SPYNNCASTER

# Synch Wights

*Notes upon their natures and haunts*

by Elias Ashwick, Spynncaster of Hollowhill



Neither good nor evil, the Wights keep to their own natures. I set down what I have seen among the stones of Hollowhill, where Spynn draws them close.

## THE WIGHTS OF HOLLOWHILL

From the old Hollowhill manuscript / Book I

# One source. Twelve natures.

Where Spynn gathers, I find Wights: on Hollowhill's cliffs, among its spires, within the Academy's oldest stone. They are unspun Spynn, wild magic possessed of appetite and habit. Neither good nor evil, they attend little to our purposes. Should our walls one day be buried and our masters all forgotten, the Wights' nature will endure. Let the reader attend to what endures.

### THE WHITE AND RED

I know their kinship by a white light narrowly rimmed in red: an eye, a mouth, a hidden lantern. No likeness of limb or hide is so reliable.

### THE LIVING THREAD

In every Wight I find a luminous Thread. It thins as the creature fails; at death the body loosens into filaments, whose light slowly leaves them.

### FEET UPON THE WORLD

All walk, climb or cling. I have never seen even Shroud take wing. Search the ledges and the undersides of stone, rather than the open sky.

## Adult size and stature

I give the measures of mature individuals in their usual posture. The portraits have their own framing; compare the measures, rather than the apparent size upon the page.

| WIGHT | HEIGHT | OTHER ADULT DIMENSIONS |
|---|---|---|
| Stamp | 0.90 m | 1.30 m body; 0.45 m pad |
| Gnaw | 0.24 m | 1.40 m uncoiled; ~0.55 m coiled |
| Pounce | 0.75 m | 1.20 m body + 0.90 m tail |
| Splinter | 1.65 m | 1.10 m span; children 0.22 m high |
| Gatekeeper | 0.55 m | 0.95 m shell; 1.45 m paddle span |
| Warden | 1.80 m | 3.20 m long; 2.30 m wide |
| Toll | 2.80 m | 1.50 m leg spread |
| Ferryman | 2.10 m | 4.80 m unfolded arm span |
| Burden | 1.05 m | 1.85 m long; 1.30 m wide |
| Tithe | 0.32 m | 0.50 m body + 0.50 m tail |
| Latch | 0.22 m | 0.38 m shell; 0.65 m leg spread |
| Shroud | 0.65 m | 0.85 m body; 2.40 m wing spread |

## Of Mages and the Long War

Mages harnessed Wights in the Long War with the Dark Folk; of this the oldest accounts agree. How those bonds were made is lost to us. I can put my Spynn within reach of a Wight. I cannot command what follows, nor mistake its company for obedience.

Rarity: Near-unseen / Rare / Scarce / Uncommon / Familiar
Size: Great / Large / Middling / Small / Minute. More light marks the rarer or larger.



# Stamp

01

RARITY *Uncommon*

SIZE *Middling*

**Sometimes seen:** Broad scree ledges and the old quarry slopes below the Academy.

I look for Stamp where stone falls. Its iron-dark plates pass for a boulder until the orange seam begins to glow. With its great pad pressed to the ledge, it listens for hours; a distant impact draws an answering blow, sometimes enough to loose another fall.

I once asked Meanamana whether the quarry path was safe. 'It has always been there,' she said beneath my boots. Stamp answered a distant fall; half the path went with it. I climbed home by the long stair, arguing with the hill.

0.90 m high; 1.30 m long; stamping pad about 0.45 m across.



# Gnaw

02

RARITY *Familiar*

SIZE *Middling*

**Sometimes seen:** Cracked finials, roof gutters and narrow fissures in the Academy cliffs.

Not every pale loop upon our finials is a root. I know Gnaw by the grit falling beneath it: six hooks braced upon the stone, red tongue working within a ring of teeth. Whatever retains Spynn holds its interest.

It travels in awkward arches, then straightens into a swift run. A moving, magic-laden object may carry it to the next high perch. I handle such objects sparingly afterwards; they grow strangely wearying to bear. Whether Gnaw consumes the Spynn or alters what remains, I cannot yet determine.

0.24 m high; 1.40 m uncoiled; about 0.55 m across when curled.



# Pounce

03

RARITY ●●●○○ *Scarce* SIZE ●●●○○ *Middling*

**Sometimes seen:** Shadowed ledges, broken stairways and the sheltered roots of the spires.

Five pale points in a seam of shade are warning enough for me. Pounce waits with its forebody flat and its hind legs folded high. Dust settles upon the velvet back; only the pale tail-filament twitches. I have learnt to look twice at an empty ledge.

Spynn newly brought to rest fixes its attention. A held orb or a bright object upon a sill invites one precise leap. Pounce knocks it loose, scuttles aside, and watches. I believe it desires the renewal of motion more than possession of the thing.

0.75 m at the raised hindquarters; 1.20 m body plus a 0.90 m tail.



# Splinter

04

RARITY *Rare*

SIZE *Large*

**Sometimes seen:** Sunlit stone fins and dry clefts above Hollowhill's lower terraces.

Splinter favours the sunlit stone fins above our lower terraces. Its amber limbs enclose a white lantern; its joints click through three quick steps and a halt. I find the small shard-young here also, but have never seen them divide.

Once I folded a broken adult into my cloak to bring it home. Before dawn, three small lights were moving beneath the cloth. By morning only the cloak remained, pierced neatly in three places. I have never mended it.

1.65 m high; 1.10 m limb span; the small shard-young stand about 0.22 m.



# Gatekeeper

05

RARITY *Uncommon* SIZE *Small*

**Sometimes seen:** Drain mouths, narrow rock passages and gaps beneath old retaining walls.

Gatekeeper backs into a narrow opening until only its eyes and broad paddle remain abroad. The brass-like shell greens at the seams; teal Thread stirs beneath its rim. I inspect displaced pebbles before putting my hand into any promising cleft.

It may occupy one passage for weeks, moving only when another offers richer Spynn. A bright object entering its shelter is scooped out again, often several times. I do not call this obstinacy. The passage is its dwelling, and my wish to pass through it is no business of the Wight's.

0.55 m high; 0.95 m shell width; about 1.45 m across with paddle extended.



# Warden

06

RARITY ●●●●○ *Rare*

SIZE ●●●●● *Great*

**Sometimes seen:** Wide cliff shelves, mossy buttresses and the oldest stone terraces.

The largest Wight I have measured resembles an outcrop clothed in luminous lichen. Its shell rises with each ponderous step. Under the front edge, a broad mouth opens upon a white light that briefly washes the neighbouring stones.

Smaller Wights gather behind it. Warden interposes its bulk before approaching bursts of magic and swallows them with a clap of stone. I cannot say whether it shelters its companions or merely feeds to advantage. Both may be true. Look for lichen brightening in shadow, and a boulder that has moved since your last visit.

1.80 m high; 3.20 m long; 2.30 m wide.



# Toll

07

RARITY ●●●●● *Near-unseen* SIZE ●●●●● *Great*

**Sometimes seen:** High pinnacles and the steep paths descending toward the Academy.

Toll stands upon high pinnacles, its palm-eye open over the paths to the Academy. As it descends toward Spynn, the brass nodules along its back kindle one by one. I hear their thin chiming before I see the legs. My simplest workings grow laborious as it draws near; a sharp disturbance drives it uphill and dims the lights.

The forces beneath Hollowhill are not all wild. I have been advised to write no more upon that distinction.

2.80 m high overall; about 1.50 m across the planted legs.



# Ferryman

08

RARITY ●●●●● *Near-unseen*

SIZE ●●●●● *Great*

**Sometimes seen:** Deep overhangs, bridge undersides and the shaded lips of cliff cisterns.

Under bridges and deep overhangs I find Ferryman hanging by its black fingers, pale Thread trailing like weed. On open stone it stalks like a heron. Its lantern-jaw betrays it in mist; its long arms catch rising Spynn and cast it down again.

One winter night, waiting below the old bridge to receive a delicate package, I sent up a signal as I had been told. Ferryman returned it. Seven times I lifted it; seven times it fell shining at my feet. I had no package that night, only awe.

2.10 m standing; 4.80 m across the fully unfolded arms.



# Burden

09

RARITY *Scarce*

SIZE *Large*

**Sometimes seen:** Level rubble beds, abandoned landings and sheltered hollows beneath the walls.

I distrust an unfamiliar cairn until I have watched it breathe. Burden settles among flat rubble, its plates drawn low about the legs, yellow light showing between them. A pale stone rests in the hollow of its back. It may keep the same deep impressions for a season.

Near it, my familiar frailties grow difficult to master, yet I can find no spell to unpick. It does not pursue me. It stays where Spynn collects and heaves beneath a weight I cannot see. I am inclined to leave it room.

1.05 m high; 1.85 m long; 1.30 m wide.



# Tithe

10

RARITY *Familiar*

SIZE *Minute*

**Sometimes seen:** Gilded gutters, parapets and the busy crossings between Academy spires.

Where bright workings pass between our towers, I expect Tithe. It hops along gutters and parapets, flicking its short wings for balance, then scurries on all fours. The wings cannot lift it; the long bare tail serves it better.

At a passing glint of Spynn it gathers something nearly invisible in both forepaws and stuffs it into its golden crop. The light continues a little diminished. I count the shining throats beneath the eaves before trusting any reckoning of what I have carried across the courtyard. A well-fed Tithe preens without embarrassment.

0.32 m high; 0.50 m body plus a separate 0.50 m tail.



# Latch

11

RARITY *Uncommon*

SIZE *Minute*

**Sometimes seen:** Warm wall faces, workshop thresholds and stones that have held much Spynn.

A red filament rising from a rust-coloured shell is Latch's surest sign. Its hooked legs cross sheer wall and paving alike. Having found a place to feed, it lifts its pale underside, settles, and seals the rim so closely that rain cannot creep beneath it.

Look near places where Spynn is gathered into new forms. While Latch holds fast, such work falters; when it moves, the work resumes. Before I blame my hands or my teaching for a silent workroom, I examine the outer sill. This small precaution has preserved much peace.

0.22 m high; 0.38 m shell; about 0.65 m across the extended legs.



# Shroud

12

RARITY *Rare*

SIZE *Small*

**Sometimes seen:** Sheltered rock faces, quiet balconies and the lee of Hollowhill's spires.

Shroud walks in a folded cloak of grey-violet wings, tasting the air with its antennae. I watch for dust upon a balcony rail: six hooked feet carry it slowly toward warmth and Spynn. On a rich stone it spreads flat, opening two white eyespots rimmed in red.

Under its wings, my small restorative workings grow faint and rest yields less renewal. The creature takes no notice of my disappointment. It creeps to the next sheltered face when ready, leaving pale powder and loose filaments. I have never seen it fly, nor found a reason to hurry it.

0.65 m walking; 0.85 m body; 2.40 m across the opened wings.