

Chapter 1

Nevermore Gazetteer



**I ascended into a wordrous realm,
Through waters dark and deep.
I came ashore where dreams do dwell,
And die...but I was not asleep.
- Poesi, The Poet Prince**

Nevermore is an ever-changing world where reason fades into the mists of slumber, and imagination emerges into a land of fanciful dreams and dreadful nightmares. It is a world where exotic and unpredictable encounters are as common as eddies swirling along a rocky shore. It is a realm of surreal landscapes awash with dramatic deeds and teeming with creatures both beautiful and bizarre.

Nevermore offers a plethora of possible and even improbable adventures for those who traverse its strange domains. It pushes its inhabitants and visitors beyond the mundane and into a fantastic realm of near boundless potential for both good and evil. Nevermore amplifies and accentuates, twists and skews and is a place where nothing remains the same for long.

Nevermore Campaigns

Nevermore assumes Game Masters (GMs) are using it as a fantasy campaign setting. However, the setting can be used for any genre or time period with a few tweaks of the background material. In light of this, the rules have been designed in such a way as to fit whatever genre and time period a GM sets his campaign in, whether it is Horror, Modern Fantasy, Future Fantasy or something else entirely.

Once a decision on genre and time period have been made, it is important to make the world live and breathe by developing the adventure hooks, story lines and subplots presented in this material into a unique vision of the dreamlands. Make sure from the moment the campaign starts that the players understand that this is not just another dream. Their actions have consequences for the world around them as well as

Gazetteer

themselves. Nevermore should have real effects on those who adventure and invest themselves in it. Life and death should be just as genuine in the dreamlands as they are in the mortal world.

If using Nevermore in tandem with another setting, make sure the events within the dreamlands foreshadow those within the other world, grant hints to the main

storyline or prove to be an integral part of foiling an adversary's plans. This is where the ingenuity of a GM is needed most; the occasional side-trek to Nevermore is all well and good, but it is of greater importance to find a way to incorporate these side-treks into the main plotline of a campaign and thereby create a tangible benefit to the players' successes within the world of Nevermore.

A Short History of Nevermore

Nevermore was created for the ethereals as a refuge from the mortal world. Over untold years, it provided a place of rest and reverie for the ethereals, producing a golden age among them. However, envy entered the world with the sin of Queen Mab, and the seeds of discord she sowed thereafter fractured the ethereals into two conflicting courts. Open strife between the courts intensified as more and more ethereals shed their mortal coils, seeking a new life in lands unsullied by human hands. Nevermore's ground tasted blood for the first time during this Age of Rebirth, and what had been a sanctuary for the ethereals, now became a battlefield.

Centuries passed with neither side gaining advantage over the other, until humans and beasts fleeing a great flood in the mortal world entered Nevermore through the intercession of Poesi, Oberon's son. The advent of men created a clarion call among many of the ethereals for a war against the mortals. Seizing this opportunity, the Unseelie court convinced some of the Seelie court to join them and marched upon men. Angered by the infidelity of his children, Faehalig, the god of the ethereals, granted Poesi the power to summon forth the waters of forgetfulness. The waters released by the prince washed away the Unseelie army and lulled Nevermore into a long and wistful slumber.

No one knows how long this Forgotten Age lasted, but when the fogs of this era finally dissipated, the domain of the Wyrd surrounded the Heartlands of the

ethereals, and within this new land, mortals held power. Unable to destroy the humans through force of arms, the Unseelie sowed the seeds of strife in the hearts of men. They prepared the ground for war with subtle schemes and cunning intrigues, until one by one the mortals began to battle each other.

The world ignited in war and woe, forging the legends of the Age of Strife. During these centuries of struggle, many dreamlords rose and fell as vast armies were summoned from the mortal world. The age culminated in a terrible crucible, which brought the world to the verge of tearing itself apart. The revenge and madness marred the very essence of Nevermore, giving birth to the Dreadlands and the nightmares that torment the world. This era would have destroyed the mortals, and perhaps Nevermore itself, but as the dirge neared its final note, the noble sacrifice of Faehalig's son, Menhalig, and the sorrowful sobs of his mother, Mergia, drowned out the cries for bloody revenge and returned the dreamlands to their senses.

The blood of Menhalig and the tears of Mergia swept away the nightmares of the Age of Strife, and in their wake, two new domains were formed, the Hedge and the Eye. These places have become sanctuaries for the inhabitants of Nevermore in the new Age of Serenity. Unfortunately, the pool of peace has dried to its dregs, and enemies, both old and new, are preparing for a darker and more tumultuous age.



The Heartlands

Northern Heartlands

The northern Heartlands lay in the shadows of the Hedge Mountains and are cloaked with decaying forests, crisscrossed with twisted caves, and haunted by Unseelie fey. It was not always such a bleak land, but the seeds of discord sowed by Queen Mab have made it so, strangling its idyllic dreams and with the creeping vines of arrogance and envy. As time has passed a grim shadow has fallen over this domain and its inhabitants, making it one of the most perilous places in Nevermore.

History

When the Forgotten Age ended, the Unseelie discovered, much to their dismay, that the mortals, whom they sought to destroy, ruled much of Nevermore in the newly formed domain of the Wyrd. No longer powerful enough to drive the mortals from the dreamlands by force, the Unseelie conspired to bring about the downfall of mortals by their own hands. Through deception and intrigue, they sparked a series of wars between the mortal dreamlords, which brought them to the brink of destruction. However, the sacrifice of Faehalig's son, Menhalig, and the tears of his mother Mergia opened the hearts of the mortals, and even some of the Unseelie, to the desire for peace, which has been the foundation for the Age of Serenity.

The northern Heartlands have been quiet since the end of the Age of Strife, but this silence is only a lull in the long battle against the mortals. With the help of Lilith, many of the ethereals that converted at the beginning of the Age of Serenity have been rooted out, either slain or banished from these lands. Consequently, Queen Mab is once again the unquestioned leader of the Unseelie court and with the aid of Lilith she weaves new webs to entangle mortals within.

Inhabitants

The northern Heartlands are the stronghold of the Unseelie ethereals and few mortals venture into them and return. The Unseelie ethereals despise the other inhabitants of Nevermore and would like nothing more than to see them banished from the dreamlands. They manifest in many shapes and sizes, but their natural appearances are often distorted and hideous. Nevertheless, some of their number have repented of their past sins and seek peace with mortals. However, most of these ethereals have been slain or driven out of the northern Heartlands altogether.

Unseelie revere Lilith, the Night Witch as their liberator. She is the queen of the fallen angels and is the one who tempted Mab with the fruit of the Heart

Tree and sowed the seeds of discord into the hearts of the Unseelie. Though she is able to take any shape she wishes, Lilith most often appears as a cunning raven with eyes of brimstone. At the end of each movement of time the Unseelie court sacrifices a mortal child to the Night Witch. It is said these children are then turned into changelings, returned to their families, and become spies for Queen Mab.

Unseelie found outside of the northern Heartlands typically fall into two categories: those who are doing the Queen Mab's wicked work or those who have fled from this domain because of their "crimes" against the crown. Few mortals take a chance when faced with one of these ethereals, either fleeing for their lives or attacking on sight. This makes the life of a converted Unseelie very difficult in the dreamlands, however there are some, such as the dreamlord Gywnudd and his followers, who have proven their virtue to the inhabitants of Nevermore and gained their trust, if not their affection.

Geography

The northern Heartlands are infamous for the immense misshapen trees, which oppress most of the landscape under a dark canopy of bony branches. Very little grows upon the ground, except creeping vines, weeds, and worse. Quagmires, sinkholes, and caverns mar the face of the countryside and act as hidey-holes for creatures just as dangerous. The weather is almost always dreary with rain filling up the marshlands and covering the forest floor with muck. Lightning storms provide the rare illumination of this bleak land and the howling winds remind adventurers who enter this place of the wails of those who have come before them.

The flora and fauna of the northern Heartlands reflect the insidious aspects of the Unseelie ethereals, which shaped them. Their appearances are vile and warped and their natures are duplicitous and wicked. Monstrous spiders and other devious beasts stalk the land, while demon-possessed ravens and other winged horrors soar through its black skies. Even the vegetation seems to be vengeful and cruel with shadow alders casting a desolate gloom over most of the land and Mab poppies poisoning the air with their loathsome scent.

Fomorian Foothills [Greater Realm]

These rocky foothills are the home of the demonic giants known as the fomorians and lies to the northwest of the Hedge Mountains. Gargantuan monoliths mark the borders of this rugged country and warn travelers to keep at least a boulder's throw distance between them and the ancestral home of the fomorians. The fomorian

Chapter 8

Aspects of Nevermore



Aspects are supernatural powers that reflect a character's psyche and tend to accentuate their inner nature in both physical and supernatural ways. All characters gain an aspect at 1st level after choosing their class. In addition, aspects count as paragon paths and at 11th level a character may gain another aspect as their paragon path.

Aspect Descriptions

The aspects in this section follow the general format for paragon paths (see the D&D 4E *PLAYER'S HANDBOOK*). GMs and players should feel free to create unique aspects for their characters, though as always the GM has the final word on whether an aspect's features and powers are appropriate.

Aspect Enhancement Bonuses: You treat all aspect-based attacks as if they were delivered by a magical weapon or implement equal to your level for

the purposes of attack rolls, damage rolls, and critical hits. If an aspect power has the implement or weapon keyword, then you use the enhancement bonus and special properties of the implement or weapon you are currently wielding.

Body Aspects: When you create a character with a "Body" aspect, choose Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity as the ability score used when making attack rolls or determining damage you're your aspect's powers. Your choice remains throughout your character's life.

Spirit Aspects: When you create a character with a "Spirit" aspect, choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the ability score used when making attack rolls or determining damage with your aspect's powers. Your choice remains throughout your character's life.

Choosing Aspects as Paragon Paths: If you choose an aspect as a paragon path, then simply add 10 levels to the feature and power levels. For example, *Aberrant Action* would become an 11th level feature, instead of a 1st level one.

Aspects of Nevermore

Aberrant Body Aspect

Your body manifests aberrant features, such as eyestalks or tentacles.

ABERRANT BODY FEATURES

Aberrant Action (1st level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you also gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Aberrant Physiology (1st level): Choose one of the following aberrant physiologies and gain its benefits.

Aberrant Anatomy: You gain an extra healing surge and a +2 bonus to Endurance checks.

Aberrant Eyestalks: You gain darkvision (see the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL).

Aberrant Tentacles: You gain two tentacles, which may hold weapons and other objects just like normal hands, but do not give you any extra hand slot items. You gain a +2 bonus to grab-related actions.

Improved Aberrant Physiology (6th): You gain one of the following benefits based on your chosen aberrant physiology.

Aberrant Anatomy: When you are bloodied, you are immune to critical hits.

Aberrant Eyestalks: You gain all-around vision (see the D&D 4e Monster Manual).

Aberrant Tentacles: As long as you are capable of making an opportunity attack, two adjacent enemies (your choice) take psychic damage equal to your Strength modifier at the end of your turn.

ABERRANT BODY POWERS

Aberrant Body Strike Aberrant Body Attack 1

You are able to use your aberrant physiology to augment your physical attacks.

Encounter

Standard Action Melee

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: 3d4 + Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity modifier damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Aberrant Anatomy: You gain a +2 power bonus to your AC and Fortitude defenses until the end of your next turn.

Aberrant Eyestalks: The target takes psychic damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Aberrant Tentacles: The target is grabbed (until escape).

Aberrant Enhancement Aberrant Body Utility 2

You enhance your aberrant physiology in order to gain some additional benefit.

Daily

No Action

Personal

Effect: You gain one of the following benefits based on your chosen aberrant physiology.

Aberrant Anatomy: You gain resist 10 to all damage until the end of your next turn.

Aberrant Eyestalks: Make a Perception check and use that as your initiative check result. In addition, you may make an active Perception check as a free action before taking any other actions.

Aberrant Tentacles: You gain a +10 bonus to grab related checks until the end of your next turn.

Aberrant Blow

Aberrant Body Attack 10

You use your aberrant physiology to devastating effect in combat.

Daily

Standard Action

Melee

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: 5d4 + Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity modifier damage.

Aberrant Anatomy: You gain a +4 power bonus to all your defenses until the end of your next turn.

Aberrant Eyestalks: The target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends).

Aberrant Tentacles: The target is grabbed (until escape). If you have already grabbed the target, it is restrained instead of immobilized until it escapes your grab. The target can attempt to escape the grab as normal. You may sustain the grab for another round with a minor action. The third time you sustain the grab after using this power, the target falls unconscious. If an unconscious target takes any damage, it is no longer unconscious.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.