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WELCOME TO THE EMPORIUM

While roaming through the city, travelers may find many stores for magic, books and adventuring equipment. However, a peculiar establishment could catch the eye as something weird and unusual: the Oddities Emporium of the Malamorte brothers, a place where one can encounter macabre rarities and sinister knowledge hard to find anywhere else, or even join an unsettling hunt. Malamorte's Oddities Emporium is the place for those who are not afraid to stare into darkness and face the nightmares that would scare away most ordinary people.

THE EMPORIUM AND ITS ODDITIES

The Emporium is mostly famous for its exposition of rarities and oddities, due to the brothers' passion as collectors. May it be the head of a monster from a dark fairy tale, a haunted doll, or a cursed painting, the two brothers will find it a place within the Emporium's shelves and cabinets, a spot for everyone to see it and maybe purchase for the right price, if one dares. This means that the Emporium acts both as a museum of horrors, and a storefront for trading macabre rarities.

While most casual visitors believe the Oddities Emporium to be nothing more than a creepy novelty shop, regulars know it isn't just a store, but also a place to inquire about forbidden knowledge and haunting truths. The brothers have a morbid, yet academic interest in anything weird and unsettling. Armando and Iginio will gladly share their knowledge for the right price, or even take requests to investigate the occult in a specific direction, if they find the investigation to be worth their time, or the request comes from a wealthy patron who will fund their research for the time to come.



THE MALAMORTE BROTHERS

Armando and Iginio Malamorte are the founders and owners of the Emporium, and truly the heart and soul of the establishment. The first of the two is the social face of the operation and handles most of the business aspects, including dealing with customers and patrons. The second is a capable inventor, hungry for progress and ready to experiment at any cost. Both of them are veteran adventurers, often throwing themselves in the face of danger when a great (and horrific) discovery is on the line. The brothers also understand when it's better to hire others for a certain job, either because it's beyond their capabilities, or simply because they don't have enough time.



ARMANDO: BUSINESS AND LORE

As many academics know, you can't do proper research without money, and the kind of research that involves adventuring requires a lot of money. Armando, the most socially proficient brother, is therefore in charge of running the Emporium as a business, including dealing with customers, finding new patrons, and hiring adventurers for specific missions. This also means that Armando is a stable attendee of many social events of the high society, like aristocratic halls, prestigious dinners, and formal tea parties.

Behind Armando's appearance as a social butterfly lies his true call as a talented alchemist, renown in many academic circles for his ability to craft dangerous concoctions. However, while these abilities should be enough to grant him the respect of the scholars in his field, Armando's eccentricity and morbid interest make him somewhat an undesired presence in most universities and classrooms.

You will find Armando's mechanics in Appendix A.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- "I enjoy mixing my flamboyant and gallant appearance with macabre and weird elements. Making ordinary people uncomfortable amuses me."
- "Secrets exist to be unveiled at any cost. Why are we on earth, if not to unearth them?"
- "My brother and the Emporium are everything I have left, and I would do anything for their sake."
- "No risk is too great in the effort to expand knowledge and peer into the darkest unknown."

IGINIO: RISK AND PROGRESS

While Armando runs the business, there is someone tirelessly working towards the expansion of knowledge in unforeseeable directions: Iginio, the oldest of the two. Whoever considers Armando to be eccentric, probably never met the other brother.

Iginio Malamorte is a visionary inventor, capable of creating wonders that merge arcane power and experimental technologies. He's also a competent physician, considering "the body" just another "machine" to experiment with. Iginio takes constant inspiration from the rarities of the Emporium, incorporating the newly acquired knowledge into his inventions.

Iginio's ability as an inventor culminated in his experimental armor: an enhancement of a deep diver suit through both the last discoveries in the realm of electric energy, and arcane power. The armor is currently unstable and dangerous for the wearer and still requires a lot of testing, however Iginio decided that "the best way to test it, is to use it", so he regularly wears it while adventuring.

You will find Iginio's mechanics in Appendix A.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- "My laboratory is my home. I'm not interested in people, unless they are interested in my work."
- "Everything is a perfect mechanism that can be understood, with enough time and experimentation. Even people."
- "My brother truly understands me, even if he complains of my lack of caution."
- "I care so much about reaching new discoveries, that I don't know when to stop."



FAMILY HISTORY

The history behind the two brothers is as macabre and peculiar as them. Not until long ago, “Malamorte” was the name of a minor aristocratic family, with patches of land and a small manor, and believed to be “cursed with bad luck”. In fact, each one of its members disappeared in mysterious circumstances, except for Armando and Iginio.

Throughout the family’s history, several within it have been trying to investigate the nature of this “curse”, making the Malamorte somehow experts in dark folklore and occult studies. This ensured that there was always a streak of macabre curiosity within the Malamorte, and was also the reason why they started collecting weird relics and forbidden books.

Eventually, the Malamorte fell into ruin. Full of debts, and abandoned by most of their allies who were afraid to be “infected” by their same bad luck, the family had to sell out their land, while being stripped of all titles and forced into exile.

The two brothers, only survivors of the family, grabbed what they could and started looking for hospitality in the courts of other aristocrats, but with little success. None wanted to host them for too long, afraid of their sinister reputation. Eventually, Armando and Iginio realized that the only way to rise from their disgrace was through their own hard work: they started adventuring, and established the Emporium with the wealth they could gather consequentially. The curiosities and texts they could carry out of their family manor, became the foundation of the Oddities Emporium, and they eventually started expanding with what they were discovering while adventuring. In due time, they

managed to reach new patrons and associates, who were not scared off by the macabre reputation of the brothers, but instead appreciated their daring attitude.

Nowadays, Iginio and Armando Malamorte divide their efforts between business, research and some adventuring, preferring to hire others for many investigations or hunts for which they don’t have the time, or the skill, to conduct themselves.

MACABRE DISCOVERIES

Behind the appearance of the Oddities Emporium as a store and museum, lies the true interest that motivates the two brothers: a deep desire to investigate the occult, explore horrors that none dares to face, and collect proofs for the world to see. Armando and Iginio are, actually, not at all interested in gathering wealth and magical power, but mostly in exploring forbidden truths that would scare away most of their peers, and bringing them into the light for the world to see. They are ready to do anything to make that happen, may it be spending money, taking risks, or making some unwise decisions. Even the way they run the Emporium is questionable in many ways, since several of the exposed oddities are cursed or otherwise dangerous, sometimes in ways the brothers themselves are not aware of.

MALAMORTE’S ODD ALLIES

A regular guest of the Emporium will soon notice the curious kind of people coming and going from the establishment, as the two brothers have several patrons, business partners and freelance associates just as unusual as they are. These characters are interested in the brother’s line of work or the content of the Emporium, either because they share their same odd interests, or because they need the Malamorte for reasons related to their personal stories. You will find a selection of twenty of these characters in Appendix B, listed in a table that the GM can use for inspiration or to randomly generate NPCs.

THE EMPORIUM

This section covers the ways the Oddities Emporium can effectively come into play as something the characters can interact with, making it an environment, and a series of special mechanics.

EMPORIUM RESEARCH

Any PC currently employed by the Emporium can spend a **Hope** or a **downtime move** to start a quick flashback scene about doing research or preparation within Malamorte's Oddities Emporium on a subject or equipment of their choice, then make a **Knowledge Roll** (or other ability depending on the fiction). The PC can spend **2 Hope** instead to interrupt the GM with the flashback scene. On a failure, the PC still obtains something but it is sinister, dangerous, cursed, or has other undesired implications. On a success with Hope, the PC can't use this feature again until the next session. On a Critical Success, the help comes from one of the Malamorte brothers themselves.

PURCHASE AND SALE

On the most surface level, the Emporium is a store for adventuring equipment, rare books and alchemical substances. These activities provide a steady income for the brothers, since there's always demand for potions and scrolls. Still, Armando and Iginio aim to focus their business on items and books that are somehow sinister.

While employed by the Emporium, the PCs can purchase certain goods at a special price or even for free, as per the following table.

EMPORIUM PRICES FOR EMPLOYEES

ITEM	GOLD
Minor Health Potion, Minor Stamina Potion (one per each type per PC at any given time)	1 Handful each
After leveling up to a new Tier: The Improved, Advanced, or Legendary version of the weapons and armor the PC already has	Free
Basic adventuring equipment	Free
Specialized tools, Tier 1 weapons and armors	1 Handful each

MALAMORTE'S ODDITIES EMPORIUM

Tier 1 Social

An Emporium of macabre curiosities, forbidden books, occult research, and supernatural experiments.

Impulses: Collect the macabre, hunt the horrors, learn the forbidden, stare into darkness

Difficulty: Special

Potential Adversaries: Any

FEATURES

Armando's Resources - Passive: While within the Emporium, a PC can spend a Hope to use the d20 as the Fear die on an action roll to find information about a supernatural creature, item, location, or topic, or to find or purchase alchemical or supernatural equipment.

What do you hope to learn in the Emporium? What's the scariest thing that was ever revealed to you here?

Iginio's Laboratories - Passive: While within the Emporium, a PC can mark a Stress to use the d20 as the Fear die on an action roll to work on a project, remove a condition, create an item, or apply medical procedures.

Which tools and resources can you find in the Emporium, that aren't available elsewhere? What could go wrong?

Visit the Exposition - Passive: A PC using the Prepare downtime move in the Emporium can visit the exposition. The player and GM work together to describe a new curiosity featured in it, and record it for future reference. Involving a recorded curiosity enables to roll for Emporium Research with advantage.

How does the curiosity look like? Which fact are commonly known about it?

Truth of the Outcast - Action: Spend a Fear while a PC is in the Emporium to hint or reveal something upsetting about the PC's past, identity, or nature.

What concealed truth scares you? What are you afraid to admit?

Comfort in Darkness - Reaction: When a PC rolls with Fear while within the Emporium and has two or less Hope, they gain a Hope.

Why do you feel welcome in the Emporium? Which part of you has a place here, and not in the outside world?

We Have a Job for You - Reaction: Countdown (number of PCs). When the PCs enter the Emporium, activate the countdown. When it triggers or if you spend a Fear, the brothers offer to hire the PCs for a hunt, an investigation, or other dangerous job, promising a reward. The GM can pick an encounter hook from a MOC creature if they wish to. The hired PCs gain the Emporium Research option.

Why did the brothers hire you? Why do you still work for them?

SNATCHER OF NAILS

One can imagine many fearful things lurking in the darkness, and waiting for the best moment to catch us off guard and take away what we hold the dearest. Of these, few are more unsettling than the ones that feel lonely. Children will sometimes tell stories of a boogeyman under their bed, trying to grab them with a gaunt arm. Their parents will treat them as fools, but who mangles with the power of dark feys begs to differ.

The so-called snatcher of nails, is a nightmare out of a grim fairy tale: a tall, slim figure with stretched arms and long nails, driven by an unquenchable feeling of loneliness. The monster's elongated arms are to hold the victims into a cold hug, and the sharp nails will make sure that these victims can never truly escape.

CRIPPLING LONELINESS

Each snatcher of nails is driven by one need and one need only: to never be alone. Because of this, the monster will be looking for other intelligent creatures (usually humanoids) to keep close at any cost. The snatcher's grasp is often enough to achieve this, since any creature "hugged" by the monster will become overwhelmed by the same feeling of tormenting loneliness, to the point of never wanting to leave the snatcher's hand. When this fails, the monster will attack the victim with its sharp, long nails, until the victim is knocked unconscious and can easily be carried away.

A snatcher of nails will gladly accept a willing creature as company when possible, but is not beyond trying to find "friends" in the most opportunistic ways, like carrying away someone who is isolated, incapacitated, or even asleep.

SCRATCHING NAILS

The elongated nails of the snatcher contribute to its reach and are part of what makes the monster so dangerous. However, the nails hold an even more sinister secret: the snatchers keep them long so they will break in combat, leaving a fragment within the victim's clothes or body. While a creature carries one of these fragments, the snatcher will always know how to find it, making it almost impossible for the victim to escape the snatcher. The fey con-

siders the nail fragment a "gift to a friend", so they can always "find each other".

A SINISTER FAIRY TALE

The story claims that the snatchers used to be feys in service of a powerful hag, appointed to kidnap people whom she could use in dark endeavors. However, these servants decided to keep the prisoners for themselves, either because they had other plans for the victims, or because they were growing fond of them. Once discovered, the hag punished the servants with a cruel curse: to lose everything they ever cared for, and be consumed by a perpetual loneliness that would push them to do unspeakable acts just to have a little bit of company.

Since then, the snatchers of the nails have become known for their habit to kidnap the people of the mortal world, often at the service of a master in need of the monster's ability as a tracker and hunter.

SNATCHER OF NAILS ENCOUNTERS

D6 ENCOUNTER HOOK

- 1 A child has been telling their parents about an imaginary friend. Some days ago, the child wasn't in their bed in the morning. There's no sign of fighting in the bedroom, only the small, dark and jagged nail shard.
Lately, the ruler of a city has been seen accompanied by a tall, hooded figure, always holding each other's hands.
- 2 A local mage asks the characters to find the components for an Elixir of Minced Nails.
- 3 The mage suggest the characters to send one of them in the nearby forest, alone, at night, while loudly lamenting their solitude.
A druid has been attacked by a snatcher sent by a rival hag, and managed to cut away a Snatched Finger before the creature fled. The druid wishes to gift the finger to the PCs so they can hunt down both the snatcher and the hag.
- 4 A tall, gaunt figure has been following the characters, getting closer at night.
An orphaned child is being accompanied by an overprotective Snatcher of Nails, that doesn't tolerate other creatures getting too close. The child has been accepting the creature in exchange for protection.
- 5
- 6



III



SNATCHER OF NAILS

Tier 1 Skulk

A tall, sinister fey with unnaturally long limbs and nails, who feels so lonely, and only wishes to hold your hand.

Motives & Tactics: Be shy, climb walls, find company, kidnap, hide in tight spaces, stalk

Difficulty: 12 | **Thresholds:** 4/8 | **HP:** 4 | **Stress:** 3

ATK: +2 | **Scratch:** Very Close | 1d4+3 phy

Experience: Stalk +3, Tight Hiding Spot +3

FEATURES

Here's a Gift - Passive: The Snatcher leaves a tiny shard of black nail within anything they hit with a Scratch attack, giving the *Gift of the Snatcher* condition until the nail shard is removed. The shard can be found with an Instinct Roll, then it can be removed.

Wall Crawler - Passive: The Snatcher can climb and walk on vertical surfaces.

Find Friend - Action: Spend a Fear to know the direction of a creature with the *Gift of the Snatcher* condition and move towards the creature.

Hug of the Snatcher - Reaction: When the Snatcher hits a creature with a Scratch attack, mark a Stress to force the target to make a Presence Reaction Roll. On a failure, the target gains 3 Hope, and the *Snatcher's Friend* condition while the two keep holding hands or until the target chooses to mark 1d4 Stress. While with the condition, the target doesn't let the Snatcher's hand go willingly, will follow the Snatcher, and treats them as a friend. The target loses 1d6 Hope when the condition ends, and marks 1 HP for every Hope they can't mark. On a successful Reaction Roll, the Snatcher can still hold the target in a hug, making both of them *Restrained* until one of two escape the grasp.

Momentum - Reaction: When the Snatcher makes a successful attack against a PC, you gain a Fear.

ELIXIR OF MINCED NAILS

TIER 1, CONSUMABLE

This potion is created with the harvested fresh nails of a snatcher of nails, magically treated to distill the monster's contagious loneliness.

After drinking this potion, make a **Strength Reaction Roll (10)**. On failure, you feel nauseated and become *Vulnerable* until you mark a Stress.

You gain the *Gift of the Snatcher* condition until the nails leave your system.

Until your next long rest, you have advantage on rolls to find other creatures or learn information about them. Additionally, the next time you impose the *Restrained* condition on another creature before a long rest, the creature must mark 2 Stress to remove the condition on top of any other requirement.



SNATCHED FINGER

TIER 1, MAGIC WEAPON

TRAIT	RANGE	DAMAGE	BURDEN	FEATURES
Presence	Far	d6+1 mag	One-Handed	See text

FEATURES

Piece of Snatcher: While you carry the finger, you have the *Gift of the Snatcher* condition. Make a Spellcast Roll (10) to know the direction of the snatcher of this finger.

Finger Pointer. On a roll to find a creature, spend a Hope to reroll the Hope or Fear die.

This broken finger used to belong to a snatcher of nails, and is infused with the creature's need to find company. Specifically, the finger misses its original owner.



SOUL CAGER

Many know what a sleep paralysis demon is: a terrifying being appearing into the dreams of a sleeping creature, inducing a kind of paralyzing fear that feels almost deadly. Whoever experiences it speaks about a feeling of dreadful powerlessness, being forced to see and feel whatever the entity does, and left impotent towards the whole experience. A soul cager seems like a creature out of one of the above hallucinations: a gaunt crow-men with featherless wings, eyes ripped out of their face, and a cage sucking in the soul of a sleeping creature, leaving the victim with a terrible curse. But, also... Was it ever an hallucination?

SOUL DEALERS

A soul cager is a demon that steals the souls of the living for personal gain, taking advantage of creatures that are in a vulnerable state, such as during sleep. Otherwise, the mere touch of the demon is able to cloud the mind of a victim and eventually make it unconscious. Whenever the right moment presents itself, the monster will open their cage, suck the soul of the victim inside of it, then leave.

The victim deprived of its soul will live but suffers a cursed life, feeling fragile and in perpetual distress until its soul is freed. It is not unusual that a soul cager will also attempt to end the victim's life, so that the stolen soul can provide great power and be traded with demons, necromancers or other sinister entities.

FALLEN PSYCHOPOMPS

Soul cagers were not always moved by dark intentions. There was a time when they were in service of a deity of death as psychopomps: otherworldly beings tasked with accompanying the souls of the deceased during their travel to the afterlife, and with providing counsel and wisdom to others by appearing in their dreams. However, the cagers eventually grew greedy and started gathering souls for themselves, or trading them with evil entities in exchange for power. As a result, their master cruelly punished the cagers by making their feathers fall and ripping off their eyes, turning the soul cagers into the fallen version of themselves.

LOOKING FOR THE LIGHT

The punishment of the soul cagers was designed to send a message. The wings that would enable them to travel between worlds were now useless appendices. Also, without their eyes they could no longer see, except through the reflected light of these same souls they were so eager to sell out. Because of this, the cagers now hold on to an imprisoned soul, that for them is as precious as a lantern during the darkest hour of the night. Their punishment was designed to condemn the soul cagers to become just what they had chosen to be: worthless scavengers. Nonetheless, the fallen demons found a new purpose as assassins and actual hunters of souls, often in service of more powerful entities just as they were back in the days.

SOUL CAGER ENCOUNTERS

D&D ENCOUNTER HOOK

- 1 Several people in the town have been suffering from an incurable sickness, making them constantly tired and frail. Some of them eventually die, but all speak about a gaunt crow-men visiting them in their sleep.
- 2 A Soul Cager starts appearing within the dreams of a character, making it impossible for them to rest and slowly killing them.
- 3 A powerful priest, seraph or adventurer had their soul taken by a Soul Cager after defeating a powerful demon or necromancer. The servants of the defeated being are now asking for a ransom in exchange for this soul, or maybe that's a trap to take revenge?
- 4 The PCs are asked to find a Soul Birdcage, or stumble upon it as part of some treasure. A blinded, featherless crowman now haunts their dreams, asking where "their birdcage" is.
- 5 The characters are asked to retrieve the components to create an Inkhorn of Haunting. To do so, they are told to break into an abandoned hospital that is considered haunted, and fall asleep.
- 6 A Soul Cager that lost their Soul Birdcage approaches a PC in their sleep, asking for help to retrieve it and posing as a benevolent being. This will lead the characters into the lair of another cager, filled with captured souls.