

Descent into Madness



Enchantment/Charm, Mentalism

Level: 7
Range: 10 yds./level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 7
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: Neg.

More insidious and powerful than the feeblemind spell, descent into madness afflicts one creature with a random form of insanity. The spell can affect any creature with an Intelligence of low (5) or higher; however, an individual protected by a mind blank is immune to this spell. Creatures are entitled to a normal saving throw vs. spell to withstand the spell. The form of insanity caused by the spell is determined by a roll on the chart. The caster has no idea what kind of madness the spell inflicts on the victim, although he may be able to form an educated guess after observing the victim for a few rounds.

d% Insanity Type

01-15 Delirium

16-22 Disorientation

23-34 Phobia

35-40 Paranoia

41-44 Alienation

45-54 Amnesia

55-64 Hallucinatory insanity

65-69 Melancholia

70-74 Dementia praecox

75-83 Mania

84-89 Hebephrenia

90-95 Catatonia

96-00 Homicidal mania

The various types of insanity and their game effects are described in the boxed text. The descent into madness spell accelerates the process of insanity radically, producing an advanced condition almost immediately. For example, an individual rendered paranoid by this spell skips past suspicion and instantly regards his friends and allies as enemies of the worst sort. The victim has a small chance to recover with the passage of time (as described under each type) but other than that the only ways to repair the effects of this spell are restoration, wish, or use of the psionic power psychic surgery.

The material component is a special cube of gold wire worth at least 500 gold pieces shaped to represent a tesseract, or four-dimensional figure.

Notes: Uncommon (PO:SM).

Short Guide to Mental Effects

Alienation: The character experiences an acute sense of dislocation or wrongness in his surroundings. He is certain that he belongs somewhere else, although he cannot say where that might be. An alienated

character regards everything in his surroundings-people, places, and things-as unnatural and threatening. As the condition progresses, the character loses his ability to function in society and gradually sinks into dementia praecox or catatonia over the course of 1d6 months.

Amnesia: The character purges his mind of anything that reminds him of the horrors he has experienced. Only his language skills remain; everything else-class skills, proficiencies, knowledge of people and places- vanishes. Hit points and saving throw values remain, but for all other purposes the character is now 1st level with no proficiencies. The amnesiac has a noncumulative 10% chance of recovery each month. During his amnesia, the character may actually begin his adventuring career again.

Catatonia: The catatonic completely withdraws from reality, ignoring all forms of external stimulus. He cannot move, speak, or act in any way. and may even ignore food placed in his mouth or painful injuries. There is only a 5% chance per month (noncumulative) that the catatonic will recover, although it is possible to provoke a catatonic into a temporary rage lasting 1d6 rounds by continuously annoying or pestering the individual

Delirium: The character lapses into a state of delirium lasting for 3d4 days during which he wanders aimlessly and mumbles to himself or rants and raves. He does not recognize friends and is incapable of any rational action; he is easily frightened and flees most encounters. The character cannot cast spells. If restrained or threatened by combat, he becomes catatonic for 1-6 hours. After the delirium passes, the character returns to normal.

Dementia Praecox: This condition is similar to melancholia, but consists of a hopelessness or loss of volition, The character just can't bring himself to care about what is going on around him, even ignoring direct attacks or immediate threats to his life. Each time the character attempts an action, such as undertaking a journey, participating in a fight, or casting a spell, there is a 50% chance that his dementia overwhelms him and he does nothing. If the character loses his will to fight, he will not even defend himself, losing any Dexterity adjustments to AC and suffering other penalties as the DM deems appropriate. Dementia praecox persists until magically or psionically treated.

Disorientation: The character's surroundings make no sense to him, and he is temporarily unable to recognize places, people, or even his own possessions. The character retains command of his normal skills and abilities, although he fights with a -2 penalty to his attack rolls and has a 20% chance of miscasting spells. However, he has a difficult time initiating or following through on actions; if told to stay put, he may wander off, or if his comrades flee from a monster, he might remain behind, unaware of his danger. The character has a 5% chance per day, cumulative, of recovering from his state.

Hallucinatory Insanity: The character perceives sights, sounds, or sensations from awful, alien dimensions that parallel our own. To other characters, the character appears to be hearing things, seeing things, or experiencing things that don't exist. These hallucinations have a very tangible reality for the character, and for any given action he undertakes - casting a spell, making an attack, even trying to walk across a room or study his spells-there is a 33% chance (2 in 6) that one of his hallucinations distracts him, preventing him from completing the action. Each month, there is a 10% chance that the character learns how to ignore these frightful apparitions and regains control of his perceptions.

Hebephrenia: A character suffering from hebephrenia withdraws from reality, wandering aimlessly, becoming child-like, and babbling or mumbling to himself constantly. This condition is completely debilitating. The character is effectively feebleminded. unable to participate in normal society or

survive without constant care. The character may never recover from such a profound shock and has only a 5% chance (noncumulative) per month to recover.

Homicidal Mania: The character develops a persona that delights in mayhem and murder, and wants nothing more than to kill until it is sated. The character will stalk and kill victims (often those closest to the character), often employing bizarre or disgusting methods to further its enjoyment. Each month, there is a slight chance (5%) of recovery.

Mania: Terror of unimaginable depth turns the character into a stark, raving madman. Every day, there is a 25% cumulative chance that he will suffer a manic episode lasting 1d6 hours, during which he attempts to attack or destroy anything around him. The maniac's Strength is incredible; a character's Strength increases by 6 points (count each percentile category of 18 as one point), to a maximum of 19. While the maniac is raging, he can easily turn on and kill people close to him, but he's just as likely to run off or try to gnaw the bark off a tree. Even if the character is temporarily in control of his senses, he cannot cast spells or embark on long or complicated tasks; the struggle to retain control consumes too much of his attention. The character has a 5% chance per month of recovering his stability.

Melancholia: A character afflicted with melancholia suffers endless fits of brooding and depression. Each day, there is a 5% cumulative chance that the character experiences an acute episode that completely disables him for 1d3 days. The melancholic will have no volition to travel, fight, cast spells, or even look after his own survival, although his friends may be able to lead him along on a journey or keep him out of the way on an adventure. Melancholia persists until magically or psionically treated.

Paranoia: The character becomes convinced that the agents of the Outer Powers are abroad in his world, his homeland, and even in his home town. They could be anywhere. At first, he is merely suspicious of strangers, but as the condition progresses, his suspicion spreads to those nearest him—his friends and family and grows in strength, so that he begins taking precautions to guarantee his own safety. These precautions eventually include lethal attacks and plots against his former allies and mends.

The condition only grows worse as time passes; without magical healing or psychic surgery, no recovery occurs. Generally, a paranoid PC becomes a NPC under the DM's control after 1d6 months have passed, or whenever the DM feels that the player isn't role-playing his character effectively anymore.

Phobia: This leaves a lasting mark in the character's psyche and makes him mortally afraid of some condition or creature. A character confronted with the subject of his phobia automatically flees the scene with all possible speed for at least 1d3 full turns. If the character cannot escape the condition, he lapses into a catatonic state that lasts for 1d6 days.