# Sanctum Secorum

Episode #01

# THE SHADOW PEOPLE

Compatible With DCC RPG

# Sanctum Secorum Podcast
# Episode #01 Companion


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**Published by**
Sanctum Media

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# Items

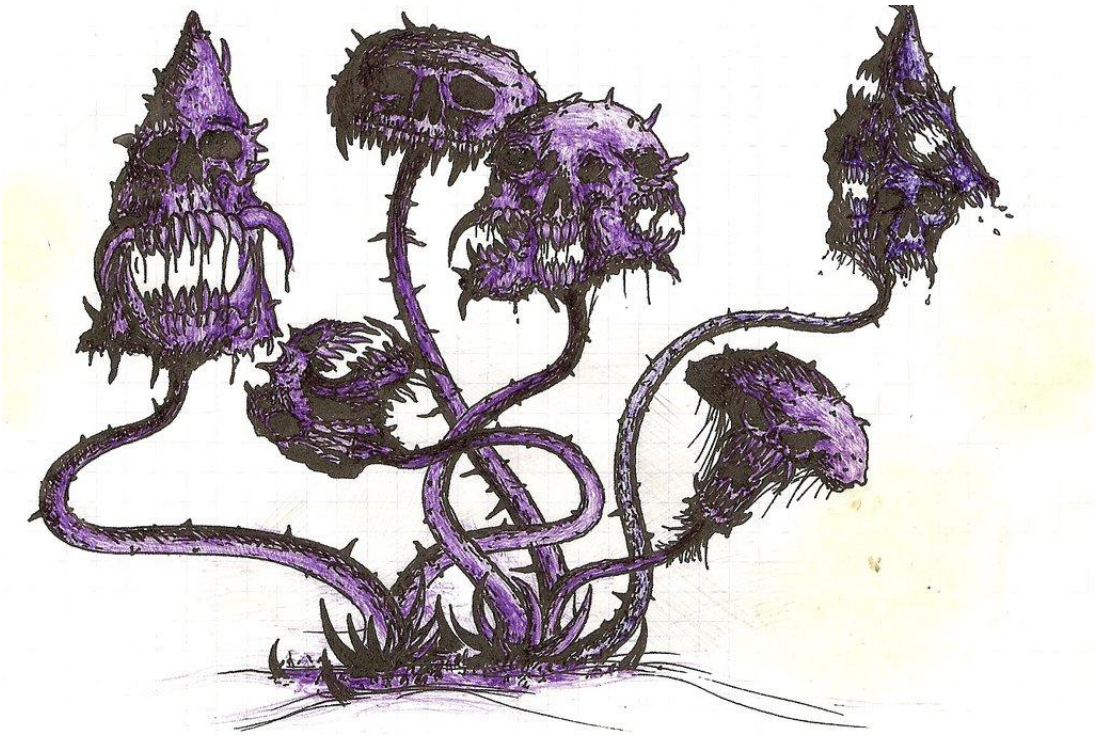
## Atter-corn #1

Atter-corn can be found all throughout the dank caverns of Underearth. It is the main food source for the variety of elves that roam the desolate caverns they call home. It consists of a course meal ground down, and mixed with a mushroom that grows readily in the caverns of Underearth. The mushrooms are ground down to a fine powder and mixed in with the meal. The red coloration of the fungus adds it's hue to the final product, giving it a crimson stain. Atter-corn, though tasteless, is a means of survival in the dark environs, and provides enough nutrients for the elves who roam the caverns deep below the surface world.

In addition to filling a basic nutritional need, the meal causes a euphoria in the sense that anyone ingesting it will begin to hallucinate 1d12 rounds after ingestion. Hallucinations usually consist of the eater becoming various animals, constantly shifting to new forms. The hallucinations last for 1d3 hours and are followed by a dark depression, an unavoidable crash resulting in the need for sleep (DC 13 Fortitude save each hour to remain awake).

When the torpor wears off, those who have ingested the meal will find the "hunger" for the meal a distraction from daily tasks which will grow stronger by the hour. The meal is readily available and a source of escape from the bleak life those existing in Underearth face each day. Anyone wishing to resist eating the hallucinogenic food must pass a DC 10 Fortitude after the third hour from the last meal. The DC increases by one per hour after the first check is made.

Atter-corn contains no viable protein, causing anyone who uses it as a main source of food to develop a protein deficiency. This results in a constant hunger for meat, causing an almost maddening frenzy in the presence of a readily available protein source. The added sight and smell of blood is overpowering, causing a DC 12 Will save to avoid attacking the source of the blood, friend or foe.



## Atter-corn #2

A coarse, brick-red, meal of grain and fungus, atter-corn is readily found in the depths of the Underearth. After the meal is manufactured, it is distributed throughout the region and piled onto small plates that are ubiquitous within the dark world. The meal has a distinctive scent - metallic, acrid, and yet cereal - that carries well and which is often used to hunt down the plates of atter-corn left out for consumption.

The mushrooms used for the creation of the meal are a hallucinogenic mushroom found only in the Underearth. Ingesting the meal causes visions and time distortion. The consumer of atter-corn will immediately begin to hallucinate for, what will seem to them, to be 1d6 hours but, due to the time-distorting effect of the meal, perceived time and actual time will differ. To determine the actual amount of time that passes roll 1d7, modified by Luck, and consult the following table.

Atter-corn Trip Table

| | |
|---|---|
| **0** | 1 month passes for each perceived hour of hallucinations |
| **1** | 1 week passes for each perceived hour of hallucinations |
| **2** | 3 days pass for each perceived hour of hallucinations |
| **3** | 1 day passes for each perceived hour of hallucinations |
| **4** | 12 hours pass for each perceived hour of hallucinations |
| **6** | 6 hours pass for each perceived hour of hallucinations |
| **7+** | 2 hours pass for each perceived hour of hallucinations |

During this time they will imagine themselves to be a number of animals (stag, wolf, goat, rat, lion, etc.). Chronic users of atter-corn can identify which animals other users are hallucinating themselves to be.

In addition to the hallucinogenic effects, atter-corn is highly addictive to humans, requiring a Fort save of ever increasing difficulty (base 10, plus 1 for each additional instance of consumption) to avoid addiction. Addicted humans will eat the atter-corn to the exclusion of all other things and breaking the addiction may only be done through bloodletting (see below).

In most elves and half-elves, the presence of atter-corn interacts with the borderlands of the Underearth to prevent departure. The essence of the Underearth that runs through the bloodstream of the atter-corn user physically prevents them from departing.

The presence of atter-corn may be removed from the bloodstream by a dangerous process of bloodletting to purge it from the addict's body. This requires the temporary expenditure of physical attributes equal to the number of instances of atter-corn ingestion. Should the number of instances outnumber the available attributes, the addict then begins to sacrifice permanent attributes. The use of certain rituals can negate the need for permanent attribute loss.

## Atter-corn #3

Atter-corn is a reddish, coarsely-ground meal with a bitter taste. Its color (and likely its hallucinogenic properties) comes from an unknown fungus. The fungus itself is grown on heaps of barley sprouts in the absolute darkness and near-zero temperatures of the Under-Earth, giving off slight patches of phosphorescence. The fungus-infused grain is then ground in stone mills and presented as a bland food substitute that distorts the imbiber's sense of time and reality.

Magical investigation (*detect magic* spell check of 24 or higher) reveals that the fungal properties could be useful for dealing with nausea (particularly that caused by prolonged weightlessness during interplanetary travel). Offensively, a method may be devised to grind the atter-corn finely enough to mist a 5'x5' area per ounce of meal. See table below for effects on living creatures. Plant growth is stunted and mildly corrupted when exposed to atter-corn dust. It has no effect on non-organic or un-dead beings.

**Atter-corn Effects**

| **1d14 + Luck mod** | **Effect when Eaten *** | **Effect when Inhaled (Area of Effect: use attacker's Luck modifier)** |
|---|---|---|
| 0 or lower | Overdose/Insanity. -1 Sta (temporary) and -1 Int (permanent), and DC 18 Will save to avoid additional -1 Int loss (permanent). DC 15 Fort save or unconscious/comatose for 2d4 days. | Cloud of miniscule spores envelops face and prohibits breathing. Once exposed to this threat, must make DC 18 Fort save or lose 1 point of Stamina (permanent) per round until magically healed. |
| 1-2 | Trapped in your own mind. -1 Sta (temporary) and -1 Int (permanent). DC 16 Will save for 2d3 hours of fitful unconsciousness (3d6 hours if failed). | Phosphorescent fungal cells attach to nasal membranes. -1 Sta (permanent) and unable to concentrate on any action requiring speech for 1d5 days, even if magically healed. |
| 3-5 | Demonic visages. -1 Sta (temporary) and -1 Int (permanent). Unable to cast spells for duration of trip (1d6 hours). Must make DC 14 Will save or be fitfully unconscious for 2d3 hours. | Lungs on fire. -1 Sta (permanent) and -2d to any actions attempted within area of effect. Must make DC 15 Fort save to be able to speak or cast spells within 3d8 hours (6d8 hours if failed). |
| 6-9 | Bad trip. -2 Sta (temporary) and -1 Int (temporary). DC 13 Fort save or spend next 2d3 rounds vomiting. | Fungus swirl contaminates airways. -1 Sta (temporary) and incapacitated with sneezing and nausea for 2d3 turns. |
| 10-12 | Hippie fever. -1 Sta (temporary) and -1 Agi (temporary). Unable to cast spells. DC 10 Will save to avoid -1d penalty on all attacks and saves for 1d5 hours. | Bright flashes of suffocating fog. -1 Sta (temporary) and DC 15 Fort save for -1d penalty on all attacks and saves (-2d penalty if failed). |
| 13+ | Mild trip. -1 Sta (temporary) and -1 Agi (temporary). -1d penalty on all actions for 1d5 hours. | Cloud of fungal fog. -1 Sta (temporary) and target is distracted for 4d3 rounds (DC 13 Will save for half). |

** Magical healing has no effect on the orally-ingested trip.*

# Magic Items

**Elfshot**

Being a projectile the size of a grain of rice, elfshot looks harmless. It is, however, a potent magical ammunition and is greatly feared (rightfully so) by the elves of Underearth. Elfshot is most often used in conjunction with blowguns. A target so struck must make an immediate Fort save (DC 15). Success means that the elfshot has been warded off and there is no further effect. Upon a failure, the elfshot sinks into the skin with a mild prickling sensation causing a single point of damage. Each turn after the initial hit, the target must make an additional Fort save (DC 20), or take an additional 1d5 points of damage as the elfshot slowly burrows through the victim's body, always heading towards the heart.

Damage from elfshot may not be healed while the shot remains in the body. The shot may be purged from the body by way of a *remove curse* spell (needing a spell check result of 22 or greater) or by cutting it from the body. Due to the shot's burrowing nature, surviving the physical excising of the shot requires a Fort save (DC 25) and causes 1d3 points of permanent Stamina damage.

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**The Glain**

"The talisman of talismans, an impenetrable fortress, a place of security and delight."

A potent protective artifact of exceptional power created by Merlin, the Glain appears to be an unpolished moonstone with 3 concentric crosses on one side. When activated it creates a shimmering shield of light visible only to those within its protective boundary.

The Glain has two special properties, usable by the bearer of the stone, regardless of class. The stone's properties are:

1. The bearer may create a protective barrier, which mimics the *magic shield* spell with a spell check result of 32+. This power may be used twice per day.
2. The bearer may create a protective barrier, which mimics the *magic bulwark* spell with a spell check result of 38+. This power may be used once per month.

**The Spirit Drum**

The origin of the Spirit Drum are unknown. Legend has it that an ancient elf of Underearth created the artifact in hopes to prolong his life for eternity. The drum is roughly the size of a small keg, constructed of a black lacquered wood traced with ornate veins of silver. The head is fashioned from elven skin, with elven scalps sewn into the bottom area.

The drum can be played to achieve three effects. These can be enacted the round after the drum is played, with effects growing stronger with each round of continuous play. The three effects may be enacted simultaneously, thus affecting up to three targets at once. This is accomplished by subtle alterations in the pattern and pressure applied to the drum

1) The drum can be played to cause paralysis in a humanoid creature. After the second round of play a target chosen by the owner of the drum must pass a DC 12 Will save, or become paralyzed. The DC of the save increases by 2 for each cumulative round to a max DC 20.
2) The drum can be played to force one humanoid target to begin to move to the will of the owner of the drum. Victims can be made to do basic actions such as walking, climbing, dancing, etc. A DC 12 Will save is allowed after the second round of play, with the DC increasing by 2 for each additional round. If the target fails the save it can be commanded by will. Targets move in a slow and jerky fashion resulting in a penalty of ½ normal movement. At any time the target is forced to do something that would bring undue harm, a second immediate save is allowed in a final attempt to resist the drum.
3) The most powerful charm of the drum allows the owner to force the soul of the target out of their own body, thus allowing the owner of the drum to leave his own body to inhabit the vacant husk of the target. This is a permanent effect and requires the owner to spellburn four points from either Strength or Stamina. Once the cost is paid the target and player of the drum enter a battle of wills as the drummer tries to force the target's soul out of the body. On the second round of play, the two make opposed Will saves. Three of these rounds must be won before the exchange takes place and they do not have to be consecutive. Should the drummer win the rounds, the target's soul is exiled from its body and forced to live as a harmless spirit until the physical form is destroyed. The drummer's essence is then transferred into the new host and retains all mental attributes. All of the new host's physical attributes will replace the possessor. Should the target win the three rounds, it becomes immune to all powers of the drum permanently.

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**Sword of Merlin**

"Forged from the crystallized will of Merlin, this sword serves as a potent focus for magic."

The sword of Merlin has a four foot long blade, etched with faded runes of unknown origin. Below the blade is a knuckle guard, seven inches long and almost two inches wide, made of a strange golden alloy. The form of the guard is of two long concave arcs, like crescent moons, laid back to back, with an orb between their separated ends. The hilt is wrapped with leather strapping for security of grip and is capped with a flat boss of the same golden metal bearing the sacred sign of the pentacle.

***The Sword of Merlin, artifact, +1 longsword:*** Int 10; AL N; bane: elves; communication: simple urges; special purpose: to carry out an esoteric task, performing one tiny step in a master plan beyond any man's understanding; special powers: detect enemies/hostile intent within 10', *spellburn reservoir* (up to 5 points) 1/day, *spell magnifier* (wielder casts all wizard spells as +2 caster level).

# Monsters

## Elf, Underearth #1

The elves that make Underearth their home are a varied lot. Accustomed to a life of cruelty and survival, rarely will an explorer meet one of the silent striders and find the welcome “warm”.

Several types can be found while delving into the claustrophobic depths; while each could be classified by subtle variations, all seem to lack any sort of skeletal structure, defying all logic.

The races are silent, rarely speaking. Instead, variations in breaths and barely-audible whistles fill the gap for communication. All variations of these pitiable creatures will resort to cannibalism when the opportunity arises.

The lack of protein in their main food source “Attercorn” leaves them deficient and instilled with a blood hunger. At any point during battle should an Underearth elf become wounded, other elves must immediately pass a DC10 Will save to avoid turning on the wounded, killing and eating them.

Considered the fodder of the race, the gray elf can be identified by its ashen skin and black hair. Gray elves often serve as food for the more domineering variations, in addition to weaker specimens being attacked and eaten by their own.

**Elf , Underearth (gray):** Init +0; Atk cudgel+1 melee (+1d6 ); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 4; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP dark vision, boneless, move silently, steel weakness; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.

*Dark Vision*: Gray elves can see in complete darkness 60’, however any source of light with the equivalent brightness of daylight will affect the creature adversely causing a -1d penalty on the dice chain to all actions.
*Boneless*: Elves of Underearth have a different physiology than that of their above ground cousins. As a result, gray elves may squeeze through tight spaces. A typical gray elf may fit through a gap no less than 6’’. Keep in mind that any equipment carried may hinder this ability which is why the gray elves rarely carry much in the way of equipment.
*Move silently*: Use the same rules for the halfling class with regards to movement and advancement.
*Steel Weakness:* Touching any form of steel causes 1 point of damage per round; cuts and wounds cause +1d on the die chain for damage and heal at ½ normal rate.

Another variation of the Underearth Elf is considered to be on the upper tier of leadership. Skin that is the color of night itself, the black elf stands taller and is considerably stockier than their gray cousins. War parties often consist of a party of gray elves led by one, or two black elves. Black elves prefer clubs for weapons and communicate telepathically.

**Elf , Underearth (black)** : Init +2; Atk club +3 melee (1d4+2); AC 12; HD 3d8; hp 13; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SP dark vision, boneless, telepathy, move silently, steel weakness; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.

*Telepathy*: Black elves have the ability to communicate by means of telepathy with all other varieties of elves residing in the Underearth. Thoughts can be exchanged within 90’ for black elves.

## Elf, Underearth #2 (The Silent People)

The hallucinogenic people from Underearth have existed from time immemorial, hidden far beneath the surface of the earth. Their primary form of nourishment is a strange hallucinogenic grain but they hunger for human flesh. Surviving on the addictive atter-corn, as well as the flesh of the unwary, the elves of the Underearth have lithe, highly flexible bodies that allow them to pass through any opening wide enough to accommodate their heads. This adaptation, seen through all castes of the silent people, aids them greatly in their hunting for foodstuffs. In addition, they have a highly developed sense of smell and can scent atter-corn within 1000'. Like their more common kin, Underearth elves are vulnerable to iron.

**Elf, Underearth (Black):** Init +2; Atk elven club +4 melee (1d5) or blowgun +4 missile fire (see *elfshot*); AC 18; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 100', flexible form, iron vulnerability, telepathy 20', immune to atter-corn; SV Fort +2 Ref +1, Will +1; AL L.

The skin of the black elf is so dark as to appear to be made of the color black. Their visage absorbs all light, making the elf resemble a man-shaped hole in reality more than a living creature. This effect is non-magical in nature and is mediated by whatever garments are worn by the elf. In addition, the black elves have developed a strong telepathic nature and communicate by invasively speaking to and reading from a subject's mind. This may be resisted with a Will save (DC 15).

The nobility of the Underearth, black elves tend to be well equipped. In addition, they may freely move between the Underearth and the world above with the ingestion of atter-corn causing no barrier.

**Elf, Underearth (gray):** Init +0; Atk elven club +1 melee (1d5); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 100', flexible form, iron vulnerability; SV Fort +1 Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.

The most common of the silent people, the gray elves are a race of cunning savages, most of which are trapped below by their addiction to atter-corn. More clever examples of the caste manage to avoid or overcome the addiction so as to move freely into the world above to scavenge for food.

Often collecting into tribal groups numbering from a mere handful to several score, the gray elves can cooperate with one another to accomplish a common goal but are easily distracted by the scent of blood. Injury to one member of a group requires all other members to make a Will save (DC 10) or turn upon him (and others subsequently injured) in an orgy of cannibalistic violence.

There do exist examples of a quasi-split within this caste of elves. There are members who are highly intelligent, on par with the black elves, who are able to gather power and exert dominance over others.

**Elf, Underearth (green):** Init +1; Atk elven club +3 melee (1d5); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 100', flexible form, glamour (appear human), immune to atter-corn, iron vulnerability; SV Fort +2 Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

While having a naturally green tinge to their skin, green elves have the ability to exude a glamour which makes them look to be perfectly ordinary human to all non-elves who look upon them. It is this, coupled with their immunity to atter-corn, that makes them feared as they are able to move amongst the world above undetected by anything other than rumored magics.

Movers and shakers of the Underearth, the green elves rank just beneath the black elves in the hierarchy and they are often used to further the strange and dark machinations of the masters of Underearth.

**Elf, Underearth (white):** Init -2; Atk elven club -1 melee (1d5); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 3; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 100', flexible form, iron vulnerability; SV Fort +2 Ref -2, Will -4; AL N.

The lowest caste in the Underearth the white elves are rarely seen. Most often used for basic menial tasks by their masters, these elves are responsible for grinding and distributing the atter-corn and are capable of carrying out other, simple or repetitive, tasks

# Patrons

**Merlin**
Known to most as a wizard of great power, spoken of in rumor and legend, Merlin is actually a wizard from a higher plane who has, in the past, frequented the lower worlds and left traces of his power. Difficult to contact, Merlin is a powerful patron is roused and can grant great boons to his supplicants or greater wrath on those who abuse his patience.

*Invoke Patron* check results

15-17 Merlin becomes distantly aware of the plea of his petitioner. The caster receives +5 to his next spell check.

18-19 Mildly interested in the plea of the petitioner, Merlin reaches out to bestow magical protection upon the caster, equivalent to *magic bulwark* with a spell check result of 18.

20-23 The magical energies of Merlin spill forth from the hands of the caster, surrounding him in a nimbus of crackling energies allowing him to see into the immediate future and choose a preferred outcome. For the next 1d4 actions rolled, the caster may roll twice and select the favored outcome.

24-27 Stirring from across the dimensional voids, Merlin extends his powers into the word of men at the behest of the supplicant wizard. Bolts of raw magical energy shriek out of the spaces between worlds and strike all foes within 100' and does damage to each equivalent to a *lightning bolt* with a spell check result of 22.

28-29 Answering the beseechments of the aspirant wizard, Merlin extends the vessel of his might. The Sword of Merlin appears in the caster's hand and will remain for one turn before disappearing back to from whence it came. During this time all spell checks made directly targeting the affected wizard are made at -2.

30-31 Merlin recognizes his postulant as one of great favor. The artifact of power, the Glain, appears in the caster's hand and will remain for one turn before disappearing back to from whence it came.

32+ Merlin extends his full awareness into the world of men and exerts his power via the frail form of his supplicants. Both the Glain and the Sword of Merlin appear in the hands of the caster and, for the next 1d4 rounds, the wizard casts all spells as +5 caster level. Housing such power comes with a great price however, and the petitioner permanently loses Stamina equal to the number of rounds in which they wielded the full might of Merlin.

**Patron Taint:**

Merlin is a difficult patron, slow to stir to action and quick to be impatient with the demands of beings so far beneath his notice. Those in his service must be willing to be used for unknown purposes and be wary of his displeasure. But even in failure there can be great benefits and Merlin can indeed be a benevolent patron

When a patron taint is indicated, roll 1d6 on the table below. When a caster has acquired all six taints, at any levels there is no need to continue rolling any more.

| Roll | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | The caster is struck by how petty and unimportant all things in this reality are. They immediately cease all actions and, for the span of one turn, stand perfectly still while deep in introspective contemplation. The caster is wholly unaware of their surroundings and may not be roused by any means during this period. Should the result be rolled a second time, the duration is extended to a full day. If the result is rolled a third, and final time, they caster loses all connection with the world of men and loses themselves in the deep recesses of their mind, never to awaken again. |
| 2 | The great age of Merlin begins to twist the form of the caster and they instantly age by 1/10th of their racial lifespan. If the result is rolled a second time, the caster immediately reaches a point halfway between their current age and the average racial maximum. If rolled a third time, the caster instantly ages to the greatest known age for their race, becoming haggard and worn, but still having 1d4 years of life remaining. |
| 3 | The caster is touched by Merlin's legendary ability to transform into animals, but only just. The caster may be subjected to transformations into a mundane animal of the Judge's choice for a period of 1d3 rounds, per day. The change is triggered by stress, such as combat or casting, and will take place upon a failed Luck check. If this result is rolled a second time, the duration of is lengthened to 1d5. If the result comes up a third time, the caster is subjected to transformations twice per day. |
| 4 | The distant and distracted manner of Merlin becomes imprinted upon the personality of the caster, reducing their personality by -1. This result may be rolled any number of times, each time reducing the caster's Personality attribute by a further -1 as the caster becomes more and more disengaged with the world around them. |
| 5 | Staring wildly into the void, the caster's very soul is buffeted by the winds between the worlds. The caster must take time to regain mastery of his essence by immediately entering contemplative meditation for 1d3 hours. If the result is rolled a second time, the meditation continues until the caster succeeds in a DC 20 Will save (offered every 12 hours). A third instance of this result leads to a mighty mental struggle lasting until the caster succeeds in a DC 25 Will save (offered once per week). Overcoming all three levels of the effect grants the caster special insights into the workings of this universe and grants a permanent ability to cast spells as if +1 caster level. |
| 6 | The caster is swept out of the realm of men and into the upper dimensions to stand before Merlin. This audience, no matter how brief it seems, takes place over the span of one full day in the universe of men. During the audience with Merlin, the caster may learn a single spell of their choosing—*wizard or cleric*—for the cost of a permanent reduction of -3 Personality. This result may only be gained once. Clerical spells gained via Merlin grant patron taint on all failure results. |

**Patron Spells: Merlin**

Merlin cannot be bothered to teach spells to all who beseech him for aid. There are no spells unique to Merlin.

# Weapons

**Elven Club**
A favored weapon in the Underearth, the elven club is made by attaching owl talons, wrapped in sinew, to a wooden club.

**Noose**
Often used from ambush to strangle or to entangle and otherwise deal with combatants armed with steel. Opponents struck must make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid being entangled. Entangled foes continue to take damage with no further to hit roll required, until a successful Reflex save is made on a subsequent round.

| | Damage | Range | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elven Club | 1d5 | - | 3 |
| Noose† | 1d2/1d8 | 10 | 1 |

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# Sanctum Secorum

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