

# The Wicked Dead

An Extreme Homage Production

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Player Introduction .....	4
From The Author .....	4
<b>Characters</b> .....	<b>6</b>
A Note About Guns.....	6
Character Creation Checklist .....	7
Bambi .....	8
Biff.....	9
Dexter.....	10
Joe.....	11
Phoebe.....	12
Spike .....	13
<b>AFMBE</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Attributes .....	14
Qualities And Drawbacks .....	14
Skill Rolls .....	14
<b>Setting</b> .....	<b>16</b>
The Island .....	16
The Cottage.....	18
<b>Weapons</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Scenes</b> .....	<b>24</b>
What Went Before .....	24
Act 1: Afternoon .....	25
Act 2: Evening .....	26
Act 3: Midnight .....	28
Act 4: Before The Dawn .....	29
Epilogue: Dawn.....	31
<b>About The Wicked Dead</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Powers .....	33
Hurting The Wicked Dead .....	33
Dying Fighting The Wicked Dead .....	34
Defeating Them .....	34
Background On Them.....	35
Welcome To The Dead .....	36
<b>Sequel(s)</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Someone Lived .....	37
Everybody Died.....	37

# Introduction

## Player Introduction

It's the last week in October, and the teaching assistants are on strike (it's Canada, after all). Your school is closed for at least a week, and one of your friends knows someone with a cottage. It's been an unusually warm autumn, and you and your friends can go hang out by the lake for a week.

Sounds good, right? It's a three-hour drive to the Muskokas and then forty-five minutes by boat. It should be a blast.

Like nothing else you've ever done.

## From The Author

Occasionally, I like a good (or even a bad) horror movie. The role-playing game *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* had me thinking about zombies, and while my wife was away, I took the opportunity to watch the kind of films she hates: Horror films. *Evil Dead*, *Evil Dead 2*, *Return Of The Living Dead* "inspirations" }, *Road To Rio* (oh, sorry, that wasn't a horror film). I started thinking about how I'd run zombies in a short adventure.

What interests me about the living dead genre is that it's everyday folk against the unstoppable. Any player who dies gets to come back as a Wicked Dead person, with full knowledge. (Except, of course, they want to kill. And maybe eat brains.) So you can't lose your character; you just switch sides.

I call these restless dead folks the Wicked Dead.

This is more than an adventure seed but less than a module. Think of it as an adventure outline, to be filled by you and your players.

This calls for between four and six characters, all the same age. Characters who are practical jokers, don't believe in the supernatural, and who are related or are in love with other characters are encouraged. In *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* terms, they're normal characters, or "Norms."

You can use your characters instead of the pregen. I recommend Norms and maybe an Inspired rather than Survivors. (But heck, it's your session. You run it as you see fit.)

*AFMBE* is made for zombies, but feel free to run this in *Unknown Armies*, *Call of Cthulhu*, or any game system you want.

# Characters

I wouldn't recommend spending a lot of time on character creation; you don't want lovingly crafted ubermenschen, you want stereotypes. If one of the characters went two extra points over budget, who cares?

You can use standard *AFMBE* rules to create characters or you can use the archetypes here. I recommend archetypes for new players.

Some of the terms used here are described in the next section, which summarizes the *AFMBE* rules.

An **archetype**{ XE "archetype:defined" } is a character stereotype you can customize. Available character stereotypes are:

- **Bambi** (socialite: cheerleader or sorority queen); Bambis are very good at getting others to do what they want. Good leaders.
- **Biff** (jock); Biffs are physically the toughest. The best at combat.
- **Dexter** (brainy nerd); Dexters are the smartest and have the most obscure skills.
- **Joe** (average guy); Joes tend to have down-to-earth skills, like carpentry and mechanic—a good all-round guy, with a bit of luck.
- **Phoebe** (artsy type); Phoebes tend to know obscure things about the occult but are susceptible to it for that reason.
- **Spike** (misunderstood person of either sex); a Spike is typically a punk, someone from the wrong side of the tracks, or a minority member, trying to fit in. Spikes tend to have unusual skills that others don't.

### These aren't binding

Archetypes aren't gender-specific; if you want your Biff to be Helga, a transfer student from the German Women's Weight-Lifting Team, that's fine.

You don't need one of each kind of character; if your story is about six Phoebes caught with monsters, hey, more power to you.

## A Note About Guns

It's Canada. Nobody is carrying a gun. They don't expect to do any hunting, so there are no rifles, and handguns are even more tightly controlled.

Should they need guns, there are some on the island, used for varmint control and someone on the island does hunt. Not that the Cast knows that.

## Character Creation Checklist

1. Pick an archetype, a character type.
2. Choose between options offered on your archetype.
3. Pick a skill of choice.
4. Describe him or her physically.
5. Name your character.
6. Tell the ZM, so he or she can write it down.

### **Choose Between Options{ XE "character options" }**

The archetypes offer some choices to conform to the stereotypes. For example, Biffs choose between “Macho” or “Gung-ho.” There are athletes who are none of those things in the real world, but when we say the name “Biff” for an athlete, those are some of the things that come to mind.

If you think of an appropriate Drawback, you can use it instead of the one on the archetype. Maybe your Biff is a “Practical Joker.”

### **Pick Skill Of Choice**

Each character has a point or two left over for another skill. Think of it as another chance to customize your character.

Basically, if you can name the skill, you can have it. Botany? Sure. Typing? Okay. Orienteering? Go ahead. Extensive knowledge of horror movies? Yup.

### **Describe Him Or Her Physically**

Obviously, you want to know what your character looks like. Being exceptional is well, exceptional, and is a Quality or a Drawback; think twice about being eight feet tall or as beautiful as Helen of Troy or so thin you can make a living as a circus contortionist. Not impossible, but not necessarily in keeping with the genre.

### **Other Details**

Maybe you want to figure out how much money your character is carrying, whether he has brought lots of clothes or not many, whether your character is the one bringing the booze or whether she’s an abstainer.

For sheer soap opera, pick someone in the group to adore but don’t tell them. Be irritated at someone—you can figure out why later.

# Bambi

<b>STR</b>	<b>2</b>	Attractive 2 (2)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>2</b>	Resources 2 (2)
<b>CON</b>	<b>2</b>	Status 2 (1)
<b>INT</b>	<b>2</b>	Cruel 1 (-1)
<b>PER</b>	<b>3</b>	Covetous: (choose glory or money or status) (-1)
<b>WIL</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>LPs</b>	<b>36</b>	3 Beautician (knows how to look good)
<b>EPs</b>	<b>26</b>	2 Foreign Language (studied abroad)
<b>Speed</b>	<b>8</b>	3 Smooth Talking (knows how to make people do things)
<b>Essence</b>	<b>14</b>	3 Seduction (knows how to make people want things)
		2 Dance (Daddy thought it would be good)
		2 Drive (Cars) (has expensive car)
		2 Acting (has star aspirations)
		3 Notice (has eye for details that might help)
		3 Haggling (loves to get the price down)
		2 Major subject (Art, History, Political Science, etc; 8 SP)
		1 Swimming
		2 Dodge
		1 Skill of Choice:

A Bambi is a socialite, someone who is at the top of the pecking order, is beautiful, and knows both of these things. Bambis try to get other people to do the work—they will work (cheerleading is not effortless) but they expect to see social payoffs. Bambis often have money.

Veronica Lodge and Reggie Mantle (from Archie comics) are both Bambis.

- Bambis are not renowned for their bravery or their tactical brilliance; the strength of the Bambi lies in getting others to do the work. Bambis are often the objects of someone else’s adoration.
- Bambis love themselves; this isn’t shown in the drawbacks, but is true nonetheless. They’re often vain.



# Biff

<b>STR</b>	<b>3</b>	Fast Reaction Time (2)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>4</b>	Resistance to Pain (3)
<b>CON</b>	<b>3</b>	Delusions of Grandeur: Big ego (-1)
<b>INT</b>	<b>2</b>	Reckless (-2)
<b>PER</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Choose one of Showoff (-2) or Obsession with winning (-2) or Macho (-1)</b>
<b>WIL</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>LPs</b>	<b>34</b>	2 Brawling (gets in some fights;)
<b>EPs</b>	<b>29</b>	4 Dodge
<b>Speed</b>	<b>12</b>	4 Football or Particular Sport (has a scholarship)
<b>Essence</b>	<b>16</b>	2 First Aid (patches up buddies;)
		2 Running (Dash) (all those wind sprints)
		3 Intimidation (likes to psych out opponents;)
		2 Drive Cars (drives fast cars)
		1 Guns: rifles
		1 Swimming
		3 Throwing (sphere)
		3 Weightlifting
		2 Major subject (Economics, Chemistry, Engineering, etc;)
		1 Skill of Choice:

A Biff is an athlete, a jock. A Biff is familiar with stress and adrenaline, with the rush of competition and with the willpower required to push out one extra crunch, move just a bit faster, keep going just a bit longer.

In the harsh collegiate social world, Biffs tend to be near or at the top of the social ladder. They may be arrogant or polite.

- Feel free to replace “football” with your sport of choice (wrestling, swimming, basketball, etc.) and you may want to replace “running” with something appropriate (swimming, for example)
- The Biff writeup takes advantage of a loophole in the rules to get the attributes up.

## Dexter

<b>STR</b>	<b>2</b>		Fear of rejection (-1)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>2</b>		Unrequited love for friend (-1)
<b>CON</b>	<b>2</b>		Blind without glasses (-1)
<b>INT</b>	<b>4</b>		Photographic memory (2)
<b>PER</b>	<b>2</b>		Situational awareness (picked on a lot)
<b>WILL</b>	<b>2</b>		Hard to Kill
<b>LPs</b>	<b>29</b>	2	A Foreign Language
<b>EPs</b>	<b>23</b>	2	Another Foreign Language
<b>Speed</b>	<b>8</b>	3	First Aid (was keener cub-scout)
<b>Essence</b>	<b>14</b>	3	Engineering (tinkers)
		5	Research/Investigation
		1	Drive Car
		4	Major subject (Economics, Chemistry, Engineering, etc.)
		1	Swimming
		3	Computers
		4	Computer Programming
		2	Computer Hacking
		2	Dodge (got picked on in dodgeball)
		1	Skill of Choice

The class genius; a Dexter is usually very smart in one area and socially clueless.

While Dexters traditionally have areas of study like chemistry or engineering, feel free to consider something like linguistics, archaeology, paleontology, or architecture.

Traditionally, a Dexter's love for some other character is unrequited and obvious to all other characters except possibly the beloved. Bambis particularly like to take advantage of this.

# Joe

<b>STR</b>	<b>2</b>	Luck 2 (6)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>2</b>	Honorable (-2)
<b>CON</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Choose</b> Clown <b>or</b> Fear of commitment (-1)
<b>INT</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>PER</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>WILL</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>LPs</b>	<b>30</b>	1 Brawling (has been known to fight)
<b>EPs</b>	<b>29</b>	2 Craft: Carpentry (built a barn)
<b>Speed</b>	<b>10</b>	2 Dodge
<b>Essence</b>	<b>14</b>	3 First Aid (summers on uncle's farm)
		2 Electrician (and wired a barn)
		2 Mechanic (fixed stuff while there)
		2 Notice
		3 Drive Cars (likes cars)
		1 Drive Boat (someone has to get them to the island)
		2 Guns: Rifles (shot groundhogs)
		2 Tracking (likes to hunt, too)
		2 Survival: forest (and likes to camp)
		3 Sport (you choose)
		2 Swimming
		3 Major subject (Economics, English, Engineering, etc)
		2 Skill of Choice

A Joe is an average guy or gal. A Joe is Everyperson. (Ash from Evil Dead probably started as a Joe.)

Joes may choose any advantages at all from the *AFMBE* rulebook; Joes are often extraordinary without seeming extraordinary.

- Joes are the most useful characters
- A Joe is a good choice to survive long enough to read the spell at the end.
- Female Joes may want to substitute “girl” skills for Mechanic, Carpentry, and Electrician. Or not; tomboys have a long tradition in the Joe world.

# Phoebe

<b>STR</b>	<b>2</b>	Artistic Talent (3)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>2</b>	Gift (5)
<b>CON</b>	<b>2</b>	Charisma (2)
<b>INT</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Choose</b> Poor (-2) <b>or</b> Recurring nightmares (-2)
<b>PER</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Choose</b> Weird delusions (flaky beliefs) (-2) and Reputation: slut (-1) <b>or</b> Bad luck (-3)
<b>WILL</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>LPs</b>	<b>26</b>	3 Craft: massage
<b>EPs</b>	<b>26</b>	2 Dodge
<b>Speed</b>	<b>8</b>	3 Fine arts (choose which one)
<b>Essence</b>	<b>26</b>	1 First Aid (wants to be helpful but blood is icky)
		2 Major subject (Economics, PoliSci, Women's studies, etc.)
		3 Foreign Language (Multicultural friends)
		3 Myths and Legends
		1 Occult
		2 Notice (can be quite perceptive)
		2 Play Instrument (probably guitar)
		3 Sing
		1 Swimming (likes to swim naked)
		2 Unconventional medicine
		2 Skill of choice

A Phoebe is an artistic type, often drawn to the occult for other reasons.

On the down side:

- Phoebes have the reputation for being promiscuous (possibly true, possibly not), which may cause conflict during the early part of the adventure.
- Phoebes generally can't drive, because they're saving the environment.

# Spike

<b>STR</b>	<b>2</b>	Situational Awareness (2)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>3</b>	Nerves of Steel (3)
<b>CON</b>	<b>3</b>	Minority—mistrusted (-1)
<b>INT</b>	<b>2</b>	Fear of Rejection (-1)
<b>PER</b>	<b>2</b>	Fear of Commitment (-1)
<b>WILL</b>	<b>2</b>	Below average resources (-1)
<b>LPs</b>	<b>30</b>	3 Brawling (got in fights)
<b>EPs</b>	<b>26</b>	3 Dodge
<b>Speed</b>	<b>12</b>	3 Guns: Rifle (sent to military school to clean up)
<b>Essence</b>	<b>14</b>	2 Drive Motorcycles (loves motorcycles)
		2 Gambling (likes the risk)
		2 Cheating (but not too much risk)
		2 Intimidation (can help if people catch on)
		2 Lock picking (liked to see own files)
		3 Notice
		2 Smooth talking
		3 Stealth (sneaks around)
		2 Streetwise (knows people)
		1 Law (knows when it's used against him)
		3 Major subject (History, Anthropology, English, etc)
		1 Skill of Choice

A Spike is a token foreigner—a member of a racial minority hanging out with the group, the group’s token Rebel without a cause, the misunderstood punk, the military brat. (Both girls in *Night of the Comet* are Spikes.)

Spikes get to have additional combat, stealth, and hunting skills that reflect their broader (but misunderstood!) backgrounds. However, Spikes suffer early in the game because no one trusts them, just as no one believes anyone with the “practical joker” limitation when he or she talks about “things out in the woods”.

Spikes often are the objects of adoration by one person, generally a Phoebe. They also may be defensive about their backgrounds or lack of resources.

# AFMBE

This section recaps the essential rules of *AFMBE* (the Unisystem).

## Attributes

Your character has six attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Perception, and Willpower. The range is 1-5 for these, but most people have a 2. (Really unhealthy people can go negative, but you're not in that category.)

## Qualities And Drawbacks

Some characters have advantages that give them a bonus to certain actions or skills. These are noted on your character sheet.

All characters have drawbacks or disadvantages that may restrict their abilities to act in some circumstances.

## Skill Rolls

Take your skill, add the relevant attribute and roll a D10. Add all three numbers together. If it's 9 or higher, you succeeded.

RESULT	SUCCESS
9-10	Adequate
11-12	Decent
13-14	Good
15-16	Very Good
17-20	Excellent
21-23	Extraordinary
24+	Mind-boggling

Some tasks are more difficult than others:

TASK IS	MODIFIER TO ROLL
Routine	Why roll?
Easy	+5 to roll

**Example:** Indigo West, adventurer, is trying to translate some hieroglyphics before the reanimated mummy breaks down the door. She has Ancient Egyptian at skill level 3; her INT is 3, she rolls a 5...she succeeds (3+3+5=11) (The hieroglyphics say, "This way to secret passageway.")

**Example:** Indigo is now trying to read an ancient scroll in the comfort of her tent. This is difficult (-5), but she rolls exceptionally well (10).

Moderate	+3 or +4
Average	+1 or +2
Challenging	+0
Difficult	-1 or -2
Very difficult	-3 to -5
Heroic	-6 to -9
Nearly impossible	-10 or worse

Some tasks don't rely on a skill, just an attribute:

- If the task is *easy*, double the aptitude and add the D10 roll.
- If the task is *hard*, don't double the aptitude before adding the roll.

I'll tell you if it's easy or hard.

If you don't have the skill, add the attribute and subtract 2 from the total (it's Difficult).

**Example:** Sandi is attempting to climb a rock face to get away from an enraged bear. She has no climbing skill; so a kind game master would treat it as a simple Strength task, and let her double her Strength and add a roll.

# Setting

Your four or six friends are going to Professor Haggard's cottage for a week. It's remote and it's late in the season, so none of the other four families are on the island. Professor Haggard is an archaeological philologist; translating dead languages is his specialty.

## The Island

The cottage is one of four on a large island in a lake in the Muskokas, in Ontario, Canada. It's owned by the family of Professor Haggard; they use it less frequently now that the kids have grown up.

The Muskokas are known as "cottage country," famous (in Canada, at least) for its rugged scenery, clean air, well-stocked lakes for fishing, and cottages that are as remote as you could want. In the height of summer, you've got neighbours, if you want to see them; in the late autumn or winter, there aren't many folks around at all.

The only way to get to the island is by boat; the families that live on the island keep their boats moored at the harbor of the nearest town, Blackwater Mills. It's a forty-five minute trip by boat to get to the island.

(Only Joes have familiarity with boating. This is intentional, but don't stop any player who wants to have boating as a skill.)

The terrain of the island is rough and rocky; lots of small hills and hollows. The soil over the rock is thin; bare or lichen-covered rock pokes through in many places. Most of the island is covered with pine trees, tough bushes and scrub. Each cottage seems isolated; there is no line of sight between the cottages. There's a woodpile by each cottage, since each has a wood stove.

There is some wildlife on the island; there was a bear there some years ago (they can swim), and there are a family of skunks and two porcupines on the island right now, as well as a variety of squirrels, chipmunks, snakes, etc. (There might be a Massassauga rattlesnake there, but the snakes are endangered and probably not on the island.)



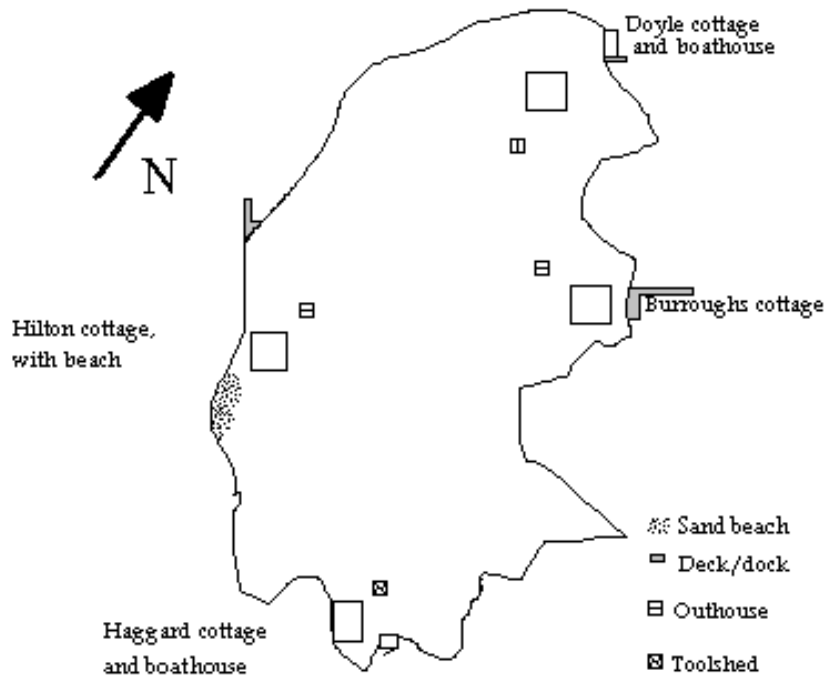
Each cottage has its own dock. For Professor Haggard's cottage, there's a dock on the south side, sheltered from the winds. From the dock is a stairway that leads up to the deck/front porch.

The cottage is medium size and tidy. It's not sealed up, as one might expect; the shutters are open.

Behind the cottage is the wood shed; one side of it is stacked with lumber for the fireplace.

Down the hill, behind the wood shed, is a path to the boathouse. It's closed on all four sides; there's space for two boats, and there's a canoe up in the rafters. The roof is corrugated green PVC plastic; the walls are plywood. It looks a little rickety. The water-doors opening to the water are worked by a rope-and-pulley system inside.

The cottage to the north belongs to the Doyle family; to the east is the Burroughs cottage, and to the west is the Hilton cottage.

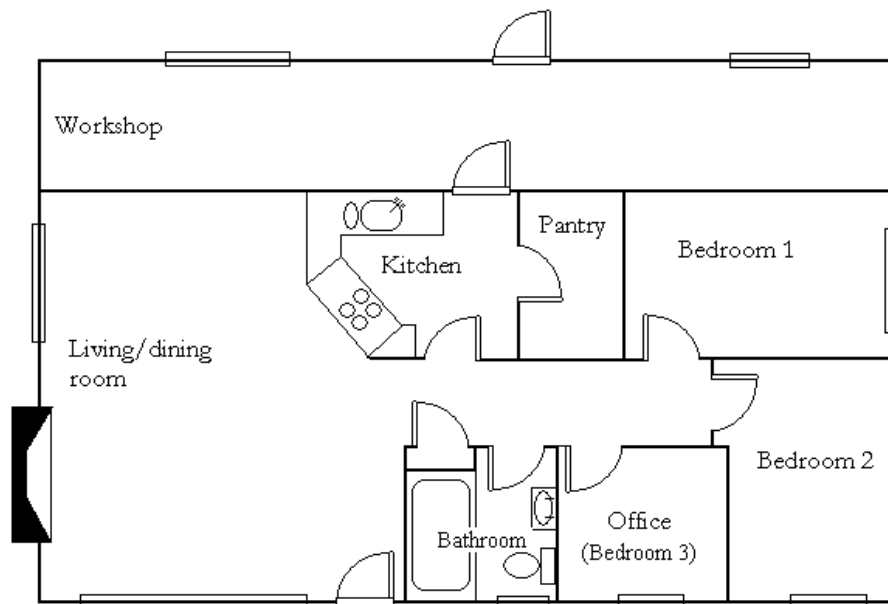


**MAP 1: THE ISLAND. Trees are not shown; the whole island is overgrown.**

## The Cottage

The cottage has three bedrooms (one is currently an office), a living/dining room, a kitchen, a pantry/laundry room, and an indoor bathroom (which contains a composting toilet and a shower). There are large picture windows; every window has a shutter (to protect during storms), but one must go outside to close the shutters.

An extension to the cottage contains the workshop.



**MAP 2. THE COTTAGE**

Some furnishings (such as beds and sofas under the picture windows) are built in, with drawers underneath. Others are clearly cast-offs from earlier in the family's life: the Formica table in the kitchen, the web lawn chairs tied to the deck

Underneath the cottage is a small cold-storage room. It's quite low (four feet tall or so). It contains the propane tanks mentioned later; there is an external door to get to the cold-storage room, but it's normally padlocked shut to keep animals out. (There's a trapdoor in the living room, normally covered by a rug.) There are some jars of preserves and some cans that didn't make it into the pantry.

Also underneath the cottage is a water tank and a water purifier which takes water in from the lake, but each sink has a "lake water" tap; don't drink that water. There's enough water in the water tank to take a bath, but then it takes about six hours to refill from the lake.

Light is by propane lamps; the building is rigged for it. The only electrical appliances are the TV, the VCR, the stereo, and a hand-held hair dryer in the bathroom. For electrical power, they have a set of batteries and a portable generator to recharge them.

## Living Room

The living/dining room has a fireplace, and a small rack with firewood.

The walls are mostly bookcases and framed nature prints. A couple of handmade quilts are hanging beside the windows. One shelf has a TV with rabbit ears and a VCR. There are cables connected for a video camera but the camera itself is missing.

## Kitchen

The space above the counter between the kitchen and the dining area is open, though there are (flimsy) shutters that can be closed to give the kitchen privacy.

The kitchen has a propane stove and a propane refrigerator. There are a pair of propane tanks in the cold-storage crawlway under the house.

The refrigerator is full-size and has a small freezer at the top; it does not need defrosting. In fact, there is a small amount of spoiled food in the refrigerator. The refrigerator is turned on but out of propane.

There is a small fire extinguisher mounted on the wall beside the stove.

This room contains the exit to the workroom.

## Pantry

The pantry is three floor-to-ceiling cupboards filled with cans and jars of food. Items such as flour are repacked in metal and plastic boxes with tight-sealing lids.

## Bedrooms 1 & 2

Each bedroom has a double bed; the mattresses and boxsprings are mismatched. The rooms have small double-hung windows (about one foot by two feet) and tall pine dressers with six drawers; the bottom two drawers contains sheets and blankets, smelling strongly of mothballs.

One bedroom has a framed print of a Lamborghini; the other has a watercolor landscape.

## Office (Third Bedroom)

The professor's office is also a bedroom with a pair of bunk beds. There is another six-drawer dresser, and a small desk-hutch combination.

The Professor has some artifacts in his office, at his desk. Anyone who spends time poking through the desk will find these.

- A ceremonial knife, intricately worked in obsidian and copper. It's beautiful in a primitive way. The blade is obsidian and still gleams.
- A binder containing rough notes, including phonetic mappings of the various glyphs in the other binder.
- Another binder containing a photocopy of an ancient scroll, probably the one translated in the journal and the other binder.
- There is a journal that contains a set of rough translations, but not phonetic pronunciations.

## Bathroom

The bathroom contains a composting toilet; taped to the wall behind the toilet is a yellowed sheet of paper explaining how to maintain it. There is a mirrored medicine cabinet over the sink. (It contains aspirins, bug spray and repellent, and some tampons.)

The cold tap water is lake water and is not safe to drink. (You risk giardia or “beaver fever.” You can purify the water by bringing it to a rolling boil for fifteen minutes.) The hot water is purified and is safe to drink.

There is only enough water in the hot water tank for one bath; then it will take six hours for the purifier to fill the water tank again.

There is an old clawfoot tub with a showerhead attached. The tub fits into an alcove in the wall and a flowered plastic shower curtain runs across the alcove.

Beside the medicine cabinet is a first aid kit. Anyone looking will discover that the first aid kit contains no disinfectant and that the antibacterial cream is nearly used up; there are other first aid kits in the woodshed, the boathouse, and the boat.

To the left of the toilet is a small magazine rack with some ancient (1950s and 1960s) copies of *Chatelaine*, *Reader's Digest*, *Argosy*, and *Saturday Night*.

## Workshop

The workshop is also a general storage room; storage is to the right coming out of the kitchen. To the left is a variety of tools. Most are arranged nicely on a pegboard rack, with the position of each tool indicated by a white painted outline. The tool rack includes hammers, drills, handsaws, bow saws, and screwdrivers. On the workbench are neatly stacked drawers of screws, nails, and other fastenings. There are three toolboxes: a “main” toolbox, a second toolbox specific to plumbing (recognizable by the small copper plumbing parts in it), and a third for electrical work (including a soldering iron).

On a shelf is a propane torch in its original box (although it has clearly seen use) and a spare fuel cylinder.

Some lumber is neatly stacked on the floor along the wall in one corner.

A boombox is also on the workbench (the professor helped build this cottage and he liked music while he pattered) and dozen dusty cassette cases. Most of the cassettes are classical, but there is also a collection of the Ramones' greatest hits and a Lyle Lovett cassette.

Under the workbench are a series of batteries and a portable generator. These batteries are wired into the wall; they power the few electrical appliances (notably the TV and the VCR in the living room).

The workshop has a large vent near the top for airflow, but has no windows.

## Woodshed

The woodshed was the toolshed before the extension was built; it has a lock on the door. The woodshed is solidly built; it looks much more secure than the boathouse.

Inside are:

- a gasoline can (half full)
- four full propane cylinders and one empty one
- a light Stihl chainsaw
- an electric lamp powered by a 6-volt battery

One wall has a pegboard rack for tools; the spot for every tool is outlined in white paint. Most of the spots are empty, since the tools have been moved to the workshop.

The tool rack has:

- a pair of pliers (for pulling nails)
- a small sledge hammer
- a lumber ax
- a wood-splitting wedge
- an awl
- leather snips
- a first aid kit
- a small fire extinguisher (ABC type)

Arranged on shelves are several clean rags, lubricating oil, and some two-stroke oil for the chainsaw. On the workbench is a small mechanic's toolkit for maintaining the chainsaw.

## Boathouse

The boathouse looks rickety.

Inside, there is an L-shaped floor that extends along the back of the boathouse and along one wall. There is a canoe and paddles set up among the joists in the ceiling. Hanging from the walls are two fishing nets, hip waders, a pair of water skis, and old orange life jackets in a variety of sizes.

There's a small workbench with some tools, cans of oil, paint, brushes, two large cans of gasoline (one full, one two-thirds full), and a box of fishing tackle. (It contains two dozen lures, sinkers, floats, a long sharp knife, a pair of wire snips, and two spools of fishing line.)

Over the workbench is a 1975 calendar featuring pictures of attractive women in fishing gear; most of them have their breasts exposed or nearly exposed.

There is no light in the boathouse, but there is a large waterproof flashlight on the workbench. The batteries are old, but it will work for a while.

The doors to the water are operated by a rope, weight, and pulley system.

# Weapons

The following items can be found in and around the cottages on the island. PCs may also be carrying penknives.

NAME	DAMAGE	MASS	EV
<b>KNIVES AND BLADES</b>			
Bowie Knife	D4(2) X (Strength)	0.4	
Hatchet	D6 (3) x (Strength)	0.7	
Lumber axe (2-handed)	D8(4) x (Strength) †‡	2.1	
Meat Cleaver	D6 (3) X (Strength)	1.3	
Hunting Knife	D4(2) X (Strength)	0.2	
Pen Knife (cheap)	D4 (2) X (Strength-1)	0.1	
Pen Knife (expensive)	D4 (2) X (Strength-1)	0.1	
Machete	D6 (3) X (Strength) †	0.4	
<b>CLUBS</b>			
Billy Club/Truncheon	D6 (3) X (Strength -1)	0.3	
Medium club	D6 (3) X (Strength)	1.4	
Big club (2-handed)	D8 (4) X (Strength) ‡	5.5	
<b>TOOLS</b>			
Claw Hammer	D8 (4) X (Strength)	1.5	
Hoe (2-handed)	D6 (3) X (Strength)	1.4	
Pen/leather awl	D4-1 (1) X (Strength-1)	0.0	
Pitchfork (2-handed)	D6(3) X Strength X 3 †‡	1.4	
Scythe (2-handed)	D12 (6) X (Strength+2) †‡	2.4	
Sickle	D6 (3) X (Strength) †	1.2	
Chainsaw (2-handed)	D10 (5) X (Strength) †‡	6	
<b>IMPROVISED</b>			
Stick, Pointed Metal	D4 (2) x (Strength+1)	1.8	
Stick, Pointed Wooden	D4 (2) x (Strength)	0.9	

† A stabbing/slashing weapon. Calculate damage normally, subtract armor, and double the remaining damage.

‡ Weapon can be used two-handed, which raises the user's effective Strength by 1.

There are guns on the island, but not in this cottage. They are:

NAME	CALIBER	RANGE	DAMAGE	MASS	RATE OF FIRE	SHOTS
Remington 870 shotgun (slugs)	12 ga	5/50/100/200/300	D8 X 5 (20)	4.1 kg	2	7
with buckshot	12 ga	10/30/50/100/200	D8 X 6 (24)			
Ruger 10/22	.22LR	10/50/150/600/1000	D4 (2) X4	2.5 kg	4	50c
.30-06 Springfield	7.62x63	10/50/150/600/1000	D8 (4) X 5	4.2 kg	1	1

There is also gasoline. Should the players improvise Molotov cocktails or the like, remember that fire does D4 (2) per Turn, or D6 (3) if the victim is engulfed in flames.

The armor values for the walls in the cottages:

	ARMOR VALUE	DAMAGE CAPACITY	BARRIER VALUE
Exterior wood wall	6	20	8
Exterior door	5	30	10
Interior door	3	10	5
Interior drywall wall	1	1	1

**Players stop reading here.** You know why.

# Scenes

The genre generally breaks down into four acts:

1. **Afternoon.** In which the PCs arrive, we get a flavor of their interaction, and we get the sense that something might not be all right. The PCs discover the interesting artifacts left behind by Professor Haggard, and unleash the forces of nature. It ends with nightfall.
2. **Evening.** In which things go wrong; at least one practical joke is played and afterwards at least one person is seriously hurt (typically a Phoebe; call this player the “doorway”). Still, it seems as though the pleasant holiday can still be saved (although they’ll have to get the injured person to a hospital in the morning). The words of the injured person hint at something much more frightening, but no one believes. This is the point at which a Joe might be coerced into taking a Phoebe back to civilization.
3. **Midnight.** In which things go from bad to worse; the nature of the horror becomes plain, and nearly everyone becomes a believer.
4. **Before the Dawn.** In which it’s always darkest. This is the point for the make-or-break action; the last desperate effort.

When running a session, sprinkle hints of oddness through act 1 and act 2. The players can hear the truth about what happens to the doorway, but penalize them if they act on that knowledge.

Act 1 should be relatively quick.

## What Went Before

Professor Haggard is an archaeological philologist: He tries to reconstruct how dead languages sounded. He translated an ancient Harappan spell, and recorded himself saying it, on videotape, to record the proper pronunciation.

That released the Wicked Dead from their extradimensional prison. As many spirits as there are players are now bound to the island, looking for a way to get bodies and then cast their own ritual to allow hundreds or thousands of their kind into our world.

The professor didn’t figure out what was going on until later, until one of them had possessed him. He survived the evening and most of the night,



seeing the images and enduring the hallucinations of the Dead; the last part of the videotape shows him babbling (it also contains a clue for the Cast).

By dawn, the professor was dying. He hadn't managed to throw off his possessing spirit, and he knew what was coming; the spirit had told him. So he weighted himself down with rocks, and now he's down there, waiting. He's, um, *occupied* right now, so as soon as the fish have nibbled enough of him so he can come to the surface, he will.

He had to take a boat; it drifted away after he rolled overboard.

The cottage still looks okay: The spirits did what little cleanup was needed; most of the damage was illusions caused by the spirits. (They're looking to trap someone else.) The only evidence is that the boat is missing, the refrigerator is out of propane and one first aid box is out of disinfectant and bandages. (Players will have to wrestle a new propane container from the woodshed into the crawlspace.)

**Alternative:**

Perhaps the Professor has no idea of what he did. Perhaps he finished the translation (that is, cast the spell) at dawn, and left, and no one has been to the island since then. If you choose this:

- The refrigerator is *not* out of propane
- There is another boat in the boathouse
- The videotape contains the spell and nothing else
- The First Aid kit is full.
- The Professor is available to help in sequels

## Act 1: Afternoon

In this act, there should be hints of oddness: the missing boat, the fact that the shutters are open, a stopped clock, a mound of dirt behind the tool shed. These hints should suggest to anyone with "practical joker" that it would be good to set up a joke for as soon as it gets dark.

Upon arriving, the players notice that the refrigerator is on, but not running; none of the propane-powered appliances work, because the propane tank is dry. It's a simple matter to take propane from the woodshed down to the crawlspace.

### The Artifacts

It's necessary to establish some of the items in the Professor's office. Whatever PC takes that room as a bedroom should discover academic papers such as "Hastur: A Phonetic Evaluation" and a manuscript in process entitled "A Translation of Anomalous Prayers in Lothal."

On searching, they can also find the following at the Professor's desk:

- A ceremonial knife, intricately worked in obsidian and copper. This is heavier than a regular knife, and does D4 (2) X (Strength) cutting damage. It is not necessary for the ritual of dismissal, but is tremendously useful. (Using it offsets the Essence cost for the spell.)
- A binder containing a photocopy of the Harappan spellbook.
- A binder of rough notes, including phonetic mappings of the various glyphs in the Book of Discord (spellbook).
- A journal that contains a set of rough translations, but not phonetic pronunciations.

See Act Three for a discussion of the spells in the spellbooks.

### The Videotape

The players may play the videotape now, or they may play it later. It's a six hour tape, labeled "Phonetic Translations: October 21." The first part of the

tape features Professor Haggard explaining that these are phonetic translations based on new finds. The priests of Lothal went out of their way to create a phonetic syllabary for the document he has translated. (It's been known for years that the document—"The Lothal Book of Worship"—is unusual. Since no one has ever translated the Harappan language, no one knew just *how* unusual.

Recent finds have allowed Professor Haggard to translate the Book of Worship and to provide a phonetic transcription.

He then reads the first spell, which he describes as a "binding" spell. (Phoebes get a "creepy" feeling, like ants crawling along their necks, when he does this.)

Immediately after this, the scene changes. Professor Haggard is talking in a low voice, urgently; his face is scratched and dirty. He is panning around the room, talking about the blood on the walls; there isn't any visible. He sounds like someone having a bad drug experience.

His last words before he disappears from the tape are:

"I understand them now. I can feel them within me. Listen: according to the Book of Discord, they can't keep going if they're dismembered. Remember that. I just—I can't do it myself. I'm going to die soon, I can feel it. I'm going to sink the boat to the bottom of the lake, to keep them from getting off the island. I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

## Act 2: Evening

In which things go wrong: at least one person is seriously hurt (typically a Phoebe; call this player the "doorway"). The act ends when the doorway dies.

If you only have a few players, you probably want to make the doorway character an NPC.

The spirits will try to act when someone is alone. They need to injure someone so they can enter the body.

While in spirit form, the Wicked Dead can cause poltergeist-like effects and can "possess" plants, causing them to wrap around someone's arm or leg. Any cuts from a bramble bush or a raspberry bush could be sufficient to "infect" the doorway character. Perhaps a tree root moves and the character throws his hands out to stop the fall; the character impales his hand on a sharp branch that "wasn't there before." See "Opening The Doorway" for more ideas.

They will find the other person eventually and bring them back.

Once they have done this, the poltergeist-like effects in the cottage increase. They still only affect one or two people at a time (they may have made a rule that no one can go anywhere alone).

Still, it seems as though the pleasant holiday can still be saved (although they'll have to get the injured person to a hospital in the morning). The words of the injured person hint at something much more frightening, but no one

### Some effects:

- The clock stops.
- The radio turns on and off.
- Musical instruments play themselves.
- Television flickers on without power.
- Mirror images talk and move independently.
- Bottles of alcoholic beverage spontaneously explode, the explosions moving in sequence around the room.
- Boils appear on someone's body.
- Cold breezes.
- Doors and shutters open and slam.
- The room swarms with insects.
- When a door opens, it reveals the wrong room.
- Crowds of sparrows gather.

believes. This is the point at which a Joe might be coerced into taking a Phoebe back to civilization.

Someone might go over to one of the other cabins looking for a phone or a ham radio. (None of the other cabins has a phone or a radio.)

If they do try to leave, prevent them. Bring up the wind so the waves are treacherous, or damage the boat's engine, or collapse the boatshed.

The first person to notice that the injured person is actually dead will see a large beetle crawl from his or her mouth and scuttle under the furniture. No one else will see the beetle. At this point, the poltergeist effects stop (briefly).

## Opening The Doorway

In order to open the doorway, the spirits must "infect" one person. They do this by causing some kind of damage to the person and "slipping into" the wound. There must be 3 points of damage.

In keeping with the genre, the accident should come about as a result of a fright, caused by the spirits.

Also in keeping with the genre, the doorway is in shock, out of proportion to the actual injury. The shock of the spirit entering the body will require the person to make a difficult WIL roll to avoid being taken over.

Possibilities:

- Someone going for a night-time swim could be grabbed or even bitten by the possessed body of Professor Haggard under the water. The drowning rules are on page 108 of the *AFMBE* rulebook.
- Scared by the sense of *something* out there, someone could trip and fall, stabbing himself or herself with a branch or thorn that just happens to be there.
- Someone might be startled while working with a knife or other tool. For instance, they might see the decayed corpse of Professor Haggard in the mirror just as the light burns out.
- First one crow attacks, clawing at the person, then falls dead, then dozens of others attack. (Crows are traditional psychopomps.)
- A beetle bites and draws blood. A second beetle appears, and then a third, until a hundred or a thousand beetles are crawling over the person, clogging their throat, blinding them, filling their ears. After they collapse, suffocated, the bugs retreat, leaving the person unconscious and bleeding from a thousand small nips.
- In certain movies, the possessing spirit is visible and worthy of a Fear check. It can be outrun, however; it has a SPEED of 8. The character will need to make a successful Running roll. (Use a difficult CON test if the character doesn't have Running.)

### Drowning

Officially, a character gets 1½ minutes + D10XConstitution seconds before unconsciousness. If the character is going to struggle, try subtracting an endurance point every Turn, or 2 if the character is struggling. The character will go unconscious faster, but the player will feel as if he or she did more in Turn-by-Turn action.

## Other Resources On The Island

If the players believe that someone—perhaps an escaped convict—is out there, someone may want to make a run to another building and look for guns.

Here's what's in the other cabins, in order it's likely to be found:

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Doyle Cottage (North)    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoe, garden trowel, spade, garden chemicals</li> </ul>  |
| Burroughs Cottage (East) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chainsaw and can of gasoline</li> <li>• Lumber axe, hatchet</li> <li>• Machete, pitchfork, scythe, and sickle</li> </ul>  |
| Hilton Cottage (West)    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A .22 caliber rifle (Ruger 10/22) and 1 box (50 rounds) of ammunition</li> <li>• A 30-06 rifle and five boxes of ammunition (100 rounds)</li> <li>• Gardening implements: hoe, garden rake</li> <li>• Disassembled chainsaw, half-can of gasoline</li> <li>• Extensive first aid kit</li> </ul> |

Each of the cabins has a fireplace or a wood stove, which is why there are so many axes and chainsaws.

## Act 3: Midnight

This is the bulk of the evening. It involves the attacks by the wicked dead.

This act should involve several short combat sessions. Players should be able to keep the evil outside the cottage (although by the end of this act, all but two should be dead).

Once PCs are actually Wicked Dead, the surviving players need to be clever and determined. Players tend to be much more aggressive in their attacks than the GM.

Reading the professor's notes—or looking at the videotape—will tell the players that the “creatures” need to be dismembered to stay down: arms, legs, and head must be removed from the torso.

### The First Attack

After the “doorway” character dies, the PCs need to decide what to do with the body. They will probably keep the body indoors—after all, none of them are doctors, and the person may just be in a coma. (If they go outside to bury the person, ask them about this.) This may be the point when others go to look for help from one of the other cottages; it will take them half an hour to visit one cottage, or an hour to visit all of them.

At least some of the characters will not want to be in a room with a corpse; the body may be left where it is, or it may be moved to one of the bedrooms.

The Dead's aim is to get one person alone and kill him or her. It may use weapons (such as a knife or scissors) if they are available in the room. If necessary, it will claw and bite. (If the body is in the same room as the ceremonial knife, it will attempt to use that knife, even if there is another weapon handier.)

The strategy used by the first Wicked Dead should be to present the illusion of some faint life to whomever loves the dead person. Because there's unlikely to be a weapon nearby, the living person will probably have a chance

to shout or call out; the cry will bring others. They should be able to fight off the Dead, and may be able to barricade it in the room. (Note that the bedroom doors open *in*, which will make it difficult to barricade the doors.)

The Dead may manage to kill the first victim, in which case, they will *both* become Dead. This would require a weapon or some very good attacks on the part of the Dead.

Remember that the Dead do have an idea of how many people there are nearby; they can sense them through walls. The Dead are strong enough to punch through drywall and grab someone in the hall. (This can only occur if the Dead are in the office or bedroom 1; in bedroom 2 they might be able to grab someone in one of the other bedrooms.)

In order for the characters to survive, they need to lock the Dead away, either by getting them into the basement, barricading them in one room, or forcing them outside of the building. (Note that they will need to go out and close the shutters to prevent the Dead from breaking through the windows.)

## The Injured

If someone is injured in the first attack, they will have some time before they're possessed. He or she will almost certainly need first aid.

At this point, the GM has a choice. If they have isolated the Dead and seem to have the situation under control, an injured person might become possessed. (Again, this will be signaled by whatever poltergeist effects you are using, and for the possessed person it's a difficult Will task.) If they have *not* isolated the Dead, then the spirits will probably keep their distance.

## Stalemate?

If there seems to be a stalemate and the Dead outside don't seem to be able to get in, remind them that there's a chainsaw outside and they're inside...

## The Dead Are Losing Already?

If you need to, you can use the "Haggard is dead" backstory and bring in reinforcements. The Dead possessing Haggard has finally worked free, encouraged by sensing them in the water earlier or when their boat passed over him. He'll show up at the best possible moment. And you know what? He has keys...

## Act 4: Before The Dawn

It's possible to piece together the ritual from the binder, but a character will need some time to cross-reference the spellbook with the phonetic transliteration, and the translation. (Two different tasks.) If the players don't decide to cast the spell, then this act is simply about survival. Either is acceptable.

**Example:** Gary was in love with Doris, who is now dead in bedroom 2. Gary is heartbroken. On his way to the bathroom, he thinks he hears a noise in the bedroom. He steels himself to go in—what if it's something gross, like animals in there?—and discovers that the sheet is disarrayed, as though she had moved. He thinks he hears her breathing, and he sees her lips move: "...Gary..."

When he leans over to listen, she wraps her arms around his neck—  
And in the other room, the radio flicks on and off.

## The Spellbooks

There are three versions of the spellbook, which is known in archaeological circles as The Lothal Book of Worship, but according to the translation is called The Book of Discord.

The rough translation in the professor's notebook shows that the scrolls that make up the Book of Discord are in this order. The modifiers are applied to the simple INT test for translating.

SPELL	MODIFIERS	TIME TO TRANSLATE
A spell for summoning and binding the Evil Ancestors	0	already done
A list of acceptable animals for sacrifice and best prices to pay	-3	1 hour
A spell for purifying the water in the harbor	-2	30 minutes
A list of 20 wicked men who are condemned to death	-1	15 minutes
A spell for trapping evil ancestors in their flesh bodies	-4	1 hour
A note that cutting the body into six holy pieces does not dismiss the evil ancestor, merely renders the body unusable	-2	20 minutes
A spell for dismissing the ancestor trapped in a body, making use of the ceremonial knife	-2	30 minutes
A spell for dismissing all ancestors bound to an area; this one says that Eremuk, high priest of Harappa, did not need the knife for he was powerful of spirit	-4	1 hour

Remember that these are the difficulties for *translating* the spells.

## Casting Spells

Before the spells can be cast, they must be translated. Ideally, the players will cast the spell to trap the evil spirits in the bodies and then dismiss them.

Casting the spells is a difficult INT test, a simple INT test if the caster already knows a foreign language (some of the phonemes are not English phonemes).

Fifteen minutes of translation turns into one Turn for casting. The spell to purify the water (which will cause Haggard's possessed body to fly from the lake and land on shore) will take two Turns to cast; the spell to dismiss all ancestors will take four Turns to cast. Spells take 5 Essence per Turn, unless you have the ceremonial knife.

## Ending It

The story probably ends at dawn. If all the Cast but one have been turned and he or she hasn't managed to dismember them or dispatch them, you've got a problem. Remind him or her that there are probably boats in the other boathouses; escape is possible in the daylight. (You just have to run like hell.)

Or you can move quickly to the part where the Dead begin their own ritual to open the gateway, and perhaps the character will manage to destroy that ritual. (If the ceremonial knife isn't broken, it's a good necessary tool for the Dead...they might be low on Essence.)

Try to give the last survivor a chance at a definitive attempt to resolve the story: a desperate dash through the woods to get to another boathouse and another boat, a chance to disrupt a ritual, a chance to break up

## Epilogue: Dawn

The last scene should wrap up the story. Assuming there are survivors, there are two ways to go: If you haven't brought Professor Haggard out of the lake yet, then do so for one last fight. Or, you can have them get to shore safely. (If they somehow took off without dealing with the problem, have someone dead meet them at the dock.)

Without being obvious about it, determine what they did with the videotape and the binders; they set the stage for sequels.

This is also a good point to remind them dismembering bodies merely freed the spirits, though they are chained to the island. Maybe you want to let them know that the final battle is yet to come...

# About The Wicked Dead

The Wicked Dead are spirits from Harappan culture; the spells were excavated from a temple in the city of Lothal, along the west coast of what is now India. The Wicked Dead ruled the city of Lothal from 1900-1700 BCE.<sup>1</sup>

Your typical Wicked Dead person has these characteristics:

<b>STR:</b> 4	<b>INT:</b> 2
<b>DEX:</b> 2	<b>PER:</b> 1
<b>CON:</b> 2	<b>WIL:</b> 4
DPS: 34	EPS: N/A
SPD: 4	ESSENCE: 15

**Skills:** Brawling 2, Language 2, any skills from life

**Attack:** Bite damage D4 x 2(4) slashing

**Weak Spot:** Amputation

**Getting Around:** Life Like

**Strength:** Strong Like Bull

**Senses:** Like the Dead, Life Sense

**Sustenance:** Weekly, All Flesh Must Be Eaten

**Intelligence:** Language, Problem Solving

**Spreading the Love:** Special; the Wicked Dead can only take over a person who has an injury of 3 points or more. It's a resisted WIL task, and the Dead get a +2 bonus if the target is at reduced Essence or +4 if they're at less than half. This is why they try to scare the crap out of people in spirit form *first*.

**Power:** 40

**Illusion:** Costs 5 Essence to make an illusion; everyone sees it, though they can act as though it's not real. Dead get the Essence they scare out of you, up to their limit.

"Weak Spot: Amputation" means that each limb and the head must be cut off near the major joint. It takes 15 points of damage to each of the five joints, preferably in one blow; however, by making an attack slightly more difficult (-2 modifier), a player can deepen an existing cut. Until the last part is cut off, each limb can act independently. Hope they tied everything down well. Heh-heh-heh... Amputation merely casts the spirit out of the body, it does not dismiss it from this world.

<sup>1</sup> Information about Lothal and Harappan culture given here is entirely spurious.



**Option:** If for some reason these aren't dangerous enough, give them Claws, so they can do D6(3)XStrength slashing damage.

Wicked Dead are almost the same as people. (Well...except for killing and eating human flesh.) WIL and Essence probably go up; those rely on the inhabiting spirit. They're also slightly stronger: their strength is 4 or the strength of the human, whichever is greater. And they're dead: they have a lowered PER. Being dead also means they don't need to breathe; you can't choke them or drown them.

Wicked Dead start off with full knowledge of everything they knew as people and their normal amount of creativity. The longer they are dead, the less creative they become. (Most movies don't last long enough for this to be a problem.)

The longer they're dead, the more corrupt their bodies become, giving evidence of the evil spirit within.

## Powers

As spirits, they're powerless in the daytime; the only way they can function in the light is to have bodies to possess. At night, they have certain poltergeist-like effects.

- They can cause tree branches to grab you or roots to trip you as you run.
- They can stop clocks and levitate small objects.
- They can make it appear that the walls are bleeding or that the faucets are running with blood; they're particularly good at Biblical plagues.
- They can make images appear in mirrors or reflective surfaces.

As spirits, they have effectively unlimited Essence. They can only channel a bit of that into the bodies.

Once ensconced in a body, the Wicked Dead are zombies.

7. They ignore all impairments in combat up to the point of amputation.
8. They can voluntarily hide this corruption and appear as if they were alive and healthy. They can't attack and use this ability simultaneously. They often use this to draw in their shell-shocked former companions (Mind Rule).
9. They can find the living based on their base Essence (Life Sense). Phobes stand out.

With bodies, they can enact the rituals required to completely open the doorway into the Other World.

## Hurting The Wicked Dead

You can only hurt Wicked Dead with lethal attacks. Fifteen points of damage to a limb or head are an amputation; Wicked Dead can only be stopped by removing all limbs and the head (this makes 6 parts of the body, and the evil spirit can't maintain control over 6 parts; 5 is their magic number).

The dead can be stunned, however; one sees this all the time in the movies. Even then, the dead tend not to let go.

## Dying Fighting The Wicked Dead

Any normal human who dies after having been bitten or scratched by the Wicked Dead becomes one of them. This can be prevented by amputating the bitten part within 3 hours of contact. (Tourniqueting a limb is a Difficult First Aid task, -1 or -2 to the roll.)

If the player doesn't amputate the bitten limb, and can survive until dawn, he or she has one more chance. When dawn comes, the bitten-but-not-dead-yet human can "dispossess" any invading spirit with a Resisted Difficult WIL task. The GM may allow other bonuses as he or she sees fit. For example, the character who has successfully exercised his will several times without failing—such as chopping up his girlfriend and managing to amputate his own hand—could receive bonuses because he has clearly shown himself to be of strong will.

A character who dies should be allowed to read the "Welcome To The Dead" text in "About the Wicked Dead."

Once dead, the normal human appears to be "normally" dead for a while; this is generally five or ten minutes or until the best opportunity to scare the crap out of the other players.

## Defeating Them

The heart was the source of all power. It was significant to the Harappans that there were five channels out from the heart: arms, legs, neck. By opening these channels, the Harappans believed the essence of the heart would drain out, and the spirit must leave it. That may or may not be the case; however, dismembering a possessed corpse into six major pieces (head, arms, legs, torso) will remove the spirit. The spirit is still around, however, and can possess another person. (From an adventure standpoint, the evening is a success if someone ends the night without being possessed.) One can also cut out the heart using the obsidian spell knife—this will dismiss the possessing spirit, especially if you burn the heart. (Don't eat it. That would be bad. For you.)

In Harappan times, the Dead could leave the bodies at will. That was because of mystic artifacts available in Lothal, and the Dead are extremely ticked that they're stuck in bodies here until the bodies are dismembered or decay. (This leaves open the possibility that a spirit will "sacrifice" its flesh body in order to possess someone else. Save that for a sequel.)

The only way to actually dismiss the Dead from this plane of existence is to cast the Spell of Dismissal. The only way to do *that* is to finish the translation.

From the viewpoint of the *characters*, it may be sufficient to chain up the remaining possessed dead and leave. However, if they take this option, make sure a Wicked Dead person greets them at the dock...

## Background On Them

Reference books on the shelf will tell the players a little bit about Lothal: it was a theocracy, ruled by a High Priest, who was forbidden to go into the sunlight.

Since the Harappans practiced ancestor worship, it was easy for the original spirit to possess the High Priest. The taboos on the priesthood were designed to keep the spirits in power.

The Wicked Dead were eventually “evicted” from the Lothal culture by priests of nearby cities, dragging the living “hosts” into the sunlight and casting the relevant spells (recorded in the Book of Discord, being translated by Professor Haggard.)

The spirits have learned from this; they’ve learned that they need to move into Earth in force when they get the chance, rather than having a cozy human time-share.

(The clues from the Professor’s notebooks should give hints that the Dead are rather like Lovecraftian horrors: creatures from beyond that seek re-entrance to earth, to use humanity as their playthings.)

The first spell in the Book of Discord is the spell to summon the Wicked Dead and bind them to an area (the island in this case), originally intended to ensure that they didn’t simply take off for safer pastures before being dismissed. This is the spell that Professor Haggard translated.

## Welcome To The Dead

*Give this to players who die.*

You know everything you used to know, but you also know this:

Your kind are ancient; you are the Old Ones. You moved through space before the Earth was born. Your kind achieved great things: they warped time and space to their own ends, and discovered that your era was circumscribed. There was an end fated to your rule of the universe.

You chose not to accept this end, and when your stars were snuffed, you continued to exist, tucked into a fold of space-time, hungry for existence again.

Some thousands of years ago, your kind discovered a way into the “real world” again. You found an insignificant sentient species who were glad to offer you their bodies, who were glad to have you partake of the pleasures of their senses. These were the Harappans of Lothal. From the perspective of your kind, this was like adopting an anthill as a pet; you did what you needed to maintain its usefulness.

However, some of the other ants didn't like this, and blocked your passage. Now that you have gained access to this world again, you will not make the same mistakes. You will not share a body with a living soul; that is too risky. Dead bodies have limitations, but they are yours completely. You will not attempt a peaceful co-existence; instead, you will take over. You will find bodies for all of your kind who entered because of the first spell cast, and you will set about opening a gate for the rest of your kind.

You are still weak; as spirits, you have only the most tenuous control over the material world, and once in a body, you are largely limited by that body. Although you can control the body parts when they are dismembered (and if you can put the pieces back together again, you can join them), you cannot hold more than 5 pieces at a time. If the body is separated into 6 or more pieces, you become diffuse and must withdraw.

You are *angry*. You know that you are only the smallest fraction of what you once were, and you want to be whole again.

You still have some abilities. If you do nothing else, you can make everyone see you as you were when you were alive and hear your voice. They may not believe you, but they will see you. You can find the living, no matter where they hide, tracking them by the essence of their souls.

When attacking, you show a preference for anyone you used to love. They are the ones you want to kill first—perhaps that's a sign of disgust at the weakness your host used to show, or perhaps that's because those were the strongest feelings your host had.

## Sequel(s)

### Someone Lived

So someone (or someones) made it to dawn? Good for them. They need to escape. If they survived *and* dismembered/dismissed all of the dead, then they'll leave and be arrested for murder. And you know what? Sooner or later somebody's going to play that tape again. In a police station. Probably the one where the survivor is in a cell.

Won't that be a fun day in court? (Unless they remembered to destroy the videotape. And the notebooks.)

If they dismembered but didn't dismiss the spirits, or if they didn't dismember every Wicked Dead, then the Dead are still waiting to build their portal, and you can run a session where characters who think they know what to expect go to stop this threat to the world. Of course, no reputable organization will believe their story, so you're dealing with possibly-competent kooks and believers on this mission.

### Everybody Died

If all of the players have died, give them an army unit or a SWAT team to come in and clean up the area. (The kids were missing, their parents called the cops, someone with binoculars saw something odd, and you were called in.) Wicked Dead aren't nearly as fearsome if you're not an average joe, and you know what you're up against.

The ancient Harappans had only bronze weapons, so full auto weapons might make a difference. Or they might not.

Once the Dead see the SWAT team coming, they'll hide their bodies so it will take until nightfall for team to have collected some corpses (not all) and then the Dead will act.

For a more decisive victory, use the Soldier archetype from the *AFMBE* rulebook.

**Private**

<b>STR</b>	<b>3</b>	Contacts (Military)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>2</b>	Contacts (Police)
<b>CON</b>	<b>3</b>	Backpack, Camouflage Fatigues, Compass, Rations,
<b>INT</b>	<b>2</b>	Flashlight, M16-A2 with underbarrel Grenade Launcher,
<b>PER</b>	<b>2</b>	Class IV torso armor, Class III helmet
<b>WIL</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>LPs</b>	<b>34</b>	2 Brawling
<b>EPs</b>	<b>29</b>	2 Climbing
<b>Spd</b>	<b>10</b>	2 Demolitions
<b>Essence</b>	<b>14</b>	2 Dodge
		2 Driving (Car)
		1 First Aid
		3 Guns (Assault Rifle)
		2 Guns (Handgun)
		2 Hand Weapon (Knife)
		2 Stealth
		2 Survival (Forest)
		2 Swimming

**Sergeant**

<b>STR</b>	<b>3</b>	Contacts (Military)
<b>DEX</b>	<b>2</b>	Contacts (Police)
<b>CON</b>	<b>3</b>	Status (1)
<b>INT</b>	<b>3</b>	Backpack, Camouflage Fatigues, Compass, Rations,
<b>PER</b>	<b>2</b>	Flashlight, M16-A2 with underbarrel Grenade Launcher,
<b>WIL</b>	<b>3</b>	Class IV torso armor, Class III helmet
<b>LPs</b>	<b>34</b>	2 Brawling
<b>EPs</b>	<b>29</b>	2 Climbing
<b>Spd</b>	<b>10</b>	2 Demolitions
<b>Essence</b>	<b>15</b>	2 Dodge
		2 Driving (Car)
		1 First Aid
		4 Guns (Assault Rifle)
		3 Guns (Handgun)
		2 Hand Weapon (Knife)
		3 Notice
		2 Stealth
		2 Survival (Forest)
		2 Swimming

NAME	CALIBER	RANGE	DAMAGE	MASS	RATE OF FIRE	SHOTS
Colt M16-A2	5.56mm	10/50/150/600/1000	D8 X 4 (16)	3.9 kg	10	30