Harpy	2	4	5
4	Owlbear	2	4	5
5	Dire lion	1	5	5
6	Worgs	8	2	5
7	Manticore	1	5	5
8	Troll	1	5	5
9	Shadow Mastiff	1	5	5
10	Ethereal Elf*	1	2	2

 * This encounter indicates that one of the inhabitants of Aniel finds the characters in the forest and follows them, trying to contact them and ask for their help. If the characters are able to detect the ethereal elf in some way, see The Elves of Aniel encounter (below) for guidelines about what they can learn about the current situation.

Encounters in Aniel

There are four encounters in the hamlet of Aniel, described below.

The Elves of Aniel

When the characters first arrive in Aniel, they find the

entire hamlet apparently deserted, with no indication of what happened to the people who lived there. There are signs of forest scavengers raiding the elves' food stores, but otherwise nothing. Homes and possessions remain undisturbed. There are no bodies or signs of violence. There are also no signs of habitation for the past several weeks. A careful search of the area (Search, DC 20) turns up a relatively fresh grave on the outskirts of the hamlet. This is the gravesite of Revan the wizard (see Adventure Background for details). He's been dead for at least a few weeks, and there are still signs of the phase spider bite that killed him on his right leg.

The inhabitants of Aniel actually haven't gone anywhere. They're all around the characters, but invisible and incorporeal to them. If the characters have any means of detecting ethereal beings (such as see invisibility or true seeing) and use it, they can see (and hear) the elves around them. As soon as the elves realize one or more of the characters can see them, they begin babbling at them in Common and Elven, pleading for their help and trying to tell them what's happened. It takes the elves roughly 15 minutes to calm down and organize themselves well enough to present the background information clearly. A character can speed this process by making DC 15 Diplomacy check. If the Diplomacy check is successful, the elves calm down in one round.

Once the tumult is calmed down, Tarien steps forward to explain the situation to the characters. He tells them about the events from the Adventure Background section from his point of view and to the best of his knowledge. He also explains that he thinks the galadiir can restore the elves to the material world and possibly put Navae to rest, but the elves have been unable to reach it from the ethereal plane. It's kept in a locked and protected case in Revan's home. Tarien (or another elf) can show the party where it is and tell them about the traps guarding it, although he can't disarm them (see Revan's Home, below, for details).

Ghostly Attacks

Shortly after the characters enter Aniel, Navae begins to harass them with ghostly hauntings and sudden attacks. The ghost uses his telekinesis ability to slam doors and windows, knock over objects, send things flying through the air, and even to push climbing characters, resulting in a 20-30 foot fall from the upper tree-houses (doing 2d6-3d6 damage).

Navae also has his phase spiders attack the characters, with only one spider appearing at a time. The spider shifts to the material plane, attacks, and phases back out again immediately as a move-equivalent action. Unless the characters have a means of detecting ethereal beings, the spiders always sur-

prise them and catch them flat-footed (eliminating their Dex bonuses to AC). If the characters can detect ethereal beings, check for surprise normally, but keep in mind that the people of Aniel will also try to warn the characters if they spot one of the phase spiders about to attack. It requires a Spot or Wilderness Lore check with a DC of 20 to determine that the phase spiders attacking the characters are not all one creature, but several different ones. Characters who speak with the elves can find out there are three phase spiders total in the hamlet, under Navae's control.

Navae's goal is to kill all of the characters except for one he can possess with his malevolence ability, allowing him to get at the galadiir again. But before that happens, he wants the characters to get at the gem for him, and may try to convince them to do so (see below).

Phase Spiders (3): CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 5d10+15; hp 42; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk bite +7 melee (1d6+4 and poison); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Ethereal jaunt, poison; SQ AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +12, Move Silently +11, Spot +9, *Feats:* Improved Initiative.

SA–Ethereal jaunt (Su): A phase spider can shift from the Ethereal to the Material Plane as a free action, and shift back again as a move-equivalent action. This ability is otherwise identical with ethereal jaunt cast by a 15th-level sorcerer.

SA–Poison (Ex) Bite, Fortitude save (DC 15); initial and secondary damage 2d6 temporary Constitution.

Navae's Deception

If the characters do not make contact with the people of Aniel and have no means of seeing ethereal beings, Navae uses his manifestation ability to appear to them. He claims to be one of the elves trapped by the curse of an evil wizard, and only able to speak to them for a brief time through a magical spell. He tells them that a magical gem in Revan's home can save the elves if the characters can get it. Navae knows the galadiir is in a cabinet closed with an arcane lock, but he doesn't know about the fire trap placed on it (it was done after he died). He asks the characters to get the gem, then fades away, telling them to hurry.

Navae follows the characters to Revan's home and attempts to possess the character nearest to the galadiir, as described on the next page.

The Galadiir

The solution to the problem in Aniel lies with the galadiir, the magical gemstone Navae wants. After Revan's death, the elves of Aniel replaced the galadiir in its wooden box and used one of Revan's scrolls to cast a fire trap on the book (with a caster level of 7, for 1d4+7 damage), keyed to the elders of the hamlet. They then placed the box inside a stout cabinet built into Revan's study and sealed it with an arcane lock. Several of the elves, including Tarien, know where the galadiir is, but unfortunately they don't know exactly what it can do, since that knowledge was lost with Revan and no one has yet had time to go through his various notes and journals.

Revan's home is built in and around the trunk of a large tree near the middle of Aniel, about 20 feet off the ground. A spiral staircase winds around the trunk of the tree up to the humble home. The interior contains a sleeping room and a combination study and laboratory where Revan worked. The cabinet holding the galadiir can be found in the second room. In addition to the gem, the cabinet contains five scrolls with arcane spells all at caster level 7 (1—*charm monster and dimension door*; 2—*silent image* and *sleep*; 3—*knock* and *locate object*; 4—*dispel magic*; 5—*see invisibility*). The last scroll will allow the characters to communicate with the people of Aniel, if they don't already have the ability among them. The cabinet also contains a *wand of polymorph self* that belonged to Revan with 18 charges remaining. The DC to break open the cabinet door is 28 with the arcane lock in place (18 otherwise) and picking the physical lock is DC 30 (Tarien has the key with him, on the ethereal plane, where they don't do anyone any good).

Navae keeps a close eye on the characters and follows them if they go to Revan's home. As soon as one of the characters has the box containing the galadiir, Navae uses his malevolence ability and attempts to possess him or her, ordering his phase spiders to kill the rest of the characters. He then casts *sanctuary*, followed by *expeditious retreat*, and flees from the area as quickly as possible.

Navae, male elf ghost Clr1/Wiz3: CR 6; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 31; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 deflection bonus); Atk +3 melee (1d4, corrupting touch); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Manifestation, corrupting touch, malevolence, telekinesis; SQ Undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation +4 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +6, Hide +12, Knowledge (religion) +6, Move Silently +4, Search +12, Spellcraft +6, Spot +12, *Feats:* Scribe Scroll, Toughness (x2).

SA–Manifestation: can become visible and attack by touch or spells.

SA–Corrupting Touch: Incorporeal attack doing 1d4 damage.

SA–Malevolence: Can possess a character by touch, Will save (DC 19) to resist.

SA–Telekinesis: Can move objects at will like a *telekinesis* spell at caster level 12.

SQ–Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ–Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

SQ–Rejuvenation: Successful level check vs. DC 16 allows a ghost to return 2d4 days after being destroyed.

SQ–Turn Resistance Turn resistance +4.

Possessions: None.

Arcane Spells Prepared (4/3/2): 0—*daze, ghost sound, mage hand, resistance*; 1st—*cause fear, expeditious retreat, spider climb*; 2nd—*knock, web*.

Spellbook: 0—all cantrips; 1st—*cause fear, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield, spider climb, true strike*; 2nd—*knock, web*.

Divine Spells Prepared (3/2): 0—*cure minor wounds, guidance, resistance* (2); 1st—*obscuring mist, sanctuary, protection from good* (domain spell).

Once he's sure he's evaded any pursuit, Navae opens the box (setting off the fire trap, which he didn't know was there, but the damage isn't likely to incapacitate him). He uses the gem's final wish to transform the character's body into his own, making his possession permanent (and effectively killing the character). He then leaves Aniel and the player characters to their fate.

The Galadiir: The stone the people of Aniel call the galadiir is a beautiful dark opal worth 8,000 gp for the gem alone. But its actual value is far greater. It is an ancient relic won from the Drow long ago and guarded by the people of Aniel, passed down over the years. The Galadiir is a *gem of three wishes* (similar to a *ring of three wishes*, p. 195, DMG). One *wish* was used in the defeat of the Drow. Navae used the second to bring about

his curse, leaving one *wish* remaining. The characters can use it to undo the effects of the curse, rescuing the people of Aniel and ensuring that Navae's spirit is put to rest.

CONCLUSION

If the characters overcome Navae and use the galadiir (or some other means) to restore the people of Aniel, they receive the gratitude of the elves, who offer the characters the (now non-magical) galadiir as a reward for their efforts, and hold a celebration in their honor. If the characters managed to find some way of restoring the elves without using the final wish from the galadiir, the people of Aniel offer to use it to grant the characters one wish of their choice (provided it's something the elves find worthy).

If Navae managed to possess one of the characters and use the galadiir's final wish to make his possession permanent, the characters have a greater challenge ahead of them. They have to find some other means of restoring the people of Aniel, which may entail a quest to find a powerful spellcaster or magic item. They also have to find Navae if they are to have any hope of recovering their companion. The former ghost goes to ground. He plans to accumulate power and knowledge before seeking out the Drow in order to serve Lolth. He can become an adversary of the characters in the future.

Rewards

The characters receive experience points for overcoming the various challenges in this adventure as follows:

Defeating Navae: 1,800 XP

Defeating the phase spiders: 1,200XP each

Overcoming the fire trap spell: 300 XP

Discovering the truth of what happened in Aniel: 1,500 XP

Add any additional experience for wilderness encounters on the way to Aniel to determine the party's final XP total.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Kenson has been a freelance writer in the RPG industry for five years and a gamer for far longer than he'd care to admit. He's written for a number of games including *Shadowrun*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES and DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE. His work appears regularly in *DRAGON* magazine. Steve maintains a website with gaming articles he has written and information about his current projects. It can be found at `http://members.aol.com/talonmail`. He can be reached by email at `talonmail@aol.com`.

Ghost Light RPG

This has the potential to be a great RPG, but has instead become defunct, lost in the attic of cyberspace. I found this game some time ago, maybe two or three years. I tried to contact the author repeatedly on MEP either continuing work on this great game, or obtaining rights to it so that we could basically write the shit out of it. But nothing came of it. This game has been totally lost.

After seeing that, I designed Soul Axis ™, sort of as a tribute to Ghostlight because I really liked what I saw. But I'd prefer to attempt to bring this game back to life. So, that's what I propose, that we as a community, do not let this potentially wonderful game die. I would ask that fans of MEP submit things regularly for Ghostlight and let's keep this game alive.

Defining a Ghost

Picture having no body, no mind. The only thing holding you up is your soul. You are your soul. Emotion, raw and pure. Picture the great afterlife. Most souls reunite with the great one spirit, losing their personality, their individuality, but not their being. Like a drop of water entering an ocean. One day, the molecules of water will again be used, but never again as the exact same drop.

Picture those that are different. Those that have enough self-love to keep, from rejoining. Those that stay separate. As they live, they gain more and more emotion, and become greater and greater. It is these "ghosts" that existence must worry about.

Ghost Light is a Dark Fantasy game where you (as players) assume the role of ghosts, but not your standard "haunts". You become denizens of a world all but removed from our own. Having no body (mental or physical) you are forced to rely on the one thing still remaining: your emotion. As you grow in emotion, you grow in power, but beware--for emotion can be consuming.

Ghost Light uses the Loose-Form Element system for skill rolls. Basically, your character is described by a series of elements (in the case of Ghost Light--the elements are emotions) which are not "set-in-stone" and are somewhat open ended. Ghost Light is to be the first game in the Loose-Form Element system (Dream Night is the major one to follow), which may or may not be used in many systems.

Becoming a Ghost

When a character is being created, there should first be the matter of age. Ghosts don't age as do mortals. Ghosts "age" by the number of lives they have lived. Young ghosts--who have been in less than five lifes--have less emotion than Adult--six to twenty lives--who have less than Old--twenty to fifty lives--who have less than Ancient--fifty or more lives lived. Since a ghosts power lies in his emotion, older ghosts have more power. For this reason it is best to let the GM decide the "age" of the campaign.

Emotion Points per Age Group
- Young: 6 Emotion Points (ep)
- Adult: 10 ep
- Old: 16 ep
- Ancient: 24 ep or more

After you know how many points to spend, you can use them to by Emotion Dice. One Emotion Point is used to buy one Emotion Dice. Each emotion can have more than one dice purchased in it, but there is a limit. The maximum number of dice allowed is equal to the Total Emotion Points first divided in half and then one subtracted from that number. (Young max = 2, Adult max = 4, etc)

"Emotions" are not limited to the classic emotions. There are also pseudo-emotions which represent general states of mind but do not classify as regular emotion. In the basis of game play, both classic emotions and pseudo-emotions can be chosen as, and will be here forth called, emotions. It should also be known that players might like to kind of refine their character's emotions. Something along the line of Desire (for knowledge) instead of just Desire. This isn't really necessary, because Desire works out almost the same in both cases--and you could just add stimuli to the emotion later. But some players might wish to do this...

There is a pseudo-emotion that all characters have. It is this emotion that keeps their soul energy from being reabsorbed. No one knows why some have it and others don't, it's just there. Different people call it different things, but for game purposes it will be called Spirit. Spirit starts at three points and can be purchased up to your ghosts Emotional Dice Maximum for your age group (No more can be purchased for Young ghosts since it already exceeds their limit, but they still get it at three dice).

With the exception of Spirit, emotions bring with them stimuli. When the ghost is confronted with an emotional stimuli he or she is in danger of going out of control. An emotion gets its first stimuli at level two (two Emotion dice). For every three additional levels (five emotional dice, eight emotional dice, etc) that emotion gets an addition stimuli. The same stimuli might be bought more than once, rising it level by one with each increment. The effects of stimuli are discussed later.

Some skills are allowed as well. At the cost of one Emotion Point, ghosts can purchase a skill dice in one skill. There is a maximum amount of total skills purchased; it is equal to the Max Emotion Dice in a single emotion. Each separate skill can only have a maximum of two skill dice. Skills give bonuses in specific areas without emotional "taint" but at the cost of emotions--the true life blood of a ghost.

Quirks, Merits and Flaws come next. A Quirk is neither good nor bad in majority of situations. It is merely something that a ghost does and players like to have up front. Quirks might include "likes to

burp", "hums to himself", etc.. Merits are good things a ghost can have, and cost Emotion Points. Flaws are bad to have, but give extra emotion points. Merits might include "Survivor (automatically one success in Spirit rolls to resist damage)", "Calculator for a Brain", "Charismatic". Flaws would include "Weak Spirit (one success automatically canceled)", "Fuddle Brain", "Nasty Attitude", and so on. It is up to the GM on how many emotion points that a Merit/Flaw is worth.

A player also gets to decide also a ghost's appearance. There a three basic schools of action with this. A character can make a relatively normal looking ghost. The player can make a dream version of the character (dragons, angels, sphinx, 4-armed etc.). The player may make a "spiritual" version of the character--swirling clouds of gas, shadows, flames, etc.. Of course, the player may mix them together anyway he or she sees fit.

A person The rest of Character creation lies in role-play. Don't be too limited in fleshing out your character but be neither too descriptive. Try to find that happy median.

Example: *Trent is to be a Adult ghost. His player wants him to be hateful and greedy--a sort of supernatural scrooge. He doesn't get along too well with others but he does act with a team (especially when they "go" his way). His player has ten points to spend. First off, Hate (3) and Greed (4) are bought. With the other emotion points Pride (1) and Lust (1) as well as the skill "Command Others (1)". Trent's Spirit is equal to three. For stimuli he chooses "People who snivel and whine (1)" for Hate and "Material Wealth (1)" for Greed. Since he has no other emotion worth 2 or more, he needs no more stimuli. Trent's player wants him to appear as a dark and brooding man with long white hair and a black trench coat.*

Being a Ghost

Play in General

Play is task based. The GM will set a task value and then players succeed by rolling over it. Tasks raise in value in two dimensions: small to large, easy to complex.

TASK VALUES
- very easy / very small : 0
- easy / small: 1
- medium / medium : 2
- hard / large : 4
- very hard / very large: 8+

Note that the above chart is accumulative in general size. In other words: something gets a task value equal to difficulty rating plus complexity rating. A task very hard and very large has a difficulty of about 16, not 8.

To see how many dice a character gets to roll, first thing that must be looked is the task at hand and the character's emotions. The character must use one of the emotions to "work" the task at hand. For instance, Apathy might be used to block out pain, Hate might be used to strike down an enemy, Fear might be used to give a burst of speed, Curiosity might be used to decipher a note, Love might be used to heal a friend. When a character decides on a proper emotion, then he gets as many six-sided dice as equal to his Emotional Dice level.

The game master should know the general complexity (the size of the task) at the start. The difficulty depends on the emotion chosen and how well it fits as well as other factors. For instance, trying to kill someone with Love is not always easy--in fact is usually hard or very hard. Just like healing (which can be an easy to medium skill Love) becoming very hard and then some with Greed, Hate, Fear, etc.

After setting the task value, players roll their dice and compare the numbers. Success come from getting the success roll equal to or greater than the task value. (That simple). To determine the number of successes, look at each dice separately. For every 1-3 rolled on a dice, there is no successes earned, 4-5 that are rolled gives one success each, and a 6 on a dice grants two successes. Add up all of the success to determine the value of the roll.

Optional Rule: (triumph/disaster)--if, on the first roll, the player rolls more than enough successes, a triumph (extra special result) is gained. If, on any roll, the player rolls all 1's (every dice the character has comes up with a one) a disaster (really, really, really bad). The GM has the option of determining the exact value of the triumph and disaster.

Example:*Trent is living in the Coyote Son's main shroud, and has been collecting the golden feathers that they consider money. His greed has caused him to resort to less than noble ends, namely purse snatching. He has been behind a naive but rich Son for a while now and plans to make his move. The Game Master notes that Greed is the emotion in use. The combined task value set is 4. Trent's player rolls his four dice and come up with 5, a success. Trent has another bag of feathers to add to his collection.*

Using Skills

When a character has skills, he can add that number of dice to his Emotional Dice total for the roll if the roll is applicable to the skill.

Channeling Emotion

Sometimes a character will need to channel one of their emotions to another emotion for some specific task. The player must describe the reason why the emotion should be channeled. If the GM agrees, then at the sacrifice of two (temporary) points from the one emotion, the emotion being channeled to gets an extra dice. It is possible to sacrifice down to zero dice in an emotion, but not below. If the GM thinks the emotions go hand in hand with the current situation, there may be a one for one trade allowed. Spirit may also be channeled into another emotion but at the cost of one Spirit wound per extra dice.

Example: *Trent has found out of a rich widow that lives in a nearby village in the Son's Shroud. He decides to use his Lust to seduce and then later come up with a way to steal some golden feathers. Since his Lust is ranked only at one, he decides to channel his greed into it. Sacrificing four temporary points, he raises his Lust to three. Due to the taint* (see below) *of the roll, his greed will make his relationship probably overbearing and dominating on his behalf.*

There are two innate dangers in this. One, the channeled emotion will "taint" the other emotion in some way based on the GM's discretion. Also, channeling away your emotion might result in a loss of permanent emotion dice.
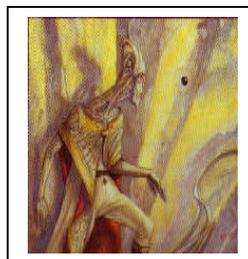
To find out taint, you have to use two sets of dice. Roll two separate piles (they can be separate colors, sizes, etc). One represents the normal dice for

the emotion, the other is the amount of channel dice that a character gets for the roll. Compare the numbers, the bigger the percentage of the total roll that is made up of the channeled dice--the bigger the taint. 50% is an extreme taint, and if there is over 75% or so--the taint might be considered irrevocable and uncontrollable.

A character can only roll on as many dice as they have left in that emotion. One temporary dice gave up is the same as one less dice to be rolled. In the above example, Trent would not be able to roll on his Greed until he got points back since he sacrificed four temporary points and only had a rating of four.

To get temporary points back, one of three things must first happen. One, the character must make a task roll using the said emotion. Two, the character must be faced with the skills stimulus. Three, the character must spend some period of time faced with contemplation about the emotion. At this point, two rolls are made. The player rolls as many dice as base Emotion Dice for that emotion. The GM rolls as many dice as equal to the number of temporary points spent. If the player rolls higher (statistically the probability) then a temporary point is returned. If the player's is more than double the GM's roll, then two points are regained; More than triple--three; and so on; up to the base value of emotion. However, if the GM's roll is greater than the players, a permanent point is lost! (as above, if the GM rolls more than double, the player loses two points, etc. down to the temporary value in the emotion.) At any point that the emotion drops permanently, then all temporary points are restored (back to the new value). If the character ever loses all of his dice in an emotion, then a point of Spirit is lost as well.

Stimuli and Emotion

As said before, an emotion takes on a stimulus at level 2, then another at levels 5, 8, 11, 14 (every third level after 2). Stimuli may or may not make an important potion of play. Generally a ghost with only one or two might not need worry with it. But some ghosts that have many (Ancients can have ten points or more) might be slave to their emotional stimuli.

Whenever a ghost is brought face to face with their stimuli, they might become overwhelmed with the emotion(s) the stimuli is tied to. Players should role-play a ghost completely absorbed into the emotion. Sometimes, perhaps most times, a ghost wishes to combat the effects of being exposed to their emotion. To do so, the player makes a roll of dice equal to his Spirit and the GM rolls a number of dice equal to the characters dice level (base, not temporary) in that emotion. If the player wins, then his reason wins out over emotion and any side effects are side-stepped. If the player loses, then the emotion overcomes and the player role-plays it out as normal. If the emotion more than triples the roll, then the character is extremely overcome. At this point the character is an extreme slave to his emotion. The GM should take over the character because higher level control is no longer an option. The character shall stay this way until the emotion plays itself out. (During this time, the character may commit crimes, destroy chances at a quest, etc. The GM should play it out to its fullest but not be cruel.)

If a stimuli has a value greater than one by investing more than one point in the stimuli, then you roll the emotion value once for every level that the stimuli has, and total the results! Since you only roll you Spirit once for the whole time, Putting all your stimuli in one decreases the amount of times you'll be faced with it, but increases the chances of being overwhelmed.

Resisted Rolls

Resisted rolls have been brought up a couple times already (between the GM and player). They may be used a good deal more if necessary. The basic formula is that two characters (sometimes a character and an object) pair up in a situation and each take an emotion and roll that value against each other. The victor is the one with the highest roll. If one player has an advantage over another player, add the advantage on. The biggest way that advantage comes up is when player is having to fight with an improper emotion (unless the emotion can be tied in properly) and the other player is not so that the other player gets bonus points to add his roll. Resisted rolls count as a standard task and so can be channeled. One variation is if two ghost are competing over something. The ghost who succeeds by the most wins the competition. One of the biggest ways in which resisted rolls are used is in Combat.

Combat and Wounds

There are all sorts of reasons for combat in Ghost Light. Some petty and obvious, others grand and subtle. The idea behind combat, as well as situations leading up to combat, might vary from time to time.

Each round of combat requires a resisted roll. Each opponent rolls on his or her "combat" emotion (some emotions like Love, Fear and Apathy are improper to combat and therefore will give the opponent bonuses to the roll. This can be avoided if the improper emotion is tied in to combat. Fighting to protect someone you love (Love), fighting because your overcome with fear and in the grip of a "fight or flight" inspired fight to the death (Fear).) and the loser gets a wound point. If the winner gets more than double, then the loser gets two wound points, more than triple is worth three wound points, etc. The roll cannot cause more wounds than the Victor's Emotion Dice minus the Loser's Emotion Dice (if even this number is one or less, two wounds may be scored if the double/triple/etc roll comes into effect).

At the end of every combat round, GM should roll a number of dice as equal to wound points while players roll their spirit value in dice. If GM wins, the ghost is either struck unconscious (if the wound level equals or is less than the spirit level) or killed outright (if wound level exceeds the Spirit level). If the Spirit roll triples or more the wound roll, then one wound is automatically lost. Just as in any resisted roll, other emotions may be channeled, and a certain bonus may be applied to one side or the other.

After battle, the healing process becomes better (somewhat). A failure is still death / unconsciousness but a success is a lost wound. More than double is two wounds healed, triple is three wounds, etc. Channeling is still allowed. In dice channeled after battle will be kept in effect until all the wounds are healed.

Character Advancement

Every emotion (and/or skill) used significantly during a session will have a chance for advancement. Make a roll equal to the number of present dice in the emotion/skill. If any of the dice come

up one (1) then the advancement failed. (There is no penalty for multiple ones). Else, the emotion/skill gains a level (and another dice). If the emotion reaches one of the thresholds for stimuli be sure to fill in another selection.

If a character was in a position to use an emotion that he doesn't have (in other words either channeled or applied a similar emotion at a penalty) then the player can ask to attempt to start a new emotion. If the GM agrees, the advancement attempt is made with three dice (adjusted up or down by a couple dice if the GM thinks that the character is *very in line for the emotion* or conversely did not really experience the emotion properly). If there are no ones rolled the character gains a single dice in the emotion. This emotion from then out are treated as any other emotion (can be advanced, gets stimuli, etc.)

Whenever an emotion/skill gains a level, put a check in front of Spirit. When there is as many checks in front of spirit as spirit's present rating. Make an advancement roll for Spirit.

Any time a player pulls a phenomenal stunt with the emotion, a roll for advancement should be called for immediately. The advancement, if it does occur, takes effect at the end of the adventure.

A Few Final Notes

First of all, role-play it. There is a lot of reference to *emotions* don't you think. Play them out. In battle, while bringing your Wrath against an enemy, role-play the viciousness. There is a difference in the way a ghost uses his Curiosity to open a lock and his Hatred to get past an annoying barrier, though the dice rolls and basic results will be the same. Don't ever say, "I'm using Joy(7) to influence the guards". Let the world know what you are doing by **how** you say it.

Finally, there may be some argument on how an emotion may be applied, and what is actually an emotion. Almost always this argument will result in some jackass bringing a fucking dictionary along. To stop this, each player and the GM should discuss the emotions they choose and their possibilities and eventualities before playing.

Bring Ghost to Light

This final section will give the briefest of information about the "world" in which Ghost Light is set. It will not give very much, just enough to fill you in. Also, most of this stuff is more or less brainstorming, so that you might not want it anyhow.
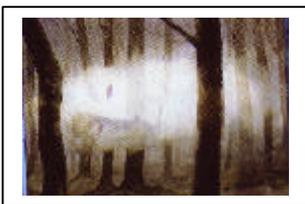
Ghostly Organization

Ghost have all sorts of genres and groups. There are three basic types. The first is Clan/Tribe/Family. Their basis is the past life of the ghost. Clans are based on the duties of the the past life. One such Clan is the ShipWright Clan whose past lives were captains of sailing ships. Tribes are based on the ethnic origin of the past life. The Coyote Sons are a tribe that comes from Native Americans, specially those of the South West. Families are ghosts united by the means of death. A family composed of those that died by slitting their wrists is called the Blood Wrists Family.

The second organization type is the Guild. Guilds are based on what the ghost does. Each member of a guild will have similar skills and appearance. One guild that is extremely feared is the Red Scythes--dedicated to killing and/or enslaving other ghosts-- apparently at random.

The last basic organization type is the sect. Sects are united by methodologies and emotions. They are sort of a religious group of ghost. Mother Gaia is a sect of love, pity and compassion who often tried to help others.

There is a fourth type of organization: the Race. Races of ghosts are not generally open to players, because of their power and differences. There are those like the Unborn -- who have never lived a life but grow as powerful as the Ancient. Also are the Forgetfuls, who have given over into a single emotion so that they are always overwhelmed.

Shrouds of Existence

The places of the Ghost Light universe are composed of shrouds. The most common one is called the Earth Shroud. It is a twisted but also spiritual view of the present Earth and its people. Some things are the same, others radically, different. Because of the similarities to the real world, most beginning players will want to be here. Fact is, many ghosts cannot ever leave this shroud...

There are also historical shrouds, which represent the earth (and other planets) at critical points of history. These are the basic remains of the Earth Shroud as it moves through time.

Worldly shrouds are composed of different views of the earth. For instance, a desert is a wasteland to some, peaceful to others, to some chaotic, to some orderly. All of these versions of a desert might have their own shroud of existence.

Personal shrouds are created by powerful ghosts. They represents their creator's personalities. The number of possibilities are vast and infinite. Shrouds exist interlaced. This means that an unlimited number of shrouds can occupy the same "real" space. To travel between them requires a Spirit roll. More info on the world to follow.

But that's just it. No info was to follow.

5 Traps from the Net Book of Traps Volume 1

The Greedy Party
From: Jason Seeley <jseeley@aros.net>
Now, what party is there out there that doesn't want to increase their ability scores? Not very many, I'm sure. Well, here is a trap to make them all wary of easy outs.

In a room, they will find various potions, scrolls, etc. (whatever, really) -- maybe even an electric chair (hehe.) The first character to quaff a potion, read a scroll, sit in the chair, or whatever, has some kind of beneficial effect (temporary or permanent, GM's decision.) Anyone else doing the exact same thing will have a malignant effect happen (ie, eletrocuted in chair, poisoned badly, blinded by scroll, etc.) Of course, most players will want to try it for themselves to try to duplicate the effect on the first player. It is very fun to help the first player understand that there was a beneficial effect, so that he can brag about it so that the other players try it, too. Maybe even have a good effect at random after the first (like a 5% chance or something.)

All fall down. And down, and down, and down...
From: Berg <berg@eskimo.com>
This one is one of my more humorous traps, but still, it is almost 100% guaranteed to kill one PC (but the others won't be harmed at all, except for their pride).

This is another variant reverse gravity trap, only this one is actually fairly pleasant. At first, anyway. The trap is a spherical room, polished to glassy smoothness, with a pair of doors on the equator. The entrance door, and the exit door opposite it. Both doors are made of solid oak, iron-banded, and cannot be forced open in the normal ways (even knock or Bigby's clenched fist spells won't touch it, it's too strong). The entrance door opens easily, but the exit door is securely locked and barred, from the other side.

The trap has several fundamental laws of physics disabled. First, there is no terminal velocity, or friction. Second, objects moving in a straight line do not necessarily keep moving in a straight line. Finally, you don't lose any momentum from hitting things, and gravity is towards the wall you fall towards.

Basically, you walk in, plummet, bounce off the floor, which is now the ceiling as far as you are concerned, and fall towards the floor, which is a spot opposite the one you just bounced off of. And with no terminal velocity, you just keep accelerating. In all cases, down is the direction opposite the wall you just hit (and bounced off of). When you hit, you can make a dex check to change your angle, so you bounce off at a totally new (and random) angle. Make a dex check, success means roll 1d4, 1 = right, 2 = left, 3 = back, 4 = ahead, and that is the direction of down.

There is one exception here. The exit door. If someone hits that, they do not bounce, and if they have more than 20d6 of falling damage accumulated, they smash through it (destroying the door, and probably dying instantly in the process). Anyone who lands in the exit doorway (after the door has been smashed), or in the entrance doorway lands unharmed on the floor (painful, but no damage). Anyone who hits the closed exit door and takes less than 20d6 damage will weaken the door, and take full damage themselves (for example, hitting the door and taking 15d6 damage means that the next impact only takes 5d6 to shatter the door). Final note, anyone with the Spelljammer skills of Zero-G combat or space fighting will be able to control their bounces, so as to bounce where they want to go (on a successful dex check), eliminating the 1d4 roll for new direction.

Special option: Eliminate the exit door, and make the entrance door a one-way teleporter (or a one-way secret door). Then, wait for falling PCS to hit lightspeed (remember, velocity will effectively double each time they fall across the room), then teleport them somewhere else. Great way to get them to another world, for some special adventuring (Athas, anybody?).

Cold   Feet
From: brian@stars1.den.mmc.com (Brian Martin)
A room of various dimensions can be used. A chandelier with various amounts of oil burn above a pit trap. The walls of the pit trap a covered with brown mold. The chandelier is rigged to fall in when the pit trap is sprung.

Most characters that fall in the pit will die as by the time they are able to work on getting out, they are frozen. The people left out of the pit or the trigger'er can also be caught as the brown mold can grow to epic proportions Also, do not forget the flame damage of those in the pit from the fire.

Between a Troll and a Sharp Place
From: QPAK01A@prodigy.com (JOEL F YODER)

As the delvers (good old Tunnels and Trolls term) walk down a long corridor, they step on a flagstone that sinks a bit. Behind them a large panel in one wall opens up and caltrops fall out. Suddenly, a large troll (or something too tough for the characters to fight, anyway) rushes from around the corner ahead. Run! p.s. this one was my revenge on players who liked to scatter caltrops around liberally.

Water Filled Hot Spot
From: kroal@infolink.net.il (Dan Gilboa)

This is a variation of the water-filled room. Any small room with one door will do. Add a nice fountain (a marble kid pissing into a pool maybe) and some burnt-down and wet bones.

After the party enters the room will be locked and water level will rise as usual. Nothing will open the door! Let the water reach about throat-high. Then the water stops and a fine quantity of oil will be spilled from above followed by a jet of flame (ever seen burning oil at sea?). Any sensible player will take a deep breath and dive. Very clever! On the third step many small holes will be opened on floor level and water level will begin to go down slowly (and make it real slow, there's plenty of oil up there...) -- they have a choice between drowning, burning by oil, or being boiled alive, not a very easy choice to make.

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3 Random Plots from the Net Book of Plots Volume 5

Author: Ben Davis
Email: bjd12@cus.cam.ac.uk
PCs are asked/hired to go and pick up (if they have a starship) or escort on a liner (if they haven't) four people from a nearby system. Ideally, get them to agree before they have much chance to do any background research.

The world they'll be going to is a Balkanised water world. The four people they're meeting are political dissidents from one of the governments, a theocracy. The starport is in a different country, a bureaucratic obsessed blood pressure inducing place.

Unsurprisingly, the four dissidents don't turn up for the rendezvous. Depending on things, they've either:

- been put under house arrest
- been arrested by the bureaucracy for a minor traffic violation (driving a powerboat without due care and attention)
- or something similar.

The governments concerned (make the planet have at least 4 or 5 for fun) should be sufficiently twitchy that, when the PCs do eventually find out where these people have got to, they can't just steam in with guns blazing. 'cause the military are on standby most of the time, and all hell'll break loose. The way my PCs got them out from house arrest on a floating hydroponics plant (remember, its a water world, makes life _much_ more difficult) was to hack into the theocracy's job allocation computer, have all four of them transferred on a Police boat (so as not to attract attention) to a nearby oil rig, and took the boat in transit during an electrical storm (weather conditions on a slowly rotating (40hr day) water world)

Just for comment, we were using a 2300AD/old Traveller(TM) hybrid (2300AD characters, Traveller universe, hybrid gear with a touch of Cyberpunk(TM) for good measure.)

Author: Graham Wills
Email: gwills@research.att.com
The PCs find a freshly dug grave, haunted by the ghost of the victim, who will follow them around and wake them at nights wailing "John Smith killed me; avenge my death". They are also hired to hunt down someone who robbed a rich merchant. His name was John Smith. Whatever. Eventually the PCs will go looking for John Smith. He is a local farmer, totally innocuous, who lives on a rather isolated farm near a dangerous area.

When they find him, he tries to zap them with a nasty wand, but after one charge, he drops it and attacks with a sword. He is berserk, but has very few hits and dies rapidly. When they get back to town they are told that while they were gone John Smith left on a boat/caravan/pogo stick. They are confused. They are even more confused when they are attacked by John Smith.

A shape changer/illusionist has got hold of a neat magic item that is supposed to make people believe they are someone else. Unfortunately the item is broken and makes people believe they are one particular person ... namely John Smith, the first person the item was used on. Undeterred, our villain controls numerous people, making them John Smiths and occasionally taking on the John Smith persona to do dirty deeds. Even when there are obviously far too many John Smiths, he'll keep doing this, as people will be reluctant to kill someone who could be their wife, brother or mother!

The PCs will have to tackle numerous John Smiths of varying dangerousness and capture them, determine whether he's a stupid peasant or a high-level evil genius and deal with the situation.

This is great for low-level types without spells that could solve the problem rapidly. High-level PCs would just do a Detect X spell and wrap up.

Background: setting 1998 earth, with incompetent bureaucracy ruling the USA, has already scuttled NASA and decided to go with a space program under direct congressional control (!). The ship travels by exploding fusion devices behind it and travelling forward on the strength of the blast. Obviously it has a very strong shield on the back. Obviously it is not aerodynamic.

The ship's mission is to go to Alpha Centauri and gather data on whether or not the system is suitable for human habitation (earth is becoming uninhabitable because of pollution and mismanagement).

The characters all have hidden motives, as they are all agents of one or another secret society in the fragmented USA government. They have to depend on a navputer+, a navigational computer that is programmed to take care of all their needs. ;-)

The problem is that Djinn wants to look at the world after 500 years, and to play off the humor of all these relics of ancient days wandering around in the brave new world of 2500 AD. Since the trip to AC will only take about 9 years of objective time, what to do?

I'm getting an evil idea...

The Navputer+ gets close enough to Alpha Centauri to check it out. Orders sent in the mean time by genius senator Orrin Hatch's subcommittee on efficient space exploration have downgraded the importance of human observation on this task. Quickly confirming that there is no suitable planet for life, the Navputer decides to continue on to Barnard's star before waking up the crew!

The crew awakens and starts working, then discovers that the starfield is all wrong and they're not in the solar system they expected, then they notice that huge gas giant in orbit. They discover a planet in the habitable zone, though calculations are difficult because of that huge companion planet. They also discover that they're short on fuel to get back. If they just head back they'll take about 100 years to make it the 9 ly (or so) back from Barnard's star. After much racking of brain they find a black hole passing by the solar system, just a little bit off the plane of the galaxy, and decide to use the black hole's gravity to give them a boost back towards Sol (it's going that general direction anyway).

Anyway, after much panicking and gnashing of teeth they go for it. Only complication is that the acceleration is going to be so strong that no human will be able to pilot through the black hole. They'll have to go into cryo and let the navputer (the one that didn't wake them up last time) do the steering, and don't have a big window for operations on the other end either, since food is running short.

And finally, the experiment backfires again, though the trip is made at near light-speed (about 9 years) unpredictable time "currents" around the black hole make them *go away* for 500 years.

Finally, the heroes awake in the solar system, speeding past Neptune at .9C. Can they slow down in time to stop at earth, or do they have to depend on earth to save them? They'll probably try to pull another deceleration manoeuvre, but this time the only available large body is the sun. Can it stop them without killing them (is the nuclear shield on the back large enough to shield them)?

At long last the heroes arrive on earth, only to find it is 500 years later, nobody knows them, and their ship is an interesting relic. Their knowledge of Barnard's star is dated. The only unique information they have is on the black hole and the time dilation they experienced. It might be worth big bucks, but how to use the information?

1. Maybe they can create some kind of time-stasis device? The rest of the campaign could be a struggle to protect the invention and become industrial magnates, then eventually rulers of their own demesne, perhaps to sit on the first galactic throne, all the time struggling against industrial espionage, cults of personality, eco-terrorists, interstellar teamsters, and the adoring public.

2. Or maybe another black hole is approaching some important planet (earth?) and the original crew's data can help them divert it. But the Navputer was sold for scrap long ago, and the tapes are covered with dust (or were caught in a flood) since they were stored by an incompetent bureaucrat. The characters search for the Navputer, which is now running some children's ride in Spielbergland, etc. You get the idea.

The possibilities, especially for satire, are endless.

Under the Jester's Hat

A Case of Mistaken Identity

While chasing an ogre (the last of a band we had killed) into a cave we saw a shadowy shape we assumed was the ogre. After we hit it with a cone of frost we found out it was a baby gold dragon. Momma was not happy, what ensued was a running chase in which all but two characters perished in the flames. What happened to those two, well the swordsman (mine) fell to the ground trying to play dead (the dm's exact words were "big momma steps on yah trailing your impaled corpse like an embarrassing piece of toilet paper") The thief ducked into a convenient crevice (remember the ogre).

This incident remains in the lore of my group to this day. The party was adventuring in a large, creepy castle. They noticed what looked like an old man carrying a lantern coming straight for them. The brave paladin spoke up and ordered the figure to stop. When the creature didn't comply, the paladin hacked it to pieces. What was the creature? An old man with a lantern who was also a little deaf.

Our party was sent by the king to find retrieve his captain from the battlefield. Half way there we ran into him and escorted him home. That evening the king was killed - the captain we escorted through the guarded castle was a doppleganger. Needless to say we weren't paid for our services.

The players correctly identified their targets, but they never guessed that enemies could actually be smart.

The party, made up of fifth level characters, were hired by the local lord to clear out a kobold-infested cave system. Rather predictably, jeers of derision and cries of "They're only kobolds" came from the players' mouths. So in a way, they were right, but these kobolds were not your run of the mill "attack the players and fight to the death" type of critter. The caves themselves were a massacre, combining the best of pit traps, ranged weapons, tunnels too small for the players, and a variety of hit-and-run tactics from the kobolds themselves. The players, who used to be so fond of flaming oil, quickly discovered that giving was better than receiving, especially when doused in combustibles in a tunnel to narrow to roll around in. And then there were the times when a lone kobold could just be seen running around a corner, prompting a general charge into the inevitable ambush. Time and again, the players refused to see the threat that critters with a mere half hit die posed to them. After four expeditions, and the loss of 7 NPCs and three PCs, they decided never to say "ONLY kobolds"again.

The moral of this tale: just because you know what type of monster you're up against, doesn't mean that they'll behave sensibly. This "low level threat" proved to be the bloodiest adventure the players ever had.

"Kill first, ask questions later." This motto had taken me and my bloodthirsty comrades far in our hunt for undead creatures. Until... An anonymous tip led us to the "lair" of an extremely vicious vampire. Actually, it was a modest house in a densely populated urban area. After pounding a stake through the body of the sleeping "vampire", the blankets were pulled backed to reveal the daughter of a local Baron's Captain of the Guard (a well-known, though quite unlucky lass- and definitely not a vampire). Following some creative sneaking (which involved the deaths of 5 or 6 other towns folk) we had smuggled the body to a temple where we had to give everything we owned to a sly cleric for a resurrection fee and vow of silence. After a few more judicious murders we returned to the sight of our original slaying (with a live, though bloody, young girl in a sack) to find the Captain of the Guard awake and waiting with friends. This was our retirement party. We have changed mottoes since then.

We were given the task of kidnapping a person, and bring him into a house. Blindfolded. The man offering the job to us looked a bit nervous, but what the heck, it paid good money.
During the kidnapping, we hosed down the people that were guarding him, using blitz maneuvers. We blindfolded him and were on our way (we had stocked up on grenades and military grade ammo before getting this far).
When we got to the place we were to get him, we went into a room with no lights turned on. We push the man inside, then turn on the lights. To our surprise 10+ people yelled SURPRISE! It was the kidnapped's birthday...

One of my friend's first RPG experiences was the following: he finds himself with a beautiful woman, and sees that half her face is peeling off, and she's been trying to kill him all night with poisoned drinks, and (only-just!) missed back-stabs. Eventually, he sees the half-peeling face, the poisoned knife she's wielding, and the ungodly Charm of Fiery Destruction around her neck. DM: She stabs at you with her knife! My friend: She's bad, right?
In one long-standing campaign, the players had gotten on the wrong side of a particularly powerful wizard. This wizard (named Syn) had the ability to cast morph self, and used it to good advantage.
His usual mode of attack was to find the party while they were in a public setting, a feast, an inn, on the street; then he would change into an innocent form such as a child, halfling, dog, etc. Once in close, he would cancel the morph spell, and launch fireballs at the party, or steal the wizard's spellbook, or slay a friend the PC's had just left in the inn. Syn cared little for the lives of innocents, interested only in causing fear and hatred in the hearts of his enemies. Needless to say, the party was soon walking on eggshells. They showed an amazing amount of respect for even the most humble NPC; even attacking innocents, in the mistaken belief that it was their nemesis.

The Mages' Mistakes

10 spells that should not be.

Acid Trip
Detect Lightning Bolts (area: 5')
Explosive Familiar (it's *your* familiar)
Fiscal Projection
Fist of Flesh
Fleshskin (range: self)
Invisible Illusion
Know Own Alignment
Locate Self (tells you where you are, relative to your location)
Mildly Surprising Grasp