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DARK CONSPIRACY™



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DARK RACES

VOLUME I



GDW



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Dark Races

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Dark Conspiracy™ is GDW's trademark for its roleplaying game of unearthly horror in a modern world.



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INTRODUCTION





It is the nature of humans to name things. We are tool users, and names are the tools by which we keep tabs (so to speak) upon the things around us. We name objects, actions, even ideas, then we classify those names into groups, and we go on to label the groups, and so on and on. We even label the overall system itself—we call it “language.”

Language is so much a part of us that to most people it seems as natural as breathing. But that’s exactly what makes it dangerous. As any foreign language student can tell you, language is arbitrary. Words are mainly just arbitrary sounds, and the arrangements we give them (our native grammar) is largely arbitrary as well. When we forget that, we start to mistake names for the objects they represent, to believe that creatures are limited to behaving as we define them.

What does this have to do with **Dark Conspiracy**, a horror game? I’m glad you asked that question.

One of the primary themes of **Dark Conspiracy** is that nothing is ever quite what you expect it to be. Horror is supposed to scare you; that’s what makes it fun. But it’s difficult to be frightened if you know beforehand what a creature’s exact abilities are and how best to defeat the thing. Mystery is a crucial element of horror.

It used to be that all horror involved mystery. Then came a period during which Hollywood began to codify exactly what it was to be a vampire, a werewolf, a mummy, or Frankenstein’s monster. A werewolf, Hollywood told us, is a human who takes on the fur and facial features of a wolf. Lycanthropy was passed on by a werewolf’s bite. And only a silver weapon could kill the creature. This is the “mythology” that most every modern American will recite if asked to describe a werewolf.

But if you could ask someone from Europe during the Middle Ages, you might have gotten a very different story. Werewolves might have been demons, or they might have been humans who turned completely to wolf form, perhaps without

a tail. Lycanthropy might be “caught” by drinking water from a wolf’s pawprint, or maybe by drinking from a stream a wolf had just drank from, but perhaps only in the light of a full moon. The abilities of these and other supernatural creatures could only be guessed at.

And when you begin to consider American Indian legends, or Oriental, the accounts become increasingly less certain of the parameters of the creatures they describe.

Currently, Hollywood is returning to that sense of mystery and open possibility. *The Howling* series of films, for instance, have even included marsupial werewolves from down under. Horror films have wandered far from the staples of Bela Lugosi’s Dracula, Lon Chaney Jr.’s werewolf, and Boris Karloff’s mummy and Frankenstein’s monster. We now are confronted with other-dimensional creatures that steal your skin, brain-hungry zombies from biologic warfare programs, and sithering, postholocaust mutants. The codification of horror is progressively being undermined to make way for new terrors of the imagination.

Dark Conspiracy is dedicated to that sense of open-endedness and mystery. And this first **Dark Races Compendium** is perfect evidence of that fact. Within these pages you will find creatures from numerous authors.

Many are creatures of legend, often with multiple explanations, always with a blurring of the forms we have come to impose upon them. Others are beasts of a particular fevered imagination.

As a referee, you are not obligated to follow even these descriptions. We have taken pains to make certain the creatures within have everything you will need for using them in your campaigns.

But you are invited to join with us in treading upon the boundaries, to adapt these visions as you see fit. Let your own imagination loose as you read the pages that follow. Scare your players—they’ll love you for it.