BLACK DOG

BY VAIDENON OF HUSTAN, WARDEN OF THE INKHORN FELLOWSHIP

the Shuck, the Grim, the Hound of Naveh, Klyss's Hounds

> "Every road in Hârn has its black dog, and every black dog its tale. I have counted four kinds of creature in the tales, and one of them, at least, is only a dog that nobody fed."
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> — Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship, Tashal, Morgat 720 TR

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A great black dog, bigger than any mastiff, with eyes like coals, pads silently beside a traveller on a lonely road, or sits on a churchyard wall, or stands at a crossroads on the night before a death. Every Hârnic land tells of it. Having gathered the tales for some years, I am sure they describe at least four different things. Some are mortal hounds, and some are not of this world at all. A game master should decide which a party has met before the dice are rolled.

THE WARDEN'S NOTE

A word on proof. The shuck I have seen with my own eyes, and patted. The grim I have seen from a distance, and did not pat. The hound of Naveh I know only from men who had seen it, and they are, every one, dead. The hound of Klyss I have heard described by a Laranian knight who had killed two, and who would not describe the third.

THE SHUCK

Most black dogs are dogs. Mastiffs and wolfhounds turned out or escaped (Dogs) live feral on the moors and in the woods by the roads, and a big black mastiff seen at dusk is easily made into a legend. A shuck hunts sheep and fowl, trails travellers at a distance for scraps, and fights like a mastiff when cornered (Dogs 3). It is mortal, and can be killed, tamed or followed home. I followed one home once. It belonged to a widow in Kiban, who was glad to have it back.

THE GRIM

In older churchyards and barrows, men say a black dog guards the dead. Siem gave self-awareness to beasts as well as to plants and earth, and some of these spirits, the ilsiri, outlive the creature they belonged to (Religion, Siem). In the Fellowship's reading, a grim is the free ilsiri of a faithful hound buried at the gate of a burial ground in the old way, and it keeps that ground. *(Inkhorn)* It frightens off grave-robbers, grave-wights and Morgathians, and lets mourners pass. Seen at a funeral, it is thought a good sign. Seen in a churchyard by a stranger at night, it is a warning.

THE HOUND OF NAVEH

Naveh is served by the Gytevsha, invisible demonic beings at their weakest in daylight; the lesser Gytevsha serve as messengers and, now and then, as hands (Religion, Naveh). In the Fellowship's reading, a black dog that follows a man for three nights and then comes for him is a lesser Gytevsha in a hound's shape, sent after an oath-breaker or a man cursed by Naveh's priests. *(Inkhorn)* The Night People call such things the dogs of Navi, and they know how to call them down on their enemies (Night People 2). I have never broken an oath to a Dromja, and I do not intend to start.

THE HOUNDS OF KLYSS

Morgathian priests, who have perfected the rituals that make and govern the undead (Morvrin 2), keep hounds as well as men. In the Fellowship's reading, a hound of Klyss is a great dog killed and raised as a gulmorvrus. *(Inkhorn)* It carries the Shadow of Bukrai in its body and the obedience of a corpse. Its eyes glow with a faint grey light, it makes no sound, and its touch brings Shadow Conflict. Morgathian temples loose them to run down fugitives and to guard their crypts.

DISTRIBUTION

Shucks are everywhere there are moors and lonely roads: the downs of Kaldor and Chybisa, the moors of Rethem, and the heaths of Melderyn. Grims keep the old burial grounds: the barrows of the Lost Years, the churchyards of Melderyn's old temples, and Sindarin and Khuzan sites, which they do not trouble (Inkhorn). Hounds of Naveh go where an oath-breaker goes. Hounds of Klyss run within a few leagues of a Morgathian temple: Golotha and the Rethemi lands most of all (Inkhorn).

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TELLING THEM APART

A shuck leaves pad-marks and barks. A grim leaves no prints, cannot be touched, and vanishes at dawn or when the gate is passed. A hound of Naveh leaves no prints, makes no sound, and is invisible in daylight. In the dark its eyes are red, and its master is never present. A hound of Klyss leaves heavy prints, does not breathe, and is colder than the air, and Sensitivity finds the Shadow on it.

SPECIAL RULES

DREAD (INKHORN)

The first sight of a grim, a hound of Naveh, or a hound of Klyss at night forces an Initiative test (Combat 18). For the hounds of Naveh and Klyss, those who fail are Demoralized. A hound of Klyss also "breeds inexplicable fear" through its Shadow (Morvrin 1).

THE GRIM'S WARD

The grim uses the ghost manifestations (Ghosts 2–3) within its burial ground: apparition (2), growl or howl (sound, 3), push and shove (4–5). It adds the **Grip** (6, Inkhorn): on a MF or CF resistance, the subject's limb goes dead with cold for 1d6 rounds. It never manifests against mourners at a lawful burial.

SETTLING ACCOUNTS (INKHORN, AFTER GEKRISH)

A hound of Naveh follows its quarry for up to three nights, manifesting (apparition, sound) and wearing him down. Then it engages him in Mental Conflict. If he is rendered unconscious, he rolls 4d6 against END; failure, his heart is stilled and he dies. In daylight it cannot manifest, and its skills are −30.

KLYSS'S HOUNDS (INKHORN, FROM MORVRIN)

Gulmorvrin rules apply (Morvrin 2, 5): no fatigue, no shock, killed when injury levels exceed END, and crumbles to dust. It cannot enter ground consecrated to any god but Morgath. It is controlled by Klyss' Command, one hound per invocation (Morvrin 2). Its bite brings Shadow Conflict (Shadow Strength × 10; gulmorvrin roll at 13+, so 1d3+3).

RELIGIOUS VIEWS

- Siem: the grim is a free ilsiri; Siemites honour it and will not banish it (Inkhorn, after Religion, Siem).
- Naveh: the hound is a lesser Gytevsha. Navehans do not speak of it, and their temples have been heard to set one on a betrayer (Inkhorn).
- Morgath: the hounds of Klyss serve the Order of the Lord of Chaos (Inkhorn, after Morvrin 2).
- Larani: Laranian knights hunt hounds of Klyss as they hunt gulmorvrin, and consecrated weapons serve best against them (Morvrin 2).
- Peoni and Halea: Peonians lay a grim to rest with kindness; Haleans say a black dog at a wedding means the bride will be widowed (Inkhorn).

FOLK TALES

The Grim of Burzyn Gate

In Chybisa they say that a black dog sits on the wall of an old churchyard and that no grave there has ever been robbed. A sexton who tried it was found at dawn white-haired and silent, and he never spoke again (Inkhorn tale).

Three Nights

A Rethemi knight broke his oath to a comrade and took his lands. For three nights a black dog sat at the end of his bed and watched him. On the fourth morning his servants found him dead, with no mark on him, and the dog-prints on the floor ended at the wall.

The Night People's Due

A reeve who drove a band of Night People from his manor in winter, so that their children died, heard dogs that were not there for a month. Then he heard them on the stairs.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A great black dog follows the party along a moorland road, keeping its distance. It is a shuck that was once a lord's hound, and the lord wants it back.
- Grave-robbers hire the PCs as guards for "a little digging" in a barrow kept by a grim.
- A PC who broke a sworn oath, however small, sees a black dog at the end of the street on three nights running.
- Silent hounds with grey eyes are running down fugitive serfs near Golotha.

ENCOUNTERS

Ethereals (Campaign 14, subtable 16): Shade/Ghost/Astral Entity, on a highway or in rural country at night (1 in 6). The Fellowship proposes that a result of "Black dog" be resolved on this table:

D100	RESULT
01–35	Shuck: a feral black mastiff
36–65	Grim (churchyard, barrow, or old temple ground; else a shuck)
66–85	Hound of Naveh (only if someone present has broken a sworn oath or is cursed; else a sighting, an omen)
86–00	Hound of Klyss (within 5 leagues of a Morgathian temple or crypt; else a grim)

Animal results for feral dogs on moors and roads may be a shuck (GM).

RUMOURS

RUMOUR	TRUTH	WHERE
A black dog the size of a calf has been seen on the high road at night.	partly	Kaldor, Chybisa, Rethem, Melderyn

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RUMOUR	TRUTH	WHERE
The black dog in the old churchyard keeps the dead safe.	true	old temple grounds
If a black dog follows you three nights, confess your broken oaths.	partly	anywhere

ECONOMIC DATA

ITEM	PRICE	SOURCE
Shuck (a trained black mastiff, recovered)	as mastiff: 24d a puppy (Dogs 3); a trained hound much more	Columbia
Bounty on a hound of Klyss (Laranian)	1d6 × 20d (Inkhorn)	Inkhorn

THE FELLOWSHIP'S ADDITIONS

- The four kinds of black dog: the grim as a free ilsiri, the hound of Naveh as a lesser Gytevsha, the hounds of Klyss as gulmorvrin hounds, and the shuck as a feral dog
- Dread, the Grip, Settling Accounts, and the Klyss hound rules
- Distribution, tales, prices, and the encounter additions

Everything else follows HârnMaster 3 and the Columbia Games articles cited, which the Fellowship commends to every reader.

CREDITS

Writer: Vaidenon of Hustan. Set down by Lesli of Bifel and his homunculus, Claudin.

Sources cited: Columbia Games' *Bestiary* (Dogs; Ghosts; Grave-Wights; Morvrin), *Religion* (#4401: Siem, Naveh), *Night People* and the HârnMaster 3 core rules (Combat 18; Campaign 14 encounters).

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STAT BLOCKS

SHUCK (FERAL BLACK MASTIFF)

Habitat: Moors, lonely roads
Height: 32″
Weight: 120 lb
Diet: Carnivore
Lifespan: 12 years
Group: 1 (rarely 1d3)
Size: Medium/d6

ATTRIBUTES

11 Str	18 Eye	06 Int	11 End
09 Sta	16 Hrg	09 Aur	32 Mov
• Dex	25 Sml	14 Wil	
14 Agl			

SKILLS

65 Initiative	70 Dodge
80 Awareness	60 Stealth
80 Tracking	
70 Bite 6p *(tangle)*	

ARMOUR

B4 E3 P1 F3 GAC 1

STRIKE LOCATIONS

01–15 Head	51–85 Abdomen
16–25 Neck	86–95 •Hind leg
26–30 •Fore leg	96–00 Tail
31–50 Thorax	

• *Odd = Left, Even = Right. As quadruped (as Dogs).*
• As a mastiff (Dogs 3), bigger. Night vision +3 (Dogs 1).
• Bite: tangle (Bestiary 2).

GRIM (CHURCHYARD DOG)

Habitat: A burial ground
Height: as a great hound
Diet: None
Lifespan: While its ground lasts
Group: 1

ATTRIBUTES

• Str	• Eye	06 Int	30 Move
• Sta	• Hrg	13 Aur	
• Dex	• Sml	16 Wil	
• Agl			

SKILLS

75 Initiative	65 Dodge
70 Manifestation	60 Mental Conflict
65 Sensitivity	65 Telepathy

ARMOUR

None (ethereal)

STRIKE LOCATIONS

None while ethereal. Only enchanted weapons, magic, psionics, and divine intervention affect it (Religion 17).

• Free ilsiri (Religion, Siem). Bound to its burial ground.
• Dread; the Grip (Inkhorn).
• Never troubles lawful mourners.

HOUND OF NAVEH

Habitat: Wherever its quarry goes
Height: as a great hound
Diet: None
Lifespan: Immortal
Group: 1

ATTRIBUTES

• Str	• Eye	10 Int	40 Move
• Sta	• Hrg	15 Aur	
• Dex	• Sml	17 Wil	
• Agl			

SKILLS

80 Initiative	75 Dodge
80 Manifestation	80 Mental Conflict
75 Sensitivity	75 Telepathy

ARMOUR

None (ethereal)

STRIKE LOCATIONS

None while ethereal. Only enchanted weapons, magic, psionics, and divine intervention affect it (Religion 17).

• Lesser Gytevsha (Religion, Naveh). In daylight: no manifestation, skills −30.
• Settling Accounts: an unconscious quarry rolls 4d6 against END or dies (Inkhorn).
• Dread.

HOUND OF KLYSS

Habitat: Near Morgathian temples
Height: 32″
Weight: 120 lb
Diet: None
Lifespan: Centuries
Group: 1d6
Size: Medium/d6

ATTRIBUTES

12 Str	12 Eye	00 Int	12 End
12 Sta	16 Hrg	04 Sha	30 Mov
• Dex	22 Sml	00 Wil	
13 Agl			

SKILLS

60 Dodge	50 Shadow Conflict[1]
Aura sense	
65 Bite 5p *(and Shadow Conflict)*	

[1] *Shadow Conflict: SS 1d3+3 × 10*

ARMOUR

B4 E3 P1 F3 GAC 1

STRIKE LOCATIONS

As the Shuck (feral black mastiff).

• A gulmorvrus: INT and WIL 0, no Initiative; AUR is Shadow (SHA) (Morvrin; Inkhorn).
• No fatigue, no shock; killed when injury levels exceed END 12; crumbles to dust.
• Cannot enter ground consecrated to any god but Morgath.

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