

Zgrozy:
THORNEN SERVANT

A supplement for Call of Cthulhu 7th edition



Zgrozy

Devilarium

Thornen Servant

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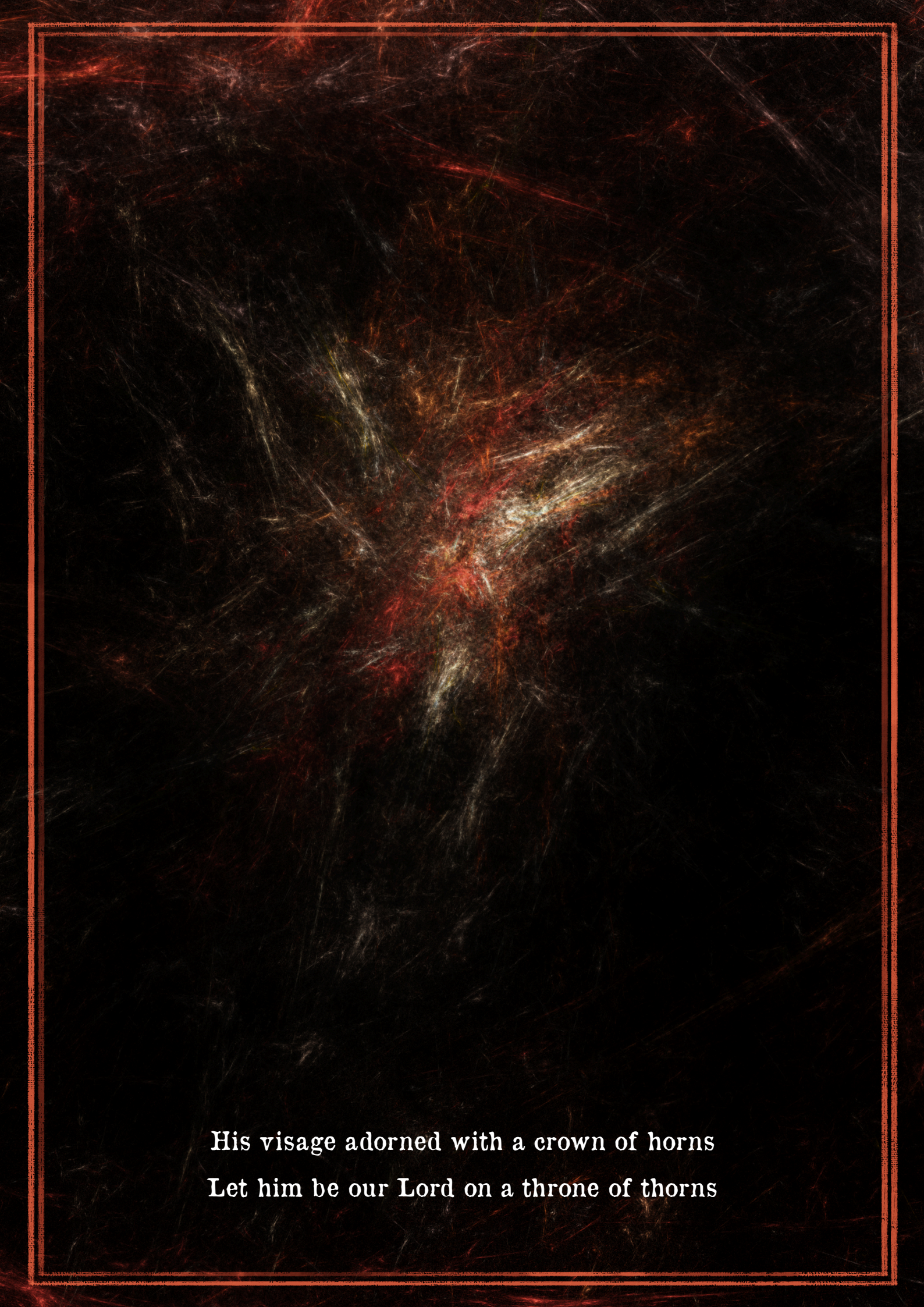
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His visage adorned with a crown of horns
Let him be our Lord on a throne of thorns

Garden

Woe to those who find this place. Whoever you are, you will forget your names. Wherever your homeland is, you will not see it again. Damned, be the knowledge and the man who seeks it. Cursed is the boundless Hunger, sated only by the Garden.

My name seems foreign for so long. My mother tongue sounds barbaric, crude, like a blemished cloth—perfumed, yet if I wore it, I would feel naked. Even the words that I scribe now become unknown. I simply use them, for the echo of this place accepts their shape.

We sensed the aura of our discovery from the start. My friends were filling the halls of the library with joy, marking the passageways with their enthusiasm. We believed in the miracle, the return of the long-forgotten truths for the next generations to benefit from. We also felt sadness, because we knew that, even if we spend our lives here, we could not fully research the lore. We, scholars, remained all too human to absorb even a tenth of it. There were five of us, but decades spent in the depths of Yor-Asul would bring us death rather than fulfillment.

Is this the name of the town in which the excavations took place? Maybe it is some elder term, brought to me by the walls covered in mysterious symbols? Delicate columns, polished and shiny in their subterranean corridors, called to us, the lights of their lanterns dancing on forgotten tomes. Only gods themselves knew the secrets buried here. They kept their silence when Caorn's Taint demanded its due.

First came an itch. Fearing an unknown disease, we forbid others from entering the Library. Only my slave was allowed to enter, bringing us food and drink while we were delving into the treaties of the ancients. His life meant little, yet he avoided the symptoms as if the disease ignored his feeble mind. The boy was illiterate, and that is why we tolerated him, as he could not steal the secrets that belonged to us. At that time, neither I nor any of my colleagues foresaw that the disease was spread through the Hunger for Knowledge, so popular among us.

"Yor-Asul needs a guardian", I kept saying, when the itch had passed, and the people wanted to see the Library for themselves. I did not let them in, ostensibly for noble reasons, yet the seed of avarice pulled my strings even then, foul, wanting more and more. The discovery of this collection shook the whole of the scientific world. If this knowledge got in the hands of the unworthy, and the new heresies covered the world as rust covers metal, we would be to blame.

The more my eyes saw, the louder the good parts of my soul wailed. Manuscripts spoke of forces beyond comprehension, yet enslaving and irresistible to the lesser beings. Each letter of each treatise seemed to hurt us, as if each was a tiny thorn on the parchment; these were the symptoms of our impending misfortune. With our every breath, the Garden grew inside us, and the Hunger for Knowledge with it. When we finally noticed the scars on our exhausted bodies, it was too little, too late.

Those who worked the hardest complained about a sharp pain in their bowels. It kept them from sleeping, which, tragically, made them search harder for a remedy. Forgotten dogmas and scientific treatises contained obscure references to Caorn's Taint. Its lore was fragmented and scattered between many books for some reason. It could be that the ancients feared it... or perhaps wanted to delay our search? The answer still eludes me.

I asked my slave for provisions, then I barricaded the exit. I hoped we will find what we seek before becoming a part of the Garden. Part of the Thornen Throne.

Oh yes, the Lord on the Thornen Throne watched us from beyond, we felt his presence. He smiled, as we unraveled his secrets one by one. We slowly began to see this downward spiral and slowly understood that the knowledge we craved fueled the disease. We could not stop, in any event, because that desire to cure this aberration, and the Hunger, and finally the Taint itself—they drove us forward. Some fell to the thorns quickly, manifesting as a rash on a ravished body. Others, I among them, were marked with a dark scab wreathed in a gray web of blackened veins. Lore-books told us not to remove the unholy sigil if we valued the time we had left... until the metamorphosis.

One by one, my colleagues paid tribute to the Lord, expiring amid the dust in fits of agony. Victims raised their hands to their deliverer as their wills joined his. That, which to the ignoramuses meant death, became a safe harbor for the tainted. Coated in thorns and frozen in a stupor, the scholars brought their wisdom into his dimension, where their minds blossomed like roses and shone with the colors of new knowledge.

I wish I could join them, but that is not my fate. From the beginning, I said that Yor-Asul deserves a protector, and I can finally be at peace. My spirit will remain in this library, bemused and bewitched by what is stronger than I. My body will not lay still, but rather transform to guard the cursed arcana. Actions will serve as a warning far better than any words known to Earth. Through the Thorn Servant, I shall speak to the intruders.

Caorn's Taint

This condition is sometimes called a thorn disease, although there is little about it in known medical treatises. The ancients wrote of it as an ancient curse that fell upon those hungry for knowledge, especially alchemists and mystics. Apart from a few enigmatic mentions by chroniclers of dubious reputation, no written sources about the thorn disease have survived on the Old Continent. Archaeological work in Pennsylvania has shed some light on this issue, where numerous deformed skeletons were found, both peculiar and disturbing. Shortly afterward, they were called "devil skeletons", due to horns above the eye sockets. Of course, numerous accusations of forgery have dominated the discussion about the source of these abnormalities.

What is Caorn's Taint?

Caorn's Taint is a disease that originates from a mysterious entity known as the Lord on the Thornen Throne. Because of that, it defies all medical classifications, and its nature remains as inconceivable as that of the Great Old Ones.

The disease has multiple stages, each bringing the unfortunate victim closer to a terrible end, and, at best, death.

Most sources agree that thorn disease primarily affects knowledge seekers. In order to become infected with Caorn's taint, one must obtain the knowledge of ancient and nearly forgotten mythologies related to the Lord of the Thornen Throne. A search for lore about him, whether in the works of famous magi or books of the occult, usually yields no fruit.

Everything, however, is up to the investigator's determination. Those who discover even a sliver of the arcane world are ready to sacrifice a lot to explore the rest of its secrets. Caorn's Taint may just be the price for this thirst for knowledge.

Thorn disease is mentioned in the blasphemous Necronomicon, as well as in other notorious books (see: Timeline of Sofia's Research).

Proximity to specific texts can draw the attention of this Great Old One to the investigator.

The course of the disease

1) **Itch** – the first symptoms aren't particularly severe, and thus often ignored.

At first, the ill will start to feel itchiness and will notice slowly progressing skin lesions. This bears similarity to a mild allergic reaction but gets worse over time. The investigator's skin exfoliates, becoming dry and unpleasant to the touch. This is accompanied by infrequent hot and cold flashes, which can even lead to passing out.

Just before the disease advances to the next stage, the veins of the infected will swell and become visible. They start to pulse in an uneven rhythm as if the heart is laboring to pump blood.

2) **Thornen Mark** – afterward comes a faux remission.

Symptoms seemingly stop and the investigator recuperates slightly. The skin regains its natural complexion, except for a single spot, typically a minute scar on the forearm. It is unpleasant to the touch but seems harmless. Most importantly, the infected do not feel pain or the ailments characteristic of the prior stage. Within two or three weeks, however, the scar will make itself felt again, expanding and turning scab-like. This stage can be overlooked as a normal healing process.

I'm afraid our suspicions are very real. We aren't dealing with ordinary keloids at all. The fact that the wound didn't heal for so long troubled me from the start, especially since you've always been as healthy as a horse. If you can, make detailed notes about the condition of your scar and your mood. I'll carry out a detailed blood test shortly; I hope it will shed more light on your affliction. Meanwhile, take care of yourself, Sofia.

3) Intestinal Pain – it will take the third stage of the disease for the investigator to realize the magnitude of their predicament. Initial chest discomfort will resemble bronchitis-like sensations. Over time, however, the investigator will suffer from very high fever and delusions. They will become convinced that their lungs are covered with scratching protrusions; after some time, the stinging feeling will render them unable to fall asleep.

Sleep deprivation will cause further symptoms, this time not only disturbing but also life-threatening. The patient, remembering the recent skin lesions, will begin to notice mysterious patterns shaped on their body, resembling branches of a bush. The scar will begin to cause radiating pain throughout the whole body, taking away what remains of its victim's sanity.

At this stage, medical care, strong painkillers, and antipyretics will become a necessity. When high doses of aspirin cease to work, morphine can help, as long as someone looks after the investigator and makes sure that they do not follow the hypnagogic hallucinations caused by drugs, or weirds and omens without comprehensible source...

The investigator's body will most certainly put up a fight, and the stronger they are, the more the thornen mark will spread. It will not be long before the cause of the disease becomes the investigator's obsession. The thorn patterns will no longer seem random and thoughts about the Lord on the Thornen Throne will come to the fore again. At this stage, the investigator's hunger for knowledge will reach its peak, and it may become even stronger than before the infection.

From now on, the sick will continue their search for books and treatises on ancient curses and diseases (if they had not already started).

4) Thorn Rash – the closer to the end, the clearer the things are. By merely looking in the mirror, the patient can begin to understand their impending fate. The skin lesions return and further thorn-like scars will appear all over the body.

Time is firmly against the investigator. Monstrous physical changes seem to slightly reduce the fever's influence and give clarity to the mind—only for the afflicted to grimly assess their chances of survival.

Caorn's Taint spreads upon the flesh at an eerie rate, presenting its "victory" for all to see. The abominable invader conquers organ after organ, takes over the skin inch by inch. At this stage, the investigators must regularly take painkillers. Ice baths may offer a short relief, though they do not affect the disease's progress.

Delusions and manic visions may come to light again, although this time some of them will be frighteningly true. The patient will regularly dream of the Thornen Throne, and the sense of being disjointed from reality will not leave them until the very end.

5) Thorn Tribute – shortly before their death, the body of the infected will become almost completely covered with thorn-like protrusions. This is a testament to the monstrous struggle of those unfortunate to become afflicted by Caorn's Taint.

Only their eyes remain to betray their former identity, for the rest of the body underwent a gruesome transformation. Finally, the infected became a part of the thorns' dominion, literally and figuratively.

I have spent several nights studying books concerning both medicine and occultism. In these masterworks from both the classical and medieval periods, knowledge of the scholars is intertwined with the beliefs of the magi. Egyptian doctors alongside Christian monks continue to reveal the secrets of illnesses we now know. Meanwhile, I am beginning to doubt whether what I read is the daydreaming of an addled mind, or if it is my psyche that interprets these facts so that I begin to look for connections and relationships that never were.

I often ask myself a question—what if we are wrong and they are right? Honestly, it is too fantastic a world to believe in. It would mean a return to the miasma theory, pestilent air and the spirits of disease stalking mortals as if they were our natural predators. Have we not overcome these atrocities with civilization? What if we just changed the rules of the game, and now the monsters adapt to us?

No doctor or scholar will be able to determine a clear cause for these changes. An unknown and extremely acute bone cancer will probably be identified as the source. However, it will be nothing more than a safe guess, proven the more improbable the more someone begins to explore the nature of this mysterious disease.

If anyone decides to search for answers, sooner or later they will encounter the lore about the Lord on the Thornen Throne.

Treatment

Caorn's Taint is no ordinary disease and cannot be cured with antibiotics or other conventional methods. Nevertheless, it is possible to alleviate the symptoms and this is exactly what the infected should focus on.

The following can bring relief:

Cold compresses, later ice water baths – these can provide some reprieve to the sick. If the adventure takes place in modern times, cryo-chamber would be the best solution.

Morphine – dulls the pain related to the progressive skin changes. It is, however, a double-edged sword for more than one reason. The most obvious is the addiction, but the itchiness it causes leads to further spread of the thorns, scratched by the infected. Finally, large doses can cause the investigator to become drowsy. At the border between dream and reality, they will be plagued by hypnagogic visions.

Meditation – Caorn's Taint affects not only the body but also the mind of the infected. Retreat into the spiritual sphere of prayers, mantras and the like can help with combating the delusions.

Surgery – this seemingly effective solution has the opposite effect. The wound will heal very quickly, after which the thornen mark will reproduce and begin to grow unless its removal is done in accordance with the instructions in the book "Breaking Curses" (see Timeline of Sofia's research).



Thornen Servant

While studying this monstrosity, I came across one more sliver of information. I do not know if I should write about it; maybe this knowledge will bestow a hideous curse on someone. However, I cannot keep silent about the most terrible fate that may await the infected. According to one of the manuscripts that I recently acquired, a person with Caorn's Taint can undergo... a metamorphosis. The patient loses their mind and changes their physical form, becoming a thornen servant. Whatever this being might be or whatever instincts might rule it, it cannot be allowed to come into our world.

Incarnation

A thornen servant is the final manifestation of the Lord on the Thornen Throne, created by Caorn's Taint. It is the crowning moment of the monstrous evolution taking place over the months.

In most cases, people infected by Caorn's Taint simply die. The process ends with something called the Thorn Tribute, and most bodies are too frail to withstand it.

Sometimes, however, the curse of the Great Old One falls on a human blessed with great strength of body and spirit. He then takes them over and during the tribute, the patient's body changes into a pupa. Then, within a dozen or so hours, a servant's protoform crawls out of it, then sheds its skin several times, leaving behind numerous traces. Aware of its weaknesses and that it may be vulnerable to various attacks, the protoform hides in a remote location to develop further.

It takes three to four days for it to reach its full form, after which it reaches a height of just under seven feet and weighing about 650 pounds.

Profile

Biotope: After maturing, a thornen servant will attempt to create a permanent dwelling. Far away from humans, it will start to convert the area in the likeness of the Thornen Throne. It prefers dark and deserted places where it cannot be disturbed.

If a thornen servant hatches outside an urban area, it will choose a grove or a forest for its den. A cemetery can also be considered a good place, especially the crypts located in its territory.

If a thornen servant is born in the heart of an urban jungle, it will likely wander for a time, until it eventually finds an abandoned building complex or in the sewers.

Habits: A mature specimen will primarily focus on fortifying its new "nest". Before building in earnest, it will hunt both people and animals to build up a small reserve of meat. Some of the materials obtained, including the bones of devoured creatures, can be used by the servant as elements of an altar built in honor of his creator.

If the investigators won't take up arms against the beast, it will expand its domain until a small hut transforms into a monstrous labyrinth of thorns. Then the thornen servant will enter a state of hibernation once again and fall into a deep sleep. When the proper arrangement of stars and planets come into alignment, the aberration shall go through a haunting resurrection.

By this time, the structure of the thorn labyrinth will be unified with the body of the servant. Animals that get lost in the maze will sooner or later die from exhaustion or from a thousand nicks and cuts. Their bodies will be absorbed into the labyrinth and serve as food for the thornen servant.



We didn't know what we were dealing with. First, we heard rumors about disappearances, then our men sent to the field didn't return. We began an investigation and it quickly turned out that a gardener's worst nightmare grew in the heart of this damn forest. Twisted thornen boughs guarded the entrance of some kind of a barrow. The hounds whined terribly and didn't want to approach, not for all the tea in China. I went in there with a few locals, found massacred bodies inside. At first, we thought some sort of animal must have done it, maybe a pack of wolves... But there was no sign of living beings in the area. Absolute silence. The specter of death hung over this forest.

Confrontation

Encounter with a thornen servant can take one of two forms; the investigators will face a relatively easy fight or one for their lives.

Much depends on the time that has passed since the hatching of the servant, as well as the tools used by the investigators. The complexity of the monster's nest will be of similar importance. The more advanced the servant and its creations, the harder it will fight.

Subimago – about 3 days after hatching:

- When attacked it will most probably flee.
- During this time, due to its small size and dexterity, the monster will comb the nearest territory looking for the right place for its lair.
- If it finds the right location, it will not be able to adapt it yet.

Imago – about 4 days after hatching

- When attacked it will effectively defend itself and it may take the bodies of the slain.
- It should have found a proper place to nest by that time.
- In favorable circumstances, the servant will begin to transform its surroundings. If it finds the location extremely promising, it will not abandon it.

Metaimago – about 2 weeks after hatching

- The creature will develop its nest into something akin to a maze of thorns.
- It will build its first altar of thorns and start to place the bones of dead animals upon it.
- It will no longer relocate, rather choosing to die in its dwelling than leave it.

Investigators that disturb a thornen servant must be ready for a violent reaction. Depending on the creature's development state, it can make surprise attacks and use the terrain to its advantage.

Thornen servants in imago and metaimago states do not treat humans as much of a threat and often come at them with brute strength alone.

Thornen Servants, incarnation of the Lord on the Thornen Throne

STR 90 CON 100 SIZ 140 INT 70 POW 65

DEX 72 HP 24

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Build: +2

MOV: 10

Spells: none

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see a thornen servant. If it is in its subimago form, then it is 0/1D3 Sanity points.

ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: A thornen servant fights in melee, attacking with sharp claws. Sometimes, it tries to pin down its enemy; subimago cannot pin down enemies.

Pin Down (mnvr): If the thornen servant grabs the victim with his claws, it may knock them to the ground and try to rip out their throat with its teeth.

Fighting 70% (35/14), damage 1D6 + damage bonus D6

Pin Down (mnvr) 35% (17/7), damage 3D6 + damage bonus D6

Dodge 50% (25/10)

Armor: None, but a thornen servant takes +1D4 damage from fire or cold

The case of Sofia Langer

Plot outline

As previously mentioned, Caorn's Taint is a disease that befalls knowledge-hungry people, especially alchemists and mystics. Sofia Langer, however, does not belong to either group.

She is a Ph.D. of History of Science and Medicine, an Oxford graduate, and has a particular interest in the study of the history of the most devastating diseases that have ever affected mankind. Until now, her academic career was a flawless string of successes, and her articles were widely appreciated for the skillful interpretation of historical records in the light of contemporary knowledge.

Despite that, Sofia Langer seems to be experiencing a personal crisis for some time. She stopped showing up at the university, and has not written a single article for almost a year. Keepers should emphasize that before her alleged crisis, she was never idle for more than three months at any one time.

This situation raised justified concerns among her relatives, especially because Sofia drastically limited her contact with family members. Sending them only generality-filled letters, assuring them of her good health and newly found scientific enthusiasm.

In actuality, Sofia found information about the Lord on the Thornen Throne during her research, and-of course-paid dearly for this knowledge.

Thanks to the information she obtained earlier, Dr. Langer determined what future awaits her if she does not find a cure; she then went on to study further. Using the wisdom of the ancients, she understood that her fate is not yet sealed and determined how she can slow down the development of the disease.

Discovery

In the case of Caorn's Taint, the patient's most faithful companion will always be despair. Progressive changes in the body will destroy them, both mentally and physically. This was the case with Sofia, who predicted the next stages of the disease faster than most. The first outbreak of despair took place before the changes to her skin became visible, so she went for the most obvious ways to relieve stress-alcohol and sex.

While the former method brought only headaches and nausea, the latter made Sofia discover a new, surprising feature of Caorn's Taint. By having intercourse, she visibly slowed down the disease's development. She even began to suspect a partial remission. However, she did not know what misfortunes it would bring upon her partners. She decided to waste no time on this and took to her research with renewed energy.

It took several weeks for the tragic news to reach her, which although she did not want to admit-she, deep down, expected.

Today I learned about a man's death, likely resulting from an unrecognized disease that caused monstrous skin lesions. Due to the state of the corpse, his identity was not established. However, I'm afraid I know who he was, and I know the cause of death.

Thornen mark is one of inevitable entropy and... shame. Although I don't want to, I must accept this deathly burden, which will weigh on me from now on. But if there is even a sliver of a chance that I can find a cure for this disease, then I must do everything in my power to do so.

- Sofia Langer's diary

The people who have slept with Sofia will experience symptoms resembling the "thorn tribute" stage of the disease. Depending on the individual's immunity, this reaction can kill the host within a week or even a month following intercourse.

Sofia will spend every moment studying old medical books and looking for a cure. Her stubbornness will grow alongside mounting difficulties and the disease's symptoms. When she feels the changes coming, she will, with both regret and conviction, seek a remedy in the arms of new lovers again. However, this method will lose effectiveness over time, and Caorn's Taint will come back with even greater strength.

A proposition of correlation between the research's progress and the disease's development can be found in the appendix **Timeline of Sofia's Research**.

Sofia Langer, Ph.D. of History of Science and Medicine

STR 50 CON 65 SIZ 45 INT 75 POW 50

DEX 40 APP 75 EDU 80 S 50 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none **Build:** 0

MOV: 7 **Magic Points:** 10

Fighting Firearms (handgun) 30% (Hard 15%/Extreme 6%), damage 1d10.

Skills: Credit Rating 50%, Dodge 20% (Hard 10%/Extreme 4%), First Aid 70%, Language (Latin) 55%, Library Use 75%, Medicine 70%, Occult 60%, Persuade 55%, Science (Biology) 80%, Science (History of Medicine) 85%, Spot Hidden 50%

Sofia is both intelligent and determined. Although the disease will undoubtedly scar her, the woman will remain focused and working. Temporarily stopping the Taint's development, however, will not affect her constant remorse over what she has done and what she will have to do. Regardless of the circumstances, she will not abandon her search for the antidote, justifying her actions with the salvation of other potential patients.

In time, she will accept the need for sacrifices, whether they are offered on the altar of science or that of the Lord on the Thornen Throne. Sofia will without a doubt use the acquired time in a very productive way. Perhaps she will even manage to get to all the necessary sources and find out what is needed for the creation of the right serum.

Sofia's action will include:

- Search for ancient medical treatises in the libraries of European universities
- Participation in research expeditions, particularly to the Middle East. Importantly, Sofia will have to suspend all travel plans for a while if the disease enters the "thornen mark" stage
- Correspondence with other scientists, in particular, those dealing with medicine and the history of medicine
- Regular visits to antique shops in search of nigh-unobtainable grimoires

As the events unfold, Sofia will realize that she needs blood samples from the people infected with Caorn's Taint to create the serum. Due to remission, her blood may prove insufficient, unlike the blood of people who die as a result of the malady.

As such, Sofia will look for the remains of such persons. First, she will try to pass herself off as the deceased's family member so that she can get access to the morgue. If her efforts prove futile, she will go as far as stealing corpses from the cemetery.

The closer to the terrible end, the more ruthless Sofia will become. Perhaps she will go as far as kidnapping one of her partners. A blood sample taken at the time of death due to the disease would certainly prove very useful. For this, however, Sofia will need a third-party to help.

Recovery

Sofia Langer's story can be full of twists and turns depending on whether she finds the allies necessary to create an antidote, whether she can overcome her own weaknesses, and whether Caorn's Taint will prove to be too much of a challenge for her body. In this uneven fight, however, Sofia still has a chance at creating an antidote. For her efforts to come to fruition, she will need the following:

- Both volumes of "Djehuta's Sons"
- A blood sample of a person who died as a result of Caorn's Taint
- Approximately three days to study the volumes and conduct appropriate chemical test
- Good health during the process, i.e. not progressing above "thornen mark" stage

If all of the above requirements are met, Sofia will develop an effective antidote and will be able to create multiple dose of the antidote to treat others infected. (see Motivations).

If the cure is created in adverse circumstances, Sofia will die after administering it.

If Sofia does not obtain the necessary ingredients and dies due to Caorn's Taint, a thornen servant will probably be born from her dead body.

Motivations

As is the case with most *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios, the key to a well-conducted story is proper motivations and personal involvement of the investigators. In the case of Sofia Langer, three interesting motives come to mind.

The first one connects to her family. It may seem too obvious and will work in virtually every situation. A family tie of any sort is enough for most investigators to justify their intervention in Sofia's current situation.

What if the investigators decided that Sofia's case is simply not interesting to them and they'd prefer to go, say, play bridge? An inconspicuous scar that appears on the body of an investigator after a night spent with the young doctor can be a solution. This night may take place after the aforementioned bridge game.

A desire to save a loved one who has also become infected with Caorn's Taint may be yet another motivation. During their search for an antidote, the investigator will obtain information that a certain Dr. Sofia Langer has been conducting similar research for a long time, studying ancient diseases and curses, probably including this thornen malady.

Motivation 1: The Patient

...

I'd like to help you in some way, but I'm afraid that the disease you described defies any characteristics I know. I don't quite understand the symptoms of this devilry either. Let me summarize what you were trying to describe so chaotically, to clarify our last conversation.

Over the last few weeks, you've had visual hallucinations, seeing things that are not there and which you should not see.

At the same time, you also experienced a kind of synesthesia, which means your senses intertwine with each other in an incomprehensible way.

I hope that so far, the disease isn't progressing, and you are able to calm your senses with the means that I acquired for you. Remember, that none of them are medicinal. They can stop the symptoms, but I am convinced that the source of your anxiety and visions lies elsewhere.

I don't like to be negative, but I've realized now that your case seems very similar to that of one unlucky fellow I met years ago, who also suffered tremendously.

I hope I'm wrong, but if your health is threatened by the same ailment, which in this dark hour again came to me, and which then led to the death of that man... I hope I'm wrong.

However, I think I can point you to a person with whom you can continue searching for answers to the questions that bother you. Sofia Langer is a Doctor of Medicine who has devoted a lot of time to studying the history of this noble science.

As one of the few scholars in the world, she had access to forgotten medical treatises which describe diseases that seemed to have been lost to mankind's knowledge long ago. I, myself, was very interested in her studies, but in response to my letter, Sofia doubted that she could share the volumes she collected. Some of them, she said, were forever lost in a fire. Nevertheless, I kindly thanked and forgot about the whole matter.

But now... I think you should visit Sofia and find out as much as you can. As far as I know, she retreated to her study and rarely visits the university library anymore. I have provided her address on the back.

Yours forever,

Dr. ...

Motivation 2: Infection

I don't know if you're aware of the honor that you had yesterday, but the woman accompanying you was the famous Doctor Sofia Langer. Undoubtedly one of the brightest minds at our university (and, by the way, a very beautiful woman). Honestly, I admit that I felt a slight twinge of jealousy when she showed an interest in you. With that in mind, I disappeared as soon as possible, not keen on distracting you too much.

When we meet again, I hope that you'll tell me all about the dear doctor, right before we go to our favorite place again. In the meantime, take care of yourself!

Timeline of Sofia's Research

Item	Description	Facts	Progress
<i>Our Diabolic Lineage</i>	A paper on devilry and esotericism. The unknown author brings up numerous instances supposed to confirm the hypothesis of historical relations between humans and Nephilim, and other semi-mythical creatures. The analysis is done in an orderly manner and covers many intriguing archaeological discoveries. Unfortunately, the huge amount of references to <i>Ars Goetia</i> impairs the scientific character of this work.	In the chapter about contemporary discoveries, the author mentions devilish skulls found during excavations in Pennsylvania. According to the included descriptions, the skeleton went through some bizarre mutations, yet the horns sitting right above the eyesockets surprised the archaeologists the most.	The woman becomes interested in the Caorn's Taint, although she's not yet aware of what she's dealing with.
<i>Celestial Newcomers by William F. Castor</i>	A work focused around the so-called "Space mythology" and connections between human deities and planets in the solar system. Mostly chaotic and too abundant in insignificant details.	William Castor, when describing the nature of cosmic symbols, also refers to the Thornen Throne. He binds it with distant power penetrating dimensions and affecting a "colonized" reality, but unlike other symbols, it is expressed in a very enigmatic and brief way.	Sofia gets the first information about the Thorns and the Thornen Throne.
<i>Devilarium. A Collective Work of Researchers and Explorers of The Past Eras</i>	A monumental work about the nature of all kinds of monsters, ranging from prehistoric beasts, demons and ending with applications from peoples of the Ancient Era and the Middle Ages. Inconspicuous, but containing a lot of forbidden knowledge. The more time the researcher devotes to exploring the atrocities described, the greater the chance that they will bring misfortune upon themselves.	<i>His visage adorned with a crown of horns Let him be our Lord on a throne of thorns</i>	Activation of the Caorn's Taint. The itch begins to take its toll on the woman. The thornen mark develops over time.
<i>Pnacotic Manuscripts</i>	Manuscript fragments are in the library of the Miskatonic University and contain a lot of information about the Great Race of Yith.	The last chapter summarizing the history of the Great Race of Yith also details the case of a bizarre infection, somewhat like Blemish of Caorn. The takeover of the body of a previously infected creature resulted in a dangerous epidemiological incident. The disease, transmitted through knowledge and thought, found its way onto very fertile soil in the form of the minds of the Great Race of Yith. Eventually, the plague was stopped in a very firm way. However, the details of the taming were embarrassingly silent.	Further information intensifies the symptoms of the disease. From the moment knowledge was acquired from the Manuscript, Sofia began to suffer from hallucinations.

Timeline of Sofia's Research

Item	Description	Facts	Progress
<i>Breaking Curses</i> by N. de Saevre	A relatively new publication, and at the same time one of the most valuable books on unknown diseases and curses. The mysterious N. de Saevre undertook a titanic effort to catalog and describe many ailments, including Caorn's Taint.	<i>Throughout history, some have linked Taint to bone and skin cancer. The fact is that it caused terrible suffering and distortion of the body in people. It made them become skewed reflections of themselves...</i> By using low temperatures and appropriate meditation techniques, you can slow down the development of Taint. Additionally, de Saevre describes how to remove thorny growths so that they do not come back for at least a short period.	If a Sofia comes into possession of this book, she can fight hallucinations and temporarily prevent the next stages of the disease.
<i>Djehuta's Sons, vol 1. A Study of the Manuscripts of Imhotep</i> by Syrkarth Myrkerje <i>Djehuta's Sons, vol 2. The Heart of Terror</i> by Syrkarth Myrkerje	A two-volume compendium of medical knowledge often enriched with annotations about the mystical dimension of some lesions. Syrkarth Myrkerje is certainly not a member of any scientific association, it is impossible to even determine if it is a real name. The author, however, is undoubtedly characterized by outstanding knowledge. Although their books are not strictly medical treatises, the way they combine the knowledge of the ancient masters with the achievements of modern medicine and its current dilemmas arouses admiration.	In both the first and second volumes of "Sons of Djehuta," Syrkarth is thoroughly trying to describe the efforts to combat ancient diseases. This publication is not as rich in details as "Breaking Curses", but unlike de Saevre's work, there are more effective methods to cure ailments, not just relieve symptoms.	With the onset of the third phase of the disease - that is, stinging in the bowels - Sofia will intensify her efforts in the search for medicine. If she is lucky, she will come into possession of books by Myrkerje during this time.
<i>Defiled Ground. Funeral Rituals</i>	A set of superstitions and folk magics related to burial rites. It is written in simple language and mostly useless due to, among others, the far too numerous and inconclusive thoughts of the author about suicides, murderers and vampires, as well as their right to be buried in a sacred land.	The publication, a large part of which is devoted to the history of medicine, contains surprisingly many references to contemporary, often innovative, methods. Using information from both volumes, it is possible to attempt to create a serum against Caorn's Taint. However, it will still be time-consuming and demanding research material. Despite the aforementioned disadvantages, the book contains several effective incantations to cleanse the body of the deceased as a result of the curse.	Thanks to this book—once the Thorn Tribute ends—it will be possible to contain the body of the deceased Sofia in such a way that it will not contaminate the soil in which she will rest.

