

CATS OF DAITIÜ RANILÜ

A 1st LEVEL ADVENTURE

BY OPHELIA POZENEL & JAMES A. POZENEL, JR.



COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**



"It is said that in Ulthar, which lies beyond the river Skai, no man may kill a cat."

The cats of Ulthar - H.P. Lovecraft

"All who die in Zul-Bha-Sair are the property of Mordiggian. The dark maw of his temple yawns eternally, and no man, no child, no woman, throughout the years, has evaded its yawning. All mortal flesh must become, in due time, the provender of the god."

The Charnel God - Clark Ashton Smith

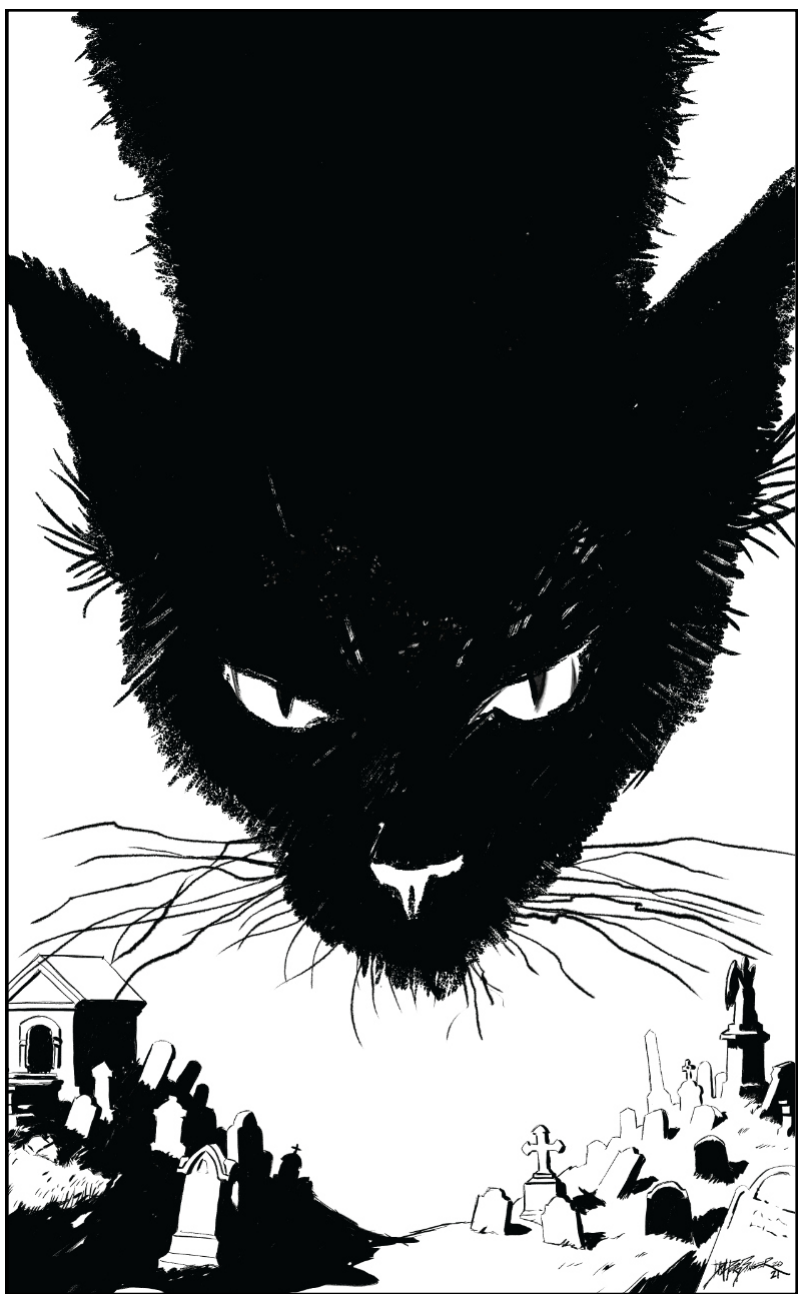
"Then he noticed all the sleek complacent cats of Ulthar licking their chops with unusual gusto, and recalled the spitting and caterwauling he had faintly heard in lower parts of the temple while absorbed in the old priest's conversation. He recalled, too, the evilly hungry way in which an especially impudent young zoog had regarded a small black kitten in the cobbled street outside. And because he loved nothing on earth more than small black kittens, he stooped and petted the sleek cats of Ulthar as they licked their chops, and did not mourn because those inquisitive zoogs would escort him no farther."

The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath - H.P. Lovecraft

"Now get this, we feed the rats to the cats, and the cats to the rats and get the cat skins for nothing."

How to Skin a Cat - Hüsker Dü





CATS OF DANTIÜ NANTIÜ

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Cats of Rahtlü

Cats of Rahtlü is designed for four to six 1st-level characters. In this investigative sandbox, the party will learn of odd disappearances and strange goings on. The adventure culminates underground as the party faces the horrifying truth in a graveyard bereft of its typical denizens.

Judge's Information

The hamlet of Rahtlü is infested by a clan of mythos ghouls. When they first settled in Rahtlü, the local cemetery was full of dead soldiers from a battle and generations of townsfolk. The long-term opportunity to feast on the soldiers that died in the last war was regarded as a great boon. However, the combination of the villagers' longevity and prodigious appetite of the clan has left the once brimming cemetery devoid of ghoulish delectables.

A ghoul-blooded human and cobbler, Jerediah Pickman, leads the clan. His ghoulish ancestors and their herd of malignant cats settled in the town just after the Battle of the Pass 400 years ago. The family embraces its ghoul-blood heritage as each generation eventually metamorphoses and retires to underground life.

To solve the clan's food woes, Jerediah hatched a plan. Once a month, they craft a pair of fine yellow & brown shaded shoes and imbue them with captivating magicks during a ceremony held amongst the standing stones on Old Man's Hill. The cats of the village, doing the ghouls' bidding, leave the magical shoes at the doorsteps of a villager. The shoes ensorcel the victim who cannot resist wearing them causing them walks out of town, to the cemetery, and to their doom. Thus filling the larder of the ghouls.

Adventure Plot

Act 1 - The party arrives in the town of Rahtlü. They learn of mysterious disappearances and investigate the town and its surroundings.

Act 2 - The party locates one of the entrances to the underground. They explore catacombs, encounter mythos ghouls and their wizard leader.

Act 3 - If the party is able to locate and solve the candle puzzle, they find a horror that will be more than they bargained for!

Plot Hooks

The judge may create whatever plot hooks necessary to engage a party. Suggestions:

- Sybil, head council member of Rahtlü, has posted messages in neighboring towns asking for help with disappearances and a call for new artisans (a tanner in particular).
- Party arrives with no set agenda, but the innkeeper shares local news of odd disappearances.
- Rumors of a clan of mythos ghouls in Rahtlü have come to light during some other adventure.
- While camped nearby, the party espies strange lights coming from the summit of a large foothill (Old Man's Hill).

Village NPCs

Residents of Rahtlü are normal people more akin to peasants than adventurers. If needed, use the following stat block:

Peasant: Init -1; Atk club +0 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 1d4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +0; AL varies.



Act 1: The Village of Rathlu

Your party finds itself in the small village of Rahtlii lying at the bottom of a wide valley hemmed in by a series of foothills. Village life is unhurried and loosely governed by a council of elders. Rahtlii's inhabitants are healthy and prudent. An inn, a blacksmith, and a shrine to Ulesh, god of peace, are the only public buildings. The foundations of a small stone garrison lie outside of the village near a narrow pass. Its stones, repurposed as grave markers for the village's cemetery and a memorial cairn, dot the landscape between the village and the ruins. The party also notices that there is a marked overabundance of cats.

Rahtlii's elders are positively ancient in appearance. If asked they will confirm their ages at well over a hundred. Most of the citizens of Rahtlii are likewise older with very few children. All agree their longevity comes from simple living and regular consumption of herbal tea.

The community is, more or less, just as it seems. Most villagers live by agricultural pursuits and by-products. The citizens have an abnormally long lifespan and whether that is due to their tea, healthy living or something else remains to be seen.

The only note of discord is a solitary couple that is said to kill any cat that strays near their remote hovel under a canopy of dark trees. Some people, when pressed, will admit their dislike of the old couple who live under a stand of dark oaks. The couple, named Pharion and Elaith, is said to have unsavory notions about cats. While social pariahs, they are aware of strange activities and the cats' involvement.

The talk of the town is a recent spate of disappearances. About once a month for the past year, a citizen mysteriously disappears in the night. No one knows how or why they vanish. The missing individual retires for the evening and is gone by early morning.

Interviewing townsfolk will reveal that on some evenings there are strange lights at the Stone Crown, a set of standing stones atop Old Man's Hill, near town. Townsfolk usually discount the lights as they've occurred for as long as any of them remember.

Headwoman Sybil

At some point after the party's arrival, they should meet Sybil, the head of the village council. Sybil invites them to lunch and serves them the local tea while explaining its virtues. She asks if the party wishes to take up the trade of tanning for the village, adding that the tanner's house will be given to the new citizen.

If there are no takers, she will ask if the party has heard about the disappearances and if they are here to help. She knows the following:

- Roughly once a month a member of the community disappears in the night.
- Most have been farmers, but the old cobbler and then the tanner disappeared in the past two months.
- Thankfully, the cobbler had an apprentice, Jerediah Pickman, who recently opened his workshop in his familial home.

Rahtlū Smithy

A man of average frame works on fittings for a plow. The mostly open air building is little more than a roof and a stone forge. He quenches the eye hook he was shaping and asks if you need any blades sharpened or equipment repaired.

Rop the Smith doesn't know much about the goings on but will share local lore and old wives' tales. Sprinkle in these stories during their commercial conversation or as answers to specific queries.

- "Yep they say the cats all just showed up one day. I mean, sure, we had cats, but all a sudden we had lots of cats. Musta been back around the time of the Battle at the Pass."
- "You like ghost stories? Sometimes the breeze whistles through the rocks of Solider's Cairn. Folks say they hear ghosts talking in the wind."
- "You ever heard of Old Man's Hill? They say cultists go up there and perform strange rites. Or it's fairy feasts in the light of the full moon. Maybe it's just some ol' hermit living in the woods, right? Who knows, eh? People sure like to get all excited about weird looking stones."

Old Tannery

On the edge of town, the tanner's shack leans up against a single tree. The nearby tanning vats still stink of feces and urine despite sitting unused for the past month. A pile of refuse sits at the entrance.

The tanner's personal effects and possessions have been removed. The home is clean and ready for a new occupant. An unclaimed tanned deer hide (5 sp) is lost amongst worn out clothes, broken housewares, and junk in the refuse pile.



The Inn of Great Enjoyment

A sign bearing the painted image of smiling lady swings gently on its hanger arm. The house is large, two-story wattle and daub building with attached stables.

The proprietor, Gillers, welcomes the party warmly. He has room for up to twelve. Four single rooms of roughly closet size, Two small rooms accommodating up to two guests and a suite large enough for four. Animals can be stabled; food and drink are available at normal rates.

He will joke with the party about taking care overnight and not disappearing before paying. If asked about the nature of the jibe, he'll explain that there have been some disappearances, but never his guests.

If used as the primary plot hook, Gillers will tell the party about the unfortunate and inexplicable disappearances of the tanner and former cobbler. He will recommend the party talks with Sybil, the headwoman, and offers to fetch her.

A concealed and warded door (as per *ward portal* spell check result 24) exists in the cellar. If the ward is somehow removed, it reveals a tunnel leading to the catacombs of the cemetery. See *Act 2: Under Rahtlii*.

Shrine to Ulesh

The Shrine to Ulesh is a small, simple stone building. A bas-relief of a pair of hands grasping wrists is carved into the tympanum above the door.

A beadle named Preadorn cares for the shrine. He also keeps records for the village. If asked, he will confirm that the disappearances occur in a regular 30 day pattern. If the pattern holds true, the next disappearance takes place tomorrow night.

Unbeknownst to Preadorn, the top of the altar can be pushed aside, revealing a shaft that leads down to a tunnel under the village. See Act 2: *Under Rahtlii*.

The Hovel Under the Trees (Pharion & Elaith)

A withered old couple, rumored to hate the cats of Rahtlii, reside in this small hovel amongst a stand of dark oak trees. Placed at the perimeter of their home, pungent rue, lavender, geranium, and rosemary form an odorous wall of plants. Animal pens sit next to the hovel and contain several rats.

Pharion and Elaith live here and are indeed hostile towards the cats of the town. They have slings tucked in their belts and a cat fur blanket over their modest bed. With little prodding they will share the following stream of complaints (none of which they can back up with any facts):

“The cats are up to no good and serve foul demons. My grannie said they came here like a plague after the battle. Is it a coincidence that the newcomers showed up around then, too? Anyway, we’ve seen the cats at night and they all head towards the Old Man’s Hill. Nothing good has ever happened up there on that summit. It’s a place of evil and blasphemous ceremonies going way back. Or that’s what we’ve heard. Nope never been up there to the Crown. Why would we!? Folks up to no good up there that’s for sure.”

If asked about cat pelts or the rats, the pair will explain their plans of feeding rats to the cats and cats to the rats (after they have been skinned) to get the cat skins for nothing. They unhappily note that the “newcomer” Jerediah lobbied for an ordinance prohibiting the killing of cats.



If asked about the tanner or the old cobbler, they will reveal that both parties were interested in the old couple's scheme.

If asked why the term "newcomer", they state that Pickmans arrived shortly after the Battle of the Pass (400 years ago).

Cobbler Pickman

A simple house of standard construction stands before you. A newly painted sign of a shoe hanging from a pick is posted next to the entrance. The door is locked. A note says, "Away on business."

Jerediah is the sole occupant of his family home, which has been recently converted into a cobbler's workshop. He will not be accessible during Act 1 as he is busy preparing for its finale (see below). The doors are locked and stuck quite tight (perhaps barred from the party's perspective). It is in fact held fast by *ward portal* and requires a DC 20 Strength check to breach.

The front of the house contains the workshop. The back of the house has living areas and access to a basement. In a common room off the kitchen, a trap door is skillfully concealed by a simple rug. If found the trap door is locked (DC 18 pick lock skill check) and leads a basement chamber containing Jerediah's Sanctum and connects to the catacombs (see Act 2: *Under Rahtlii*).

Jerediah the Cobbler

Jerediah recently became the village's cobbler upon the disappearance of his master, the former cobbler. Unbeknownst to his community, he is a self-taught wizard. His prize possession is his family's grimoire, which he uses to ensorcel shoes made from human skin.

Old Man's Hill

The largest foothill stands guard over the cemetery and slopes down to the valley's pass. It is covered with dense forest and a small path leads upward to "Stone Crown." Several tree stumps dot the edge of the forested hill.

The stumps appear to be the result of casual and necessary logging by the village. Some stumps are fresher than others and furthermore some stumps are quite old and rotting towards full decay. Careful examination of the rotting stumps will reveal that one is easily moveable and conceals a tunnel into the earth and signs of frequent use. If the party uses it, proceed to Act 2: *Under Rahtlū*.

Stone Crown

At the top of the foothill closest to the cemetery lies a circle of misshapen, mossy, worn stones. The shapes suggest men, bulbous eyed with large drooping lips.

Investigation reveals several monstrous footprints as well as those of a human and cats. Burnt offerings ringed by grotesquely shaped mushrooms lie in the center of the clearing. Examining the coals and ashes reveals shards of bones. Anyone accustomed to healing work will recognize that the pieces are human bones.

Shortly after the party arrives, cats start appearing in ones and twos from the woods until a clowder of Rahtlū cats has formed. Any movement away from the area causes the swarm to attack. They fight until the swarm is destroyed.

Rahtlū Cat, swarm (1): Init +5; Atk swarming bite and scratch +2 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 4d8+4; hp 25; MV 40'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, supernal appetite; SV Fort +0, Ref +10, Will 0; AL N.

The Cemetery of the Battle of the Pass

From the eastern edge of the village to the narrow pass where two foothills meet, the valley floor is littered with stones and grave markers. A great cairn of the same stone sits near the south side of the path. Where the dirt path ascends to the opening between the mountains, the foundations of a garrison house jut out of the ground like broken teeth.

The garrison house was maintained by Count Derlette, the village's distant liege lord. Four hundred years ago, the garrison was destroyed in a small battle of a minor political war and never rebuilt. The dead soldiers were placed in the cairn and the locals have since used the fallen stones of the garrison for building repairs and even headstones.

Soldiers' Cairn

A large funerary monument consisting of carefully stacked, split fieldstone stands 10 ft high and twice as wide in diameter. The overgrowth of moss and lichen suggests that the cairn was built several generations ago.

According to local history, this cairn was erected after the Battle of the Pass. The cairn can be easily climbed and a successful Luck check reveals an area of loose stones at the top. If the stones are moved, an opening is revealed with a ladder disappearing into the dark tomb.

Once inside the surprisingly empty cairn, a faint moan emanates from one side of the hollow chamber. At the other side, is a second ladder leading into a hole in the earth. If the party descends this second ladder they find themselves near the catacombs under the cemetery, *See Act 2: Under Rahtlii.*

In the direction of the moan, a barely visible, ghostly warrior lays on his side and coughs, "Is...is that you, Perigard?" If the party answers the ghost, he continues, "I've lost Tell True. My father will be angry for having lost our familial dagger. I was struck during the retreat from the garrison. I must have lost it then. Find it, won't you?"

If the party heckles the ghost, disparages nobility, or tells him the outcome of the Battle of the Pass (they lost), he will attack, claiming the party are spies and traitors intent on killing the king.

Lord Vemba, ghost (1): Init +2; Atk telekinesis ranged (1d3) or special (future sight); AC 10; HD 2d12; hp 18; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons, telekinesis, future sight; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C. (for special attacks see pp. 413-414 of the DCC RPG rulebook).

If provoked Lord Vemba will alternate between picking up rocks to hurl at the party (dealing 1d3 damage) or using future sight to frighten opponents with visions of their death.

The dagger is buried amongst the ruins of the Southern Gatehouse (see encounter area in this document).

Ruined Garrison Foundations

All that is left of the garrison and its gatehouse are two square foundations set on either side of the east/west road leading into Rahtlii. Stone litters the areas near the foundations. A ramp of rubble (formerly stairs) leads down into the basement of the northern gatehouse.

Southern Gatehouse

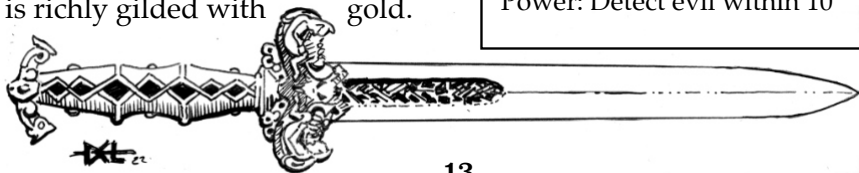
A pile of stones and the remnants of the foundation lie here.

Anyone seriously searching the ruins is liable to find more than they were bargaining for. Each searcher must make a Luck check. If a PC fails, they are attacked by a Vombis Leech hidden amongst the pile of stones. If multiple PCs fail the Luck check, the one with the lowest Luck score finds the leathery cowl-like predator. The vombis leech's first attack is with surprise receiving +4 to the attack roll.

Vombis leech (1): Init -1; Atk bite +0 melee (0); AC 10; HD 1d6+1; hp 6; MV 15'; Act 1d20; SP cranium bore; SV Fort +1, Ref -2, Will Immune; AL N. (See DCC RPG rulebook p. 431 for full description).

An hour of searching the ruins yields the Lord Vemba's lost heirloom, Tell True. The blade is straight and bears no rust. The hilt is richly gilded with gold.

<p>Tell True: +1 Dagger Alignment: Neutral Intelligence: 6 Communication: None Power: Detect evil within 10'</p>



Northern Gatehouse

Amid the rubble sits a low-curbed well, covered with a wooden lid. The lid resembles a wagon wheel with a hub and carriage bolts.

Examining the lid reveals a rotating handle in the hub. Twisting the handle unlocks the lid, but also triggers a trap. If not detected and removed (with a DC 12 target for both find traps & disarm traps skill checks), the carriage bolts shoot out, potentially striking anyone opening the lid as well as up to three people within 20'. The trap's bolts attack with a d20+4, deals 1d4 damage, and the opener is denied any Agility bonus to their AC.

Once open, a rope ladder descends into *Act 2: Under Rahtlüt*.

Act 1 Finale: The Shoes!

If the party makes no plans or fails to act, these steps play out in order

- All of Rahtlüt's cats slink their way out of town to the cemetery, disappearing through the Soldiers' Cairn into the catacombs.
- Jerediah puts the finishing touches on the most recent pair of shoes in the Shoemaking Workshop under Rahtlüt.
- A swarm of Rahtlüt cats returns to the village in the predawn hour carrying the pair of shoes. The shoes are placed on the victim's doorstep. The cats disperse.
- Whoever first lays eyes on the shoes is strongly compelled to put them on (DC 20 Will save) and will think of nothing else besides putting them on their feet.
- Once wearing the shoes, the victim walks out of town straight to the closest accessible entrance to Under Rahtlüt (either the tree stump or cairn entrance).
- The victim is escorted to the shrine of Morddoth and the ghouls begin the performance of a Rite of Feasting.
- The Rite of Feasting takes hours to complete while the still-living sacrifice is vivisected and flayed. Skin is carefully removed for the making of more shoes. Organs are removed from the body yet left attached. During the rite, acolytes are

careful not to sever any crucial blood vessels. If the party acts with urgency, it is possible to find the victim still alive. Later, the town awakens and the person's absence is discovered.

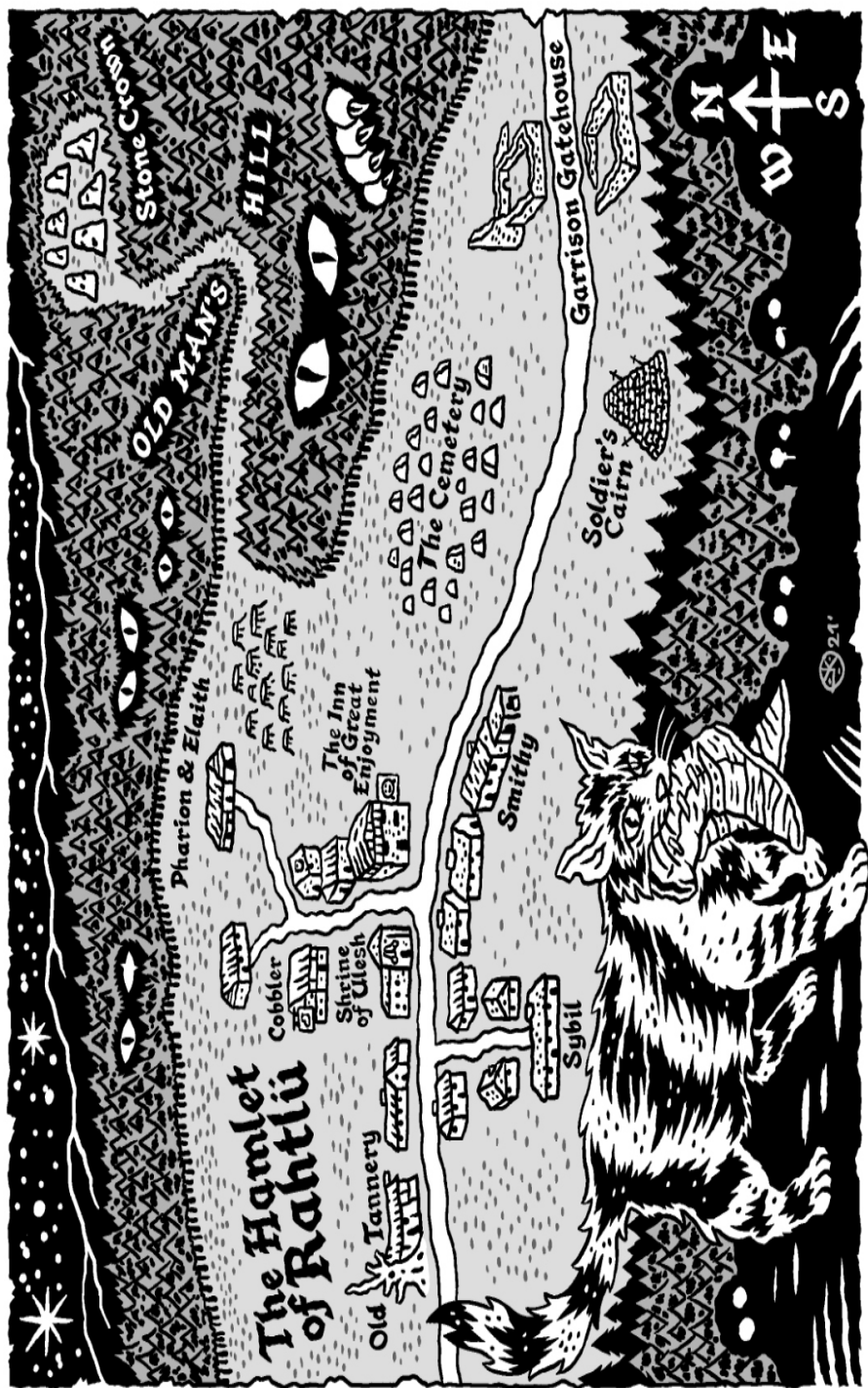
At some point you, the judge, may need to pull the trigger for the finale; the ensorcelled shoes need to be delivered to a victim. Other than Pharion and Elaith, who have protected themselves from the cats' approach, the victim is up to you. It could be someone the party has befriended during the adventure. If a group moves slowly through the adventure, a judge may even opt to target the party thereby bringing them directly under the cemetery. Alternatively, the party could merely run into the swarm of cats who are delivering the shoes to the victim. The outcome depends on the party actions, the time of day or whether they are on watch for the next disappearance. If they are sleeping, it might also depend on where and when they wake up.

If the swarm is encountered while delivering shoes, one large cat holds a pair of shoes in their mouth. Other members of the clowder will instantly move to fight the PCs.

Rahtlü Cat, swarm (1): Init +5; Atk swarming bite and scratch +2 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 4d8+4; hp 40; MV 40'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, supernal appetite; SV Fort +0, Ref +10, Will 0; AL N.

Any attempts to steal the shoes will be difficult as the swarm has a single minded purpose to deliver them to a victim. Anyone touching or closely examining the shoes is instantly beguiled. A powerful dweomer placed on the shoes requires DC 20 Will save to resist wearing them. Once shod, the victim is compelled to walk to the nearest known entrance to the underground. If they know of none, then they proceed to stump entrance.





Act 2: Under Rahtlū

Under the Cemetery

A maze of earthen tunnels winds its way under the bucolic valley's sod. The tunnel network is most dense at the cemetery forming a catacomb completely devoid of corpses. Transit tunnels lead away from the cemetery to Old Man's Hill, Soldier's Cairn, the Garrison Basement and back to town. Once under the village, the tunnel branches and ends at various locations (the cellar of The Inn of Great Enjoyment, the altar in The Shrine of Ulesh and Jerediah's Sanctum). The warrens under the cemetery feature four shrines dedicated to entities important to the ghouls.

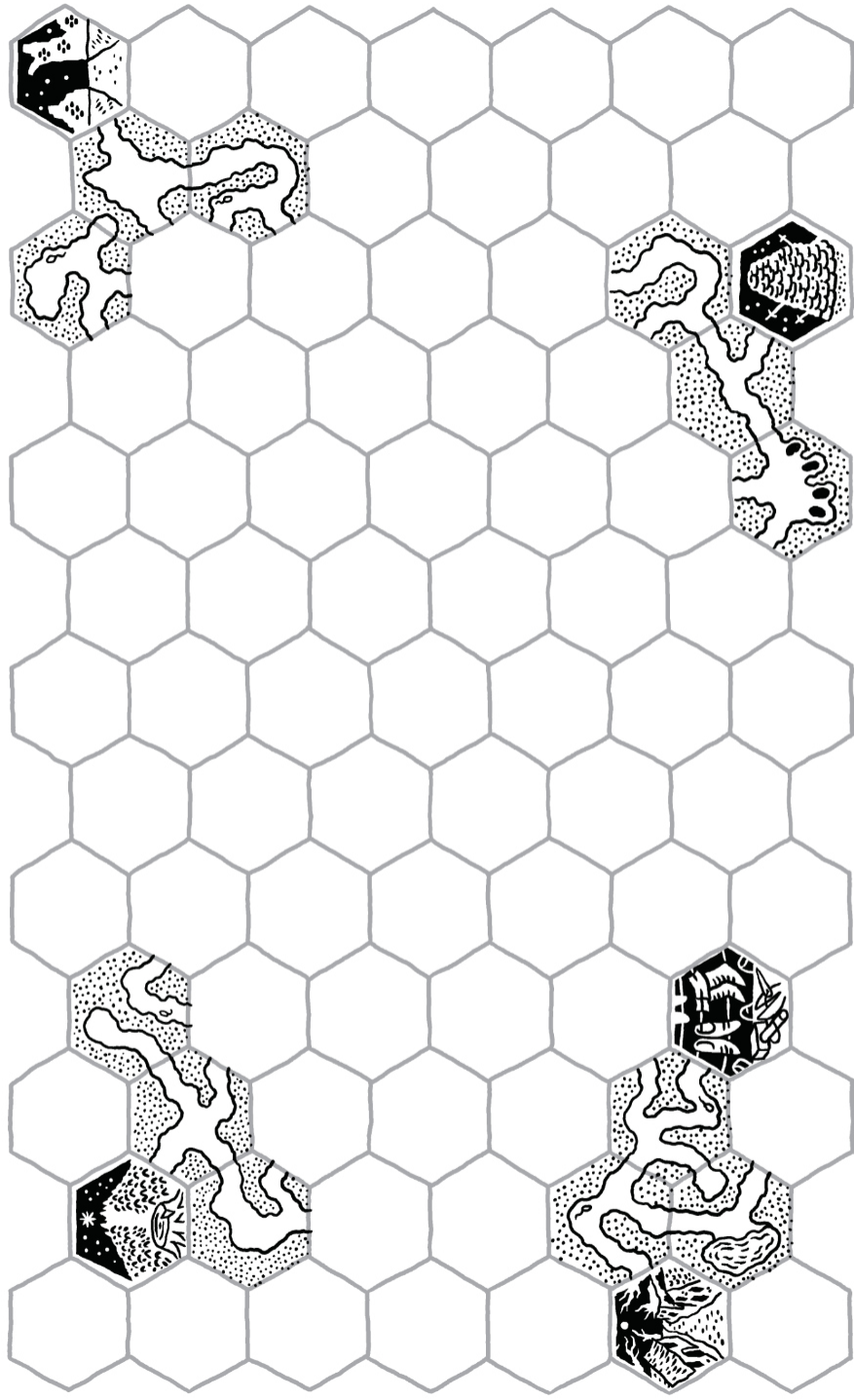
Exploring Under Rahtlū

Instead of a full, labyrinthine map the judge can use a hex crawl to simulate time and distance underground. Hexes and basic dimensions to be explored are provided on the map below, but the exact contents of each hex are rolled. Time spent per turn assumes cautious exploring speed. Cut time in half if the party is moving quickly. If the party moves with alacrity, double the chance of surprise.

For every turn spent exploring, roll a d12 and consult the wandering monster/event table below. If a shrine is discovered, choose one at random. You may also opt to choose a result for the sake of cohesion or expediency or use a smaller die such as a d8. For the placed "winding tunnels; open graves" hexes on the map below, use a d8. You can document their progress on the map provided by filling in the map details as you go.

d12	Wandering Monster/Event Result
1-6	Winding tunnels; open graves. Nothing happens.
7	1d3 ghouls; Winding tunnels opened graves.
8	A swarm of Rahtlū cats form from all directions. They lick their chops and stare at the party hungrily before attacking; Winding tunnels; open graves.
9-11	Party discovers a shrine (choose one at random).
12	Jerediah & 5 ghouls surprise the party; winding tunnels; open graves.

The Catacombs of Rathlú



The map shows only fixed locations such as the entry points into the catacombs and some surrounding “winding tunnels; open graves” hexes. The “Hamlet of Rahtlū” hex leads back to various locations in the village via a single passageway. The map should not be shared with the players, but drawn or otherwise displayed as the party explores the catacombs. Blank hexes should use the Wandering Monster/Event Result table provided in this adventure.

Combat Under Rahtlū

The highly tunneled nature of the labyrinth allows for more fluid combat than might be expected for narrow passages. Tunnels weave in and out from each other forming more of a grid with columns of dirt for support. Ranged combat will be difficult for anything other than crossbows, small thrown weapons or short bows, suffering a -2d penalty.

Named Encounters

Unless otherwise mentioned, all the rooms are earthen with timber supports and have exits in every direction.

Shrine to Morddoth

Candles in a rainbow of colors are arranged around an obsidian bas-relief of an amorphous cloud-like worm. A length of chain descends from a hole in the ceiling to a great, rune-marked iron plug that fills a roughly 6ft diameter hole in the floor.

If *detect magic* is used on the iron plug, it radiates powerful conjuration. If the spell check warrants the information, the 3rd level wizard spell *planar step* is present. In most cases, clerics will sense that the plug as “evil” in nature.

The candles are unlit, but a simple wrought iron candle-lighter and a dozen lighting tapers sit nearby. The candle colors are khaki, amethyst, daffodil, azure, tangerine, and honeydew. Lighting the candles in the order that spells “Kadath” causes the chain and iron plug to be drawn up. This procedure is documented in the Pickman Family Grimoire in Jerediah’s Sanctum. The hole in the floor is finished in brick and a ladder descends into the bowels of the earth. A stale, dry, earthy smell wafts from the hole. If the party descends, go to *Act 3: Under the Catacombs*.



Shrine to Lord of Zul-Bha-Sair

A blackish purple stone carving of a low, windowless building with a portico on each of its four sides sits on a small altar. Next to the building a bowl of rotting flesh gives off strong charnel odors.

The carving of the building depicts the Temple of Mordiggian in Zul-Bah-Sair. If touched, images of strange purple hooded priests taking corpses into the putrescent smelling temple violate the PC's senses. The perpetrator must make a DC 14 Will save or be shaken with horror for the remainder of the adventure, suffering -1d on all future actions.

Shrine to Shaurash-Ho

A blackened bronze statuette of an anglerfish-headed, scaly-skinned humanoid surrounded by prostrate worshippers stands alone in an alcove. The word 'Father' has been scraped into the earthen walls and painted with a rust colored pigment.

The statue implies that the creature is stitched together and is made of several different chunks of flesh. Its chest cavity is pinned open, with the exposed heart likewise pinned, as if an autopsy was just performed. A garland of skulls girds its waist. Around it vaguely canine faced figures lay in poses of worship or ecstasy.

Those with occult knowledge may recognize Shaurash-Ho, The Prowler Among the Tombs, and Father of All Ghouls.



Shrine to Yogash

An antique brass statue of an emaciated, dog-faced humanoid with pointed ears, red gem eyes, flat nose, and drooling lips hunches over a corpse. It gnaws at a partially defleshed skull in its boney claws. The word 'Son' has been scraped into the earthen walls and painted with a rust colored pigment.

Those with occult knowledge may recognize that this statue of a ghoul is not just any ghoul, but Yogash, the First Ghoul. Seeing both Yogash and Shaurash-Ho with their crudely inscribed epitaphs certainly makes clear the figures' relationship.

Placing the idols of Shaurash-Ho & Yogash in the same vicinity unleashes a powerful curse. First, a wave of nausea washes over those in the room. Next all must make a DC 18 Will check, or be cursed to devolve into ghoulness within 2 years time. Minor symptoms such as a thinning of muscle and body fat, ears increasingly become more pointed, bloodshot eyes, slowly flattening noses and noticeable prognathism befall the accursed. The curse may be lifted with powerful magic or burning 40 mythos ghoul skulls and reciting the *Obsecration against Ghouls*, an invocation found in a rare manuscript called the "Cults of Ghouls".

Shoemaking Workshop

The smell of an over-full latrine and rotting flesh assault your sense of smell even from outside the room. Meager light pours out from under the rickety door covering the entrance.

Anyone familiar with tanneries will instantly recognize the smell of skins being cured. After opening the door read the following:

A small cobbler's workshop has been incongruently installed into this earthen chamber. Three red-eyed, boney, canine-like creatures are making shoes and cutting paper-thin leather.

If The Rite of Feasting has not started and not already encountered, Jerediah is in this room instructing the ghouls on the finer points of shoe making.

Mythos Ghoul (3): Init -1; Atk claw +1 melee (1d3+1), or bite +4 melee (1d4 + worry); AC 12; HD 1d8+1; hp 9, 8, 4; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP worry; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.



Jerediah, 4th level wizard: Init +0; Atk dagger +1 (1d4) or clawed glove +1 melee (1d4+1) or wizard staff +2 melee (1d4+5); AC 11; HD 4d4; hp 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP spells (+4 spell check, *charm person*, *chill touch*, *feather fall*, *spider climb*, *ward portal*, *wizard staff*); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

Pickman's Staff: Jerediah's staff is as described in the *wizard staff* spell in the DCC RPG rulebook and provides the following benefits: The staff's wielder receives a +1 bonus to spell checks when casting *chill touch* and *ward portal*. The staff also grants a +1 bonus to saving throws.

Jerediah's Shoes: Jerediah has fashioned a pair of magical shoes from layers of cured and waxed human skin. Their appearance is that of a glossy, supple, yellowed leather. The wearer may invoke the shoe's powers by speaking the phrase: "All mortal flesh must become the provender of the god." At that point the shoes will ignite in purple and sable flames that consume one layer of skin from the shoes. As the layer of skin peels and turns to smelly black ash, the magical flame deals 1 hp of damage to the wearer, after which the wearer may select from one of two effects below. After 4 uses the shoes' layers of skin have all burned away, rendering the item useless.

Feather fall: Caster falls at a graceful rate of 50' per round and takes no damage if they land before 3 rounds pass. Otherwise, they suffer half damage and are allowed a Fort save (DC 10 +1 for each 20' fallen) to avoid all damage.

Spider climb: For the next 30 mins, the wearer becomes extremely skilled at climbing, gaining a +20 bonus to Climb checks, and moves at normal speed as they climb.

Jerediah's Sanctum

This cramped, earthen, underground room is crammed with all sorts of grave goods. Several clay and glass containers of various sizes hold herbs, powders, liquids, and mummified bits of animals. Tools and other esoteric items lie amongst charts and papers on a small table. An inexpertly crafted, yet stout, door made of various species of wood lead off to the east.

Various artisan tools, votive objects such pots or holy symbols, and even simple jewelry lie in one corner of the room. If a PC is looking for a specific tool there's a 50% chance it's in the pile and in good condition. Most of the pots are empty, but one contains 2d20 silver pieces. Another has a collection of 2d10 arrow points. Jewelry tends to be semi precious in nature but adds up to 2d10 x 10 gp in value.

The table has several charts and papers with mathematical figures on them. An astrolabe, compass, ruler, and other drawing tools litter the table. A wizard or someone skilled in astrological matters can easily determine that the author is tracking movements of stars and planets. A desk lectern holding a grey, rubbery, hide-covered book dominates the table.

The book is closed and padlocked (DC 13 pick locks skill check to open). A DC 12 find trap skill check reveals several needle holes in the filigreed padlock's face. A DC 17 disable trap successfully disables all the needles. Lower result checks partially disable the lock's needles. There are seven needles in total. Each attack with a d20+2 and deliver a DC 16 Fort save poison that deals 1d4 damage on success or 1d4 temporary Agility damage on failure. The difference between the DC of the trap and the disable trap skill check is the number of needles attacking the PC (e.g., the PC rolls a 13 on disable traps. $DC\ 17 - 13 = 4$ needles attack the player as they open the padlock).



Pickman Family Grimoire

The first part of the grimoire details the Pickman family genealogy and documents their line back thousands of years. Each person has curious horn-like marks over their names except Jerediah. A sage specializing in occult matters might know that the horn-like symbols denote their ascension to full ghoulish-hood (DC 20 Intelligence skill check).

The next section, starts with the phrase: "All mortal flesh must become the provender of the god." and describes the entities Morddoth, Sharuash-Ho and Yogash and ceremonies associated with the ghouls. If found and read before entering *Act 2: Under Rahtlii*, PC's will clearly recognize the shrines and their deities.

Another section reveals the function of the iron plug in the Shrine of Morddoth. Including the methodology of opening the well.

Lastly, the book contains all the spells Jerediah knows (*charm person, chill touch, feather fall, spider climb, ward portal, wizard staff*) plus *make potion*.

Above the table are shelves of glass and clay containers. All the items have value to someone in the magical arts and amount to 4d10 x 10 gp of value. There is a collection of potions here as well. The potion of paralysis and half the healing potions will be with Jerediah during The Rite of Feasting.





Potion	Appearance	Effects
Paralysis	Clear glass with a long glass stopper for applying drops. Light yellow in color, smells of wet earth.	Paralysis for 1d8+5 rounds. If the creature is 2 HD or less, it is automatically paralyzed. If 3 HD or more, it receives a DC 20 Will save to resist. Each HD above 3 reduces the DC by 1. Dose size: a drop from the glass stopper. Doses 5.
Human Control	Tin salve container. Sticky, black confectionary balls. Smells of burnt sugar.	Consumer gains control of one human as per <i>charm person</i> . Victim may resist with a DC 19 Will save. The effects are broken with saving throws at set intervals of time (see DCC RPG rulebook p. 131). Dose size: a globule the diameter of a small coin. Doses: 2
Healing (4)	Brown glass bottle with cork stopper dipped in beeswax. Red- brown in color, smells of tarragon.	Imbiber is healed 2 HD of damage. Dose size: 1 bottle.
Poison	Clear glass bottle with cork stopper. Slate grey in color, smells of the ocean.	DC 16 Fort save, 1d4 hp on success, 1d4 Agility (temporary) on failure. Doses: 7

Act 2 Finale: Jerediah

Once inside the catacombs it's time to bring the party face to face with Jerediah and the terrible secrets festering under Rahtlū.

Jerediah and a number of ghouls to provide a suitable challenge to the party gather in the Shrine to Morddoth. When the party enters read the following:

A group of cultists dressed in long cowed purple robes stands before you. The room is lit by an array of colorful candles. A huge iron plug hangs over an open pit of about 6 feet in diameter. Two cultists each hold a purple pillow; one bearing a clear glass bottle, the other with a brown bottle. A number of them hold leather straps and various instruments of torture. Still others hold staves carved into a swirling cloud-like worm.

If Jerediah already has a victim, they are in the process of torturing the stone-still sacrifice.

For the first few moments of combat it will be impossible to tell Jerediah from the ghouls. He will reveal himself after he is able to take an action, typically a *charm person* spell to gain an ally or readying a potion. Anyone taking their action to find Jerediah may notice one of the cultists carries themselves in a human fashion, rather than the loping movements of the ghouls.

During the final confrontation Jerediah is upset that the his genius plan is unraveling, he begins shouting at them: "It was perfect! You give the shoes to the humans and the human skin to the shoemaker and get the human meat for nothing!"



Act 3: Under the Catacombs

Should the party figure out the candle puzzle in the Shrine of Morddoth or find the ghouls during their Rite of Feasting, they may descend from the catacombs into the dreamland home of mythos ghouls. It is a place of darkness, infinite piles of bones, wandering ghouls, and things far worse.

The iron plug itself is the means by which the portal between dimensions exists. Removing the plug severs the physical connection between realms. If the plug is moved to another location, a ceremony in the Pickman Family Grimoire details the process for reestablishing the planar doorway.

Spawn of Morddoth

You descend the rope ladder into light absorbing darkness. About half way down there's a brief unsettling feeling as if you have passed an unholy threshold. As you set your feet down a crunching sound meets your ears. You find yourselves standing on a great mound of bone shards that continue as far as you can see. The air is fetid and stale. You hear a susurrations as if the wind blows, yet the air is still.

Inform the party that whatever light sources they have are perceptibly dimmed to half the normal illumination. Give the party a few moments to make plans or search the surrounding and then read the following:

The whispering sound grows louder and suddenly a swirling darkness appears within your weakened light. A huge shadow moves over you and coalesces into a worm shaped column with tendrils of shadow issuing forth from the main body. The tendrils coil, collapse, and reform as it moves towards you.

Morddoth Spawn (1): Init +3; Atk envelopment +5 melee (special); AC 13; HD 8d8; hp 40; MV 40' flying; Act 2d20; SP half damage from physical attacks; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will Immune; AL C.

The spawn attacks by enveloping a target with coils of shadow. The blackness grows and waxes making a flame-like murmuring as it closes about the victim. Anyone enveloped must make a DC 14 Fort save or take 6d6 damage from the caustic ebon smoke. Those slain by the attack, dissolve in a sudden gust of air of

strangely hot and cold, with an acrid odor and no chance to roll the body. Succeeding the save prevents all damage, but fills the victim with abject terror who immediately flee the area at maximum speed for 1d4+1 rounds. The spawn will not stop attacking.

If they manage to defeat this eldritch horror, there is no treasure to retrieve for their trouble. Judge may either allow the party to recover and explore or may manifest another morddoth spawn to further harass the party.

If the judge permits exploration, they will uncover great dunes of shattered bones within a seemingly unending subterranean cavern system. Perhaps they are in the bowels of the earth, or the vale or Pnath, or perhaps some other place between Kadath and the lands we know...



Bestiary



Rahtlü Cat, swarm: Init +5; Atk swarming bite and scratching +1 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 4d8+4; MV 40'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, supernal appetite; SV Fort +0, Ref +10, Will 0; AL C.

Rahtlül cats look like normal cats although they often gaze hungrily at animals and people alike. When provoked or ravenously hungry, a clowder of cats form and attack their victims by biting and scratching all within their midsts. Once their prey is down it takes only a few minutes for Rahtlül cats to strip the corpse to raw, bloody bones. Sated for the moment, the cats happily busy themselves with grooming.

It should be noted that in some other dimension, alternate reality, or dreamland another breed of cats behaves in a similar nature in a town named Ulthar. The only difference between the two is the cats' alignment. Cats of Ulthar are lawfully aligned.

Mythos Ghoul: Init -1; Atk claw +1 melee (1d3+1), or bite +4 melee (1d4 + worry); AC 12; HD 1d8+1; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP worry (automatic 1d4hp dmg/round after successful bite); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.

Mythos ghouls are loathsome vaguely human creatures with hooved feet and canine features; they speak a guttural language that is best described as meeping and gibbering. They are often encrusted with grave mold that collects on them as they feed. They dwell underground, frequently in tunnel systems located under villages and towns; they also like to burrow vast networks under graveyards, their preferred feeding grounds. When a mythos ghoul successfully bites its prey it latches on tight and does not need to roll an attack on the following round; it automatically inflicts another 1d4 points of damage as it worries its fangs into the victim. Mythos ghouls are agile climbers and exceptional diggers.

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