

# Strange Aeons Backstory Items

Before the start of the campaign, each player will select one of those following items. They do not get to see the associated backstory, and can only infer it based on the theme of the item. They will discover the truth of their backstory as the campaign progresses, or when they get their memories back.

## Woodsman's Knife

This utilitarian knife has a handle made of carved antler and a blade kept sharp by a simple leather sheath. It is lightly stained with blood, possibly from being used by a hunter, but the blade has been kept meticulously clean. It is not designed to be used as a weapon, but can serve as a masterwork tool on survival checks to hunt.

**Backstory:** you were originally in the service of Njano the hyena princess, and directly reported to the duplicitous halfling, Hakoar. You were set up as a scapegoat for Hakoar's own double-cross. Njano was still mulling over your fate when Haserton Lowls offered to purchase you, extricating you from the situation. Loyal to that man alone, you were often used to dispose of those whose usefulness had expired. You will be the preferred target for the revenant attack in book 2, and will have unfinished business in Okeno after getting your memories back. Hakoar is particularly sadistic in taunting you, and should he survive into book 5 he will join Weiralei to finish you off in Neruzavin. If the coward flees and survives again, the Briarstone Witch attempts to call his promises due and he is devoured by eldritch energies. You get a chance to save him. If Hakoar is shown mercy, then in the epilogue a mysterious halfling benefactor will reunite the PC who owns the Broken Wedding Band with their long lost spouse.

## Broken Wedding Band

A simple golden wedding band that has seen better days. It appears to have once had a precious stone ensconced but it was forcibly removed, damaging the ring in the process. There is a name inscribed inside that seems intimately familiar to you, but is not your own or any other party member.

**Backstory:** you lived a peaceful life in one of the small coastal villages in the vicinity of Cassomir, until you, your spouse, and your young child were captured by pirate raiders and taken as slave stock. You were acquired by Biting Lash and brought to the flesh markets of Okeno to be sold to the first buyer. By luck Haserton Lowls was one of the patrons that day, but he could only afford one of you with the money he had on hand. Though you could have taken your chances to remain with your family, you accepted Lowl's offer of a semblance of freedom and left them behind. You spent many nights awake, haunted by your cowardice, but have come to the understanding that you will never see your former spouse or child ever again.

You had arranged a meeting with Gossa Kelkin and Wreben Malliver in the days before your mind was sacrificed, luring them to Versex with lies and thinly veiled threats. After the sacrifice

of your minds their assistance was no longer necessary and the Count neglected to contact them or dismiss them. They are bewildered as to why the Count and his contacts have left them hanging for over a week now. Weiralei knows you, and attempts to use the leverage of your family to control you against the party. After she is defeated in Iris Hills, she uses her contacts to locate your son, buy him, and subject him to unholy rituals of Hastur to turn him into a killing machine. He will be encountered in the dreamlands in book 3, and later in Neruzavin in book 5. He can be saved by taking him to the oasis in the dreamlands to give him the same second chance that you received.

## Well-Loved Book

Melvin Garlton's *Secrets of Avistan* runs nearly 700 pages long and is filled with rich details of some of the most bizarre and unusual mysteries throughout Avistan. This book has clearly been read prolifically, as its pages are worn and dog-eared with handwritten notes throughout the margins. However, the book has suffered water damage, and much of it is ruined with pages stuck together or torn out. It seems ready to fall apart, but despite this the intact pages are still legible and can provide some information to a reader.

**Backstory:** you were Lowl's chief research assistant, collecting his disorganized notes and dealing with his many collaborators. You had a degree of privy into the Count's secret endeavors and the full degree of his depravity, aiding him in his tasks and even assisting in the sacrifice of your compatriots. You never imagined after all the others were drowned that you were next.

Your book is filled with copious notes, and despite your attempts to study them you are constantly noticing notes and drawings you previously missed. Whenever the player searches the book for information about their current situation, they will find notes about the journey Lowls went through and their shared backstory with the villain. It should emphasize that the PC shared Lowls ambitions and really did want the count to succeed in his wild aspirations.

## Cracked Spectacles

These glasses appear to have once been of fine make, but the left side has been damaged. The lens is cracked down the middle, and pieces of the surrounding frame have been repaired with shoddy wire. Spectacles of this quality would have been quite expensive to produce, and one would imagine the owner would have had access to simple mending magic to repair them. [if you choose this item, you are near-sighted].

**Backstory:** you were the young apprentice of Clymes Prett, the secret lover of Nemira Lowls. You were directly involved in the occult ritual to infect the former Count with a wasting ailment. Clyme's infidelity was discovered before the count's death, and you were implicated as well. You faced life imprisonment, but had the sentence commuted by the new Count after the old one died - provided you would help keep his mother's corruption under wraps. Ever since the affair you have been haunted by eldritch visions from just outside of the corners of your eyes. All attempts to mend the glasses have failed, as if their natural state is now to be broken. Nemira

Lowls recognizes and interacts with you with greater civility, and you frequently see signs of eldritch beings before actually encountering them.

## Stabbed Cloak

This finely made cloak has a number of perforations, indicating the wearer had been stabbed with bladed weapons. Either the wearer avoided bodily harm, or the blood was subsequently washed out, but the damage was never repaired. The deep blue cloak is lined with a yellow trim with a few arcane runes suggesting it may have belonged to a spellcaster at some point, but its clasp is missing.

**Backstory:** you were the partner of Risi Nairgon, and the two of you were prolific professional killers before being recruited into the cult of Hastur by Melisenn. You continued your work for the cult, committing kidnappings and killings on their behalf. After Melisenn brought the two of you to Thrushmoor, Lowls saw an opportunity to use you. He used a Charm spell to convince you to divulge secrets of the cult to him to aid in his work on his rituals. This betrayal was discovered, and Melisenn sent Risi to kill you. Risi was unwilling to do so, and instead with surgical precision left you unconscious but alive on the outskirts of town. Lowls found you and secretly brought you back to Iris Hills, where he offered to set things right with the cult if you'd just help him with one ritual excursion to the dreamlands. He never intended to follow through on his end of the bargain, as you were little more than a sacrifice for the Mad Poet.

When you return to Thrushmoor, Melisenn is furious that Risi failed to do her job and makes it clear that she must finish you. Risi, at the same time, is angry that you spurned her mercy. It is likely only after Risi's death that you will actually understand what happened and that Risi never wanted to kill you.

## Broken Pocket Watch

This once-fine pocket watch no longer functions. It appears someone attempted to open it up to repair it, but only managed to make things worse in the process. Several pieces of clockwork are now missing entirely. The face of the watch is still in good condition, but repairs will not be a simple matter and would require a specialized clocksmith with the right tools and parts.

**Backstory:** this device was once an artifact capable of turning back time. Your ownership of this device made you arrogant and imperious, and you delved into secret knowledge you shouldn't have. Ultimately you completed the rituals of the star stelae and inadvertently sacrificed your own world to Carcosa. You became trapped in the yellow city, the watch wasn't powerful enough to send you back, and you became just another puppet on Hastur's grand stage. However, you became aware of the actions of the Briarstone Witch and saw an opportunity to not only escape, but redeem yourself by saving another world from Hastur. At the moment of her final victory, you wound up your watch beyond its normal limit and jumped back in time. You were the one that created the time paradox that awoke the party, and you used the last energy of your watch to place yourself in the new time stream. This broke the watch, and it is now inoperable. Now you must complete the journey to close the loop and make this divergent timeline a reality.

The pocket watch occasionally flares to life. Whenever a PC would die on a surprise round [for instance, because of a certain assassin...], it rewinds time and the owner of the pocket watch can change the course of the round to alter the outcome. In addition, you are well-known in Carcosa as a powerful and dangerous individual and the NPC's there generally fear and respect you. You *do not* get your memories back with the rest of the party. Instead you have one final trip to finish the time paradox. After waking up the rest of the party, you must follow your original self to the oasis in the dreamlands. There you must push yourself into the oasis with the rest of the party, completing and stabilizing the time loop. Only then will you get your memories back.

## Traveler's Good Luck Charm

Butterfly charms such as these are often worn by travelers seeking good fortune from Desna. A stolen charm is said to be incredibly bad luck, and due to this there are very few fences willing to purchase these second-hand. This one in particular is very finely made with vibrant colors, and was likely a custom order for an important person going on a significant journey.

**Backstory:** you were touched by Cthulhu's dreams, and through this exposure came to become a willing pawn of a cult of Cthulhu. You learned many of their secrets, and ventured into the dreamlands with them. Eventually a group of paladins stormed the cult, and you only survived by escaping into the dreamlands. But the ritual misfired in the chaos, and you became trapped there. You were eventually rescued by Haserton Lowls, who figured out a way to pull you back. You repaid your debt by assisting him in his research into the Mad Poet, but were ultimately betrayed and sacrificed like the others. Your charm shifts from a Desna Charm to a Cthulhu charm in the dimension of dreams. When your mind was sacrificed in the dreamlands it broke your connection to Cthulhu permanently, so even once you have your memory back you are safe from this. However, when other Cthulhu cultists learn of this they begin to seek you out in search of their own salvation, and some are less diplomatic about it.