

HORROR



SAGA BORN

HORROR

SagaBorn Roleplaying Game Ruleset

by Michael Bielaczyc

Additional Writing by Dane Clark Collins

Cover By Michael Bielaczyc

Interior Art by Michael and Paul Bielaczyc



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HORROR RULES

The room was empty, no living thing stirred inside its stone walls, but something seemed to breathe. Maybe it was the room itself. Strange containers and jars of unknown liquids sat in stacks. Strange formations of bones hung from long sinewy strings above the large wooden tables. All of this was enough to make you want to leave, but it was the far wall that held your attention. Strange runes and sigils fill the wall, painted with a dark red liquid. What did it say? It seemed to pulse as you stared at it. You lean closer to get a better look. How did you get over to the wall? Had you walked or had it drawn you in? A pulsing in your head like the beat of a drum, echoing down from a forgotten dream. The words... the words seemed to etch themselves into your mind, their meaning lost, but their form, their embrace. Your mouth opens to scream but nothing comes out. The sigils begin to move and all fades to a red mist.

A TWISTED WORLD

Horror rules in SagaBorn attempt to simulate the inner workings of a character's mind as they deal with the strange world of Atheles.

There are two reasons we think this is an important addition to the SagaBorn core game. First is to illustrate the difficulties in the characters' minds of the characters as they encounter with the bizarre and often terrible things happening around them. The first time the undead rise up to fight might be a mind-numbing event, not just a combat encounter. Or, opening and reading a Grim Mortis warps the character's perspective of the universe. Thus, Horror tracking becomes a game of balancing your mental state amidst the horrors of Atheles.

The second is to add consequences to overt violence. We don't have alignments in SagaBorn, but acts of unwarranted violence are considered evil. When one commits these acts, they erode the barriers that separate them from being more than brutish animals. In a tabletop game where we are simplifying a complex world into a world built on numeric formulas, these rules will allow players to have their characters deal with the loss of compassion and understanding.

These rules are not necessary for the core game, but a StoryGuide and players can choose to incorporate them into their game.



Roll 1d10

1 Cower - The character is frozen in fear and can take no actions. A Cowering character takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class and loses their Dexterity bonus (if any).

2 Nauseated - The character or creature experiences gastric distress, and may also vomit up the contents of their stomach. Nauseated creatures are unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention. The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn.

3-4 Panicked - A Panicked creature must drop anything it holds and flee at top speed from the source of its fear, as well as any other dangers it encounters, along a random path determined by the SG. It can't take any other actions. If cornered, a Panicked creature is also considered to be Cowering. The character or creature takes a -2 penalty to all rolls while Panicked.

5-7 Scared - The character or creature flees the source of their fear in a direction of their choosing. They use any abilities that aid in escape. If they can not move at least 40' away from the source of their fear, they are considered Cowering. The character or creature also takes a -2 penalty to all rolls while Scared.

8-10 Stressed - The character takes a -3 penalty to all rolls.

At 100 Points:

The character slips into Cosmic Horror, and it would take a miracle to save their mind.



מגילת אסתר

ENVIRONMENTAL

When a character encounters a gruesome, unnatural, or supernatural situation, the SG might require the player to make a Will Save vs a Horror Save DC. They may not experience this every time they encounter these examples, and it is up to the SG to make that decision.

Severity Level	Horror Save DC	Horror	Examples
Minor	10	0/1d2	Finding a dead body, a stream of blood, encounter with a minor demon, translating another's spellbook.
Moderate	12	1/1d4	Being buried alive, witnessing a friend's death, encountering a ghost, harming an innocent.
Significant	15	1/1d8	Being tortured, seeing a ritual to raise the dead, killing an innocent.
Severe	20	2/2d8	Assassinating someone, taking part in a dark magic ritual, torturing someone.
Extreme	28	1d10/1d100	Meeting a great one from the Navirim.

Some creatures and monsters have abilities, or even their mere presence, that cause Horror. A monster with “First Encounter” as a Horror ability means that the first time this creature is encountered by a hero, they must make a Horror check. Other abilities may be marked in the creature sheet that says when other Horror checks take place. A creature’s Horror can be gauged by its CR. The DC to save vs a Creature’s Horror is 10+ the creature’s CR.

Creature Horror Effects by CR

Creature CR	DC	Horror Effects
<1	10	0/1
1	11	0/1d2
2	12	0/1d3
3	13	1/1d4
4	14	1/1d4
5	15	1/1d6
6	16	1/1d6+1
7	17	1/1d8
8	18	2/1d8+1
9	19	2/1d10+1
10	20	2/1d12+1

Spell Horror Chart

DARK SPELLS

Some spells automatically take a mental toll on the caster. These spells cause Horror with no chance of a Horror Check.

Dark Spell Horror Chart

Spell Mana Cost	Horror
1	1
3	1d3
5	1d6
7	1d8

Forbidden Knowledge

Examination Period	Knowledge DC to Research	Number of Spells to be Gained	Initial Horror Loss	Horror Loss Upon Completion	Forbidden Lore Ranks Gained
1 week	20	0	1	1d4	1
1 week	20	1	1d4	1d4	1
1 week	25	2	1d4	2d6	1
2 weeks	25	1d4	1d6	2d6	2
2 weeks	25	1d6	1d10	2d6	2
2 weeks	25	3	1d6	2d6	2
2 weeks	30	1d6+1	1d6	2d6	3
3 weeks	20	1d4+1	1d10	2d6	2
3 weeks	25	1d6	1d6	2d10	2
3 weeks	30	1d4+5	1d10	3d6	3

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

A standalone skill, Forbidden Knowledge is gained by research into the dark world. Forbidden tomes, ancient artifacts, or forgotten temples can allow a person to gain Forbidden Knowledge. For each point in Forbidden Knowledge, an adventurer can add a Damage Reduction of 1 to Horror taken, as well as add a +1 expertise to any Knowledge check involving dark lore.

Researching Forbidden Knowledge is a dangerous and mind-bending task. There are high risks to gain Forbidden Knowledge points, greatly risking your health and horror.

The highest Forbidden Knowledge score a character can have is +5.



LOSING HORROR

Immediate help

A companion or NPC can try and use their Persuasion or Survival skill to help someone when they reach 75 Horror. They must succeed at a DC 17 skill check. If successful the one in need has their Horror reduced to 74. A companion may try to help once per day.

DOWNTIME

Downtime = 1 week

Players lose 7 Horror points for each week of downtime when they do nothing else.

Players lose 3 Horror points for each week when they do small tasks, such as crafting or directing allies.

Players lose 1 extra Horror point per Stronghold level for each week of downtime in their Stronghold, even if doing other activities.

Players can spend the week with a companion. Both heroes who spend a week of downtime recuperating, lose 14 + combined Cha bonus in Horror points.

TALENTS

Blood Magic (1) - You draw your own blood to add power to your next spell. You take 1d4 damage and 1d3 Horror to cast a blood magic spell. The effect is either an additional 2d6 damage or the target loses its Save roll vs the spell.

Dark Lore (1) - You gain a +3 to Knowledge checks involving all dark things; the Navirim, demons, and dark magic.

Stonewill (1) - When studying forbidden sources you take 1 less point of Horror at initiation and completion of the research.



SPELL BOOK

Spell Summaries - Detailed spell descriptions in the following section.

1 Mana

Blood Wave

A wave of blood trips opponents and makes the ground slippery.

3 Mana

Bleed

A victim bleeds from all orifices.

Phantom Hooks

Hook-ended chains lash out of the mist to grapple the victim.

Speak to the Dead

Allows caster to speak to a deceased sentient creature.

5 Mana

Break

Caster breaks one of the victim's hands or feet.

Cause Madness

Target gains Horror.

Flay

2d6+1 damage and the skin peels back on the victim.

7 Mana

Circle of Death

Kill creatures within a 40' radius.

Nightmare Terrain

Area turns into a nightmarish landscape.

1 MANA SPELLS

Blood Wave

Mana: 1

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 15' cone

Target: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: 1 round per level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Horror Cost: 1

The mage pricks their hand and using their own blood, expands it into a giant wave of blood that crashes out 15'. Those within the area of effect must succeed at a Heroic action vs. the caster (Dex vs. Spellcraft) or be tripped and end up *prone*. The area covered by the cone remains slick for 1 round per level, requiring a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check from any creature attempting to move within or out of it.

Blood seeps from all orifices of a victim doing 1d8+1 in damage, 1 Bleed, and 1d3 Horror damage if they fail their Horror check.

Phantom Hooks

Mana: 3

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 30'

Target: 1 creature

Duration: 1d4+1 rounds

Saving Throw: Reflex half, see text

Horror Cost: 1d3

Mist surrounds the target from which hooked chains fly towards the victim. The hooks embed themselves in the target, pulling skin loose and slowing movement. The target receives 1d3 Horror damage if they fail their Horror roll. If they fail their Reflex Save, the hooks grapple the victim and do 1d6+1 damage. If grappled, the target can not move. If they succeed at the initial Reflex Save, the target is still hooked, but only suffers half the damage and can move at half-speed. Each round the spell lasts the target may attempt a Heroic Action (Dex vs. Spellcraft) to escape, which allows them to move at full speed.

3 MANA SPELLS

Bleed

Mana: 3

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 30'

Target: 1 creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will half

Horror Cost: 1d3

Horror Cost: 1d3

This spell does not let you actually speak to the person (whose soul has departed). It instead draws on the imprinted knowledge stored in the corpse. The partially animated body retains the imprint of the soul that once inhabited it, and thus it can speak with all the knowledge that the creature had while alive. The corpse, however, cannot learn new information. This spell does not affect a corpse that has been turned into an undead creature.

Horror Cost: 1d6

A successful Will save means the victim takes half damage and they can use their extremity.

Horror Cost: 1d6

Horror Cost: 1d6

The spellcaster causes the target's skin to peel back from their body. This causes 2d6+1 damage, 3 Bleed, and 1d6 Horror if they fail their Horror save. A Will Save halves the damage and negates the need to roll a Horror save.



7 MANA SPELLS

Circle of Death

Mana: 7

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 100'

Target: Several living creatures within a 40-ft.-radius burst

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Horror Cost: 1d8 (+1 per creature slain)

The spell slays 4 HD worth of living creatures per caster level. Creatures with the fewest HD are affected first; among creatures with equal HD, those who are closest to the burst's point of origin are affected first.

Nightmare Terrain

Mana: 7

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 100'

Target: Several living creatures within a 40-ft.-radius burst

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Horror Cost: 1d8

The mage contorts the terrain to look, sound, and smell like something out of a nightmare. Writhing vegetation, disembodied limbs, animated corpses, and smoking pits cover every surface. Dank mist fills the area, and the stench of death fills the air.

The nightmare terrain created is mostly illusory, but the obstacles are partially real. Creatures within, entering, or viewing the area can make Will saves to discern the illusion. Creatures that fail their saves become entangled and must make a Horror save. If they fail the Horror check, they suffer 1d8+1 Horror damage.



DARK RITUALS

SUMMON GREATER NAVIRITE

Casting Time: 10 hours

Duration: 1 hour

Materials: A single candle whose wax is mixed with the blood of the caster(s), silver wire (400 gp), 5 gold runestones (200 gp), amarnium hooks (2,000 gp)

Skill Checks: Fortitude DC 2 first hour, each hour after reroll DC adds a +1. At the apex of the spellcasting ritual, a cost of 40 mana as well as a DC 40 spellcraft check (mana is subtracted from the group of casters, and each caster rolls a Spellcraft check and they are all added together)

Cost: Each spellcaster suffers one temporary negative level. Each day the spellcaster can try to to regain the lost level with a DC20 Will save.

Failure: Gain 30 Horror + Horror Cost

Horror Cost: 3d4

The circle is drawn in a place untouched by sun or moon. The single candle is lit on the northern side. A net is woven of the silver wire, with the amarnium hooks attached. The five runestones are set equidistant apart along the circle.

The casters begin the ritual, weaving the magic to enchant the net to hold the greater being. As they weave, they begin to tear a rift to the Navirim.

If the ritual is successfully cast, the creature is bound in the net. They will remain prisoner for one hour, and will be subject to answer questions or be bound by another ritual to serve the mages. After the hour, the Navirite will return to the Navirim, unless it succeeds at a DC 35 Will save. If it makes the save, it can break free of the circle and remain in this plane.

BIND GREATER NAVIRITE

Casting Time: 30 minutes

Duration: Permanent unless binding item is broken

Materials: An expensive necklace, ring, or something the owner can wear to control the demon plus the item needs to be covered in the blood of a person sacrificed for the purpose, which would cause Horror damage to the killer.

Skill Checks: DC 60 Spellcraft check added together from all participating.

Cost: Each spellcaster takes 1d3 Ability damage to their Intelligence, which returns at the rate of 1 point per week. The spellcaster(s) also lose the knowledge of 1d6 spells chosen randomly that must be relearned.

Failure: Bond reverses and the casters are bound to the service of the demon.

Horror Cost: 2d8 plus sacrifice Horror loss.

An artifact, or artifacts are imbued with the power to bind a summoned spirit. This takes no mana, but creates a bond between the item and the creators. The demon can not remove the binding item, and those who bound the demon must also continually wear their items or lose power over the demon. If half or more of the binding items are removed or destroyed, the demon becomes free.

MAGIC ITEMS

Mind's Eye Amulet - This ancient amulet was made to protect mages while experimenting with unknown magics. This gives the wearer +2 to Horror checks while being worn. If removed, the wearer loses the bonus as well as gaining 5 points of Horror.

Psyward - This item can come in many forms, but it shields the mind of the wearer against mental attacks. The wearer gains a +1 to their Horror Resistance.

Grim Mortis, Minor - A Grim Mortis contains ancient knowledge that conveys Forbidden Knowledge to any who dare read it.

Minor Grim Mortis

Examination Period	Knowledge DC to Research	Number of Spells to be Gained	Initial Horror Loss	Horror Loss Upon Completion	Forbidden Lore Ranks Gained
1 week	20	2	1d4	2d6	1

Grim Mortis, Major - A Grim Mortis contains ancient knowledge that conveys Forbidden Knowledge to any who dare read it.

Major Grim Mortis

Examination Period	Knowledge DC to Research	Number of Spells to be Gained	Initial Horror Loss	Horror Loss Upon Completion	Forbidden Lore Ranks Gained
2 weeks	22	3	1d6	2d6	2

Diary of Daloron the Leech - Daloron was the right hand of the Warlock King. He performed unimaginable experiments of both science and magic. Though his research he was able to extend his own life and that of the Warlock King by several centuries. His works involved the unnatural combination of man and beast, and the summoning of creatures from dimensions outside of our own. His diary allegedly holds the coded secrets to these dark experiments.

Diary of Daloron

Examination Period	Knowledge DC to Research	Number of Spells to be Gained	Initial Horror Loss	Horror Loss Upon Completion	Forbidden Lore Ranks Gained
3 weeks	28	1d4+5	1d10	3d6	3

SAMPLE LEGACY ITEMS

Mother's Guard - This amulet was created to protect their child as magic returns. At level 2 it protects the bearer against the Daze spell, giving the bearer an 80% chance to negate the Daze spell if they failed their save. At 4th level, the amulet allows a reroll on a Horror check once per day. At 8th level, it gives the bearer a +2 to Horror Damage Reduction and they lose 2 Horror per day during downtime.

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