

The Book of Gates

The Necromancer's Codex of the Seven-Part Pact

Draft 3.0 (April 2024)



Part I: The Necromancer

Behold the **Necromancer**, known as **Keeper of the Gates**, **Skull-Bearer**, and the **Grim Seventh Magus**. He is the guardian of life and death, the gray and ashen line of gates which keep Isha safe from the ceaseless waves of the dead. He is of a melancholy and cold temperament, and his fate is governed by the planet **Saturn** and the metal **Lead**. It is said the first Necromancer was loathed by others of his kind, and his signature placed upon the pact reluctantly. He is the only Wizard of the Seven-Part Pact permitted by law to return the dead back to life.

Within this Part of *The Book of Gates*, you will be prompted with a number of choices to make on behalf of your Wizard. Should your answers ever change, or your Wizard grow beyond your original image of him, your answers should change as well.

Humour & Temperament

The four Elements govern your relationship with magic, and these Elements are governed by your relationship with the world. Mark down which path best describes you, and increase the corresponding Elemental Circle.

- Death is cruel in her parity; she takes from everyone and breaks all hearts eventually. Do you **sympathize with those who mourn** (+1 Water) or **reject the whining of those who cannot face the truth** (+1 Air)?
- The underbelly of Isha is crawling with petty ghoulcallers who fashion themselves your peers. Do you regard them as **uncertain allies at the border of death** (+1 Fire) or **enemies to the Pact and all you stand for** (+1 Earth)?
- Working with the dead gives you a strange air to those still alive. Do you come across as **macabre and irreverent** (+1 Air) or **solemn and eerie** (+1 Earth)?
- The poorest isles of Isha have lost many to coastal raiders and harsh winters. Do they **welcome you like an old friend** (+1 Water) or **spurn you as an ill omen** (+1 Earth)?
- Once a child came to you, begging for your help — their mother recently passed away in a most unfair manner. Did you **try to help despite the cost** (+1 Fire) or **explain to the child the truth of death** (+1 Air)?
- You are intimately familiar with death. Did you lose a **lover** (+1 Fire) or a **family** (+1 Water)?

Your fragment of the Seven-Part Pact is a skull, but in your hands it takes another form:

- A wooden stave with a rictus grin and a flickering light atop its mast. (+1 Fire)
- A wicked scythe with an ashen blade sharp enough to cut through bone. (+1 Air)
- A gloomy metal death-mask bearing the visage of one who died. (+1 Earth)
- A heavy chalice whose contents taste of the rivers of death. (+1 Water)

History & Secrets

There was another Wizard before you, your old master who taught you the secrets of Necromancy. How did he teach you, and how did he die? Choose 1 which is known to all and 1 which you suspect. No matter what, he is now dead, and his spirit guards the 8th Gate of Death.

- He was a stern and wizened man, rather like a father for you, who raised you from the earliest age to follow his footsteps. He gave his life to hold the Gates and keep his most fearsome enemy at bay.
- He was an awkward man, who preferred to read instead of talking, and was often negligent in his education. He was betrayed by another Wizard in a moment of weakness (perhaps it was by the Warlock's master).
- He was a charming man, as much your equal as your teacher, who found you working as a petty ghoul-caller in the slums of Isha. He was executed by the King of Isha for treason and adultery.
- He was a quiet man, who rescued you from the edge of death and restored you to life, teaching you silently. One day he simply gave you his fragment of the Pact and departed into Death, never to return.
- He was a cruel man, who stole you away from some faraway isle, and taught you most unpleasantly. You took his life to preserve the Seven-Part Pact, although you still wonder if it was the right choice.
- You never met the former Necromancer, for you were chosen by the other Wizards to fill a vacant seat within the Pact. He taught you still, in visions and in death.
- You learned your magic from the carrion-birds and open graves of the Graven Isle, and needed no master to guide your hand in matters of necromancy.

The one scarcity all Wizards share is time. Wizards discuss their age in scores, periods of twenty years that shape their long and wizened lives. How old are you, and how has death left its mark on your bones?

- You are just a boy, far too young to assume the mantle of Necromancer, but an untimely death has forced you into the Pact.
- You are a young fellow, not yet two scores old, but the icy touch of death already whitens your hair and weighs heavy on your heart.
- You are of a middling age, between two and three scores old, but many mistake you as far older, for the corrosion of death has ravaged your former youth.
- You are of a proper age, between three and four scores old, but your death lurks around every corner, and your body is falling apart around you.
- You are of a great age, between four and five scores old, but it is only through sheer force of will that the bag of bones you call a body is holding onto the living world.
- You are at least a century old, but the magic you use to preserve your body has started to fail, and any day now you expect death to claim you.
- You are far more than a century old, but the magic which preserves you has stripped away all that was once human, and in many's eyes you are the personification of death herself.

Magic changes those who work with it. Choose 1 change, and another 1 for every score you've been alive:

- Your hair is bleached white from the horrors you've seen, and your hands have an unmistakable tremor.
- You reek of death, the sickly sweet smell of corpses cutting through any perfume you wear.
- Your eyes are black as the deepest pits of death and leak the waters of the furthest death.
- Great tattered wings grow from your back, somehow impossibly capable of flight.
- One arm is dead, reduced to bones and rope, and yet still capable of serving you.
- You are hollow and brittle, insides filled with sand, and every food you eat tastes of ash.
- Your voice is harsh and grinding, your lungs worn away from breathing the poisoned air of death.
- Your bones sharpen into points, your teeth and fingers long spikes, and spurs protrude from your skin.

- Your body stretches and warps in monstrous ways, growing and twisting to keep your magic contained within you.
- When you stand in direct sunlight you seem to fade away, as if there's nothing left to hold onto.
- Your shadow flickers with wailing faces and clutching hands begging for release.
- You cannot sleep, your mind races with nightmares at all hours of the day and dark circles form under your eyes.
- Others cannot bear to touch you, for your skin is colder than stone and your grasp burns at those who try to get close.
- You are dead, your heart is still, and yet somehow you still stand.

Your are a man, as all Wizards are. However within your heart you know:

- To be a man is to protect the people you care for, and you fear you're not strong enough to guard those you love from the inevitability of death.
- To be a man is to be sturdy in the face of disaster, and you fear you're too soft to handle the heavy weight of life.
- There is something wrong with you, that your body does not fit with how you wish you could be, and the title of man sits uncomfortably on your shoulders.
- You live a double life as a woman, in the solitude of the Graven Isle and in the privacy of your Companions.
- You were once a lady, but many years ago you disguised yourself as a man to join the Pact.
- The sands of death have worn away all that once gendered you, and what remains is hardly a man at all.
- There is an even greater secret, which is for you and you alone.

Your name as a Wizard within the Seven-Part Pact is:

- A name taken from a gravestone.
- A title bestowed upon you by your old master.
- An honorific bestowed by the people of Isha.
- A nickname that fits your morbid sense of humor.

Might & Trappings

Through your Pact-Fragment, you may freely perform any of the following:

- While casting a spell, transmute any symbol divined through the dice into "♄" (Saturn).
- Find a pathway into Death, and through this pathway traverse the Gates of Death and return, as described within the rules of your Domain in *Part III: The Gates of Death*.
- Within the realms of Death, rebuff any foes present and force them to flee deeper into Death, as described within the rules of your Domain.

Along with your Pact-Fragment, you possess 3 of the following Treasures. Pick which ones your old master left for you, which you stole from the Ghoul-Callers, and which you scavenged yourself:

- A cloak woven from shadows and dying breaths, which upon donning may render you invisible, and disguise you as a deep shadow.
- A set of eleven ancient chimes, which only ring when the dead are near, and whose tune is loud and harsh to the souls of the dead.
- The left hand of a notorious killer, transformed into a flickering candle, whose light reveals deception and strikes fear into the hearts of the living.
- A stone dagger chiseled from the 1st Gate, whose touch is anathema to the dead, and which rots away at the living.
- A funerary veil from within the crypts beneath the Graven Isle, which when placed over another's face may ward them of the caustic effects of death.
- A basket of fruit picked from the groves of the 11th Gate, whose consumption erases memories of pain and grief.
- A pair of sturdy steel-toed boots, which will never wear away and will never fall apart, no matter how far you go from home.

Additionally, you are adept at the secret practices of Necromancy, which grant you access to certain Humble Magics, cantrips which you may perform at any time through your will and without any incantation. They include:

- Extinguishing all light present, blinding all with deep shadows, through which you may move freely.
- Silencing the breeze, stilling all sound, dampening the calls of nature and in turn ensure your own footsteps are silent as you pass.
- Taking the life of the dying in your hands, granting them safe passage into the realms of death, and allowing them to move at peace into what lies beyond.

Finally, you carry the following possessions:

- A simple black cloak, with leaden clasps bearing the symbol of Saturn.
- Three sets of clothes, at least: suitable for a gravedigger, a wealthy but out-of-fashion gentleman, or a soon-to-be buried corpse.
- Any materials necessary for the casting of magic, such as: chalk, loose bones, grave dirt, needle and thread, etc.
- Any accessibility aids or mobility tools, such as: a cane, a wheelchair, painkillers, etc.
- This very Codex, filled with the notes of Necromancers past.

Part II: The Crypt & Its Companions

In the cursed and ancient ruins of his past the Necromancer broods, surrounded by those few he dares still to love. It is a hard and meager life, here at the edge of Isha, but it is the seat of power for the Seventh Grim Magus, and all know to tread lightly across the isle.

Within this Part of *The Book of Gates*, you will be prompted with a number of choices to make about your Wizard's Isle, Sanctum, and Companions. Many of these choices are not immediate, and if you intend to stay with this Necromancer for a long period of time, you may wait until you have a free moment (or until the story of the Pact calls upon such knowledge).

The Crypt Upon The Graven Isle

The Graven Isle is the place you call home, the furthest and least hospitable island in the archipelago. Change or add one detail. You may Spend Time to care for your Isle, and in doing so, change or add to its Lore.

- The Graven Isle is a cold and miserable place, covered in dark clouds and filled with countless memorials to the dead.
- For as long as anyone can remember, the Graven Isle has been the burial grounds for all of Isha's dead, and the catacombs run deep into the bottom of the world.
- The Graven Isle was once a beautiful place and the heart of Isha, before magical war destroyed its towers and plunged the landscape into ruin.
- A long-ago Necromancer was responsible for the desolation of the Graven Isle, and Necromancers dwell here still in exile from the archipelago.
- No one else dares to live upon the Graven Isle, save ghouls-callers, smugglers, and the diseased.

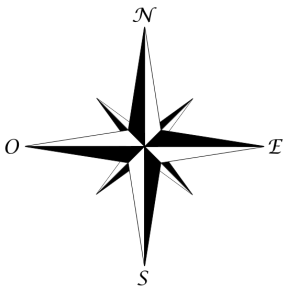
The Necromancer's Crypt sits within the Graven Isle and serves as your private Sanctum from the outside world. Change or add one detail. You may Spend Time to care for your Sanctum, and in doing so, change or add to its Lore.

- The Necromancer's crypt was once the Imperial Palace of Isha, although now it's a rain-soaked ruin.
- The walls of the crypt are cold stone carved with the memories of the dead, the stairways worn away by time, filled with secret passageways which have not seen light in hundreds of years.
- The halls of the crypt are lined with the eerie statues of the dead, which in many places plunge beneath the water or are propped up by grim piles of bones.
- The central room is a funerary space where the dead are brought from the other isles and left for you to take care of.
- Your living chambers are dreary and uncomfortable, with any living occupants and obvious afterthought.

A Map of the Graven Isle

Whenever you have a spare moment, complete and mark the map of the Graven Isle. It should include some or all of the following details:

- The Necromancer's Crypt.
- The royal mausoleum.
- The abandoned tower, filled with crows.
- The marsh filled with unidentified corpses.
- Where the common folk are buried.
- Where Ghoul-Callers smuggle bodies out.
- Where the diseased of Isha are quarantined.



Companions & Care

While you are a Wizard, you are also mortal, and as a mortal, you require care from others to survive. These are your four Areas of Care, and each is associated with a particular Element.

- Your **daily life**, ensuring food and water are brought to the Graven Isle, that the robes of the Necromancer are carefully washed, and that the Crypt is properly dusted. (*Earth*)
- Your **emotional life**, comforting you when you are distressed, giving physical intimacy and touch, and that the horrors of death do not break your heart. (*Water*)
- Your **private life**, guarding the Crypt from incursions of Ghoul-Callers and nosy explorers, protecting your secrets shared in confidence, ensuring you can find privacy away from your responsibilities. (*Air*)
- Your **creative life**, providing conversation late into the night, philosophical musings on the nature of death and the afterlife, and inspiration for the further development of your magical practice. (*Fire*)

The higher your Elemental Circle is, the more important and valued that Companion's Care will be. Choose at least Companion 1 who is physically present with you and at least 1 whose spirit still lingers, and assign each an area of Care.

- Your wife, who knows more about death than you do.
- Your child, still innocent to the ways of death.
- Your sibling, who grew up alongside you upon the Graven Isle.
- Your best friend, who doesn't care about your robes and station.
- Your mother, withered and worn down by the weight of death.
- Your assistants, who tend to the dead of the Graven Isle.
- Your familiar, who lingers in your shadow.
- Your demon, petulantly bound to your will.

You may Spend Time with one of your Companions to gain +1 in their associated Elemental Circle. You may also, during a Scene, ask of them any favor, and they will comply if they are able to, and ask something of you in return.

Should one of your Companions ever depart, die, or become unwilling to provide their Care, you must do so yourself. Each month you must Spend Time fulfilling or handling the missing Care, often in a sloppy, self-destructive, or vice-filled way.¹ If you don't, the associated Elemental Circle is reduced to zero this month.

Developing Your Companions

Whenever you have a spare moment, develop more about your Companions by answering questions about them, exploring their inner lives further.

Your Wife

- How did you meet your wife? What is her name?
- What secrets does your wife understand which you cannot grasp?
- What is the sickness which haunts her? *or* What past guilt does her appearance remind you of?

Your Child

- Which gender do you know your child is? What is his or her name?
- What is it about death which your child is still naive to?
- Why is your child not your prentice, despite their wishes? *or* Why do you blame yourself for your child's death?

Your Sibling

- Is your sibling older or younger than you? What is their name?
- Why wasn't your sibling chosen to be Necromancer instead of you?
- What do you envy about your sibling's current life? *or* Why can't you have an honest conversation with them?

¹ Certain previous Necromancers (whose names I wouldn't dare to sully here) have in the past turned to alcoholism, self-destructive bouts of violence, and brooding along the borders of life and death, as a result of the grief caused by losing one of his few Companions.

Your Best Friend

- How do first impressions often deceive your friend's nature? What is their name?
- What gift does their presence give you which no one else can provide?
- What is the secret joke the two of you share? *or* Why do they stick by your side?

Your Mother

- What has age taken from your mother? What do you call her?
- What did she have to give up in order to help you become who you are?
- Which part of her is just as vivid as it was in her youth? *or* What did you sacrifice to keep her present?

Your Familiar

- What form does your familiar take? What do you call it?
- How does your familiar communicate with you?
- How does your familiar aid you in your magic? *or* What does your familiar do that haunts you?

Your Assistants

- What responsibilities do your assistants hold for the Graven Isle? What do you call them?
- What secrets of the crypt do your assistants know?
- What rituals do your assistants do for the dead? *or* What unsettles you about your assistants?

Your Demon

- How did you or your master bind your demon? What do you call it?
- How does your demon torment you?
- What secret tricks has your demon taught you? *or* What curse has your demon placed upon you?

The Necromancer's Prentice

Each Wizard has at least one Prentice, who will (most likely) inherit his position within the Pact upon his death. In the event of your passing, your Prentice will be crucial for holding your Domain together for your successor, and ensuring the wisdom of previous Necromancers is passed on to the future.

Your Prentice is most likely a score younger than you.² Describe your relationship with him, choosing at least 1 truth and at least 1 lie:

- He is your child, bearer of your surname, and the last of your lineage.
- His mother died as he was born, and the specter of death left its scar on him.
- He is of royal blood, and he was taken far from the palace to protect him.
- He scrounged on the streets of Isha as a Ghoul-Caller, until you could rescue him.
- You saved him from the Graven Isle, where he was left abandoned by another.
- You found him at the border of death itself, and the dead still linger around him.
- You stole him from the rest of his family, for you saw the potential of magic within him.
- You care for him as a favor to another Wizard, but think little of him.
- You have many Prentices under consideration, and he is simply the least disappointing of the bunch.

Give him a name which you call him, although this may be different than his own.

During any scene, you may declare your Prentice would be present, and ask if any member of the Celestial Audience wishes to Adopt him. If they choose to do so, tell them about how you came to find him, and ask them to make choices about him based on *Part VI: Inheritance* within this Codex. They take on your Prentice as a second character, and develop him further when they have a spare moment.

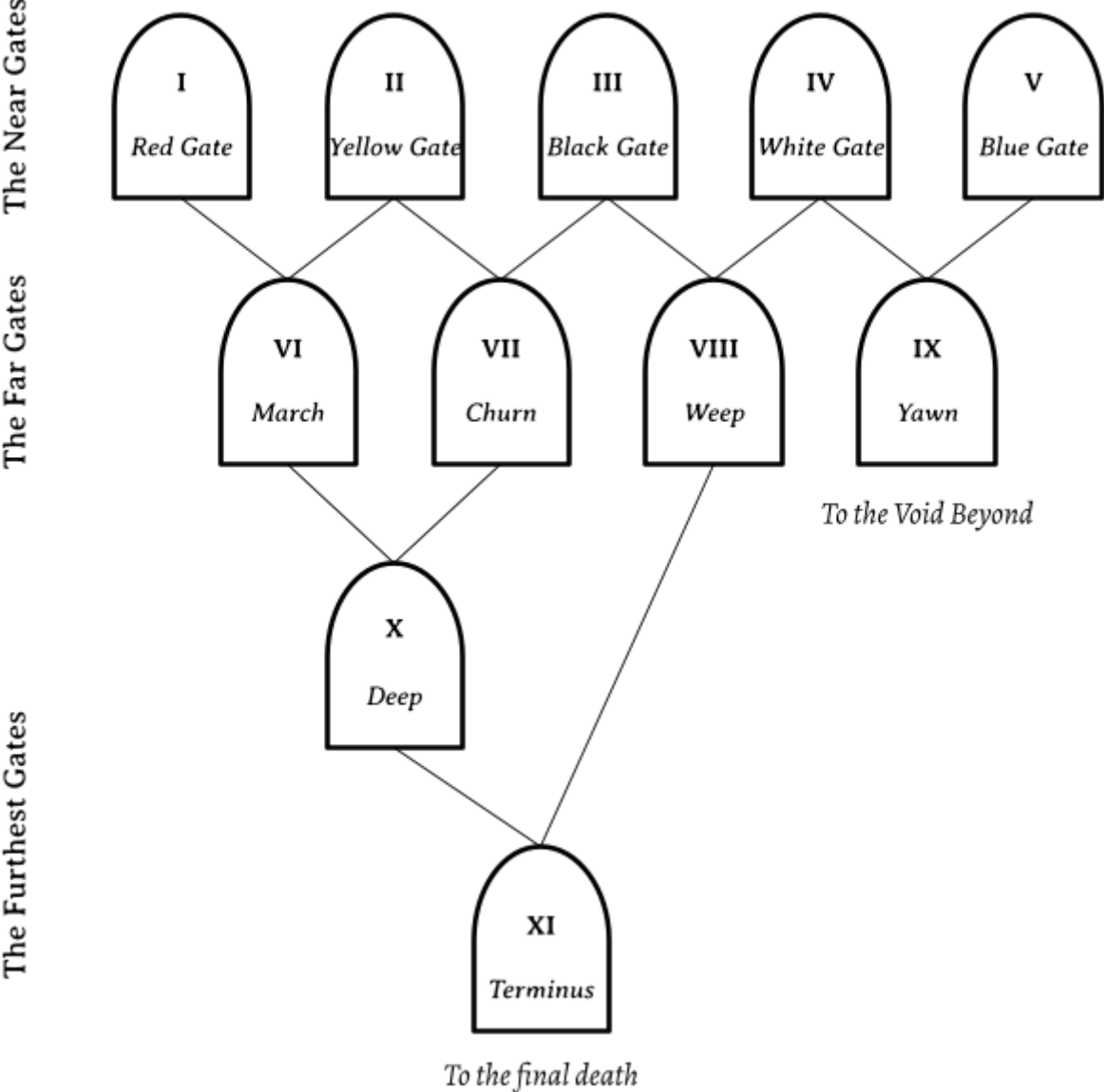
² If you are a younger Wizard, it may be true that your Prentice is older than you. He may have been the second-in-line for your position, or he may have been chosen as an adult. While the image of prentices in many's head is that of a young child, the advanced age of Wizards means their Prentices may grow to be quite old indeed, waiting patiently for their shot at absolute power.

Part III: The Gates of Death

Eleven Gates stand between the living and the furthest death, that unknowable fate which none have ever returned from. In that gulf roam the countless dead — some dangerous, some compassionate, most listless and crumbling into sand. To care for the Gates of Death is to clutch a shepherd's crook in one hand, and a brutal blade in the other. If they will not reach death by their hand, they must find it by yours.

Within this Part of *The Book of Gates*, you will be prompted to develop and flesh out the Laws of Death, your time within the Gates, and the Foes who haunt it. This will cover the rules for moving through and rebuffing enemies of death, and what to look for each month as the stars change within the sky.

Entering the Gates



Here are the 11 Gates of Death within the Sunless Lands, which correspond to your Domain. Mark 2 which you're most Familiar with and 2 which have become Hostile in your absence.

1. **The Red Gate.** A massive gate amidst the endless sands, watched over by sphinxes, open to those of gentle hearts.
2. **The Yellow Gate.** A scalding gate in the fuming heat, watched over by demons, open to those of furious hearts.
3. **The Black Gate.** A mossy gate hidden amongst rocks in a misty moor, watched over by specters, open to those of mournful hearts.
4. **The White Gate.** A frozen gate carved into a glacier, watched over by krakens, open to all who have nowhere else to go.
5. **The Blue Gate.** Built by Wizards long ago, carved from wood and stone, open to those who know magic's secrets.
6. **The Marching Gate.** A gate carved into a series of canyons, carved by the footsteps of the countless waiting dead.
7. **The Churning Gate.** A whirling maelstrom amongst pillars of salt, its winds rend apart one's mortal form.
8. **The Weeping Gate.** A dizzying spire of glass and stairs, its mirrors challenge the dead with reminders of their past.
9. **The Yawning Gate.** A spiraling pit marked along its sides by the bones of those who tried to hold on. No one knows what lies beyond.
10. **The Deep Gate.** An endless pit filled with stairs and paths, where the dead hide when they fear the final rest.
11. **The Final Gate.** A beautiful place, although few have seen it. Beyond it is the final death which none may return from.

The Laws of Death are powerful within their Realms, and failure to follow will result in your doom. Choose 2 which must always be followed, and ask the Star-Keeper to choose 1 as well:

- Do not eat the food of the dead, or drink their water.
- Do not reveal your name to the dead, or look into their eyes.
- Do not touch the skin of the dead, or embrace them.
- Do not look behind yourself, or witness thy own shadow.
- Do not travel death without a spectral guide or familiar.
- Do not believe the lies of those that dwell within death.
- Do not laugh or smile within death.
- Do not spill blood within death.
- Do not fall asleep within death.

You have many enemies within death, who constantly strive to escape and lay waste to the world of the living. Choose 3 and place each within a different Gate, then choose 1 who serves you, and place them at another Gate to guard.

- King Morrog, once a mighty lord of men, now a monstrous tyrant who rallies the dead behind him in a mockery of war.
- Gulliane the Fiend, lecherous lord of the Lead Market, adorned in endless gold and shimmering jewels.
- Belfagor the Ashen, once a necromancer of the Pact much like you, now a skeletal lich who longs for recognition from his peers.
- Great Atros, mythic hero of the isles, now a hulking brute of a warrior who rebukes all he once swore to save.
- Lady Tatterlin, a beautiful women with spider-like eyes, who lures men into her webs. She was once an especially powerful ghouel-caller.
- The Wicker Hag, bound to her walking home, who prowls the edges of death to prey on your weakness.
- The Manticore, a horrifically intelligent monstrosity from legend, with countless needle teeth and a particular hatred for Wizards.
- The Malbolge, a whirling storm of dead flesh and hate which consumes all those that come near into itself.
- Carlisle, who was once your prentice, but delved too deep into the true nature of death, and can never return.

Rules of the Gates

Traversing The Gates

While in possession of your Pact-Fragment, you may carefully and quickly travel between the Gates of Death, following the paths connecting them. The Gates are divided into three groups — the **Near Gates** (Red, Yellow, Black, White and Blue), the **Far Gates** (March, Churn, Weep, and Yawn), and the **Furthest Gates** (Deep and Terminus).

At the start of play, two of these Gates are Familiar and two are Hostile. Hostile Gates are those whose very presence rebuffs you, rejecting your intrusion and loathing your arrival. Familiar Gates know you intimately and delight in your presence, sending spirits to welcome you and usher you safely through. You may change whether a Gate is Familiar or Hostile to you by studying it and learning how to respect it through *The Lore of the Gates of Death* in Part V on page XX.

You must Spend Time to travel to any Near Gates, and from there, another week of Time to travel to a connected Gate. Hostile Gates require an additional week of time to travel through.

If you lose your Pact-Fragment, you may no longer travel in such a manner.³

Foes & Allies

Your Foes are ceaseless and legion; your Allies are few and overwhelmed. Your enemies of death strive forever to climb through the Gates, advancing out of the darkness into the Near Gates, and breaking through those into the living world. Every month, your Foes will move forward based on the position of the stars in the sky. If they reach one of the Near Gates, and then would move forward again, they instead break free, and rampage across Isha, bringing grief and misery in their wake. Nothing will be able to halt them,⁴ and in their arrival they will bring about the certain end of the world.

³ If you seek to travel through Death without your Pact-Fragment, or you wish to find a faster way through Death, or another Wizard desires to traverse the realms of Death, refer to *The Starless Realms* on page XX.

⁴ Save through the use of magic.

Consult *Greater Foes of Death* on page XX when this occurs.

All hope is not yet lost, however. While your Foes still reside within Death, you may Spend Time within one of the Gates to rebuff all Foes present, forcing them back into a Deeper Gate. If there is no deeper Gate, the Foe will instead be forced into the true reaches of death, from which nothing has ever returned. If the Gate is Familiar, you don't even need to Spend Time — simply your presence within the Gate is enough to rebuff the dead.

While it is the frustration of the Necromancer that he cannot ceaselessly guard every Gate of Death, your Allies will be your greatest tool in guarding Death. You may Spend Time at a non-Hostile Gate to find a dead spirit and earn their trust, gaining their assistance as an Ally. Whenever a Foe would cross past a Gate, if an Ally is present, that Foe is unable to move forward. Stopping a Foe in this manner Exhausts the Ally, and they can no longer perform their guardian duties until you Spend Time with them to restore their station.

Watching The Stars

To ascertain the behavior of your Foes and the state of the Realms of Death, look to what lies in alignment with the planet **Saturn** (♄) each month upon the Orrery. Consult each Celestial Body in its order.

If **Mercury** (☿) and **Saturn** (♄) are in alignment, the dead claw against the Gates. Choose three Foes and advance them all forward.

If **Venus** (♀) and **Saturn** (♄) are in alignment, one of your Allies must depart their station and embrace the clarion call of the final parting. Remove an Ally from the Gates.

If **Mars** (♂) and **Saturn** (♄) are in alignment, something lurks in the darkness. Create a new Foe within Death, perhaps representing someone killed as a result of another Wizard's acts, or a long-forgotten enemy of the Pact. Place them within a Hostile Gate.

If **Jupiter** (♃) and **Saturn** (♄) are in alignment, the teeming dead overrun one of the Gates, rendering it unfamiliar and eerie. Choose a Gate and change its Lore in Part V to reflect how it has become unfamiliar to you.

If **The Sun** (☉) and **Saturn** (♄) are in alignment, the armies of death march against you. Exhaust all Allies, and then advance all Foes.

If **Saturn** (♄) lies alone, with no other Celestial Bodies within its Houses, instead a new Disruptive Ghoullcaller has been spotted in the Graven Isle. Create them consulting *Ghoullcallers* on page XX and place them in any Near Gate. As long as they continue their operations unchecked, every month all Foes of Death in an attached Far or Furthest Gate will advance towards them, like a piece of wriggling bait.

Summary of the Gates

- Spend Time to travel to a Near Gate, or from any Gate to any connecting Gate. Hostile Gates take an additional week of Time to travel to.
- Once at a Gate, Spend Time there to rebuff all Foes present back a Gate. It doesn't cost any Time to rebuff Foes at Familiar Gates.
- Foes will periodically try to move forward. If a Foe would move forward while its within a Near Gate, it instead Escapes.
- Spend Time at a non-Hostile Gate to create an Ally there. If a Foe would move past an Ally, instead that Ally is Exhausted (and cannot continue to guard until you Spend Time with them), but the Foe does not move forward.
- Spend Time at Gates to change their Lore in Part V, and to make Hostile Gates neutral, or neutral Gates Familiar.
- Each month, consult the Stars in alignment with **Saturn**.
 - **Mercury** + **Saturn**: Advance three Foes.
 - **Venus** + **Saturn**: Remove an Ally.
 - **Mars** + **Saturn**: Create a new Foe within a Hostile Gate.
 - **Jupiter** + **Saturn**: A Gate becomes Hostile.
 - **The Sun** + **Saturn**: Exhaust all Allies and advance all Foes.
 - **Saturn** is alone: Create a new Ghoullcaller in the Graven Isle.

Part IV: Keeper of the Gates

While you play the Necromancer, there is also a second role which you must fulfill, in your part as **Gate-Keeper** of the **Celestial Audience**. Through the Celestial Audience, you will witness the rise and fall of the Wizards of Isha, and watch as death inevitably claims each one. All things must die, and it is beneath your graven star that their death will someday find them.

Within this Part of *The Book of Gates*, you will learn your responsibilities as a member of the Celestial Audience and the unique rules governing your own domain, that of the dying and the dead. These will provide you with tools to engage with scenes even when your character isn't present.

All Wizards Are Mortal

All Wizards Are Mortal, indeed, all Wizards know this. In your part as the Celestial Audience, you are the guardian of this truth, who provides its implications as they play out across the world of Isha.

Death must come for all Wizards eventually, and the use of magic to pursue a longer and longer life will merely stretch out those final few moments into an agonizing eternity. There is no way to live forever. Even those Wizards who *have* lived for many centuries, who safeguarded against death with a thousand walls and buttresses and armed guards, only served to construct their intricate prison.

Wizards watch the world change without them. In their long lives, Wizards watch as others grow old and pass on without them. The archipelago of Isha changes fundamentally, and that older state which many may still dream of cannot be achieved again. The ones you love will die, and there will be no way to truly save them.

Death is a thoughtless mistress, and she strikes at will and without regard for the care of the living. In stories, the hero always survives, no matter what is thrown at him. In truth, death is random, capricious, and unfair. The most wicked villain is just as likely to survive as the most

charming kid is to drown in the waves. People die constantly, and their dying souls trickle through the Gates, fueling the great machine of creation.

You make the final call. Within the Celestial Audience, you rule absolutely on all matters of your Domain. If there is any uncertainty around the mechanisms of death from any member of the Pact, you make the final decision. Refer as much as possible to the *Rules for Dying* on page XX to govern this process. If you feel ill-equipped or too biased to make that decision, you may deputize another member of the Celestial Audience to decide for you. When a Wizard or other prominent character does die, you are the one who decides on the nature of the funeral, using the *Rules for Death* on page XX.

Rules of Dying

A Wizard Is Dying

Time slows to a crawl, a spike of adrenaline kicks in. Determine how much time the Wizard has until he would die, what is the cause of his death will be, and what must be accomplished to prevent this death. Inform him of what it will cost him in order to survive, and if he would rather pay the price (if there is one), try to cast one final spell, or accept his death.

If he **pays the price**, it will be costly and unwelcome. Describe his only chance of making it out of here alive — it might involve letting everyone he loves die, betraying the Pact fundamentally, losing all aspects of the man he once was, or begging for forgiveness from his most hated enemy. Just because he chooses to pay the price, doesn't mean his life is certain. His best shot for getting out of the immediate situation alive may still leave him in immediate danger from dying from some other cause.

If he **casts one final spell**, he finds an appropriate spell in the Grimoire and casts it. If it cannot conclusively and inarguably prevent every single cause of his death, it is not enough to save his life, although it may still give him the ability to leave one final curse upon the world.

If he **accepts his death**, prompt him to describe what he says and does before he dies. Give him space to honor his character and achieve some measure of dignity in death.

A Mundane Being Is Dying

Just as with Wizards, mortals are offered a price to pay before they die, and whether they pay this price is decided by the Celestial Audience. Unfortunately, it is the nature of magic that very often this price is impossible to achieve. There is very little you can do to make it out of the path of a wave of flame. Sometimes, a more appropriate question to ask in the face of a powerful spell is not "do these people die" but "how many people die."

A Powerful Being Is Dying

Witches, fairies, demons, monsters, and many more powerful creatures are just as susceptible of potentially dying as a Wizard is. After determining what will kill them, check their truths to see if any of their truths simply negate this threat of death. Then, frame the same choice you would for a Wizard to the member of the Celestial Audience representing the powerful being. Often, even if a powerful being is able to survive, the best path towards their survival is to flee far away from Isha to recuperate their strength, giving the Pact peace from their meddling for many years.

Saving Someone's Life

If one is present while another is dying, and they hear the price asked of saving them, they may make that most cruel and horrible choice to pay it themselves. If they do, they must pay in full, and if they're able to, they save the life of the dying person. If they cannot pay the cost in full, they will themselves die, and it is your choice as Gate-Keeper whether that is enough to satiate death. Remember she is cruel, and she will take everything from you, without regard for whether you had proven you deserved to live.

The Rules of Funerals

Funerary Rites

It is tradition in Isha for every Wizard, no matter how loathed, to receive his funeral.⁵ This is an interstitial scene, held during the Quiet Moon at the very end of the month, and without any Time Spent. It is moderated by the current Necromancer (although, should you have been the one to die, it will instead be moderated by one of your Companions). The Deceased Wizard may be present at this scene too, through his Companions.

The Deceased answers the following questions before the Celestial Audience:

- *Where is the funeral being held?*
- *How do your Companions show their grief?*
- *How does your Domain show its grief?*

The Necromancer then answers the following questions before the Celestial Audience:

- *What marking has been placed to honor the body?*
- *What special offerings have been brought to funeral?*
- *What obscure Ishanian funerary tradition is being performed?*

Finally, each member of the Celestial Audience, going around in a circle, answers each of the following questions:

- *Is your Wizard here? If so, how is he dressed for the funeral? If not, who did he send as a representative?*
- *Is anyone from your Domain attending? If so, who? If not, why?*

Finally, going around in a circle, each member of the Celestial Audience describes how a member of their Domain or one of their Companions pays their respects to the Deceased, with the Deceased's Domain being last. Then, going around a second time, each Wizard says a few

⁵ This is because the Pact is afraid: should even the most loathed amongst their number lose that final chance at recognition in death, then each man in turn will fear he shall be forgotten as well. In this fashion the Pact has a certain fraternity to it, even in the event one of the funeral's attendees is also known to be the murderer.

words and pays his respects as well. In this case, the Deceased would be the final one to speak, but instead say only a few words about the silence of the world, or perhaps, nothing at all.

The Funeral concludes when the silence is broken.

Abandoned Domains

When a Wizard dies and there is no one willing to take on his Domain, the Domain continues on without him. He will continue to adjust his Domain each month according to the movement of the Stars, even if he is playing another Wizard and has another Domain to maintain. He no longer needs to concern himself with solving any of the challenges presented by his Domain, for it writhes and grows wild without him.

A dead Wizard, whose funeral has been held, is expected to move on through death and peacefully depart.⁶ If he does not, and becomes a Foe in death instead, he will not be controlled by the player who created him initially, but rather will serve as just another Foe acting through your Domain.

Funerals For Others

Sometimes, the Pact will go up against an enemy of such incredible power, or will enjoy the love of someone so tremendously, that upon their passing the Pact as a whole will call for their funeral. Such a funeral will be a smaller affair, and should be rare — reserved for only important characters. During the Quiet Moon, decide who is present and who is absent, and how the funeral is held. Each Wizard present says a few words in honor, and the Deceased describes the reminder they leave upon the world, for others to find.

If such a Funeral is held, that character cannot appear as a Foe or Ally within the Gates of Death — they move on, forever.

⁶ The only exception to this is the Necromancer himself, who takes the place of the previous Necromancer at the 8th Gate of Death.

Part V: Death's Secrets

Death is a vast and monstrous place, full of horrors warped by centuries of loathing towards the living. While most are lucky to merely travel on to their final death, the creatures who dwell in the darkness and drag their wretched forms from Gate to Gate carry with them the weight of eternity, and keep their own cruel secrets.

Within this Part of *The Book of Gates*, you will learn unique rules for the Gates of Death, including Lore on the darkest corners of the Eleven Gates, and rules for modeling the countless monstrous dead and those who manipulate them. This Part is not necessary for your first month or two as the Necromancer, but is rather a resource when you grow more curious about the most wretched excesses of your Starless Domain.

Traversing The Gates

While you wield your Pact-Fragment and follow the Laws of the Gates, you have little to fear from your jaunts through Death. If you step outside those laws, or if you lose your Pact-Fragment, suddenly the work you do is in grave danger. And should another Wizard travel into these Gates for his own desires, he will face challenges beyond his comprehension.

Presenting the Gates of Death as a landscape is not solely your responsibility — other members of the Celestial Audience, such as the Star-Keeper, Chain-Keeper, and Wilds-Keeper, have tools and perspectives which can aid you. The forces which one faces in even the most familiar of Near Gates are vastly more powerful than any mortal beast, and the Gates threaten to take everything from those who explore them unprepared. It is easy to die within Death, and one who dies within Death is certain to become one of its Foes.

A few special Consequences which may appear within Death (as a result of breaking a Law of Death, from facing off against a particular monstrosity or environmental feature, or incurred just through the reality of Traveling) include:

- The Wizard forgets someone important to him. Remove one of his Companions — even though they still love him, he cannot feel their Care.

- A part of the Wizard's body is warped by Death. He gains one of the Necromancer's signs of magic.
- Death leaves its mark in the Wizard's mind. Replace one of his initial Elemental Questions with one of the Necromancer's, and ask him to adjust his Elemental Circles to reflect his new answer.
- The Wizard cannot return from death without the aid of magic, and even if he does, he will be dead.

A Wizard can only find his way to the Near Gates of Death through the *Navigation* spell,⁷ and a Wizard must use the rules for *Traveling Through The Far Realms* on page XX of the *Book of Wilds*.

The Starless Realms

I. The Red Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Red Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Red Gate is an enormous sandstone structure emerging from an endless desert, carved by some unknown civilization at the dawn of creation, where many sets of stone guardians watch over those who cross through.
- The Red Gate is easy to enter and hard to return from, as the current carries the countless teeming dead from across the world through death.
- Shadowy dead cling to the sandstone palaces carved into the sides of the gate, forming necropolises dedicated to long-forgotten societies within the walls of the gate.

⁷ Or another magical Treasure, guide, or resource which shows him a path or provides him with a Doorway.

II. The Yellow Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Yellow Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Yellow Gate is a massive brass doorway surrounded by scalding hot flames and tended to by burning fire spirits which some believe act as demons for those passing through.
- While the Yellow Gate calls to those still mourning and vengeful after their death, the flames burn at the softer parts of the self, revealing all hidden fury trapped within.
- Corpse-pirates soar around the gate in airships lifted up by the flames, buffeted by the powerful hot drafts and stealing chunks of compassion from the furnaces of the gate.

III. The Black Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Black Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Black Gate is a small and muddy passageway, surrounded by misty hills and strange muddy passageways.
- The Black Gate is tricky to find, the paths obvious only to those in grieving, and the swamps perilous to those whose hearts are naive to sorrow.
- Long-forgotten kings dwell in barrow-mounds within the moors, grave-fairies who laugh and dance beneath the soil, and they'll work with Necromancers — for a price.

IV. The White Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the White Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- At the edge of the world sits the White Gate, carved a colossal glacier wreathed in frozen winds and surrounded by the spirits of the great sea monsters of antiquity.
- The White Gate is the passage to death for the sailor, the wanderer, and everyone without a home, who has no way back to their family and their true death.
- The wreckage of ships and serpentine bones have been crafted together by gangs of lost pirates, forming a spectral city at the glacier's edge called Mulgragnif.

V. The Blue Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Blue Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Blue Gate is a wooden door built into the base of a mossy and overgrown Wizard's tower, on some tiny island far from Isha.
- The Blue Gate was once a revolving door for Wizards to cheat and escape death, but such practices gained a grim reputation during the Tragedies, when mage-commanders would force their armies to keep coming back and suffering new atrocities.
- The Blue Gate was built by one of the first Wizard-Kings, and within the halls of his abandoned tower are libraries of moldering books and spectral students still trying to get into the Old Colleges of magic.

VI. The Marching Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Marching Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Marching Gate is a cold and cruel desert with countless long canyons carved into its surface, formed from the droning footsteps of the great lines of the dead marching to the brutal Gate.
- All imperfections are shaved away by the Marching Gate, all differences between how one sees oneself and the truth are worn down by footsteps. This can be a blessing or a curse, depending on a soul's delusions.
- Flocks of wicked harpies linger at the edges of the Marching Gate, stealing away stragglers to transform into blades which they then can sell at their fairy markets.

VII. The Churning Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Churning Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Churning Gate is a whirling maelstrom of wicked winds, that buffet huge chunks of ice and pillars of salt.
- The more viciously one tries to move through the Churning Gate, the harsher the winds cut into you — only those completely at peace may pass through without harm.
- Giant insects called Chronophage trawl the Churning Gate, each carrying towns of ghouls seeking shelter from the winds amongst their carapaces.

VIII. The Weeping Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Weeping Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Weeping Gate is a dizzying spire that runs from one end of eternity to the other, with a narrow spiral staircase wrapping around the inner wall.
- The Weeping Gate's walls are made of mirrors, a series of interlocking realities that cause those of weak will to fade into dust. Nests of angels lurk along its few windows, and their feathers dot the stairs.
- It is tradition that the former Necromancer guards the Weeping Gate, and a leaden estate juts from the side of its structure to serve as his home after death.

IX. The Yawning Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Yawning Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Yawning Gate is a rotting maw of flesh and bone, a thousand miles wide and filled with dangling spines and grasping claws.
- Those who lacked physical strength or confidence in life are dragged into the Yawning Gate to become yet another skeleton lining its walls — only those strong enough may pass.
- The Yawning Gate is bottomless, but it is said that at its bottom lies the primordial void of creation, the source of all nameless things which resent both the living and the dead for having stolen names from the Gods.

X. The Deep Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Deep Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Deep Gate is a labyrinth of sewer grates, damp stairways, and cruel ancient architecture, filled with deep pools of mossy water.
- The dead who seek a final rest may pass through quickly, but for those who wish for life, it may take them decades to navigate its tangled halls.
- Many of the most monstrous dead lurk in the deepest halls of the Gate, feasting on lesser dead to prolong their shadows and extend their chances of crawling back up to the surface.

XI. The Final Gate

Whenever you Spend Time in contemplation of the Final Gate, you may also change or add to its Lore.

- The Final Gate is a forest of gentle fruit trees and rolling hills, with the occasional broken column from some forgotten society.
- The fruits of Terminus are fruits of forgetting — those who feast upon them cannot remember anything of who they used to be.
- Through Terminus lies the final death, which none has ever returned from. No Necromancer knows what lies beyond.

Foes, Rivals, and the Petty Dead

The Petty Dead

The Petty Dead are those teeming mindless souls produced by the thoughtless and manipulative application of the *Resurrection of the Dead*. They have been dragged forth by one force or another to serve an even greater power — perhaps a Ghoucaller, great Foe of Death, or even you in your role as Necromancer. The dead are held to life through the presence of certain magical symbols. These symbols are not always necessary to identify, but their identification can be useful when confronting them. When faced with the dead, they are easy to rebuff — casting any spell which generates all of the symbols present within them is enough to obliterate them. When against those who possess many symbols, multiple spells which together achieve the desired set will be enough.

The bestiary below is not an exhaustive list. Even the same symbols and associated Element can be used to produce new and monstrous creatures. If you encounter any new petty dead not included here, document them.

Petty Dead of Earth

Those Earthen Dead retain their bodies, although their old personalities are long gone.

1. **Thrall** — Servant, single-purposed, miserable. (2f)
2. **Ghoul** — Cannibal, violent, hunts in packs. (♂)
3. **Wight** — Soldier, well-armed, loyal. (2f ♂)
4. **Fext** — Disguised as human, deceitful, cunning. (2f ♀)
5. **Kyon** — Dog and human fused, horrific, constantly starving hunters. (♂ ♀ ☾)
6. **Dullahan** — Headless horsemen, commanders of death, dangerous warriors. (♂ ☾ ♀)

Petty Dead of Water

Those wretched Dead of Water retain the grief around their death, although struggle to hold onto physical form.

1. **Aptrgangr** — Walking dead, seeks violence on relatives, sometimes contagious. (♂)
2. **Weeping** — Ghost of tragedies, feeds on human emotions. (♀)
3. **Nachzehrer** — Woeful spirits, devours others' life-force remotely. (♀)
4. **Gashadokuro** — Man-eating skeleton, often unusually large, dissolves into mist (♂ ♀)
5. **Nighthaunt** — Powerful vicious heart, emerges only at night as vast shadows. (♂ ♀)
6. **Banshee** — Howling spirits, doomsayers, heralds the death of the living. (♀ ♀)

Petty Dead of Air

Those cruel dead of air are just intangible specters, but they hunger for the sensations of life.

1. **Deadgull** — Ghosts of birds, soar in packs, useful spies. (♀)
2. **Memoria** — Spectral memory of the past, can recite its history, hateful towards the living. (♂)
3. **Haunt** — Invisible, poltergeist, hateful towards the living. (♂ ♀)
4. **Wraith** — Spectral warrior, cursed with pain, tattered robes. (♂ ♀ ♀)
5. **Gloom** — Shadowy hunters, live inside dreams, torment the sleeping world. (♀ ♀)
6. **Sluagh** — A howling tornado of lost souls, ravages landscapes, warps minds. (♂ ♀)

Petty Dead of Fire

Those burning Dead of Fire maintain scraps of their once-great power.

1. **Will-o'-wisp** — Flickers of magic, tricksters and guides in bad faith. (♀)
2. **Lemure** — Malevolent shade, stalks and devours the living. (♀)
3. **Dream Eater** — Whimsical apparition. lives in dreams, dangerously hungry. (♀)
4. **Chamberlain** — Ghastly servitor, traverses the realms on your behalf. (♀)
5. **Mage-Killer** — Gaunt and vicious corpse, magic-eating, with innate wards. (♂ ♀)

6. **Lich** — Lords of the dead, skeletal adversaries, capable of magic themselves. (♁ ♂ ☾ ♃)

Ghoulcallers

Ghoulcallers are minor spellcasters of no great repute, whose power emerges from a handful of parlor tricks they've managed to steal from previous Necromancers, and who deserve no deep acknowledgment or recognition. They are at best useful tools for a Necromancer to access spaces he may not otherwise find allowance for, and at worse foolish smugglers leaving the Gates of Death wide open for those greater Foes to escape.⁸

Isha's underbelly is teeming with Ghoulcallers, although most will never successfully perform an act of any real magic. It is a rare individual who is relevant enough to catch your eye, and in order to do so they must have some sort of skill in their operation of magic.

To create a Ghoulcaller, give them an age (Ghoulcallers tend to be young, rarely older than 40, and often look older than they are) and choose one way in which the magic of Death has changed them. Then, pick a personality defect and an elemental affinity based on the position of Saturn in the sky.

Sign	Elemental Alignment	Flaw
Aries	Fire	Furious
Taurus	Earth	Stubborn
Gemini	Air	Duplicitous
Cancer	Water	Weepy
Leo	Fire	Arrogant
Virgo	Earth	Fixated
Libra	Air	Judgmental

⁸ Some attempts have been made by over-friendly Librarians to catalog Ghoul-Callers as a sort of Ishanian folk-magic, but such descriptions are best reserved for naive and unserious academics.

Sign	Elemental Alignment	Flaw
Scorpio	Water	Manipulative
Sagittarius	Fire	Explosive
Capricorn	Earth	Pitying
Aquarius	Air	Inscrutable
Pisces	Water	Delirious

Ghoulcallers In Your Domain

When a Ghoulcaller is present within one of the Near Gates of Death, they are either **Disruptive** or **Reliable**. Every month a Disruptive Ghoulcaller is present, they pull the darkest forces of death to the surface like a wriggling piece of bait, unaware of the trouble they cause. All Foes in a Far or Furthest Gate which lies underneath that Near Gate advance every month.⁹ If a Foe reaches a Ghoulcaller, that Ghoulcaller dies and becomes themselves a new Foe of Death.

While the best Ghoulcaller is a dead Ghoulcaller, if you can find a way to bribe or otherwise cajole a Ghoulcaller into helping you, they can become Reliable. Reliable Ghoulcallers are treated the same as Allies in Death, and you may treat the Gate they're in as Familiar. However, if the Ally Ghoulcaller would be Exhausted, they instead move to a different Near Gate and become Disruptive again.

It is the choice of the Celestial Audience what it will take to convince a Ghoulcaller to become Reliable.

Ghoulcallers and Power

The power of a Ghoulcaller is not always necessary to determine. However, if you seek to confront a Ghoulcaller with violence, or desire a Ghoulcaller's aid, it will be useful to know what they're capable of.

⁹ The Marching Gate, the Deep Gate, and Terminus all lie beneath the Red Gate. Only the Yawning Gate lies beneath the Blue Gate. If death is a stream, these are the Gates which lie "downstream" of certain Near Gates.

Ghoulcallers are always accompanied by a throng of Petty Dead. If you wish to know what forms they take, roll 4 D8s or 6 D6s and use the symbols consulted to create some combination of Petty Dead on page XX.

Ghoulcallers may cast magic the same way a Wizard might, with 3 in their aligned Elemental Circle or 1 otherwise. They know one spell for every ten years they've been alive (*Resurrection of the Dead* is always the first). They are treated as having 3 Wards in their aligned Element and 1 Ward in all other Elements. They possess chemical reagents purchased on the Lead Market allowing them to, once a month, transform one symbol present into a "h" Symbol. They also possess a Codex written in Drujite Hieroglyphics detailing how to travel to the Near Gates of Death, and including an additional spell from the Grimoire.

Especially powerful Ghoulcallers are extremely rare, and may call themselves Reanimators, Resurrectionists, Bonemages, or Necromancers. Such a powerful Ghoulcaller has a second Elemental Alignment, may cast spells of Mighty Import, and consult twice as many dice to see what Petty Dead surrounds them. They also possess one of the unchosen Treasures of the Necromancer.

It is possible for Ghoulcallers to work with multiple traditions of magic. If this is the case, work with the Wizard responsible for this other source of magic to determine the shared properties of such a Ghoulcaller.

Greater Foes of Death

Those that return from Death of their own will are monstrous creatures, warped by years or decades of straining against the bleak magic of the Gates. Within Death they are easy for you to repel and keep at bay, but when they escape and descend upon the isles of Isha, their corrosive touch will easily threaten to overwhelm the world if the Pact cannot work together to bind it once more.

When a Foe of Death emerges, record on a piece of paper its name, its truths, and its Malignance (choosing from Occult, Brutal, or Manipulative). The following is true of all Foes:

- **Arcane Rot:** A Foe of Death may cast any spell in the Grimoire, although they don't roll dice — instead they can only use the "½" symbol.
- **Anti-Life Presence:** Any creature killed by a Foe of Death returns to life as a Petty Dead, perhaps a Thrall or Ghoul. Wizards killed by a Foe of Death return as Liches.
- **Cruel Vitality:** A Foe of Death cannot be slain by non-magical weapons, is both faster and stronger than a mortal human, and is able to withstand incredible heat, miserable cold, and biting winds.

Once you've recorded all information about this Foe, place the piece of paper and the Foe of Death within any other Wizard's Domain.

Occult Malignance

An Occult Malignance is a Foe of Death with access to tremendous magical powers, granting it incredible power with none of the restraint wielded by the wizards of the Pact. Occult Malignances are Necromancers, former Prentices, ancient Wizards, amalgamations of Ghoul-Callers, or other magic-users emerging from death. They tend to be arrogant, greedy, and self-isolating, sealing themselves away from the world to further their magical study. The following is true about Occult Malignances:

- **Spellcasting:** All Occult Malignances have access to all spells in the Grimoire, and have 2 in each of their Elemental Circles.¹⁰
- **Undead Army:** Occult Malignances surround themselves with the dead. Their army is composed of a mix of various creatures of the Petty Dead, and they are always guarded by a mix of Wights and Wraiths.

Additionally, choose one of the following to be true:

- **Tremendous Power:** This Occult Malignance gets +2 in all Elemental Circles, and may choose one Wizard Special from any Wizard Codex to have be true.
- **Devil-Gifted Treasure:** Ask the Faustian (or look in the Faustian's Codex) to choose one Devil Treasure from amongst the four Kings options in the Devil's Deck. This Occult Malignance wields such a treasure.

Like all Foes of Death, Occult Malignances desire to remain alive. They also seek to establish their magic, regain their former glory, and build a Sanctum of their own. The Domain they've begin in represents the base of their operations, the place where they seek to build up power. When they first arrive within their Domain, and at the start of each month, the Occult Malignance casts a spell of Mighty or Mythic Import to further their goals, with no regard for the isles of Isha.

¹⁰ This is consistent with the properties of Arcane Rot, allowing the Occult Malignance to always be able to conjure forth another symbol.

Brutal Malignance

A Brutal Malignance is a Foe of Death reduced to a bestial and monstrous state, wielding incredible violence somewhat randomly against the world which spurned it. Brutal Malignances are blighted heroes, powerful monsters, barbarians, fused masses of warriors, or other warriors emerging from death. They tend to be hungry, thoughtless, and violent, running rampant through the land and ripping the world apart. The following is true about Brutal Malignances:

- **Incomparable Violence:** Brutal Malignances are stronger, faster, and better at fighting than any member of the Pact, including the Warlock.
- **Death-Warped Skin:** Brutal Malignances cannot be harmed except by exceptionally powerful magical weapons, and are treated as having 2 in every Circle for the purposes of Wards against Maledictions.
- **Cruel Weapon:** Brutal Malignances wield swords, axes, talons, claws, or other weapons strong enough to shatter mortal blades and cut through magical wards. Even the smallest nick from such a weapon will fester and rot with necrotic magic, and by the end of the month such an injured person will die.

Like all Foes of Death, Brutal Malignances desire to remain alive. They also hate the world of the living, striving to destroy it and rip it apart, and desecrate all that was once beautiful in the world. The Domain they're in represents the place beginning of their rampage. At the start of each month, the Domain's Wizard must choose: suffer a major consequence as a result of the Foe's rampage, or suffer a minor consequence and move the Foe to any other Wizard's Domain (besides the Necromancer), who must then make the same choice again.

Manipulative Malignance

A Manipulative Malignance is a Foe of Death cunning and smart enough to root themselves in a part of the world, using their Domain as a stronghold to control others. Manipulative Malignances are spider-queens, assassins, liars, politicians, and other cunning tricksters emerging from death. They tend to be quick-witted, scheming, and charismatic, spreading through a Wizard's Domain like a cancer and embedding themselves within. The following is true about Manipulative Malignances:

- **Cult Leader:** Manipulative Malignances are always surrounded by a group of mortal devotees, who hang on every word it says and will give up their lives to protect it. They also have access to the resources of that cult, including boats, wealth, warriors, and buildings. The nature of this cult is based on the Domain they have infested.
- **Powerful Offers:** Manipulative Malignances may Bargain with a Wizard, using the same rules as the Devil's Bargain, but it may offer anything which is reasonably within its power to provide. This might include alleviating problems in that Wizard's Domain, magical artifacts from the black market, assistance against another Foe, or boons of power for spellcasting.
- **Slip Away:** At any moment, as a last resort, a Manipulative Malignance may dissolve into black shadow and escape. Unless stopped by magic, the Manipulative Malignance will then move to any other Domain (besides the Gates of Death), abandoning its old cult and starting a new cult there.

Like all Foes of Death, Manipulative Malignances desire to remain alive. They also seek power, influence, and the safety of other people depending on them. The Domain they're in is the location of their nest. During the Visions Phase of each month, the Foe creates a consequence for every other Wizard besides their Domain's Wizard. During the Planning Phase of each month, the Foe spends two weeks of time within that Domain, making changes which both anchor its presence and often improve the state of the Domain for its Wizard.

Part VI: Inheriting The Lead Throne

Eventually, the Necromancer will die. It is inevitable — all Wizards die, when given enough time. It's practically the only thing they all have in common. The Necromancer will die, and a new Necromancer will take his place.

There is a great burden on your shoulders. I hope you are prepared to carry it.

This Part of *The Book of Gates* is exclusively reserved for the Necromancer's successor. It contains instructions on how to create a new Necromancer when you're not the first Necromancer within this iteration of *The Seven-Part Pact*.

The New Necromancer

Complete Humour & Temperament as is traditional.

Choose your origins, before you became Necromancer:

- You were the old Necromancer's Prentice, his child, or one of his Companions. Continue without interruption.
- You were a Ghoullcaller who got lucky. Start with two other Reliable Ghoullcallers in two Near Gates of Death.
- You were the Professor of Death at the Inscrutable Library. Start with three additional Gates being Familiar to you.
- You were someone else, who another Wizard mentored and prepared for this position. Ask that Wizard for a Treasure or other boon representing your relationship.

Complete History & Secrets, and Might & Trappings. For Treasures, you have all the Treasures possessed by the old Necromancer, and an additional one which he didn't choose. You cannot possess any Treasures which have been destroyed.

The Crypt & His Companions

Consult the Lore of the Graven Isle, the Necromancer's Crypt, and any sketches of the Map. If you aren't one of the old Necromancer's Companions, ask the Celestial Audience to add new Lore to both reflecting how their unfamiliarity and discomfort for you.

Choose Companions. Keep as many of the old Necromancer's Companions as is applicable, although they cannot provide the same Care for you which they provided the old Necromancer.

Decide if you have a Prentice yet. You may still need to find one.

The Gates of Death

Familiarize yourself with the Gates of Death. You cannot change the Laws of the Gates. Choose two Gates which are Hostile to you and two which are Familiar.

If you are the old Necromancer's Prentice¹¹ the Gates of Death remain as they are.

If you're not the old Necromancer's Prentice, in addition to the current state of the Gates of Death, choose or create three new Foes of Death, and one new Ally.

Keeper of Death's Secrets

Familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of the Gate-Keeper and the state of the Lore of the Gates in Parts IV and V. Ensure you observe any changes the old Necromancer made to the Gates of Death.

Describe for the table your new Necromancer, and coronate yourself upon your Throne of Lead.

¹¹ Or if the old Necromancer's Prentice has been keeping an eye on the Domain during the interim period.

Appendix

Written by Jay Dragon, with developmental editing from Mazey Veselak (@NightlingBug on Twitter).

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Compass Rose from [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Many of the Petty Dead were invented by Jeremy Gleick.