

*As the cat lapses into savagery by night,  
and barbarously explores the dark,  
so primal and titanic is a woman with the love-madness.*

—Gelett Burgess  
*The Romance of the Commonplace*

## BIOGRAPHY



Meeka is an unusual creature, for she is not a human who has been infected with lycanthropy. Rather, she was born a common house cat and contracted lycanthropy from a werebeast in its animal aspect. Shortly afterwards, this quiet, black cat developed the ability to change shapes, assuming the form of a beautiful, raven-haired woman. Although Meeka is not an evil creature, her natural predatory nature has made her into a deadly enemy.

## Meeka

### Pathologic Catwere, Neutral

Armor Class	5	Str	1 or 14
Movement	18, Climb 9	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	5	Con	1 or 14
Hit Points	30	Int	12
THACO	15	Wis	13
Morale	Average (10)	Cha	17
No. of Attacks	3		
Damage/Attack	1d2/1d2/1d2 (2 claws/1 bite)		
Special Attacks	Surprise, rear claw rake (1d2/1d2)		
Special Defenses	Surprised only on a 1 or 2, hit only by silver and +1 or better magical weapons		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

## Appearance

In her normal form, Meeka appears as a slender cat with a glossy coat of short hair the color of midnight. Her eyes are emerald green, ringed by a flickering halo of gold. A series of scars runs down her right flank, reminders of the wound that made her what she is today. Although mostly hidden by her fur, these blemishes are still visible as defects in an otherwise perfect coat of black.

Meeka is as graceful and elegant in her human aspect as in her feline one. Her delicate body stands just an inch or so over five feet, but it is supple and well proportioned. Although her eyes are those of a human woman, they retain a cat's green color. Her skin is dark and her features almost oriental. All in all, her unusual heritage gives her an exotic look that most men find alluring.

When moving about in human society, Meeka favors sarongs and similar loose clothes. Yellow is her favorite color, but she sometimes wears green and red fabrics. She never uses any manner of jewelry or cosmetics, although her beauty certainly does not suffer from these omissions.

## Background

Meeka was born to a comfortable family of innkeepers in the village of Briggdarrow, Tepest. The family kept cats to hunt the rodent population of their inn and were delighted when blessed with a new litter. While they embraced her half dozen siblings, however, they did not welcome Meeka. A black cat, as everyone in Tepest knows, is an omen of great ill fortune.



# MEEKA

The innkeeper's wife insisted that they keep the kitten for a time, hoping it would develop a patch of white somewhere. After three months, however, when no such blaze surfaced, she allowed her husband to rid them of the ill omen. He placed it in a burlap sack along with a pair of heavy rocks, then tossed it into the chill waters of Lake Kronov. In a matter of days, he had driven the incident from his mind. Fortune was with the black kitten, however, for the innkeeper's knot slipped loose and the feline swam ashore.

In the months that followed, the cat became feral, surviving on a diet field mice, small birds, and the like. As winter set in, however, food became scarce, and the cat grew thin. If not for a chance encounter, she might well have died. Instead, she was befriended by Anjornio, a black-hearted darkling. He saw in the cat a kindred spirit, an outcast forced to survive as best she could.

Meeka seemed to share the darkling's feelings of kinship. Though wild, she returned to his fire each night, often bringing a mouse or bird as a token of friendship. When Anjornio traveled, Meeka followed. In time, the darkling named her with the Vistani word for midnight.

Eventually Anjornio traveled into the domain of Valachan. One night, in the light of a dancing campfire, while Meeka sat cleaning herself, a pair of men arrived to meet with the him. After their business was done, they turned on the darkling. Transforming into werepanthers, they attacked. When Meeka rushed to Anjornio's aid, one of the werebeasts slapped her away. This blow opened a trio of wounds in her side and forever changed her life.

For several days, Meeka was on the verge of death. When she finally began to recover, she went back to her feline ways, unaware of the changes that were taking place inside her. As the wounds faded to scars, the dread disease spread throughout her body.

Two weeks later, when the moon grew bloated and amber in the sky above Valachan, Meeka underwent a transformation. No longer did she move about on four legs, slipping quietly from shadow to shadow as she hunted. For the next three days, she had the form of a human woman. Only the scars on her side remained to remind her of what she truly was.

Along with this change came a great increase in her mental faculties. Meeka was now as clever as any human. Her natural hunting instincts, however, had not changed. Within hours after her transformation, she made her first kill in human form.

In time, Meeka learned to be careful in her dealings with the human race. She soon learned some of their languages and customs, enabling her to move about in their society. She grew more careful in making her kills, aware that a trail of bloody bodies could lead to her doom.

Meeka also learned the nature of the rhythms that now control her life. Most of the time, she would remain in her feline aspect. But during the three nights of the full moon, she would become human from the moment the moon rose until the instant its last rays vanished.

## Current Sketch

Meeka now travels the Core, much as she did in the days before her transformation. In feline form, she is a menace only to mice, chipmunks, and the like. When she is transformed into a human woman, however, she preys upon larger creatures—often the citizens of Ravenloft.

## Personality

As a cat, Meeka is a solitary creature. She enjoys exploring, basking in the sunlight, and all other things common felines take pleasure in. She takes pleasure in the thrill of the hunt and loves to pounce at things even if she has no intention of killing them.

In her human aspect, Meeka retains something of her feline manner. This can lead others to believe that she is a pampered, almost spoiled, woman. Her aloof nature and exotic looks often cause those she meets to speculate that she is an exiled princess or other such soul.

Perhaps the most disturbing characteristic that Meeka carries over into her human form involves her hunting style. Like all cats, she likes to play with her food before she kills and eats it. While these games of cat and mouse might seem cute for a tiny cat, they are nothing short of horrific in a human female.

Meeka has little interest in human society, except as an idle curiosity. She finds the men and women of Ravenloft dirty and more than a little offensive. Her lack of experience with people makes it difficult for her to hide her contempt, something that even her exotic good looks cannot always make up for.

## Combat

Meeka is really only a dangerous enemy in her human form. As a cat, she shies away from human contact. In either of her aspects, Meeka is immune to damage by any weapon not made of silver or endowed with at least a +1 magical enchantment. She is also able to move with great agility and in almost total silence, imposing a -3 penalty on the surprise rolls of her victims. Her own keen senses make it possible to surprise Meeka only on a roll of 1 or 2.

## Cat Aspect

While most cats have only a single Hit Die, Meeka's intelligence and unusual physiology give her 5 HD. In her cat form, Meeka attacks with her front claws and keen teeth. Each of these attacks inflicts 1d2 points of damage. If both front-claw attacks find their mark, Meeka can then rake with her rear claws. Each successful attack with these inflicts an additional 1d2 points of damage.

In cat form, Meeka is able to climb trees and other such surfaces at half her normal movement rate. She does so to escape from danger or to set up an ambush.

### Human Aspect

When in human shape, Meeka is a far more dangerous creature. The long fingernails, which appear at first glance to be the mark of a pampered woman, are actually deadly claws. In any given round, Meeka can attack twice with them, inflicting 1d4 points of damage with each blow that lands. She can follow up these attacks with a dangerous bite that inflicts an additional 1d4 points of damage.

Meeka never makes use of weapons. She is a natural hunter, and the use of knives, daggers, and the like is foreign to her. She is still very agile in her human form, having a movement rate of 18. While not as quick a climber in this aspect, she can scale surfaces like trees at one third her normal movement rate.

## A CAT'S REVENGE



As this scenario unfolds, the heroes become entangled in a series of killings. At first, they'll probably be blamed for the crimes. In actuality, however, these are just loose ends being tied up by Meeka.

The nature of Meeka's curse means that the heroes must act fast if they are to solve the mysteries to follow. After the three nights of the full moon, she'll be locked in her normal cat form for another month. During that time, she'll leave the scene of her crimes far behind.

### Introduction

This adventure takes place in the village of Briggdarrow, on the shores of Lake Kronov in the domain of Tepest, not far from the Shadow Rift. If the Dungeon Master wishes to move the scenario to another location, perhaps even one outside of Ravenloft, a similar setting should be chosen. In this case, the assumption must be made that the new location is also Meeka's town of birth.

There are a few important characters in this story, although their occupations are fairly generic. If the Dungeon Master wishes, they can easily be replaced by similar characters familiar to the player characters.

### Barthol

Barthol is the owner and keeper of The Wayfarer's Friend, a small tavern and inn on the road leading into Briggdarrow. He is a round man with a jolly temperament and a great white beard. As a matter of fact, he looks an awful lot like Santa Claus and even shares the robust laugh one associates with that winter visitor.

Barthol's role in this adventure is, sadly, that of the victim. It was he who once threw a black cat into the chill waters of Lake Kronov and whose image has burned forever since in the mind of Meeka the catwere.

The Dungeon Master should go out of his way to portray Barthol as a really nice guy. He worries about the comfort of his guests, charges a fair rate for room and board, and is an excellent host. The more the heroes like him, the greater the impact of his death.

### Wanada

This charming woman is Barthol's wife. She has elegant features and dark hair, shot through with silver. A careful look reveals that she is, in fact, a half-elf. She met Barthol many decades ago and decided to stop her nomadic wandering and assume the role of a wife. The two are happy together, and she is every bit as pleasant a host as her husband.

### Denton

There are few men in Briggdarrow as physically powerful as Denton, the massive smith who fashions and mends the assorted tools required to keep the village running.

Denton is arrogant and proud. He's an easy man to dislike, prone to taking too much drink and getting into brawls. If the players suspect that they are involved in an adventure that features a werebeast, it won't be hard for the Dungeon Master to portray the blacksmith as a wereboar. This is especially true because of the tale he tells at the start of the adventure.

Several years ago, Denton spent some time as a wandering man at arms. In those days, he began to collect knives and swords. He has continued to do this ever since, which is another trait that may draw suspicion to him during the first part of the adventure.

### Clandon

A stern and quiet man, Clandon is the head of Briggdarrow's city watch. He's not a man to be crossed (treat him as a 5th-level warrior) and has astonishingly little sense of humor. In many ways, Clandon can be run as the medieval equivalent of a western sheriff.

Still, despite his grim demeanor, he's an honest man who wants only to see justice done. From time to time, when witch hunts break out or other such things threaten his town, he tries to keep things calm. He doesn't always succeed, but he's always ready to clean up whatever mess such incidents might result in.

Clandon doesn't like outsiders, a trait he shares with almost everyone else in the town. He won't go out of his way to help them, but neither will he stand by and watch them blamed for a crime he doesn't think they committed.

## Scene I: The Wayfarer's Friend

This adventure begins when the heroes reach the outskirts of Briggdarrow. It is assumed to be near the end of the day and a light, chill rain has come from off the lake. The warm lights of The Wayfarer's Friend beckon, as does the smell of a good meal and the promise of a warming drink.

The following narrative can be read to the players when their characters enter the tavern.

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*Amber light and the warmth of a blazing hearth fire embrace you as the door of The Wayfarer's Friend swings shut behind. Several tables, some occupied, are spread out before a wide bar, and the smell of roast pig hangs in the air. At the table nearest the bar, a great bear of a man with a flat-featured face is in the midst of a tale.*

*"Ne'er before have I seen such a creature," he says in a heavy voice slightly tainted by drink. "It were no normal boar—'twas twice the size of any I've set eyes on afore."*

*His companions laugh good-naturedly at this tale, jesting that his encounter was with a keg of ale rather than a wild boar. The man responds by opening his shirt. A red gash, crusted with blood, runs across his belly. It is indeed an angry wound, one sure to leave lasting scars.*

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At that point, the place falls quiet. The characters have been noticed and are being examined by cold eyes. Not the least curious of the tavern's patrons is Denton the Blacksmith, whose tale the heroes caught near its end. The Dungeon Master should make the most of this scene, letting the characters know from the start that this inn obviously does not hold as much hospitality as its name promises.

Then, as this cold reception is beginning to make the heroes uncomfortable, Barthol comes to their rescue. He waves them over to the bar with a big smile. The following text introduces the heroes to this friendly fellow.

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*"Welcome my friends!" comes a booming voice from behind the bar. "There's a storm coming in off the lake an' I can't imagine you'll be headin' out again tonight, eh? But I've room enough for you here, an' stables in the back fer horses if you've got 'em. Come o'er here and dry yourselves off. The first round is always on the house at The Wayfarer's Friend."*

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## Angry Words

The Dungeon Master can carry on the happenings of the evening more or less as he sees fit. There are, however, a few important things that must be woven into the tapestry of events before the PCs call it a night.

As the evening goes on, the heroes are subjected to more and more hostility from Denton. He doesn't actually go so far as to start a fight on this chilly evening, but he does come pretty close to it. In fact, events proceed to the point that it seems he's about to come to blows with one of the heroes, when Barthol steps in to put an end to the matter. Or, at least, that's his plan. What actually happens next is that Denton turns his anger on the jovial innkeeper. He grows more and more hostile, though still stopping short of actually throwing a punch.

This whole matter comes to an end when Clandon enters the tavern. He announces that he could hear the blacksmith all the way down the block. He suggests that the burly man call it a night and head home. For a moment, it looks as if Denton is going to lash out at Clandon, but then he backs down. Cursing and grumbling under his breath, the blacksmith storms out into the night.

Clandon excuses himself as well at this point. He wants to follow Denton home and make sure the fellow doesn't get into trouble on the way. In the wake of his departure, the heroes are given the impression that this behavior is somewhat unusual. Although Denton often drinks and lets his temper get the better of him, he's never come so close to getting into a brawl with Clandon or Barthol.

Most of the locals put this down to irritability due to his injury. After all, he's a proud man and the boar that wounded him was never found. This is, in fact, exactly what happened. Of course, the heroes may well leap to some more sinister conclusion, that the boar was a werebeast, and Denton has been infected with its curse.

## Cats, Cats, And More Cats

It also becomes quite apparent over the course of the evening that Barthol and his wife keep a good many cats around The Wayfarer's Friend. All told, there are about a dozen of the animals, all wandering about the place at will. The cats seem to know better than to leap onto tables or the bar but otherwise have their run of the place.

The Dungeon Master can use these animals to introduce Barthol's wife. She has a great affinity for the animals and, although her husband is fond of them as well, thinks of them all as hers. Although she acts in no way suspicious at this time, the Dungeon Master can rest assured that her love of these animals will bring her to mind when her husband is discovered murdered.

The Dungeon Master should also work in mention during the evening that a black cat has been seen around town. Briggdarrow's people as a superstitious lot, and they all make signs of protection when the creature is mentioned. Again, later in the adventure, further mention of a black cat being associated with the killings will help to point a finger of suspicion toward Wanada. Whether the PCs think that she is able to become a cat, or that she is some manner of witch herself (remember, the lords of Tepest are hags) is unimportant. All that matters is that these seeds of doubt and fear are planted.

## Scene II: The First Night

Several hours later, after the heroes have retired for the evening, Meeka strikes. Tonight is the first of the three nights when the lycanthropic blood in her veins changes her to the form of a human woman. It is the night when Barthol pays for the attempted murder of a small kitten many years ago.

Meeka strikes a little before midnight. She starts by making a slight racket outside of Barthol's window. As the rain outside falls steadily and the wind howls in the darkness, the innkeeper is awakened. Concerned that something might be amiss in the stable, he dons a robe and wanders out to investigate. In the stable, he is attacked.

Meeka strikes without warning, opening a nasty gash in Barthol's face with her long fingernails. She doesn't follow this up with a killing blow, however, but torments him with several other cuts first. She eventually tires of this game, however, and ends the matter.

Barthol's death scream wakes the heroes from their sleep. Read the following text aloud to detail this event.

*In the dead of night, as a steady rain dapples the window panes and a chill wind howls through the trees, a horrible scream startles you from your sleep. It is a sound so full of fear and pain as to make your blood run cold.*

*This dread cry is followed quickly by the sound of a woman's voice. You recognize it as Wanada's. "Barthol!" she yells. "What has happened? Are you okay?"*

*Having heard the scream, you know she will receive no answer.*

Outside, in the yard that separates the stables from the inn itself, is the body of Barthol. It is not a pretty sight, for the flesh has been nearly flayed from his bones in places. The following text can read aloud to describe what the heroes see that night.

*Barthol's body lies face down in a broad puddle that seems composed of equal parts water, mud, and blood. The innkeeper's rounded shape is oddly contorted, with ribbons of flesh hanging from great wounds, and one knee clearly broken. His hand is outstretched, as if he were grabbing at the inn's door when he cried out. A more gruesome sight would be difficult to imagine.*

## Clandon's Investigation

In the wake of this attack, Clandon arrives to investigate the matter. He is quick to suspect the newcomers but won't insist on locking them up right away. He warns them not to leave town, however, and sets about trying to figure out what went on.

Even a casual investigation of the area reveals that the attack began in the stables. This is evident from the splashes of blood on the walls, a few broken tools with which Barthol tried to defend himself, and the general scattering of just about everything else inside.

A more detailed investigation enables the characters to determine that the wounds inflicted on Barthol were caused by very sharp claws. Exactly what type of animal might have made them is unclear, however.



## The Blacksmith

Some suspicion also falls on the blacksmith. After all, Denton and Barthol did quarrel earlier that night. In addition, the blacksmith is known to keep some fierce dogs. While it seems unlikely that Barthol's wounds were caused by anything canine, still the corpse is in pretty rough shape, so Clandon won't rule anything out.

If the heroes go to visit Denton, they find that he denies all knowledge of the killing. He doesn't seem too surprised by it, though. Like most of the folk in Briggdarrow, he's always assumed that something like this would happen to Barthol. No good can come of catering to strangers.

While they're looking around at Denton's shop, which is also his home, the heroes can hardly help noticing his collection of knives. Most of these are in excellent condition, razor sharp and well polished. The wounds suffered by Barthol are long, parallel gashes, however—not the sort of injuries that a common knife inflicts.

A closer look, however, reveals one weapon that just might have been used to cause the types of wounds found on Barthol. Hanging on one wall is a weapon that looks like a metal gauntlet with short blades projecting from between the knuckles. It's similar to the tiger claws worn by assassins in certain oriental cultures.

Any interview or meeting with Denton should end with him losing his temper and chasing the heroes away. He may even loose his dogs on them or threaten other violence. This sets the stage for the next killing.

## Scene III: The Next Night

Meeka's next victim is the Blacksmith. At first, however, she intends only to kill his dogs. A bad turn of events, however, costs Denton his life as well.

Shortly before midnight on the second night of the full moon, Meeka makes her way to Denton's home. She breaks into the pen where his trio of dogs is kept. As she rips them apart, they raise a terrible ruckus. The noise soon arouses Denton from his deep slumber.

When the blacksmith goes to investigate, Meeka has no real choice but to kill him. His body, as well as those of his dogs, is found in the morning. Following this, Clandon is notified and he, in turn, sends for the heroes. When they arrive, read the following narrative.

*At first glance, everything looks normal enough at the Blacksmith's shop. His bellows and other equipment stand ready, finished tools are offered for sale, and those in need of repair await Denton's attention.*

*Behind the shop and the small cottage to which it is attached, however, things are quite different. There, beneath a peaceful blue sky, lies a scene of bloody carnage and death.*

*The blacksmith's body lies in the center of a large dog pen. Three parallel gashes cut across his face, splitting it open to the bone. A thick, white blanket has been thrown over his body. This is almost certainly a merciful thing, for great crimson stains have soaked through it. Clearly, Denton's wounds must be nothing short of horrific.*

*The bodies of three dogs lie near that of their master. Great wounds crisscross their bodies, making it obvious that their killer had a most savage disposition. These animals are clearly half-wolf, and they certainly didn't go down without a fight.*



It should be clear from the questions he asks that Clandon suspects that the player characters are his murderers. Not only does he conclude matters by reminding them that they are not to leave town, he also has their horses (if they have any) rounded up and transferred to his own stables. He then assigns three men (all 1st-level fighters) to watch The Wayfarer's Friend that night.

The PCs have the day to look around and conduct their own investigations, but they are under strict orders to be back in their rooms by sunset. If they don't agree to these terms, the constable has them arrested and held in the town jail. He's willing to give them the benefit of the doubt for the moment, but he won't stand for anyone challenging his authority.

## Wanada's Thoughts

Barthol's wife is doing her best to hold things together in the wake of her husband's death. She loved him dearly and can't believe that he's been taken from her. For the time being, she tries to lose herself in keeping the Wayfarer open and running.

She also pays a lot of attention to the cats. In fact, this is something that the PCs may well read the wrong way. After her husband's death, she is never to be encountered without one of the felines in her arms. Often, she can be found brushing them or whispering softly in their ears. She also seems a bit distant and lost.

All of this is normal enough considering what she has been through. To the PCs, however, it's likely to raise suspicions.

## Scene IV: The Last Night

The third night of the full moon finds Meeka returning to the scene of her first crime. It is her plan to put an end to the life of Wanada, who shares Barthol's guilt in her

attempted killing. This time, however, the PCs will be alarmed before the killing and ought to arrive in time to save Wanada's life.

In order to get into the house, Meeka must get past the man stationed outside. This isn't too difficult for her. All she has to do is sneak up on him and slash open his throat with her deadly claws. Apart from a gurgled cry of alarm, which can't be heard more than a few yards away, there is no other warning of her entry into the inn.

Read the following narrative aloud some time after the heroes have retired for the night.

*At first, the sounds that reach your ears in the dead of night don't seem at all unusual—especially in *The Wayfarer's Friend*. A single cat hisses and lets out a low growl of warning. This primal alarm spreads from one animal to another until the whole of the night is filled with feral sounds. In fact, so disturbing is this caterwauling that it hardly seems surprising when a woman's scream is added to the chorus.*

Meeka has made her way into Wanada's bedroom (where nearly all the cats in the house sleep) and now crouches at the foot of the bed. Her eyes blaze with the fury of an untamed animal. There can be no doubt that the heroes are in the presence of the killer.

### Fighting Meeka

In the battle that follows, Meeka fights valiantly. She focuses her attention on Wanada, however, eager to destroy the woman who was a party to her attempted murder. In this skirmish, the Dungeon Master should do everything in his power to play up the cat-like nature of this enemy. She leaps about, hissing and snarling, throughout the whole encounter.

This battle almost certainly ends with the characters dispatching Meeka. After all, she isn't a particularly deadly opponent (at least, not as far as lycanthropes go).

### Loose Ends

The Dungeon Master must use some care at the end of this adventure. If it ends without the PCs learning why Meeka has been killing the people of Briggdarrow, the players won't feel the scenario was anything more than a random collection of killings. There are a number of ways in which they can learn about the events that led to this tragedy, however.

After her death, the Meeka reverts to her cat form. If Wanada is still alive, she recognizes the animal and

gasps out the revelation in horror, speaking as if to her dead husband. For the moment, she seems to have forgotten altogether the presence of the heroes.

If instead Meeka manages to kill the innkeeper's wife, she can be allowed to spit out a few seconds of vengeful explanation before an attempted escape. Her words make it clear that Barthol and Wanada once tried to kill her, although the rest of her story remains untold.

In either case, or if both of the women are killed, the players can learn about what has gone before in any number of ways. They might use a *Speak with Dead* spell or perhaps piece together the facts from someone else in town. As a last resort, the Dungeon Master may assume that Wanada has kept a journal in which an account of the black cat's birth and presumed death is recorded.

### Slipping Away

It's quite possible that the characters will be the inn's only survivors of this encounter. If this happens, they'll be right in the middle of things again. Or so it seems. The folk of Briggdarrow are so superstitious that they are more than willing to blame a black cat for what has happened. However, they're also going to be pretty quick to link the cat to the heroes. This is especially true if one of the party is a wizard or other spellcaster. After all, is there anything more common for a wizard or a witch to have than a black cat familiar?

All in all, the best thing for the heroes to do at the end of this adventure is pack up their gear and get out of town as quickly and quietly as possible.

### Recurrence

Even if this adventure ends with Meeka's death, there are other ways in which these events might further torment the heroes.

It is possible that one of the other cats in the room was injured by Meeka during the fight. In this case, the animal could become a catwere as well. The same thing could happen if one of the cats laps at Meeka's wounds or tastes her blood. If the heroes managed to save Wanada's life, the newly afflicted cat might even be made a gift to them at the end of the adventure, with no one realizing its deadly potential.

At the very least, this adventure can be mirrored if the heroes ever return to Briggdarrow. As soon as they ride into town, the villagers begin to whisper behind their backs. If this is coupled with another mysterious killing or two—whatever the reason—the heroes might find themselves in danger of being hanged or burned at the stake.