


Darker Gifts



Curse of Strahd Expansion



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Supplement for players and dungeon masters of the world's most famous RPG containing rules for new dark gifts for the Curse of Strahd storyline.

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DARKER GIFTS - CURSE OF STRAHD EXPANSION

The current season of the D&D Adventurers League has just started, with the Death House introductory adventure.

My favorite feature of the season so far however was not the adventure - a great location-based crawl in its own right - but a nice little feature referred to in the Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide as **Dark Gifts**.

The rules there state that any character under 5th level may be instantly brought back to life by the dark powers of the mists of Ravenloft, acquiring some horror-theme trait, such as becoming blind as their eyes melt off their faces or developing gills for underwater (or should I say Black Lagoon?) breathing. However there was a problem with this feature.

And the problem is that there are only four of them. Players get to roll a d4 each time they are resurrected in this fashion, which may easily cause a particular unlucky character to possess all four dark gifts in no time.

As I started my own Curse of Strahd campaign with Death House I decided to adopt the dark gifts mechanic even it's a home campaign and not part of the Adventurers League. But I wanted more, much more.

I came up with 16 extra dark gifts that players may acquire by being brought back to life by the mists. The first four however are not reproduced herein, so check out the Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide for those.

The rules are as follows: a character who dies in Barovia can be revived with full hit points and spells on their next round if they accept a dark gift. The traits that come with it remain until the character receives a **remove curse** spell. For added tension

however I recommend making these effects permanent, or at least impossible to remove while the character remains in Ravenloft for the duration of the Curse of Strahd adventure.



d20 Dark Gift

1-4 See the Adventurers League Player's Guide for these dark gifts.

5 The character develops claws with sharp talons where the hands and feet once were and fur-like hair grows on the character's body. The claws can be used as unarmed strikes (1d3 slashing) and climbing doesn't halve the character's speed anymore. Any time the character encounters a hostile creature there is a chance a beastly personality will take over, causing the character to instantly attack the creature if he or she fails on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw. The character's smelling sense also becomes heightened, granting him or her advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smelling.

6 Ears similar to those of a bat grow on the character, heightening their hearing. The character has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sound and acquires tremorsense up to 60 feet. The improved hearing however causes the character to have vulnerability to thunder damage and loud noises can likewise stun the character for 1 round if he or she fails a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, at the DM's discretion.

7 Creatures of filth start to follow the character around, drawn to him or her by some supernatural force. Once per long rest as an action the character can summon a swarm of insects or rats, which appear instantly on any space up to 60 feet from the character. The swarm instantly attacks any creature on that space or adjacent to it and cannot be commanded in any way. As a collateral effect the character is more susceptible to disease, failing any saving throw to resist infection, and also acquires vulnerability to necrotic damage.

8 The character's mouth is magically sewn shut, preventing any form of speech – which also makes it impossible to cast spells with verbal components. As a bonus action the character can use a dagger or similar weapon to rip the seams open, becoming therefore able to speak for a full round before the mouth is magically shut again. Doing so causes the character to suffer 3 (1d6) points of damage.

9 A permanent catatonic state starts to afflict the character, causing disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks of any kind and therefore also a -5 penalty to the character's passive Perception score. Because of that any spell or similar ability that relies on the target's attention – such as hearing a command or looking at the caster – has a chance of failure, granting the character advantage on the saving throw to resist such an effect.

10 The character's heart ceases to beat normally and must be made to function again through electric shocks, which also grants the character immunity to lightning damage. Every 24 hours the character must be dealt an amount of lightning damage (which will not actually affect the character's hit points) equal to his or her Constitution score – cumulatively or all at once – or drop instantly to 0 hit points. If this happens the character is dying and can only be saved if he or she is dealt lightning damage within 3 rounds, which instantly revives the character.

11 Whispers and ghostly apparitions start to haunt the character, who gains disadvantage in any saving throw made to resist fear. During a long rest the character must also succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw at the DM's discretion as horrifying visages and dreams torment the character in his or her sleep. Failure in this save cancels the effect of the long rest. The character also becomes less likely to fall for illusions as he or she starts to believe only in the ghosts in their head, having advantage on saving throws and ability checks to discern illusions from reality. The whispers and apparitions are real however and cannot be dismissed.

12 The character's spine bends and twists causing the character to assume a hunchback posture. Difficulty of movement reduces the character's speed in 10 feet. Also, the character's bones become brittle, causing vulnerability to bludgeoning damage. The character's climbing speed is doubled however and falls up to 20 feet do not cause damage to the character.

d20 Dark Gift

- 13 The character's soul is divided between the character's body and its shadow. As an action the character can spawn a shadow under their control for a period of up to 1 hour. The shadow has half the hit points of the character, whose main body retains the other half. If the body or the shadow are reduced to 0 hit points while in this state the character dies. After 1 hour the body and shadow reunite, which can also be done as an action if they are within 60 feet of each other.
- 14 The character loses the ability to feed on regular edible material, becoming able to digest only moldy, decayed and otherwise non-edible foodstuffs. Exhaustion caused by hunger affects the character normally and attempting to eat regular food causes the character to be poisoned for 1 hour. The character also becomes immune to poison damage.
- 15 Second and third-degree burns completely cover the character's skin as he or she is immolated by flames during the resurrection. An excruciating and never-ending pain torments the character, who therefore acquires vulnerability to piercing, slashing and bludgeoning damage. The character however gains a regenerative ability that heals wounds and reforms lost tissue. During a short rest the character recovers an amount of hit points equal to their Constitution score in addition to any hit points recovered by rolling hit dice.
- 16 As their whole body disappears the character learns to momentarily become invisible. This effect is similar to the invisibility spell and can be used once per long rest. Differently from the spell however the character's worn or carried items do not become invisible and must therefore be left behind for the benefits of the invisible state to take effect. While invisible in this way the character also has vulnerability to any damage.
- 17 The character's body withers and acquires a frail, pale and sickly appearance. The character's full hit points drop permanently, removing any previous Constitution bonus added to the score (as a simple calculation, remove the Constitution modifier times the character's level from the total). The character also doesn't add their Constitution modifier to their hit points when gaining new levels. As a side effect the character also becomes immune to disease and necrotic damage.
- 18 Strange words appear on the character's skin as bloody scars written in a beautiful cursive script. They are indecipherable but the character can oddly read them – they are spells written on the character's skin as if he or she was a living spell scroll. The character has access to three cantrips from any of the Sorcerer, Warlock and Wizard spell lists, chosen only once. Casting a cantrip in this way causes the scars to open and start bleeding, dealing 5 (1d8) damage to the character.
- 19 The smell of humanoid blood starts to appeal to the character, who acquires a craving for drinking it. The character is cursed to feel an urge to drink at least a pint of fresh humanoid blood each day. Resisting this urge requires a DC 15 Charisma saving throw made once a day. Failure to satisfy the craving if the saving throw fails causes the character to suffer 1 level of exhaustion until blood is consumed.
- 20 The character's flesh becomes affected by necrosis and there is a risk that limbs are lost. Each time the character suffers slashing damage equal to or higher than their Constitution score they must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or have a limb severed off. The DC for this saving throw is the amount of damage taken, and the severed limb is decided upon by the GM. A lost limb reattaches to the body if held in place during a short rest or a new one grows after a period of 24 hours. If the character is decapitated the body will continue to function normally but is considered blind and deafened. Neither a new head or a new body can be grown – both must be reunited.

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