

The Lantern of Lost Souls

There's something about the Lantern that sets your nerves jangling, like a soft, persistent note struck just beneath your skin. It gleams, but not in the way that polished brass or silver might. No, this thing catches the light and twists it, bends it into shapes that have no place here. In the half-dark, when the sun sinks and the world settles into that brief space between day and night, it seems to flicker like a pulse—alive, aware, perhaps waiting for you to light it again.

You hold it, and the weight of it presses against your palm, much heavier than it should be. It's not a matter of simple mass; it's a feeling that settles into your bones, deep and cold. The weight isn't physical. It's more like the memory of something ancient and unresolved, something that clings to the Lantern as surely as the dust of forgotten years. It hums—not a sound, exactly, but a vibration you feel in your chest, in the air around you. The way the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, the way the shadows stretch just a little too far in the corner of your eye.

You could tell yourself that you found it—that you stumbled across it in some forgotten place, wrapped in cloth that reeked of old stories and faded history. Or maybe it was handed to you, pressed into your reluctant grasp by someone who knew, but wouldn't say. Or perhaps—though you can't quite recall—you've always had it. Always felt its quiet presence, a dim, slumbering thing that only now has begun to stir. Maybe it's been waiting for you, just as you've been waiting for something to give shape to the unease that's lingered on the edges of your life.

It doesn't matter. What matters is that it's yours now, and it is awake.

The Lantern hungers. It seeks. The souls of the dead—the lost, the forgotten, the forsaken—they are drawn to it, like moths to a flame, or maybe like vultures to a carcass. They cling to the places where they lived, fought, loved, and died. Places you now find yourself standing in, with only the Lantern's dim glow to guide your way. These are not the stories meant for the living, and yet here you are—a witness to the echoes of things left unfinished, to voices that call out from beyond the veil, still tethered to their griefs, their desires, their rage.

When you light the Lantern, it doesn't just reveal the souls of the damned—it invites them. They come, drawn from whatever hollowed corner of existence they've been bound to, and they find you. And each one has something to tell, something to ask, something to demand. The stories they carry are like shards of broken glass, sharp and dangerous, and if you're not careful, they will cut you open.

But you light the Lantern anyway, because now that it's in your possession, there's no turning back. This is your burden. You're the keeper of these stories now, the one who listens when no one else dares.

What You Need

A Journal or Notebook: Your hand will grow tired, your thoughts may wander, but you must record it all. The lantern demands witness.

A Tarot Deck: Every card is a whisper of fate, and with each draw, you call forth something... forgotten.

A Pen: Words are more than ink here; they are the lines of the world you're drawing around yourself. Every stroke matters.

A Quiet, Atmospheric Setting: The lantern prefers solitude. It works best when the air is thick with silence, when shadows can stretch and settle like old friends.

Game Setup

The Lantern, cold and dark now, has a story, just as much as the souls it will reveal. But its origins? Those are more complicated. Some say it was crafted by a dying king to keep the spirits of his enemies bound to him even in death. Others whisper that it was a relic of some ancient order, whose members used it to steal the last breath of the dying, storing their souls in its ever-growing flame. Perhaps none of that is true. Perhaps all of it is. You decide.

The Lantern's Origin

Write, as though you're remembering a dream, about how you came to possess the Lantern of Lost Souls. Who gave it to you? Was it passed to you by trembling hands, or did you find it in a place it shouldn't have been? A whisper from the past, or a demand from the present? What were you told? Did they warn you of its power, its purpose—or were you left to discover that for yourself, one soul at a time? And most importantly: what do you feel when you carry it? Is it a burden, a curse, or something else entirely?

Phases of Play

Each time you find yourself in a new place, still and hushed beneath the weight of forgotten history, you'll follow these steps. It's always the same, yet never the same. The Lantern flickers, the air thickens, and you are no longer alone.

Lighting the Lantern

You strike the flame. The sound is a whisper, a hiss of life, or maybe death, crackling to the surface. The light spills out in an unnatural arc, cutting the dark with a clarity that is wrong. It doesn't flicker like a candle or sway like a torch—it holds. Write about the moment you realize it's begun. How does the air shift? Does it grow colder? Does the wind still, or do the shadows shudder? There's tension, of course, an awareness that something stirs just

beyond the edges of perception. The Lantern always feels heavy, as if it knows what's coming—what you called forth.

Drawing a Tarot Card

You reach for the deck, your fingers brushing over the cards as though they're alive, pulsing, waiting. You draw one, careful not to look away from the dark too long. The card slips from the deck, cold, real. What it reveals will shape the soul—its form, its intention.

Let the card speak. Is it a distorted reflection of yourself, or something far older? The image on the card tells you what's coming—whether a ghost from sorrow, rage, or something altogether worse.

Soul's Appearance

It appears, inevitably. Maybe it flickers, a shimmer barely visible in the corner of your eye. Or perhaps it's a wailing thing, bent and twisted in agony, or silent, watching with eyes that see too much. Use the tarot card to give it form—does it crawl from the earth, or is it already behind you, waiting to speak? The soul is bound to the card you drew; it shapes them like a long-forgotten truth. Write about the way they fill the space around you.

The Soul's Story and Demand

Souls do not come without reasons. It approaches you because it must—it was drawn to the Lantern like a moth to that unnatural flame. What does it want? It could ask for your aid, a simple task, or something more complex, insidious. Perhaps it offers a warning in exchange for peace, or perhaps it seeks to harm, to drag you into its story.

- Write the soul's tale. Who were they in life? What grieves them in death? Did they die by betrayal, by accident, by their own hand? The tarot card will guide you, hinting at whether their request is one of redemption, revenge, or something else entirely. Does the soul want rest—or ruin?

Your Response

The air seems to thicken as you consider its words. The Lantern's light flickers, pushing back the shadows, but only barely. You must choose your path. Do you comply with the soul's demands, heed its warnings, or defy it? Write about your actions, how they shape you. Does the weight of these encounters press upon you, change you, as the Lantern grows warmer in your hands?

Draw Another Tarot Card

The Lantern's light trembles, as though responding to your choice. You draw another card.

Major Arcana: Something pivotal occurs—an unexpected twist, a surge of power, a moment of profound revelation. Perhaps the soul is released, or perhaps you are bound in its place.

Minor Arcana (Swords): The atmosphere sharpens. Conflict brews—maybe you're in danger now. The soul may not leave peacefully.

Minor Arcana (Cups): The encounter draws out emotions. There's grief here, or love long lost, sorrow that weighs heavier than the Lantern itself.

Minor Arcana (Wands): The soul has a task for you, something left undone in its life, something it insists you complete. Or perhaps it offers wisdom, the kind that comes with a price.

Minor Arcana (Pentacles): The meeting shifts something physical—an object left behind, a remnant of the past that finds its way into your hands. Sometimes, the souls are not without gifts, though they may carry their own burdens.

Write about the outcome. The Lantern dims, or perhaps flares—each encounter leaves its mark.

Ending an Encounter

There is always a moment at the end, after the soul has spoken, after the light has played its cruel tricks on your mind, where you realize the encounter must close. You know it as surely as the soul does, though neither of you says it. The Lantern, that quiet thing in your hand, flickers—no, not flickers—wavers. It's waiting for you to extinguish it.

You exhale, or maybe it's more of a sigh, and you reach for the flame. It dims in your hand, sputtering like a breath caught between life and death. You feel the weight of what's passed, like the pressure of a forgotten promise. The light fades, and with it, the soul dissipates—back to whatever shadowed corner it came from. There's no sound in its passing, only the unsettling silence of something ancient returning to the dark.

Write about that final moment: the extinguishing of the Lantern, the way the air shifts as if the world lets out a breath it didn't know it was holding. Is there relief, a sense of peace? Or has the soul left something behind in you—a cold pit in your stomach, a lingering fear, or perhaps a greater understanding? Reflect on what remains with you, now that the figure is gone.

And then, after the quiet settles back in, you move. There's always somewhere else to go, always another place where the dead still whisper. You move to the next location, lantern in hand, and begin again.

Final Reflection

At some point, it will end. Not the Lantern's light—no, that thing is as old as the souls it reveals, and it will outlast you. But your journey with it—that will end. You'll choose how many encounters you face, how many stories you can bear before the weight becomes too much. And then, when you're ready, you'll write one last entry.