

The Gloomvile

(Andrew Wright)

Many are the demonic denizens of the infernal regions and mysterious are their motivations and obligations. One such pack of strange and rare lesser fiends are the ragged Gloomviles¹⁾. These are gaunt, human-like figures in dark robes that spill out behind them like pools of shadow and their flesh is a bloodless grey-white. Their grim visages are cruel and twisted, with bleak, malice-haunted eyes, and their thin hands end in claw-like nails.

Gloomviles typically manifest in set circular locations of arcane power; a pentagram lit by large wax candles, for example, or a round group of toadstools in a forest clearing, or even a ring of standing stones beneath a moon-lit sky (for example, see [Over the Gloaming Moor](#)). They cannot leave the boundaries of their place of manifestation, but will beg for visitors to enter, and (if the victims are stupid enough to do so), set upon them with flailing talons.

If a Gloomvile causes a critical hit in combat (i.e., a roll of 1 on the d20 Hit Roll), it has grabbed its opponent's throat with both hands and throttled the victim for 10 Health Points damage, armour notwithstanding. A Gloomvile will regenerate 1 Health Point per Round if they have taken damage from a non-magical weapon; spells and magical weapons wound them normally, while the touch of a relic will reduce them to a puff of grey smoke. Once per day, a Gloomvile may cast the *Benight* spell (see *Dragon Warriors* p105), though without the attendant Geas misfortune.

The one major weakness of the Gloomviles is their predilection for playing games of all sorts and kinds. If a visitor is smart enough to remain outside the Gloomviles' confinement, they may be pleaded with to come to the edge of the invisible prison and "play just one game!" Accepting the request will provoke a certain sad joy in the horrible creatures, who will eagerly bring out dice, counters, boards, and tattered rulebooks, crouching just inside their circular gaol, keen to play!



To determine the game to be played, roll one die or pick from the following table. The rules of these games can be found in [Games of Legend](#). Some of the games have rewards or penalties for playing, as detailed above. In other games, if the Gloomvile wins, they will demand a prize from their opponent, typically a magical item, or a scrap of enchanted lore (if anything less worthy is offered, the Gloomvile will attack immediately). Should the Gloomvile lose, they are remarkably good sports and will proffer something valuable to the winner; an enchanted bauble from their hoard, a precious heirloom, or esteemed advice or knowledge not otherwise easily obtainable.

GLOOMVILES		RE 5
ATTACK	17	Claws (d6, 5)
DEFENCE	11	Robes (AF 3)

MAGICAL ATTACK	18	Magic Points	None
MAGICAL DEFENCE	9	Health Points	2d6 10
EVASION	6	Movement	12m (25m)
STEALTH	12	PERCEPTION	8 (Gloomsight)

Category: infernal; Number: 2-7; Habitat: underworlds, hills, forests; Typical Treasure: average

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1)

Gloomviles originally appeared in the Golden Dragon gamebook *The Eye of the Dragon* (1985, reprinted 2016) by Dave Morris. The games *Finger of Fate*, *Jacks*, and *Mix-Up* are all taken from the same gamebook. The inspiration for this version of Chess comes from the Golden Dragon gamebook *Crypt of the Vampire*. *Spiral of Gold* comes from the Blood Sword gamebook *The Battlepits of Krarth*, while *Krarthian Chequers* comes from its sequel, *The Kingdom of Wyrd*.

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