

FALL 2011

ELDER TUNNELS

HALLOWEEN SPECIAL



INSIDE:

TALES SPUN BY NEIL RIEBE AND KATJE ROMANOV

MONSTERS RE-ANIMATED BY KATJE ROMANOV AND TOM K. LONEY

ADVENTURE CRAFTED BY DAVID R. CROWELL, SCOTT MALTHOUSE,
JEFF FREELS, MIKE LARSEN, AND KEN ST. ANDRE





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This abominably capacious Halloween issue of *Elder Tunnels* is hideously bulging with unholy treasures, including solo adventures by David R. Crowell and Jeff Freels; GM adventures by Scott Malthouse, Mike Larsen, and Ken St. Andre; a short story by Neil Riebe; and two bonus monsters, one with an accompanying piece of flash fiction by Katje Romanov.

Pay no heed to the frenzied warnings of the madman Michael K. Eidson, who may try to infect you with his paranoia. Reading the sinister words and viewing the nightmarish pictures in this book is not only perfectly safe, it could be *the only hope you have!*



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ELDER TUNNELS

HALLOWEEN 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Greetings, dear reader. It has fallen upon me to warn you about this issue of *Elder Tunnels*. If you read beyond this introduction, you will read words written by the Elder Ones themselves: beings ancient, powerful, and deceitful. Let me tell you about their plans to ensnare your mind and lead you to your own destruction.

First is the ominous David Crowell. Do not be led astray by him, for what he describes will sound familiar yet be something entirely different. It may behoove you to wear a mask while you read his words. Trust me.

Next is the sinister Scott Malthouse. Those who read his words will be attacked by nasty demons or bonked in the head by easily identifiable flying objects. Crossing yourself will not help.

The words of the vile Katje Romanov will drive you up a tree and down into the depths of insanity. Then she and the mysterious M. Lot lend their evil spirits to an already wicked tree. Do not attempt to climb it.

The inauspicious Jeff Freels will tease you with a false sense of normalcy, an evening out at a small-town pub. Resist the urge to have a few drinks. Flee while you have a chance. Or burn.

Even if you maintain your sanity after reading the words of those unmentionable Ones mentioned above, you will still learn of undead beings so horrifying, I cannot describe them. Only the cruel Mike Larsen can, and does. If you meet one of these undead and it asks you to lend a hand, don't believe for a second that you'll ever get it back.

The nastiness doesn't stop there. The portentous Tom K. Loney describes a thing of evil that can steal the very souls of those who encounter it. Simply knowing of this monstrosity will keep you from sleeping at night.

Then you will learn the secrets of a certain plot of unhallowed ground, as can only be told by the inimical Neil Riebe. If you pass that way, be sure you can pay the toll, lest you pay with your life.

Any hope of staying sane you may still harbor will be crushed, nay, obliterated, by the foul fiend, Ken St. Andre, the Trollgod himself. Even Cthulhu would chitter in terror at the knowledge that Ken St. Andre will bestow upon you. Those who take the trek into the surreal world Ken describes will die deaths most horrible, in a doomed realm between worlds.

I have given you fair warning. To read further is to surrender yourself to the madness of Knowledge Not Meant To Be Known. But I have not been forthright with you completely. The editor, that heinous Christine Crabb, is also an Elder One, and as you have read my words, her power has bound you to read the remainder of this tome. Choose then, mortal: read and become insane, or die a slow and horrible death. What will it be?

Cheese and biscuits for the Trollgod!

MICHAEL K. EIDSON



BATS IN THE BELFRY



Christopher Lee Rowan

A SOLO FOR T&T 7+ BY DAVID B. CROWELL



1 The massive bulk of the cathedral rises above the city like a looming mountain, the peak of its spire shredding the clouds that scud across the evening sky. Tonight is the eve of All Saints, the time when the veils between the worlds are thinnest.

You have come to join the throng of worshippers and celebrants. Although this is a ceremony in remembrance of the dead and departed, it is not a somber occasion. The atmosphere is festive as people exchange favorite anecdotes and memories. Some have donned their costumes for the masquerade balls that will be featured across the city as the night deepens.

Tradition holds that the spirits of the dead come and dance with the living this one night each year. Spirits and living alike don masks and costumes so that their identities remain veiled. The living do this as protection from malevolent or vengeful spirits as well as from overly amorous spectral suitors who might otherwise wish to carry them back across the veils to the Cold Halls. The dead keep their own counsel as to why they appear in fantastic shapes and forms.

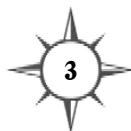
As the candles are lit and the ritual begins, the bell begins its thirteen solemn tolls. You count along, ticking them off on your fingers. One... Two... Three... Each slow, steady beat fades away before the next begins... Eleven... Twelve... Thirteen... Fourteen... Fifteensixteenseventeen... Something is wrong. The bells are clanging, discordant, erratic: not the steady rings of ritual.

Several of the priests and acolytes look up and dash away, seeking the source of the trouble. The monsignor continues the ritual as if nothing untoward is occurring.

You may follow the brothers running to the belfry at **2** or go to the choir loft at **3**, the vestry at **4**, the crypts at **5**, or the dormitory at **6**. Alternatively, you may remain in the nave and watch the remainder of the service at **7**.

2 You rush out through an archway, following the brothers who are running toward the belfry. Upward and upward you climb. First a spiraling stone staircase, then a staircase of wood, and finally a series of wooden ladders between ramshackle platforms. Always to your sides are the stone wall of the tower on one hand and the shaft and hanging bell ropes on the other.

The ropes are jerking madly instead of exhibiting the smooth rise and fall you would expect during the chiming. From above, you hear the sounds of struggle. Suddenly, a dark shape plummets down toward you, great wings of shadow swooping out from it. Abruptly, its downward flight is arrested, and you find yourself face to face with a corpse.





The body is hanging from the bell ropes. Did it become entangled during its fall? Was it wrapped in the rope and then dropped? Is a murderer still above you in the tower?

If you wish to investigate the body further, go to **9**; to continue the climb to the belfry, go to **10**; to climb down and return to the service, go to **11**.

3 This is the area where the choir gathers and sings during services. Currently the choir is present and singing a hymn of praise to the departed.

If you are wearing a choir robe, go to **26**; if not, go to **27**.

4 The vestry is a changing room where the priests, acolytes, and choir don their ritual apparel. Several spare robes hang on hooks; you may take one if you like.

The clothing of the celebrants rests in neat stacks on shelves or simply draped over chair backs or dropped on the floor, according to the owners' personalities.

You may search the clothing for anything suspicious at **8**, proceed through the door to the choir loft at **3**, or return to the service in the nave at **7**.

5 You make your way down into the crypts beneath the cathedral. The vaulted hall of the main crypt has been transformed into a banquet room. Long tables and benches parallel the central axis. Sideboards laden with sumptuous foods and exotic delicacies rest beneath the alcoves, from which the skulls of saints leer down.

Soon this place will pay host to the Silent Supper, a ritual joining of the living and the dead for a shared repast. All who come are masked and shrouded; none can say with surety who lives and breathes and who does not.

Side arches open off the crypt, leading into the catacombs, where believers have been entombed since time immemorial. Tonight they are lit with candles to show the way to the tables.

You may investigate the feast laid on the sideboard at **35**, explore the catacombs at **36**, wait for the Supper to begin at **37**, or return to the service at **7**.

6 The dormitory where the priests and acolytes live is a long stone hall with three rooms. The front room serves as a dining and study hall with a kitchen opening off of it, the second room is the sleeping quarters, and the third room is a bath and necessary chamber.



You may search the dining and study hall at **21**, the kitchen at **24**, the sleeping quarters at **19**, or the bath at **20**. Or, you may proceed to the service at **7**, the vestry at **4**, the choir loft at **3**, or the crypts at **5**.

7 The service has an air of the Otherworld about it. The congregants are all costumed and masked, as though for a masquerade ball. This is a celebration of the departed on All Souls' Eve, when the veils between the worlds of the living and the dead are at their thinnest. The service calls the spirits of the dead to come and celebrate with the living at a supper in their honor. The spirits are beseeched to provide their blessings and to look with favor upon the living.

At the conclusion of the service, the congregation is lead in solemn procession down to the crypts for the Silent Supper, at **51**.

8 You search through the clothing in the vestry: outer cloaks and boots, as you would have expected. For the most part they are very ordinary; however, several garments appear to be decades, even centuries, out of style and have a dank, musty odor suggesting that they have been stored in a cellar. A smell of the grave clings to these garments and must also cling to their former wearers.

You may proceed through the door to the choir loft at **3** or return to the service at **7**.

9 The body is that of an acolyte dressed in choir robes. He has been strangled by powerful fingers, then hung from a bell rope looped around his neck to disguise the strangling. He obviously put up a struggle; several rents, as if from talons or claws, mark his face. His robes are not stained with blood, so it is unlikely he wounded his attacker.

You may continue to climb up to the belfry at **10** or descend and return to the service at **11**.

10 As you emerge into the dimness of the belfry, you cough and sneeze on dust, feathers, pigeon guano, and bat dung. The carillon may ring with the tongues of angels, but its home is far from heavenly.

The bells loom around you in the dimness, hanging from beams as thick as a man's waist. Rafters and frames angle through the gloom. Guttering tallow candles shed light and shadow in equal measure.

No one passed you on the staircase; the murderer must be here.

To stand watch at the ladder, go to **12**; to search among the bells, go to **49**; to search the shadowed corners of the belfry, go to **14**. The two monks with you will take the tasks that you do not.



11 Shaken by your encounter, you turn and descend the stairs, re-tracing your steps. The monks shrink back to give you room as you pass. Are they looking at you with scorn, pity, or understanding? It is hard to read the eyes beneath their cowls. Go to **7**.

12 You stand at the ladder's head, anxiously peering into the gloom. Your ears are pricked to catch any sound. Suddenly, a shadow detaches from the dark and flies straight at you! You feel a leathery impact and a sharp prick of pain.

The creature attacking you is a dire bat (MR 95, 10d6+48; Special Damage 4/Hold That Pose). If you defeat it, roll a die. On an even result, go to **16**; on an odd result, go to **18**. If the bat kills you, go to **33**.

13 You poor lost soul, how did you end up here in Limbo? Return to where you came from or restart this solo. This paragraph does not exist in the world of the living.

14 You cautiously advance into the shadows at the edges of the belfry. It is a claustrophobic, low-ceilinged space. You crabwalk, crouched over with your head brushing the beams above you. Suddenly you feel a strong draft of cold air. Looking up, you see that one of the leaded windows has been forced open. The killer must be on the roof. You may climb out after him at **15** or remain inside and search further at **43**.

15 You pull yourself up through the window and out onto the slates of the roof. A chill wind is blowing, and the stars shine coldly down. You gingerly creep down the roof toward a vague form. The shadow looms up to meet you, a humped and twisted shape in a long, billowing cape.

The cape flaps out with a leathery creak, and harsh claws are scratching for your throat, stony fangs biting. You face a creature out of nightmare. Bestial muzzle, horns, beard, claws, dragon-wings, flesh of living stone: a gargoyle (MR 200, 21d6+100; stone body provides 5 points armor). If you defeat it, go to **34**; if it kills you, go to **33**.

16 The brother who was investigating the bells gives a cry and lunges forward. "I've got him! It was the bell ringer." If you rush to his assistance, go to **49**; otherwise, go to **54**.

17 You hear a high-pitched squeak and the flap of leathery wings. Turning, you see a bat with a wingspan as broad as a tall man's reach



swoop into the monk keeping watch at the head of the ladder. If you dash to help the monk, go to **60**; if not, go to **50**.

18 You hear a loud exclamation from the monk who was searching the far corners of the belfry: "A window is open here. He's on the roof! He'll not escape." With that, the monk scrambles out the window and onto the slates of the roof outside. You may join him at **44** or continue to search inside the belfry at **43**.

19 This austere room serves as sleeping quarters for the monks. Each has a simple bed with a plain chest at the foot, a hook for hanging robes, and a small shelf for personal items. A quick glance shows nothing out of place or unusual.

You may check the bath at **20** or the dining hall at **21**.

20 This room serves as bath and privy for the monks. It has several large copper and wooden tubs for washing, rough linen towels and lye soap, and a fireplace and cauldron for heating water. Several cubicles containing the necessaries are located at the end of the room. It is clear that no one is hiding here, nor are there any signs of disturbance. You return to the dormitory at **19**.

21 This room is furnished with long tables set parallel to its long axis. The tables are fitted with wooden benches, which are currently resting on the tables. This is clearly where the monks dine and study. At the front of the hall are a lectern and several wall cupboards; an archway on one side leads to the kitchen and a door at the far end leads further into the hall.

You may enter the room beyond the door at **19** or the kitchen at **24**, or investigate the cupboards at **22** or the lectern at **23**. Or, if you like, you may return to the service at **7** or visit the crypts at **5**.

22 The cupboards contain wooden dishes as well as scrolls, ink, and candles for the monks' copy work. Opening a couple of scrolls at random shows them to be religious writings and poetry: no help in catching a murderer. Return to **21**.

23 The lectern serves as a pulpit for the before-meal blessings. A large devotional lies open on the lectern; perhaps this is the current work being copied. Sadly, the killer has not left his calling card here for you. Return to **21**.



24 This is a large and well-equipped kitchen. It shows signs of recent use, likely in preparation for the Silent Supper that will follow the evening's worship. If you are unarmed, you may equip yourself with your choice of large knives or cleavers (each is a 2d weapon). When you are finished here, you may investigate the pantry at **25** or return to the dining hall at **21**.

25 The pantry and buttery off the kitchen houses the ingredients needed to prepare the simple meals of the monks and priests who serve the cathedral. Sacks of meal, dried beans and peas, braids of onions, bundles of dried herbs, wheels of cheese: simple but wholesome and sustaining fare. A butcher's block and knives stand ready to prepare meat brought in fresh. Make a 1st lvl SR In. If you succeed, go to **38**; if not, return to the kitchen at **24**.

26 The choirmaster scowls at you and furiously motions to an empty place on the choir benches. You may take your place with the choir and spend the service here observing what happens at **28**, or you may drop the hood of your robe and try to explain that you are not with the choir at **29**.

27 The choirmaster scowls at you and furiously gestures at you to leave. If you go quietly, you may return to the service at **7**, proceed to the crypts at **5** or the dormitory at **6**, or argue with the choirmaster at **29**.

28 You take your place among the choir and fake your way through the singing. Your disguise holds, and you remain undetected until the end of the service. Go to **30**.

29 The choirmaster scowls furiously at your intrusion into his sacred realm. He ushers you out of the choir loft with a raised fist. Once in the vestry with the door to the loft closed, he demands to know what you mean by bursting into the choir loft during the service. You may apologize and tell him it was a mistake—that you are lost—at **31**, or tell him there has been a disruption in the church and you are investigating it at **32**.

30 You slip into the indicated space and try your best not to sing so far out of tune or off key as to draw attention to yourself. You manage this reasonably well, drawing only a few glares as you miss notes and are slow finding your place in the hymnal. As you sing, you also try your



best to keep an eye out on the service. At one point, the bells clang discordantly, and several monks run across the back of the sanctuary in pursuit of another. You chafe, wanting to follow, until finally the service ends and you are free to process down to the crypts for the Silent Supper at **51**.

31 You stammer out an apology, telling the choirmaster that you made a mistake and got lost; you were looking for the lavatory. The choirmaster scowls more furiously at this. "Well, it isn't here," he growls. He proceeds to give you directions, followed by some rather unpriestly advice as to what you can do when you get there.

You may rejoin the service at **7** or go to the dormitory at **19** or the crypts at **5**.

32 You stammer out an apology, telling the choirmaster that you are investigating a disturbance in the service. The choirmaster scowls more furiously at this. "Well, you are certainly creating a disturbance here," he growls. He proceeds to give you directions to the crypts, followed by some rather unpriestly advice as to what you can do when you get there. You may rejoin the service at **7** or go to the dormitory at **19** or the crypts at **5**.

33 Its claws sink into your flesh with a dreadful finality. You feel your heart beat its last; your sight dims and fades to black; silence falls.

Your mortal life is over. Slowly and dimly at first, you become aware that you still feel; that your eyes perceive, but as through a glass darkly. Your heart no longer beats, your breath no longer steams, yet you stand. The pain of your wounds has gone, though they still mark your flesh. You feel called back into the cathedral; the Silent Supper awaits, and a murdered monk still waits for justice. Make your descent at **11**.

34 The living rock of the gargoyle chips and cracks at each of your blows. Finally it returns to stone and, off balance, slips and plunges from the roof. Following with your eyes, you see it hit the pavement far below and shatter. The gargoyle is a killer, but not the one you seek; these gargoyles, you know, are enchanted to be unable to enter the cathedral. Roll 1d6: on an even result, reenter the belfry at **16**; on an odd, go to **17**.

35 You step over to the sideboards and peruse the choices offered on the menu for tonight's feast. It will be a cold supper, though a rich



one. Meat pasties, pies, tarts, salads, soups, bread, cheese, roast fowl, nuts, green salads, subtleties, puddings...your mouth waters at the sights and smells. If you wish to sample some of the dishes, go to **39**; otherwise, you can wait for the feast at **37**, return to the service at **7**, or explore the catacombs at **36**.

36 You peer into the flickering candlelight that barely illuminates the entrance archways leading into the catacombs. This seems the likeliest hiding place for the murderer; if you want justice you will have to go in after him. Slowly and reluctantly you enter the final resting place of the faithful. At first, the tunnel walls are lined with niches into which the coffins of recent interments have been placed. As you go deeper along the low passages, the niches become smaller and are filled with dry bones. Soon you pass into chambers where bones of like kind are stacked and arranged into walls and pyramids, towers of skulls, patterned floor mosaics of inlaid bone: a whole city of the dead. Your ears catch faint whispers of sound. Dry rattles and clacks, the rustling of ancient fabrics; it seems the dead are on the move. You remember that this is the Eve of All Souls, when the veils are at their thinnest. You hope that the dead will look with favor upon your search for a murderer.

As you round the next corner, it becomes clear that your question will soon be answered. Several ancient denizens of the catacombs are moving toward you. Behind them stands a figure cloaked and cowed in deep red.

The dead figures seize you in their cold clutches. If you have died in this adventure, go to **59**; if not, go to **40**.

37 You wait in the silent crypt for the worshippers to come to the Silent Supper. It is an eerie feeling to wait alone at the table in this place of the dead. You may sample the foods at **39** if you have not already done so. As you wait, you begin to realize the silence is not as complete as you had thought. Rustling, creaks, and rattling clatters are softly echoing from the catacombs. You may go to investigate at **36** or continue to wait for the Supper to begin at **51**.

38 You rummage through the raw ingredients and herbs laid out in the pantry. Something is missing. Your gaze travels over bundled stems of rosemary, basil, and thyme; braids of onions; salt cellars...wait, braids of onions red and white but no garlic. Not a clove of garlic is to be found anywhere in the pantry. Strange that this staple flavoring should be absent. Puzzling over this, you return to the kitchen at **24**.



39 You pick and taste at some of the dishes. The food is well prepared, but blander in taste than it should be. You sample a bit more, and it comes to you: this meal has been prepared entirely without salt. Looking about, you see that there is not a single salt cellar on tables. Of course; this is the Silent Supper, and the dead cannot eat salt.

You may now wait for the Silent Supper to begin at **37** or explore the catacombs at **36**.

40 There are five of the animate dead facing you. MR 50 each, 6d6+25; Spite Damage 1/1. If they kill you, go to **42**; if you defeat them, go to **41**.

41 You beat off the animated dead; they fall to the ground in piles of bones and dust. Looking around, you realize that in the confusion their red-cloaked master has disappeared. You return to the crypt for the Silent Supper at **51**.

42 Their cold fingers and rusted weapons sink into your flesh with a dreadful finality. You feel your heart beat its last; your sight dims and fades to black; silence falls. Your mortal life is over. Slowly and dimly at first, you become aware that you still feel; that your eyes perceive, but as through a glass darkly. Your heart no longer beats, your breath no longer steams, yet you stand. The pain of your wounds has gone, though they still mark your flesh. You feel called back into the cathedral: the Silent Supper awaits, and a murdered monk still waits for justice. Return to the crypts at **5**.

43 Venturing out onto the roof of the cathedral at night to face a murderous madman is more than you bargained for. You hesitate beneath the window frame, listening. You hear a cry, then several blows, then a scream!

You may scramble up onto the roof at **44** or let your cowardice get the better of you and descend at **11**.

44 You pull yourself up through the window and out onto the slates of the roof. A chill wind is blowing, and the stars shine coldly down. You see the shadow of the monk moving along the roofline. A second shadow looms up to meet him, a humped and twisted shape in a long billowing cape.

You may go to the monk's assistance at **45** or stand and watch at **46**.



45 You scramble down across the slates of the roof. The monk seems to be getting the worst of it from his opponent. The monk has a Con of 12, is armed with a staff (2d), and has +5 Adds. Go to **15**.

46 As you stand and watch, the monk is swiftly defeated and his body thrown from the roof. If you charge down the roof to take revenge, go to **15**; otherwise, go to **47**.

47 As you watch the monk's killer, the presumptive murderer leaps out into empty space. He plunges swiftly downward, but then his cloak spreads like wings and catches the air. With a sudden powerful flap, the creature is in full flight. It sails to a perch on the steeple, from which its misshapen profile juts out alongside those of the other gargoyles. Shaken, you retreat back into the relative safety of the belfry at **48**.

48 You climb back in through the window and tell the waiting monks what you witnessed. They do not respond with the relief you had expected. "The gargoyles are enchanted to be unable to enter the cathedral," one explains. "I fear we are still in with a murderer, and though it pains me deeply, I believe I know who it is...Bell Ringer, show yourself!"

You hear a cry of "No! It was not me!," and a hunchbacked figure leaps onto the bell ropes and rapidly shinnies down.

"Alas, that he could betray us this way after we took him in when the world rejected him. Come, quickly! We must catch him." With that, the monks turn in pursuit to **53**.

49 The bells hang from their crossbars like great swollen fruits of bronze. The air still hums with the last vibration of their peals. Peering between the shoulders of the bells, you spy a glimpse of a hunched shape. Could this be the murderer?

Cautiously you edge around the bell, skirting the drop beneath it. Just one more step and... The face that greets you is hideous, grotesquely swollen and knotted.

You lunge, hands outstretched to grab him. The fiend ducks under your grasp, leaps into the shaft, and slithers down the bell rope. You may make a 1st lvl SR Dx and follow him down at **52**, or you may dash down the ladders and stairs at **53**.

50 The monk is aged and a poor combatant. As the dire bat swoops in on the attack, the monk raises his arms in a desperate attempt to shield himself. The bat claws and bites at him. Tragically, the old monk

stumbles on the head of the ladder, trips, and falls. He lands at the base of the ladder, sprawled like a broken doll cast aside by a child. The bat swoops back into the shadows and vanishes in the gloom. Go to **16**.

51 At last it is time for the Silent Supper. You take your place on the benches at the tables in the crypt. The food is passed from hand to hand in silence. Diners indicate by gesture which dishes they would next like to sample. No one speaks. The only sounds are the clink of tableware and the working of jaws chewing.

The celebrants look better suited to a carnival than a funeral setting. Each is costumed more extravagantly than the last. Here a goblin-angel passes a slice of cheese to a corpse-bride. There a horned and painted devil breaks bread with a mail-clad knight whose face is obscured behind a helmet visor. The shades and spirits of the dead are as strangely garbed and masked as the living. For this one night all are equal as the veils between the worlds are sundered.

Faintly at first and then with growing volume the silence is disturbed. With an anguished cry, the form of the murdered monk bursts in among the throng. His head is cocked at a grotesque angle on his neck, and his eyes bulge from their sockets. "I demand justice before you all. One among you killed me, and my blood still stains his hands. Give me justice so that I may rest." He levels his arm to point unwaveringly at a figure hooded and cloaked in red. The figure stands and throws back its cowl to reveal skinlike parchment stretched over a skull. His eyes and nose appear as pits of shadow as he throws back his head and laughs. The candlelight gleams on the points of his fangs. A vampire!

"Tonight, when the veils are thinnest, is the night when my kind rule. Your death was but a taste of what is to come. Tonight's supper will be silent no more. Sing! Sing your songs of screams while I feed."

The vampire grabs you as his first victim. If you have died in this adventure, go to **56**; if you have not died, go to **55**.

52 The coarse rope blisters and burns your hands as you slide down after the hunchbacked assassin. The bells above you peal wildly and discordantly. The chase is on. Dropping off the rope, you follow quickly through the sanctuary and down into the crypts. Go to **36**.

53 You fly down the ladder and round the spiraling stairs at a speed that makes no concessions to safety. Alas, your quarry is faster than you. As you reach the bottom, you catch sight of him racing through the crowded sanctuary and down into the crypts.

You may join the throng of worshippers at **7** or follow into the crypts at **5**.

54 The monk leaps into space, grabbing a bell rope and sliding down after the bell ringer. The cacophony of clanging bells is deafening. You join the other monks in giving chase at **53**.

55 You must now fight the vampire. If you lose, you will doubtless become his servant as one of the undead. If you slay him, justice will be served. Vampire: MR 175, 18d6+86; 2 points Spite for every 6 rolled. If you slay the vampire, go to **57**. If he slays you, go to **58**.

56 The vampire pauses at the moment of sinking his fangs into you. "No longer a mortal? Join with me, then." If you accept his invitation, go to **58**; if you refuse, go to **55**.

57 The vampire crumbles into dust. The murdered monk turns to you and offers his sincere thanks. You are certain to remember the events of this All Souls' Eve for a long time to come. The End.

58 As you had feared, you do not find oblivion. Instead, you are reborn to a tormenting red thirst. You have become a minion of the Master Vampire, and now you join him, falling upon the living gathered for the Silent Supper, in a supper of your own. The End.

59 The dead pause as they take hold of you: "You are not one of the living. You are one of us. Come join us at the Supper." They take your arms and escort you to the Silent Supper at **51**.

60 The creature attacking the monk is a dire bat (MR 95, 10d6+48; Special Damage 4/Hold That Pose). The monk has a Con of 12, is armed with a staff (2d), and has +5 Adds. If the bat kills you, go to **33**. If you defeat the bat, go to **16**.

61 I hope you enjoyed this little venture. My inspirations should be obvious: *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and "The Masque of the Red Death" being chief among them. Be sure to play this with the lights on!



CABIN IN THE WOODS IV THE STABBENING



Katje Romanov

KAT

BY SCOTT MALTHOUSE



Legend has it that it was written by the Dark One: the *Necro-gnome-icon Ex Mortis*, roughly translated as *Book of the Dead Gnome*. The book served as a passageway to the evil worlds beyond. It was written long ago, when the seas ran red with blood. It was this blood that was used to ink the book. However, one day, the book disappeared.

This GM adventure is for four to six characters, levels 1st through 3rd. Although it is suited to common kindred, rare kindred may be used at the GM's discretion.

With apologies to Sam Raimi.

GM BACKGROUND

Two thousand years ago, in the land of Rheygul, a war erupted. However, this was no ordinary war, as the invading army consisted of hideous creatures from another dimension who were at the mercy of General Khakanigas, a malevolent gnome wizard. Khakanigas had in his possession the dread *Necro-gnome-icon*, a book which he used to summon and control his otherworldly horde.

The book, said to have been created by the Dark One before time began, was inked in blood and bound in flesh. It was a disgusting sight to behold, and many went insane just from gazing at the forbidden tome.

As black clouds rolled over the battlefield of Rheygul, Khakanigas's forces clashed with the noble knights of Rheygul. Both sides suffered many casualties, but in the end the knights prevailed and drove the sinister army back into the dimension from whence it came. The gnome, seeing his forces decimated, fled the battlefield and the country.

Rumours spread years later that he had settled down in Huddlefork, building a small cabin in the Sirencall Woods and living there for the remainder of his days. These rumours appeared to have been confirmed a month ago, when a few brave guardsmen ventured deep into the woods and stumbled across the cabin. Planted in the dirt outside it was a headstone bearing Khakanigas's name.

In actuality, during his last days the gnome had erected the headstone himself in order to deceive others into believing he had indeed passed away and would never again pose a danger to the land. Then, with his final breath, he bound himself to the *Necro-gnome-icon*, which now rests in the labyrinthine complex beneath his cabin. He believed that this act would ensure not only that he would live on in the dimension of the dead, where he would grow more powerful, but also that, if the book were to be destroyed, he would once again be released into the material world, stronger than ever.

Khakanigas's headstone also bore a passage that came directly from the dreaded book. The passage, if read out loud, would summon



demonic creatures to the forest. Unfortunately, one of the guards made the mistake of reading it. Only one of the three guards emerged from the woods alive, and he died two days later. Before he died, he told his friend Lucan that his fellows were slain by horrific demons.

Now the creatures from beyond haunt those woods and all who would trespass in the cabin. Stopping the creatures means using the *Necro-gnome-icon* to unsummon them and then destroying the vile book. Meanwhile, a priest is trying to lure a human into the woods in order to summon the Dark One, who will destroy the world. It's up to the delvers to stop him.

PLOT HOOKS

1. Characters arrive in Huddlefork and hear of an antique book collector who will pay 16,000 gold pieces to anyone who can deliver the *Necro-gnome-icon* to him. He will never tell the characters the real name of the book, referring to it instead as the "ancient book of wonders."
2. Characters hear about the "Horror of Huddlefork" while in the tavern of another town or city. They are told that three guards were killed by something in the woods where the necromancer had lived. They bet the mayor of Huddlefork will pay good money for peace to return to those woods.
3. Lucan, a friend of one of the guards, spots the characters and tells them the story of the guards' discovery. He will pay 8,000 gold to the party if they avenge his friend's death.

PART ONE

Huddlefork

Whichever plot hook is used, the adventurers will arrive in Huddlefork after a good week-long journey. The road to Huddlefork is safe, as merchants pass through regularly from Khosht and Griz'zart. However, if the characters mention Huddlefork to any of the travellers along the way, the travellers will say that they never travel by night because of the stories of demons in the woods close by.

If the players do decide to travel at night, they will meet no other soul, but on a roll of 1 on a d6 they will be attacked by a winged hellhorn.

Winged Hellhorn

MR 100 (11d6+50)

Special Damage: Spite 1/1





Special Ability: Every combat round, the winged hellhorn has a two in six chance of grabbing a random PC, flying into the air, and throwing her to the ground. The target PC halves her Combat Adds and takes 1d6 damage.

Huddlefork is a small city with a population of 200,000. Most residents are humans and elves, but there is a hobb minority who collect together in hobb-only taverns. During the day, the city gates are open to merchants and travellers, but at night they are heavily guarded by six guardsmen and women. If the PCs arrive at night, they are thoroughly questioned. If the PC with the highest Charisma attribute fails a 1st lvl SR Ch while attempting to convince the guards to let them in, the group must wait outside until morning, when the guards are gone. If this happens, roll a d6. On a one, the PCs are attacked by two winged hellhorns, but the six guards do come to their aid. Each guard has 10 Combat Adds and rolls 3 dice. If the creatures are defeated, the guards will let the PCs in on the count that they put up a good fight and are clearly not in league with the monsters.

There are five primary locations in Huddlefork that the PCs might wish to visit. They are:

1. The Slaughtered Lamb Pub
2. The Market
3. The Temple of Rai'Mi
4. The Guardhouse
5. The City Library

The Slaughtered Lamb Pub

This long-standing establishment is run by owner Marie Lovecraft, a white-haired elf with a cheery disposition that hides a disturbed mind. Marie welcomes the PCs warmly and offers them a drink. Rooms here are one gold piece per night, and drinks cost five copper coins. If asked, Marie will talk openly about the demons that lurk in the woods. She believes they come from out of time and space, because the surviving guard spoke of their "otherworldly" qualities—multiple, gibbering mouths; tentacles; and wings—features that have not been documented together on any known creature of this world, as far as she knows. She tells them that the necromancer died, but she thinks his spirit still haunts the woods. If asked about the priests of Rai'Mi, she becomes angry and says that she would never go and worship at their altar. She says she has seen their head priest go into the woods at night, so she is very suspicious of the whole religion.

Some of the patrons will tell them that Marie hasn't been the same since Bruce, the remaining guard, told her about what he had seen.

She often sits in the corner of the pub, writing in her notebook, but nobody knows what she's writing. She is in fact writing about her demonic dreams of late, in which some dark, shapeless figure has told her about the vast bounds of space and time, about the ones who created the *Necro-gnome-iron*. If she is asked about the notebook, it requires a 2nd lvl SR Ch to get her to mention the dreams, but she won't go any further into detail. A 2nd lvl SR Dx will allow a PC to quickly steal the notebook.

All the patrons know about the horrors in the woods, and it's clear that nobody dares go there. One man says that the necromancer had many rare books and magical equipment, which would fetch a hefty price on the market.

The Market

The market is alive with commerce, with stalls selling all kinds of goods, from backpacks to armour. Most items detailed in the rulebook are on sale, but at a 10% higher price.

The Temple of Rai'Mi

Priests in green robes mill 'round the temple, reading, praying, and generally doing priestly things. They have noticed a sudden influx of people attending sermons over the past few weeks, and as a result they have been making quite a bit of money from collections. One priest says that the demons are the best thing that's happened to the Rai'Mi religion, because of the monetary factor, but he does realise this is a crass thing to think. If the PCs make a donation, they each will receive a blessing that will restore all health and strength loss.

The priests also comment on Marie Lovecraft, the pub owner, saying that she seems to have become obsessed with the creatures in the woods. They say they have asked her several times to start coming to the temple, but she has refused each time.

If asked about the high priest visiting the woods at night, the priests say that he has been placing protection spells on the trees to prevent the demons from leaving the woods. In actual fact, High Priest Thulsara has been communing with the creatures. They have been telling him to bring Marie Lovecraft to them, as she is a perfect conduit for the Dark One to use to break into this world.

The high priest is not in at the moment, so it is impossible for the PCs to question him.

The Guardhouse

This smokey building is close to the main city gates and run by Head of the Guard Caleena Wulfrum. She and a handful of other guards are

in the guardhouse and will speak to the PCs if questioned. She knows the following:

- * Bruce died of severe wounds to his chest. He said the demons did it.
- * There have been attacks every week by the demons. At least 20 people have been killed, mostly merchants travelling at night.
- * She has done a bit of research into the necromancer and has found out he was in possession of an evil book called the *Necro-gnome-icon*. The book has the power to summon creatures from another dimension. The library would be a good place to go to find out more.
- * She has started visiting the temple to receive blessings. She wishes Marie Lovecraft would go along too; she has tried to convince her.

The City Library

The library is a cramped place where there are more books than shelves. The head librarian is sitting at a large oak counter, serving customers. A few other librarians are scurrying around, sorting and fetching books.

If the delvers search the shelves, they will find three books that will prove helpful to them:

A Bloody History of Rheygul

Tells of the famous battles in Rheygul's history. Players learn that the gnome necromancer General Khakanigas attempted to take over a country called Rheygul, which is 300 miles east of Huddlefork. Using the *Necro-gnome-icon*, he amassed an army of demons and marched on the capital, Highnorst. Khakanigas lost and fled Rheygul, injured and dismayed. It is said that he was later spotted in Sirencall Woods, near Huddlefork, living in a small cabin. Whether he still had the book at the time is unknown.

Banned Books: Literary Nasties

Speaks of the *Necro-gnome-icon* as the most foul book ever made. Inked in blood and bound in flesh, this book opens a passageway to the worlds beyond. Just reading certain passages of its text aloud can cause evil things to pop into existence. It is said that powerful gnome wizards can bind themselves to the book in order to make themselves immortal in the realm of the dead. If the book is destroyed, the bound wizard is cast out into the mortal realm. To unsummon the demons, the first passage of the book must be read backwards. The book can only be destroyed with fire.

Demons, Devils, and Other Horrid Things

Tells of the *Necro-gnome-icon*'s ability to summon horrific monsters from another dimension. They are believed to be in the service of the Dark One, a formless god who travels from world to world, materialising through a human conduit and destroying everything and everyone on the planet. It is said that only particular conduits are suitable for the Dark One's manifestation. The Dark One tests suitability by feeding potential conduits visions of horrible worlds beyond their comprehension. It is likely that the Dark One uses its servants to lure a conduit to a ritual space in order for it to manifest.

PART TWO

Once the players have learned about the *Necro-gnome-icon* and the Dark One, they are likely to head into Sirencall Woods to locate the book. They may, however, try to find Marie, who is being targeted by the high priest, and talk to her about their findings. If they choose to go down this route, they are told by one of the bartenders that Marie left a note saying that she has left the city and will not return for a few days. The note did not say where she was going. (In fact, the high priest has kidnapped her and is, for the moment, holding her in the temple's basement. However, if the players go to the temple they will find it closed, and even if they manage to break in, they will not find anything; by the time they arrive, the priest will have left with Marie.)

THE SIRENCALL WOODS

1. The Grabbing Trees

The trees seem to bear down on the PCs, their gnarled limbs reaching out for them. Each PC must make a 1st lvl SR Dx or be grabbed by a tree and crushed, taking 1d6 Con damage. Once the damage has been taken, any grabbed PC must make a 1st lvl SR St or be crushed again. This will continue until the character has escaped or died.

2. The Dancing Witch

In this clearing, a young woman is dancing gracefully through the undergrowth. She is actually the animated corpse of one of the merchants who was recently killed. Her dancing is so hypnotic that the PCs must make 1st lvl SRs In. Those who fail become so entranced that they walk towards her and fall to their knees. She then reaches out and absorbs 1d6 St from each of the hypnotised PCs before disappearing into the darkness with a cry. If she is not able to hypnotise anyone, she flees immediately.



3. Acolyte of the Dark One

A gibbering, tentacled mound of blackness moans through its 10 mouths. There are two bodies on the ground, as well as a notebook (assuming the delvers did not filch Marie's notebook earlier). The notebook is Marie's, as she has been taken through through this area by the high priest. The bodies are those of guards who chased the priest into the woods and were killed by the Acolyte.

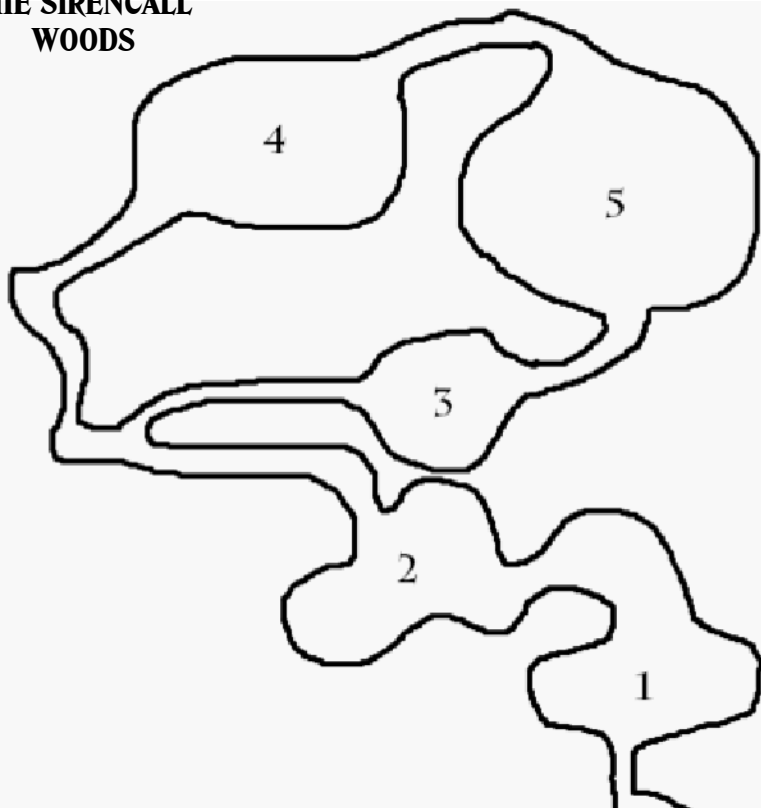
Acolyte of the Dark One

MR 120 (13d6+60)

Special Damage: 3/Befuddle

Special Ability: The Acolyte is weakened by fire. If fire or a fire spell is used, do double the damage.

THE SIRENCALL WOODS



4. Strung-Up Heads

Strung up on branches with rope are several decapitated heads, hanging around head height. Once the PCs get within 10 feet, the heads' eyes open, and they say simultaneously: "We are the ones that were and shall be again!" before cackling hysterically. This highly disturbing sight requires PCs to make 1st lvl SRs In or go slightly insane, permanently reducing their In scores by 1d6.

5. The Necromancer's Cabin

Once they reach the cabin, read out loud the following passage:
"Out of the gloom emerges a large wooden cabin. Outside it is a porch chair, strung up with chains, that rocks quietly in the breeze. The world falls into a silent unease, as not a sound can be heard around you. A lone headstone stands before the cabin."

The front and back doors are locked, but with at least five minutes' searching or a 1st lvl SR In, the key can be found under the mat (if that's not the first place the delvers look).

THE CABIN

There are three rooms in the cabin: the sitting room, the kitchen, and the bedroom. The whole place smells musky, and a thick layer of dust covers everything. There are two items of value here: a vial of Increased Intellect (one use, permanent +1d6 to In) and an ornate music box worth 400 gp. In front of the large fireplace is a trapdoor with a trail of blood leading to it. This is the door to the basement, where the high priest has taken Marie. It is locked, but can be forced open with a 1st lvl SR St.

1. Entrance Stairs

The stairs descend 60 feet into the earth. It's pitch black, but on the walls are torches that can be lit. The blood trail stops halfway down the stairs.

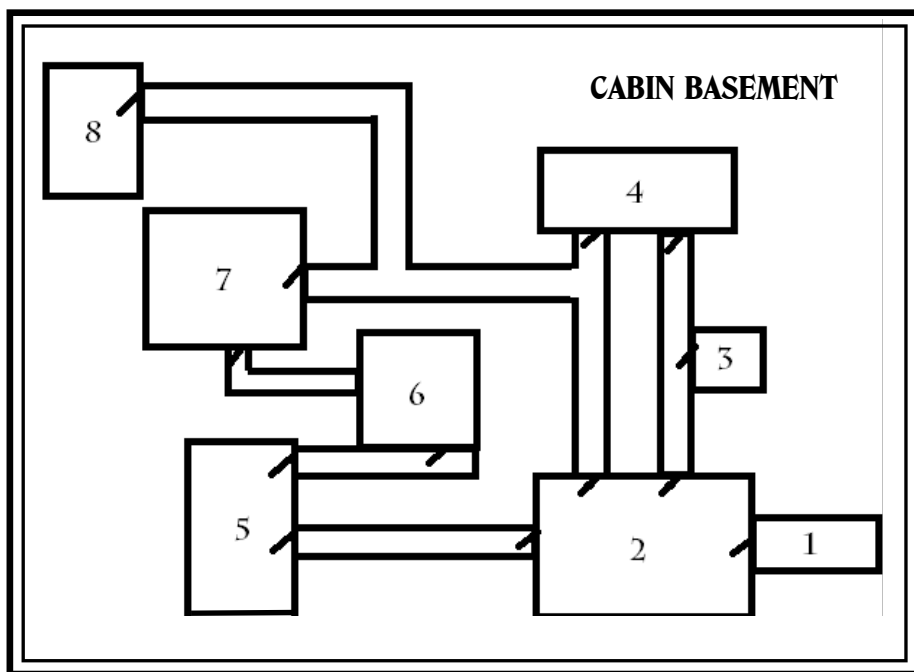
2. Apothecary

This large room is filled with tables lined with various instruments for creating potions and elixirs of all kinds. A hideous buzzing emanates from three large creatures in the centre of the room. Their bodies are oddly plantlike, and their heads resemble purple funghi with writhing feelers. These are **Funghi from Muggoth**, MR 40 (5d6+20). Every turn there is a two in six chance they will spew out deadly spores. If this happens, every PC within 20 feet must make a 1st lvl SR Lk or inhale the spores, taking 1d6 Con and St damage.

The vials in the room are: Potion of Weakness (-2 St for two days), Elixir of Fortune (+5 Lk for two days) and an Energy Salve (+10 Wiz). These are all one use only.

3. Storage Room

In this room are a couple of barrels full of grain. Inside one of the grain barrels is a Darkstorm Helmet. It has 10 points armour, and if the wearer rolls 3 Spite Damage it will perform the Blasting Power spell.



4. Trophy Room

Grotesque animal heads of different species line the walls. Once the PCs enter, the animal heads turn to look directly at them, laughing maniacally and shaking wildly. Each PC must make a 2nd lvl SR In or start losing sanity, deducting 3 In points permanently.

A large chest in the east corner contains a 4d6 Inferno Lance and a Deathwinter Buckler (7 points armour). However, the floor directly in front of the chest holds a pressure plate that triggers two **Suits of Armour** in the east and west of the room to come to life. Each has an MR of 70 (8d6+35).

5. Pet Cemetery

This room's floor is made up entirely of soil. A variety of small headstones, with names like "Lucky" and "Spot" inscribed on them, cover the area. Suddenly, paws, hooves, and claws pop out from the soil, and long-dead animal corpses begin to climb out. The **Zombie Pets** fight as one, with a total of MR 130 (14d6+65).

6. Library

The library is tightly packed with bookshelves containing all manner of tomes. Books of note include: *Arcanum Stickicus* (teaches Glue You spell after five hours of reading) and *Magic and Other Badassery* (teaches Whammy spell after five hours' reading).

7. Wine Cellar

A fat old woman sits in her rocking chair in the corner of the wine cellar. As soon as she sees the PCs, she launches into the air and begins flying around, cackling. "Come and see your old Henrietta," she screeches. "I'll swallow your soul." **Henrietta** has an MR of 120 (13d6+60), and if she rolls 4 Spite Damage she casts Hold That Pose.

When searching the room, the PCs may roll a 1st lvl SR In to determine which wine is the most expensive, this being "Grapes of Wrath," which goes for 2,000 gp.

8. Necro-gnome-icon Room

There is very little in this room other than a stand with a hideous-looking book resting on it. This is the *Necro-gnome-icon*. A swirling blue portal hovers near the book. The high priest created it in order to travel to a pocket dimension, where he intends to summon the Dark One into Marie.

A 1st lvl SR In will allow a PC to read the correct passage backwards, which creates a great wind in the room as all the abominations are sucked back into the book. If the book is then destroyed with fire, it spews out a wispy cloud that ascends through the cracks in the ceiling. This is the gnome necromancer, who is now upstairs in the cabin.

Stepping through the portal transports the PCs to the Nether Realm.

PART THREE

The Nether Realm

The Nether Realm is a 50 x 50 foot stone platform floating in a swirling ether. An altar stands at the opposite end of the platform, where Marie is lying. High Priest Thulsara has one hand on Marie's forehead and the other grasping the book he is reading from. A great vortex is slowly opening above the platform as the Dark One makes his way into the Nether Realm.

High Priest Thulsara

MR 140

Special Damage: 4/Dis-spell





Every round the Dark One draws nearer, even when Thulsara is fighting. Thulsara must be reduced to 70 Con in five turns or fewer, or the Dark One will reach Marie and then materialise in the flesh, transforming from Marie into a huge, hulking creature with a skull head and a muscular body. If this happens, the Dark One will kill Thulsara and attack the PCs.

Dark One Incarnate

MR 300

Special Damage: 6/Death Spell #9

Special Ability: Immune to Magic. Magic weapons and spells have no effect on the Dark One Incarnate.

If the PCs manage to reduce Thulsara to 70 Con in time, he flees through the portal and the vortex above begins to close. They can escape with Marie, providing that she didn't turn into the Dark One Incarnate, but she is still out cold and will have to be carried.

Return to the Cabin

If Thulsara is still alive, he is retreating through the basement. Because all the creatures have been unsumoned, there is nothing to fight on the way back up to the cabin.

Once the PCs reach the cabin, they find a dead Thulsara on the ground and Khakanigas the gnome necromancer floating above him, his eyes glowing red. "You have released me from the death dimension," he snarls before dropping to the ground. His eyes fade, and now he just looks like a withered old gnome. He wheezes wearily and sits on a chair. "I have done some terrible things; I see that now," he croaks. "I thought immortalising myself would make me powerful, but it was hell in that dimension." He smiles. "But now the book is no more and the world is safe, thanks to you. I do not deserve to live, so it is fortunate that I have mere breaths left before I go." He coughs violently and groans. "Because the book is gone, the passage on the headstone will no longer work. I would very much like to be buried for real this time." With a deep sigh, Khakanigas dies.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Now that the woods are at peace, Huddlefork can rest easy. After hearing the news and sending guards into the woods for proof, the mayor pays 4,000 gp to each PC. Marie, if she still lives, allows them to stay in the pub for free for however long they wish. If the PCs decided to keep the *Necro-gnome-icon*, they can sell it for 16,000 gp. If they




indeed still have the book, then Thulsara managed to escape the woods and did not return to Huddlefork. Future adventures could feature Thulsara trying to retrieve the book and having another go at summoning the Dark One. Either way, the PCs receive 1,500 AP each for their hard work.


Happy Halloween!




REMEMBER THESE GUYS?

THEY'RE STILL AVAILABLE - AND THEY'VE GOT FRIENDS!





Remember how much fun you used to have with the Lost Worlds Combat Picture books? Flying Buffalo is the official publisher of them. We have all the old ones, and a lot of new ones available, including (so far) four Knights of the Dinner Table books. Imagine El Ravager with his Hackmaster +12 fighting against the Cold Drake; or Thorina with a battle axe vs the Woman with Quarterstaff.



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Wallas's Tree

by Katje Romanov

Author's note: The other day my mom found Wallas's Tree, one of the old stories I had written when I was twelve. I came up with it one day when I was sitting on the porch and looking up at the huge old pine tree we had in the front yard.

My teachers thought I had a disturbed and overactive imagination.

“DON'T climb that tree!” screamed Billy, “It's got a mind of its own—didn't you ever hear the story of Wallas Benson?”

“Sure I did,” answered Jim. “Ole Wallas once climbed this tree, didn't come down that night. Parents stayed out all night, didn't take their eyes off it for a minute, except when the phone rang. Wally's ole lady went in to get it, ended up talkin' for an hour. Came back an' Wally an' his ole man both were hanging from one of them limbs, sticks in their guts, eyes stairin' wide. That's what they say happened to ole Wallas, but I don't believe it for two seconds, an' I'm gonna climb this tree if it kills me!”

Billy stared in total disbelief. Jim was really serious. He was going to climb that tree. “Please don't do it, Jim,” cried Jim's little brother. “Mama and Pa won't never forgive me for lettin' ya.”

“You're not a sissy, are ya, Bill? If ya are, I'm gonna tell Jenny, an' Jenny won't like ya no more,” teased Jim.





"I'm not a sissy, an' Jenny's still gonna like me," Bill said, completely unsure of himself.

Jim grabbed hold of a low branch and swung himself up. "I know you're gonna end up like Wally if ya don't come down now," said Bill. He looked up at Jim, his eyes already swollen and red.

"I'm gonna tell Jenny once I see what's at the top of this tree. She's gonna hate you, sissy!" Jim yelled down. He stuck his tongue out and climbed even higher. Jim soon was covered by the slowly swaying branches. Like fingers grabbing for Jim, Billy thought, ready to stab him an' kill him! Tears streamed down his paled cheeks. I'm gonna get a beatin' from Pa when he finds this out, an' it's all gonna be Jim's fault, Billy slowly realized as he heard Jim scream till his breath gave out. Jim screamed again.

Billy jumped back and ran away from the tree to escape the branches that whipped and tore towards him. When Billy was out of the reach of the branches, he turned. Jim's body fell limply onto a lower branch. Billy screamed as a dark red bubble burst in Jim's mouth, splattering his face. Blood ran down his colorless cheeks, and his eyes bulged out of their sockets. Sharp, blood-drenched branches pierced him through his ribs and back. Billy ran all the way home...

He was right all along. Jim did end up like Wallas, and Billy did get a beating from his Pa.



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CREATURE FEATURE

by **Katje Romanov
& Monkey Lot**

The Wallas Tree

MR 140–190 (15d to 20d + 70 to 95)

Ch 90

Armor: 6 pts. The bark and wood fiber of the Wallas Tree act as very tough armor against weapon-based attacks.

Special Abilities:

- * *Whimsy in the Woods:* A natural Mirage spell ability, without any Wiz costs. The tree may cast this either around itself or within its branches, but not both.
- * *The Parts Greater Than the Sum:* Each separate branch can attack at 5d.

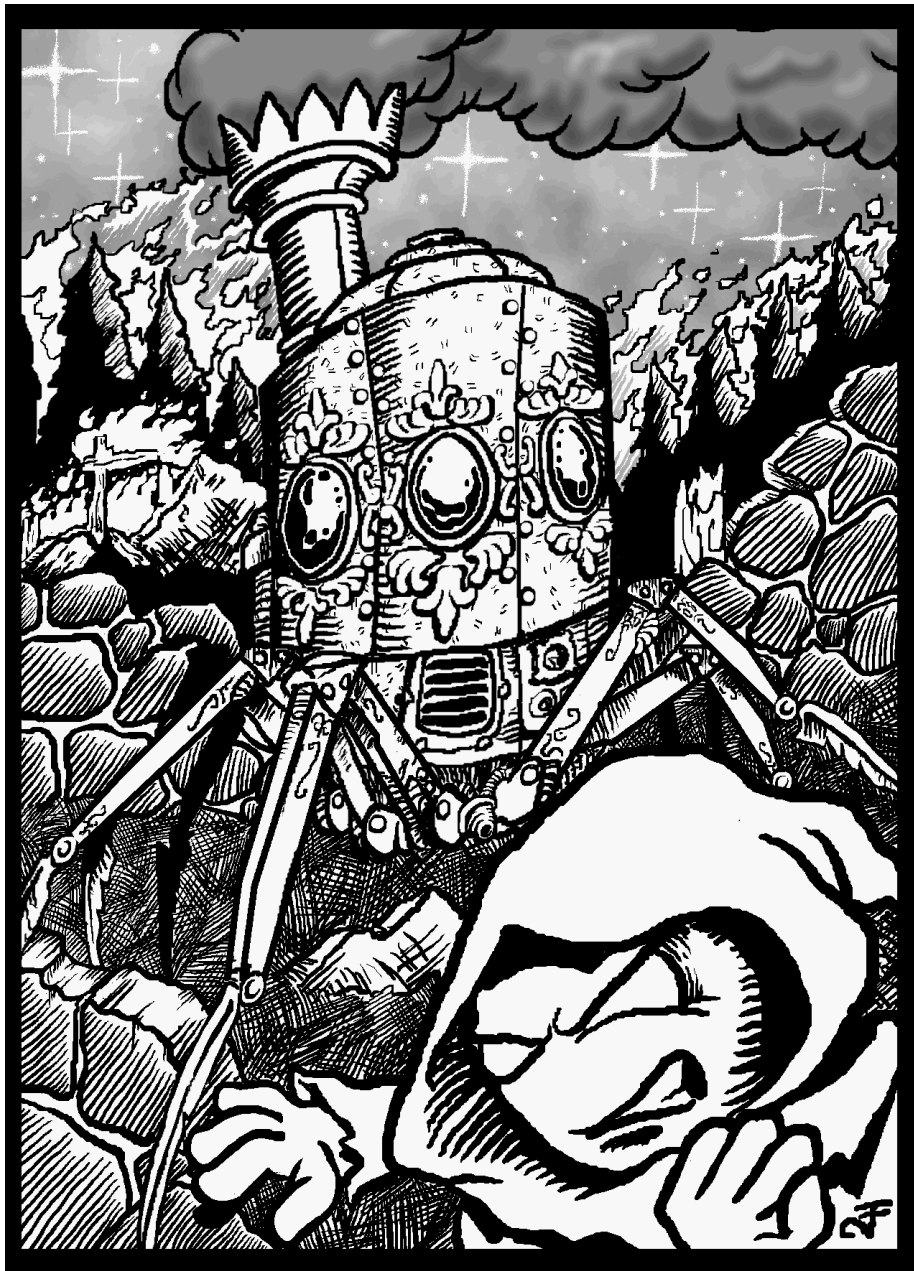
Notes: Named for one of the many victims of the predatory flora, the Wallas Tree is said to grow in places where She-Who-Walkses have stepped. Their footsteps can be incredibly gloomy, yet lush with vegetation. These carnivorous trees use illusions and pleasant surroundings to lure the adventure-loving and foolish to explore their limbs.

Often bits of treasure or delicious foods will appear within their branches, while pleasant bird songs lilt through the air. But once climbers are within the embrace of the tree, it will select one, if indeed there is more than one climber, as its meal. It will then use all of its branches (number to be determined by the GM) as an organized foe. About a quarter of the branches will attack the chosen meal, while the rest of them will fend off any rescuers.



The Persistent Drifter

by J. "The Podre" Freels



Jeff Freels

A mini-solo for BEAN! The D2 Role-Playing Game

This is a mini-solo adventure for **BEAN! The D2 Role-Playing Game**. Any Archetype is suitable for this little adventure. Begin by reading number **1**, and may the luck of the Beans be with you!

1 It's dusk, and your travels have brought you to a tiny village on the coast of the Little Kingdoms. You don't know what this place might be called, and you don't even care right now. It's been a long day, and you're just looking for a spot where you can shake off the dust of travel and have a warm meal. There is only one building here that shows any signs of life, and the place is bustling. It has to be the local pub! Once inside, you blink for a moment and let your eyes adjust to the bright light while you take in your surroundings. Most of the town must be packed into the pub, making merry and catching up on the day's events. You see a bulletin board next to you; probably a good place to get a quick feel for the area. A fiddler is setting up near the large open fireplace, and there are some empty chairs around him. The bar at the far end of the pub also has a few free stools open.

If you decide to look at the bulletin board, turn to **9**. To have a seat next to the fireplace, go to **15**. If you want to take a stool at the bar, go to **3**.

2 Bright sparks of electrical energy sizzle forth from the dying beast. The sound of loud clanking and grinding gears nearly deafens you as the beast shudders in its final death throes. Its many legs spasm a final time as it crashes to the ground. The only movement from it now is the dripping of dark fluid and the spray of escaping steam and oily smoke... The wreckage is too hot to loot right now, but give yourself 80 XPs for your accomplishment! You catch your breath and begin walking around carefully, surveying the area for signs of any further dangers. Go to **7**.

3 A few patrons take an interest in you, and the barkeep calls out, "Welcome, stranger! Have a free drink to wet your whistle while you tell us of your travels and whatever news you might have!" A mug slides down the bar directly to your hand. You're warming to this friendly welcome, and after a few quick sips you begin to speak of the things you've seen. All seems well and right with the world; what could possibly go wrong at a time like this? You'll see. Turn to **6**.

4 You're beginning to relax and take in your surroundings, but your finely tuned senses tell you that something isn't quite right... You'll need

to RollSpirit2 to notice what's going on. If you make your roll, turn to **14**. If you miss the roll, turn to **11**.

5 There is a dangerous armored mechanical beast before you, and it's already laid waste to most of this little town with its flaming breath. It's time for a hero to step in an' smite this sucker! If you leap deftly into combat, you'll need to roll for yourself as well as for your opponent. The Spider's stats are: Body 7; Mind 2; Spirit 1; HPs 6; DEF 3.

If you can use magic and you decide to cast a spell on your foe, choose which spell you're going to cast, and then turn to **10**. If you slay the Spider, go to **2**, but if you win the combat round without slaying the beast, turn to **8**. If you lose the combat round, but still live, turn to **16**. If your HPs fall to zero or less, turn to **13**.

6 The evening takes a sudden turn for the worse as the far wall explodes in flames! Shattered, splintered lumber and stonework burst in upon the crowd. Screams of surprise and fear fill the air, and the mass of people rushes as one toward the door!

If you choose to flee with the crowd, turn to **18**. If you choose to duck for cover, turn to **12**. If you decide to run outside through the hole where the wall used to be, turn to **17**.

7 The night has been full of dangerous and unexpected events. Just as you're beginning to get a grip on yourself, something smacks you in the head, *hard!* You brace yourself for another attack, and realize that you've bumped into the first rung of a rope ladder dangling out of the night sky! You've never been the sort of person to look a gift horse in the mouth (at least not until you've been bitten), so you hoist yourself up the ladder and begin your ascent to...well, it's really dark up there, but probably worth checkin' out! Turn to **20**.

8 Luck has been with you, and you've crippled one of the Spider's saber-tipped legs, but there are still more than enough left to slice and dice you like a roast beast treat! To continue the fight, turn back to **5**, or get out while you still can and flee to **7**.

9 The bulletin board has the usual listings and notices you would expect in a small town. There's a notice of upcoming festivals, a handbill advertising a barn-raising event, and several items pertaining to live-stock. One flyer announces efforts to collect relief funds for a nearby

village that's been ravaged by a dragon. "Gargoyles wanted, apply at Dreadwing's Tower," reads one ad. It's all pretty standard stuff for a rural village. When you're done reading the local haps, turn to **4**.

10 Cast your spell! You should know, however, that the only spells that will have any effect on this beast are Chill (does double damage), Lightning Bolt (does double damage), Phantom Blade, Web (gums up the works and gives you one free turn before the webbing burns off with a foul odor), or Brittle (will destroy one leg per 3 scored at casting). The energy spent on any other spell will be absorbed by the Spider! If you defeat the Spider, turn to **2**. If the spider wins this round and you're still alive and want to continue fighting, turn back to **5**. If you're still alive and want to keep it that way, you can always flee to **7**. If your HPs are at zero or less, bummer; turn to **13**.

11 Your burden has been lightened, but not in a good way, for only too late do you notice the pickpocket disappearing into the crowd with your money! You're about to shout something useless like "Stop, thief!" and pursue the scoundrel when...turn to **6**.

12 You're able to duck behind an overturned table that's only slightly on fire. Taking in your surroundings, you see a mass of struggling, frightened people blocking the main door of the pub. There's no quick escape that way! Clanking, whirring mechanical sounds come from the other side of the demolished wall, and outside in the darkness you catch a quick glimpse of something that looks like giant, spindly legs scuttling by. If you decide to surrender to mindless fear and join the crowd, turn to **18**. If you decide to try and slip out the large open space where the wall used to be, turn to **17**.

13 There's a flash of bright light, of crimson, and then all fades to blackness. The sounds around you become muffled and subside as you begin to drift on the vast open sea of infinity. You've left a bloody, pulpy mess behind as you depart this dimension. Y'win some, y'lose some, and them's the breaks. Close the book and drink a toast to your valiant efforts. Better luck next time, champ.

14 You feel a fumbling attempt to snatch your purse away! The would-be thief is startled, and you have a brief moment to remind him why it is wrong to steal, or you can take a free shot at him with whatever

weapon you have handy. Just as you're about to administer your brand of justice, something terrible happens. If you'd like to know what, turn to **6**, but brace yourself cos it's really horrible.

15 You plop yourself down into a chair by the hearth. It's warm and cozy here, and the fiddler begins to play a rousing melody. But as you look around to see if someone might come to take your order, you are suddenly overcome by the feeling that something is amiss! Go to **4**.

16 The tide of battle washes over you in a really bad way! You're knocked around by the strong metal legs and slashed by their scimitar-like tips. If your HPs have been reduced to zero or less, turn to **13**. If you're still alive and want to continue the fight, turn back to **5**. If you want to quit while you're ahead, you can retreat to **7**.

17 You bolt from the relative safety of your hiding place and make your way to the burning hole in the side of the building. TossBody2 to dodge falling debris, or lose 1 HP. If somehow you're dead already, turn to **13**; otherwise forge ahead to **19**.

18 The crowd is a tightly packed riot of fear and desperation, and nobody's lettin' you squeeze in front of them! TossBody3 to try and make any headway. If you miss your roll, take 1 HP in damage. Whether you make your roll or not, you find yourself tossed across the room to **19**!

19 You're just through the burning remains of the wall when you see a frightful sight! Standing twice your height is a mechanical monster resembling a spider. It clanks and whirrs and clatters about on eight long and spindly metal legs, each one tipped with what looks like a mighty scimitar. It has several great glassy eyes that glow with flickering light, and a smokestack on its back churns out a foul-smelling cloud. It seems to limp as if it's sustained some kind of damage, and you have the impression that there are more like this one in the distance. Could this be a new monstrosity unleashed by the Haricot Empire? There's no time to ponder it now; you've only a brief moment to decide whether you want to attack this beast at **5** or flee into the night at **7**.

20 It's difficult to see much of anything in the night sky above you, but you climb on up through the smoke of the ruined village via the



mysterious rope ladder. You clear the smoke, but there's still a huge shadow above you that blots out the stars. You hear the creaking of timber, sounding like a ship rocking on the sea. After a moment, you reach the bottom of—yes, somehow it's a ship! It's a wooden ship floating in the sky, suspended from a great long balloon! In another moment, strong hands are pulling you aboard, and too many voices are asking you about the battle, if you're wounded, if there are any other survivors, where the last SpiderBot has escaped to...it's too much to take in, but soon the crowd around you parts, and a dangerous-looking figure in pirates' garb steps up and she says, "I am Captain Minos, and you are on the skyship called The Persistent Drifter. Find something to hold on to, because we've got one last SpiderBot to slay." A wicked smile crosses her face as she adds, "It's going to be rough sailing." With this, you're left to yourself as the crew scurry off to their tasks and the ship drifts away into the night with its newest passenger.

You can relax now while the crew man their stations and prepare for pursuit and battle. Perhaps you'll be able to join them, or perhaps you'll just lay low until it's all over. Only time will tell, but for now, anyway, this adventure is at an end, and you've lived to tell the tale! Way to go, Champ!



Dead n the Run

or Escape the Necromancer's Prison



Jeff Freels

by *Mike Larsen*

THE CHARACTERS wake up in a dungeon cell: a standard dreary brick cell, about 50' x 50', with one huge metal door, a small barred window, and several sets of empty shackles attached to the walls. Heaps of garbage litter the corners opposite the door.

The characters cannot remember how they got to the dungeon, or anything else, for that matter, including their former lives, and they realize, after looking at their dungeon-mates, that they are all undead creatures. Up to two of the characters are floating skulls, up to two are skeletons, and up to two are zombis. Other undead creatures may be substituted, except for ghosts, for obvious reasons.

The undead delvers have the following abilities, though they should not be immediately aware of this:

SPECIAL ABILITIES OF THE UNDEAD

Cost: 5 pts Wiz per use

Zombi Ability: Infectious Faint

If a zombi successfully bites a living being, it may use its Infectious Faint ability to make that person pass out, leaving them more vulnerable to further bites. If the target of the attack fails a 1st lvl SR Con, he or she faints for the round. In addition, the target must succeed on a second 1st lvl SR Con to avoid becoming a zombi.

If the zombi bites the same person a second time, the target's SRs to avoid fainting and to escape becoming a zombi increase a level to 2nd lvl Con SRs. Three bites will almost certainly make the bitee faint and turn into a zombi, as two 3rd lvl Con SRs are required. And so on. The more bites, the more likely it is that the bitten will faint and turn into a zombi, short of its being wholly eaten, that is.

Each time a zombi bites a person or creature, there should be a chance that the victim will become immune to that zombi's Infectious Faint ability. With each successive bite, make the Lk SR for immunity easier.

Skeleton Ability: Rearrange the Body

At any time, a skeleton may detach one or more of its limbs or reattach a limb. Reattached limbs do not need to occupy their original locations. If there happens to be an extra limb lying around, the skeleton may attach it wherever it can find room on its body. The extra limb will be able to move in the same manner as an original skeleton arm or leg—it will be able to kick, punch, wield a weapon, etc.—however, the GM should feel free to apply a difficulty modifier due to the delver's not having had time to become used to an extra appendage. And there is a catch: for the limb to integrate with the skeleton and to function, it must be solely bone and cartilage, with nothing else attached—no skin, fur, muscle, or the like.



Floating Skull Ability: Wink of Blindness

If a floating skull makes a successful attack, it may opt to emit from its eye sockets a searing flash of light that blinds its victim for a round. The target of the attack must make a 3rd lvl SR Lk to avoid being blinded. The blinded hero may also endure a Bite or a Head Butt attack, or both. The Bite attack, like Spite Damage, will occur whether the target(s) win the combat turn or not. The bitten area will not heal until a Healing Feeling spell has been cast on it.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

The characters have been captured by a necromancer, who is harvesting their life energies. His dungeon is a magical place imbued with powerful forgetfulness spells and surrounded by a protective shield to keep them in should they overcome their amnesia and remember who they are.

The upkeep on such a magical place is horrendous; i.e., it needs a lot of recharging to stay working properly. So, what if one day the scheduled upkeep was not done? The prisoners would remember that the place sucks and that they want to leave, and eventually they would probably start to remember their former lives as well.

BUT HOW TO ESCAPE?

Well, that's easy once a character remembers. The delvers' memories should start to trickle slowly back soon after the adventure starts. Though they may investigate the area to look for a way out, they should find that the door and window bars are not going to budge, no matter what. Under one of the piles of filth and garbage, however, is a rusted metal sewer drain large enough to admit a humanoid. If, after a bit of searching, the players still haven't thought to check in that area, a successful 1st lvl SR In or Lk will remind one of them that that corner had been clear when the group first arrived at the cell. A few hits and the drain cover should come right out.

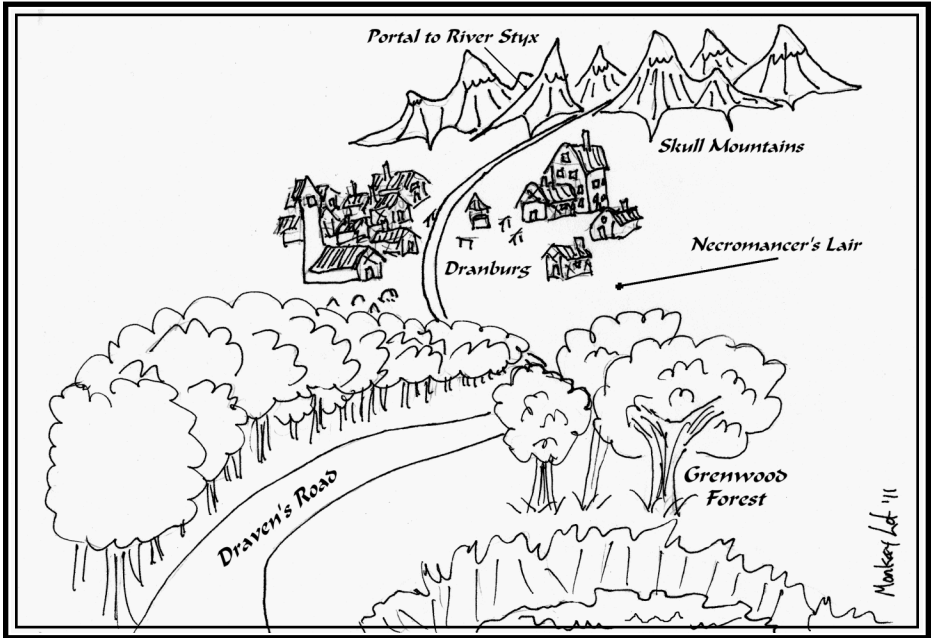
OUT OF THE PRISON AND DOWN THE DRAIN

The sewer is only big enough for the delvers to walk single file. As they leave the prison and begin to traverse it, their memories will come flooding back. They should remember their professions as wizards, warriors, or thieves, spells and all.

Upon entering the drainpipe, the adventurers will see that it is brimming with filth, refuse, and other unmentionables, along with a few rusty swords and the like. Small rats skitter about the sewage. If the delvers had noses or a sense of smell (which they don't), they would be overwhelmed by the reek.



There are no branches off the main tunnel, so the delvers have no choice but to follow it toward daylight, which they can glimpse in the distance. At the end of the tunnel, the sewer dumps into a small pond.



NOW WHAT?

Well, if memory serves correctly—and it will, with a 1st level SR In or Lk (or whatever attribute the GM deems prudent)—a character will recall that the portal to the River Styx is located in a small cave roughly three days' travel from here, in the Skull Mountains. What plans could the delvers have except to go to the afterlife and claim their final reward? But in order to get there quickly enough to escape the necromancer, who is sure to send his minions to retrieve his property as soon as he notices they are missing, they must traverse Draven's Road, a route used regularly by caravans and travelers on their way to Dranburg, a large city on the other side of Greenwood Forest at the base of the Skull Mountains. The delvers should start on the opposite end of the forest, near the necromancer's castle and not far from Draven's Road.

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Getting to the River Styx will take 10 rolls on a d6. On a roll of 3 or higher, the PCs run into some of the locals: 2d3-1 of them, to be specific.



Here's the rub. First, the characters are undead. Second, the local populace will not take kindly to their appearance. Thus, regardless of how nicely the delvers speak to them, the locals must make fright checks (3rd lvl SR In). If the locals fail their fright checks, they will quiver in fear or run away to get help. If they succeed on their SRs, they will fight the delvers into retreat or until the locals have been beaten up and need to make a hasty retreat themselves.

Now, these locals are Citizens who will be fighting with hoes, pitchforks, and shovels. These implements are essentially 2d weapons, translated as MR 15 per 20 encounters (opponents) in strictest game terms. One in each group will be a Woodsman Citizen sub-Type carrying a hewing axe, a 3d weapon. For every 18 mob villagers encountered, add another 1d6 villagers wielding sledgehammers (4d weapons). But their real advantage is in numbers.

Even when the PCs are able to scare away the initial locals they encounter, the retreating villagers are only seeking to find help. This means that for each local scared away, d2 more villagers will join the fleeing local in returning to the area of the encounter. Now, it is not expected that our heroes will try to stick around in one place too long. Therefore, the GM should be willing to fill their path with yard fences, laundry lines, and compost heaps for them to stumble on or to hide behind to avoid the increasing number of local combatants who arrive each turn of play. A 3rd lvl SR Sp or Lk is required for the PCs to hide from the reinforcements successfully.

If things get really tangled up, one or two of the Citizens of Note (see below) should appear and further complicate the situation.

Corporal Johann Flexer

4th level Rogue

Keeper of the Peace in and around Dranburg

MR 80 (9d+40)

Lk 46 Dx 42

Armor: 6 points

Spells: Knows 1st and 2nd level spells

Notes: Corporal Flexer will not be looking to be a hero, but will conduct himself with bravery and resolve in the face of evil creatures.

Having been a lawman, he might pick up on clues that other villagers overlooked.

Burgomeister Hugo Pepperling Von Pflatt

4th level Wizard

MR 90 (won't engage in Hand-to-Hand)

Wiz 46 Dx 32

Spells: Knows up to 5th level spells



Notes: Has been thinking that something odd has been going on around the area for some time. He has adventured enough to know that things are not always what they seem.

IF THAT ISN'T ENOUGH...

The angry necromancer will by now have become aware of the PCs' escape, and he wants his property, them, back in the worst way possible. So, he will be sending out his minions to round them up. And after a few days, if his property is not returned, he will head out himself to recapture the recalcitrant delvers.

So, the scenario should be a no-brainer with regard to what route the players should take, because if they go the long way through the wilderness to avoid the road or the city, the necromancer and his minions will have a much greater chance of catching the dead folk on the run.

NPCs

GMs may breathe life into the following NPCs as they see fit.

The Necromancer

10th level Paragon

MR 184 (19d+92)

In 87* Wiz 105 Dx 87*

*Spells**: Knows up to 10th level spells

* *Notes:* Though the necromancer is not at a level high enough to cast Nefarious Necromancy, he is a minion of the Bat-Winged Fiend, who grants him the spell and the abilities (the In and Dx) to use it. If the medallion that he is wearing is removed or destroyed, his In and Dx revert to 54 and 46 respectively.

Resistances: Special resistances to the PCs' undead abilities. Any new appendages on the skeletons cannot strike him, but their original limbs can.

Minions: A party of goblins (six should be sufficient) led by a minotaur.

Goblin

MR 30 (4d+15)

Armor: 3 points

Resistant to Wink of Blindness and Infectious Faint

Minotaur

MR 55 (6d+27)

Armor: 4 points, natural hide

Resistant to the zombi's Infectious Faint but not the floating skull's Wink of Blindness, due to the minotaur Kin's having spent generations underground in mazes



CREATURE FEATURE II

THE WENDIGO

BY TOM K. LONEY

SOMETIMES people living out in the wilderness lose it.

Isolated in the primeval forest depths, they begin to hear voices; to see, from the corner of an eye, peculiar shiftings in the shadows; to feel wafting chills on balmy, windless days.

At such vulnerable moments, the incursions begin.

The gentle nudgings gain purchase, widen access. And the umbral forms well in. Through means both harsh and subtle, brutal and feather-soft, they re-fashion their host, rebuilding what once was human into the summation of themselves...into a *Wendigo*.



The wendigo is an evil spirit made up of the many other spirits it has consumed over the course of its existence. Needless to say, the process isn't pleasant. Though fundamentally incorporeal, the beast is nevertheless dependent upon a succession of physical forms with which to reinforce itself. Even when the target of a wendigo's appetite has died, the creature uses the bits and pieces around its chosen's body to substantiate its form, covering itself in weeds, moss, sticks, and even the bones of fallen animals...or of travelers in the area.

The wendigo must feed upon the flesh of Kin or suffer horrible pain, which causes it to yowl implacably, its scream a relentless frozen wind through barren trees. Though it can shift its form into a pleasing countenance, it cannot diminish its hunger. This gaping need occurs whether the thing is in its physical form or not.

The Wendigo

MR: Heroes and groups of heroes encountering these creatures should be able to overcome a monster rating of 100.

In: Uncanny

Wiz: 90 at least

Con: 100 plus

Armor

It is the spirits, not really their physical form, that the player characters must destroy. The form and armor of whatever unfortunate being the wendigo is currently inhabiting will determine its armor statistic.

Special Abilities

- * For each Con point eaten from another, this creature adds a point to its MR.
- * For each 10 Con points consumed, the wendigo gains a Wiz point as its own.
- * Able to cast a Spirit Mastery spell over a chosen target and, if successful, to inhabit the body of that character.





Unhallowed Ground

by Neil Riebe



Mike Harrlieb



AFTER THE PASSING of my parents, I moved in with my uncle, Bogomil Ilnik. I had not been in his castle long, only a few days. Even though I was grateful that he had taken me in, I was unsure why, because he seemed bent on being offensive. After dinner, he gloated over the split in the Church between Rome and the Byzantines. Then he switched to pecking away at Scripture.

"Faith," he said, smirking while Greta, his maid, cleared our plates at the supper table. "What is faith? Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

"Hebrews 11:1," I said, interrupting him with an imperious smirk of my own.

"Yes, Kalina dear," he agreed without losing his haughty grin. "Now, let's get down to the marrow. By the author's admission, faith is hope. In other words, he hopes what he believes is true. But he doesn't know for a fact. Therefore he must forever lock horns with his doubts. I," he emphasized with a rise in his tone, "don't live by faith. I live by what I know."

"What do you know, Uncle?"

"Ah," he shook his finger at me. "If I told you, I would be no better than the man in the pulpit."

Such was my evening.

"Kalina, tomorrow I want you to make more candles," Greta clucked. She reminded me of a crow with her black shawl draped over her humped shoulders and her nose sticking out long and beak-like. You should have heard what she said to me when I first moved in: "Heh-heh!" she cawed. "I bet you thought this castle would be full of men. Huh? Heh-heh! No. All you're going to find here is work. Let me look at those lily-white hands." She had grabbed my wrists and twisted my palms up for inspection. "It's just as I thought. They're soft and smooth as cream. I'm going to have fun putting blisters on those."

I glared at her, and then, taking a breath, I curbed my anger and said to Uncle Ilnik, "Is it customary for the household help to order the family around?"

He made a dismissive gesture. "Hierarchies are contrivances of the outside world. I do not recognize them. Sort the problem out yourselves."

I sat dumbfounded with an open mouth. Greta pinched my earlobe, driving her thorny thumbnail into my flesh. I stifled my yelp to deny her satisfaction in hurting me.

"You'll have to try harder than that to get me into trouble, little missy," she said. "I wanted you to make the candles so I could sweep



out the stairwells in the towers. But since you're being uppity, you can do both."

"Even so," I protested, rubbing my sore ear.

"Even nothing," Greta said. "What did your father do again?"

"He was a cobbler," I answered.

"Exactly," Greta snapped her tongue. "You're the daughter of the common folk, a working girl. Living under your uncle's roof changes nothing."

A sudden crash boomed upstairs. I gasped. My heart jumped. Footsteps strolled the ceiling above my head, followed by the slam of a door.

"I understand why you found this castle abandoned," I commented.

The noise distressed neither Uncle Irnik nor Greta. My uncle folded his hands on the table. "The beliefs of men are like beetles and spiders, all black and creeping with fear. The last owners abandoned this place because they believed the spiritual principalities upstairs were demonic. The castle and the land flanked by the mountains are all mine now, with no one to lay claim. Best of all, my property is strategically placed!" My uncle's eyes glittered with thoughts of gold.

Traders use the road that runs by the castle. Uncle Irnik's toll equaled what my father's shop used to earn in a month.

"How do you make people pay?" I asked. "Only you and Greta live here."

"They pay or else." Uncle leveled his gaze at me.

"Or else what?"

He merely smiled again. His smirk didn't last long when he noticed a spot of gravy beside his arm. Quickly, he pulled away and examined his sleeve in the waning sunbeams shining through the window. He was particular about his robes. I couldn't blame him. They were woven from silk, imported from the kingdoms of the East. Purple and carmine were his favorite colors, and they were all emblazoned with silver trim—with no symbols or emblems, mind you. As he once said, "Symbols were the first step in contriving a false reality." Oh, he wearied me so!

"Greta!" he barked and nodded to the gravy with his bearded chin, making such a show.

Apologizing, Greta wiped the offending juice with a rag.

Once that "crisis" was over, he sighed.

"There will be a change in tomorrow's itinerary," he announced. "Kalina, I can see you still have many unanswered questions. It is time you found the truth."

"Where will I find the truth?"





"Start by searching the grove."

"What truth is out in the grove?"

"Just look!" He bugged his eyes at me.

I rubbed my temples.

"What about the chores?" Greta demanded of my uncle.

"You've taken care of this household's needs by yourself for years. One more day isn't going to hurt."

Greta scowled. Uncle Irnik raised his bushy, gray brows, inviting her to comment. She clenched her jaw, saying nothing. Her feathers ruffled, she sneered at me and about-faced toward the kitchen. I held back snickering at her, even though I wanted to.

My uncle bid me good night. With a candle in hand, I went upstairs, and stopped short of the landing.

I hated the upper floors. They hated me. From the first night I stayed there, the corridors and chambers made me feel unwelcome. No one was present, from what I could see. Nevertheless, the feeling encroached upon me as I ascended the last steps.

My footsteps echoed in the corridor leading to my room. I guarded my candle flame closely, heedless of its heat against my palm. My heart pattered. I tried not to be afraid.

Then I passed through a pocket of chilly air. Fright locked my muscles. Forcing my arm to move, I reached back. The pocket of air was still there. I have been told such pockets are spirits of the dead.

I hurried toward my room, shielding the candle. Footsteps sounded on the flagstone floor, following me. When I reached my room, I braced the door. A fist slammed against it, making it reverberate within its frame.

"Go away!" I cried.

The footsteps shuffled about.

I waited, anticipating what might happen next. My imagination became my worst enemy.

I quickly undressed and got into bed, pulling the coverlet up to my chin, ready to pull it over my head. At some point I fell asleep.



My uncle's crumbling old castle was situated in a mountain pass, surrounded by thick forests. Mornings were redolent with the scent of pine needles. Glaciers wrapped around the mountains like white blankets of ice. They made the air seem crisp and frosty no matter how warm the afternoon became.



And it was quiet. Aside from a few notes from a songbird, the mountain pass seemed to be asleep. If I concentrated on the silence too long, my skin tingled with gooseflesh. It was peaceful, beautiful, but sinister.

After breakfast, I wandered the grove outside the castle. The bark of the trees was as craggy as an old man's face, and the limbs were as gnarled as crippled fingers. I had baked a half-dozen pastries, before my walk, in case a handsome merchant might come down the road.

I carried the pastries in a wicker basket, covered under a cloth to keep them warm. I also hid a dagger inside my basket. Slavers traveled the road as often as the traders.

I wished my older brother Rigel were there. He was a monk, and a learned man. He taught me how to read. If anyone could cross swords with Uncle Irnik, Rigel would be the one. The last I heard, my brother resided at Rila Monastery.

There had been five of us all told: my mother and father, Rigel, and my older sister Maria. I was the baby of the family, and spoiled like one, as some had said. I prefer the word "precocious."

Last winter an epidemic swept through Klonitza, my home town. From several thousand, disease winnowed the population to a few souls, and slew my parents and my sister Maria. The stench of death drew the ghouls from their hollows in the foothills. Rigel helped me escape Klonitza through the narrow alleys, setting fire to the rubbish behind us with a torch to stymie their pursuit. From there he took me to the Boar's Inn at the road junction. Bound by his commitment to the Church, Rigel said he must continue his service and join another monastery. Having a monastery in town, like my brother's in Klonitza, was a rarity, which meant Rigel and I had to part ways.

I could have dedicated my life to the Church as well, but I knew I could not honor the vow of celibacy. As the Apostle Paul had said, it was better to marry than burn in lust. Besides, I didn't foresee staying with Uncle Irnik for long. I've been complimented on my flowing red hair and lovely complexion. All I needed to do was meet a worthy mate.

As I strode among the trees I encountered my uncle.

"I haven't found any truth," I said.

"No?" He plucked a leaf from a low-hanging branch. "What would you call this?"

"A leaf."

"Very good." He then placed it in my hand. "Tell me how it feels."

"It feels smooth."



"And what else does the leaf feel like?"

I shrugged. "Leathery?"

"It's solid." He squeezed my hand around the leaf. "This is truth. Truth is tangible."

I laughed. "You're crazy!"

"That might be true, too." My uncle helped himself to one of my pastries, taking a bite. "But it's a subjective truth. Subjective truths can lead to delusions. For instance," he said as he chewed and smacked his lips, "this pastry is tasty. However, this is my opinion, which makes this truth subjective."

"Now, let us say someone accepts my word without tasting for himself. He is then substituting faith for experience. Once he walks by faith rather than by experience, he has veered from the truth and started down the path of delusion." He took the leaf and batted me on the forehead with it. "Now go and find some more truth."



The merchants paid in food as well as gold for Uncle Irnik's tolls. When their caravans stopped coming, I offered to go out on foot to the nearest town to buy something to eat. My uncle forbade me. "Send Greta," I said. He refused.

Our stocks dwindled, but Uncle Irnik held his confidence. "Someone will come," he said. "They have to."

For comfort I read my Bible, which my brother had given me as a gift. My copy wasn't the best. The scribe who wrote it made errors in translating from the original Greek text. His monastery was going to discard it, but Rigel salvaged the manuscript and sent it to me with a note telling me what the incorrect verses should have said. Despite the errors, I treasured my Bible. Only nobles, scholars, and the clergy had books. Besides, the scribe, whoever he was, had beautiful handwriting.

My room had no table, so I laid my book on the bed. The spirits from the corridors would give me no peace. The pages flipped ahead as I read. I smoothed the leaves back only to have them flipped again. Finally I held the pages down.

Then a cold breath blew across my cheek, carrying the rancor of decay. After the plague that swept through Klönitza, I had become all too familiar with corpses, old ones and fresh. The brush of air stunk of a very old and very dry corpse. I also smelled wood planking, moldy soil, and mice. The stench swelled, making me cough.



I refused to be dissuaded. I sucked in my breath and kept reading.

Next, the page began to smolder. I barely got my hands out of the way when it burst into flame. Just the one page I was reading lit up into a firestorm. The rest of the book was untouched.

Fed up, I shut my Bible and drew water from the well in the courtyard to fill a basin in my room. I prayed for the water to be sanctified. Yes, I knew this was above my station, but what else should I do? I hoped I would be permitted the same grace which God had granted David through the priest Ahimelech, by allowing David to eat the temple showbread while fleeing from King Saul. I humbled myself and waited, prepared to accept the fact that despite the exceptions made in the past, my Heavenly Father was not obliged to bend His rules now.

As I remained on my knees on the hard floor with my eyes closed, peace welled up within me. Of all places, in this godless abode I had never felt closer to the Almighty in all my eighteen years. I heard no words nor witnessed any sign, yet I sensed that I had found favor. The water was blessed.

Quickly, I moistened the door and windows. I turned my uncle's guest chamber into my sanctuary.



The pantry shelves were empty and gathering dust. Hungry, I was constantly tired. But when I tried to sleep, the pit in my stomach seemed to burrow itself deeper into my belly, like a grub gnawing into the meat of a tree.

One night I awoke without realizing I had fallen asleep. Someone called my name. "Kalina, come." I didn't hear the words so much as they seemed to appear in my head like thoughts.

As if under a spell, I obeyed. Getting up from the bed, I exited my sanctuary. In the corridor, the spirits, muttering in whispers, huddled up in the corners of the ceiling like bats clinging to the high wall of a cave. They seemed to avoid me so as to not get in the way of the higher power that was drawing me. My feet found their way through the darkness, out of the keep, and onto the battlements, where Uncle Irnik and Greta stood looking out over the grove. My uncle had his hands raised with his fingers spread taut, so much so the tendons stood out on his aging hands. His face squeezed tight in concentration. Between his palms blazed a globe of purple light. I stared at it as I approached, entranced. The light intensified and climaxed into a white flash, and

disappeared, leaving my eyes stinging. But the compulsion released me and I felt in control.

My uncle lowered his hands and glanced my way. "Ah, you've come."

Indifferent, Greta seemed accustomed to my uncle's display of power. She nudged him in the ribs and nodded toward the grove.

Coming up the footpath were two soldiers on horseback. They carried torches. The elder of the two had a full beard and looked as strong as a bear and fierce as a wild dog. The other appeared to be my age, clean shaved and delightfully fit. His expression brightened when he laid eyes on me. I acknowledged him with a smile, even though the time was awkward for flirting.

The bearded soldier roared up to my uncle. "Lord Petâr Kostov the Third wishes to parlay about your tolls."

"We're up to number three now?" Uncle Irnik asked. "What happened to the second?"

"Fever. His son has succeeded him."

"It's just another number," my uncle said dismissively. "Tell number three no."

"Be reasonable. Just you and your housemaid stand against our forces. What hope do you have?"

"There are three of us now." Uncle Irnik drew me closer. "Meet my brother's daughter, Kalina Irnik."

"Hail, fair lady!" cried the younger soldier.

Embarrassed, my blood rushed to my cheeks.

"Heh-heh!" Greta cackled. "You found yourself a suitor in that one, Kalina."

"Bogomil," the elder soldier called up, "you wouldn't farm your own land much less bake your own bread. You can't have so much as a crumb to feed to the birds. Look at your niece. I can see from down here she can barely stand. What does she say? Will she suffer under siege with you?"

Uncle Irnik wrapped his arm around my shoulders. "The three of us stand united!"

I shook my head no.

The young soldier tapped the bearded one and pointed up toward me.

"I see dissension in the ranks," the bearded soldier grinned wolfishly.

"Your lord's reputation for greediness speaks louder than the slander of my character," Uncle Irnik countered. "The only reason your lord



wants to negotiate is because his coffers are as depleted as my larder. Now either agree to my terms or leave!"

"You hold no title and not a drop of noble blood flows in your veins," the bearded soldier argued. "You have no right to levy tolls."

"And where does your liege get the right to say I can't?"

"Our lord was ordained by the bishop with God's blessing."

"Well, if Petâr received his rulership from God, he should ask God for a new trade route."

"Bogomil, you —"

"You nothing! An army of priests couldn't exorcise these mountain passes. Only I have the rapport to tame the spiritual personages that occupy this land. Without me, your merchants and emissaries will be torn to pieces, turned into lycanthropes, or sucked dry of blood.

"So spare me the platitudes of rank. No god keeps Petâr seated on his throne. A complicit army does that, sycophants like you. In like manner, my invisible army allows me to demand generous donations for use of the road. Might makes right. So why don't you come up here and use your might to make it right?"

My uncle and Greta broke out laughing.

The bearded soldier trembled with rage. His younger companion gripped his arm to steady him. I stepped away from their sight to distance myself from this insult to their authority.

"The die is cast, Bogomil!" the bearded one growled.

"Go on! Get out of here!" Uncle Irnik taunted.

Beyond the grove was the firelight of many torches. A camp for an entire army must have been out there.

"What now, Uncle?" I asked.

"Now we fight," he said. "Watch. You will find this amusing."

Uncle Irnik and Greta rested their elbows on the battlements like spectators.

Waiting stirred my anticipation. The night seemed to hold its breath, until I heard the reedy snap of the catapults and the whoosh of the boulders hurtling toward the castle. The great stones shattered against the castle walls like balls of dirt. Despite the reverberations, the walls were untouched. Bits of boulder debris cascaded upon us, but the castle stood sound.

Once the volley stopped, we returned to waiting. The troops milled around within the torchlight of the camp, seeming uncertain of what they should do. Nevertheless, the bugles called them into action. They formed up ranks and marched forward under the beat of a drum,

carrying torches and scaling ladders through the grove. I could hear the clink of their armor.

Greta twisted the ends of her black shawl in her fingers. Her teeth began to show as she grinned like some vulture eager for carrion. Just as the soldiers were about to clear the grove, my uncle leaned forward and said toward the trees, "Now."

Throughout the grove came noises of what sounded like branches tangling themselves together. The darkness masked what was happening, but the screams told me enough. The men were being grabbed and torn to pieces. It was an awful, awful chorus of wails. I spun around and curled up with my back to the battlements. No matter how hard I clutched my ears I could not shut out the sound of limbs being pulled from their sockets, of flesh being ripped from bone, nor of the screams gurgling with blood.

"You see that?" Greta cackled. "That one had his head popped off. Oh! And look at that one there! He thinks he can wriggle away with just one arm left!"

As I cried, my uncle reached down and patted me on the shoulder.



The caravans resumed. They paid their tolls, which allowed us to restock our food stores. No one mentioned the failure of the siege. I searched the grove and found no trace of the slaughter, not so much as a soldier's footprint.

My loathing for Uncle Irnik grew. He said he tamed the wild spirits, and he was using them against Lord Kostov's people to make them pay tolls.

Also, to my shame, I hoped that anyone who could identify me with Uncle Irnik had perished in the battle. I especially recall the face of the young man who had cried up to me, "Hail, fair lady!"

"You wish he was dead?" my conscience asked me.

"No! No!" I would answer back, arguing with my thoughts. But if word spread through Lord Kostov's domain of my presence at Irnik's castle, what was to stop people from linking me with my uncle and his demonic magic?

The corridor ghosts started hounding me physically. They were angry because the blessing I had put on the door had barred them from my room.

"Uncle," I said at supper, "you must do something about the ghosts upstairs."



"No."

"No? Uncle, I can't even walk down the halls in the daytime. They grab my ankles, trying to trip me! They pinch me! They pull my hair! At night they hoot and snarl outside my door."

"You must have agitated them," Greta said, peering at me with a probing eye.

I rebuffed her with a sneering look.

"Kalina," Uncle Irnik folded his hands on the table. "This is a prime opportunity for you to learn spiritual truth. The ghosts are real because they interact with you. What you see, touch, taste, experience—these things form reality. Reality is truth, and truth is reality. That is what I have been trying to teach you.

"Too many people, because of their religious upbringing, have pre-conceived notions. That's the sort of hubris I have dedicated my life to avoiding." My uncle smiled proudly. "Spirits speak only to those who will listen and grant their power to those who will learn their ways. I need you to understand this so you can one day record what I have learned. Writing is an uncommon talent in these parts."

"If you want me to be your scribe," I squared my shoulders, "then tell your ghosts to be civil."

"Naw," Greta shook her head, shoveling food into her mouth. "The ghosts are of the original owners of this castle. If I had a place to haunt I wouldn't want someone telling me how to haunt it."

I sighed.

But, this was not going to be the end of the matter. The following day I searched the castle. No chapel was within the walls, no cemetery, no hallowed ground of any sort. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised. It just made it difficult to find the resting places of the original owners. Nevertheless, in a disused stable by the castle gate I found the skull of a goat mounted on the wall.

The floor creaked underfoot when I examined the dry bones. On a hunch, I cleared a spot in the hay and rapped the floorboards, getting a hollow sound in return. It was the best clue I had found all afternoon. Quickly, I fetched a broom and torch. While I swept, mice hopped out of the hay in surprise, bolting to new hiding places. I remembered the smell of the ghosts' breath: mice, old wooden planks, and dried corpses. In my excitement I tore the floorboards apart, as I knew I would find the third ingredient to that pungent odor.

And there underneath the floor was a room! Its walls were made of stone. I lit the torch and climbed down. The grimy confines made my



eyes water; I stifled a sneeze. Not that I was dissuaded. After helping stack the dead in Klonitza during the plague, one became hardened to such things.

There were shelves cut into one of the walls, one above the other. Each held a body. The top one wore the crown of a king, the one below of a queen. Both wore armor, now tarnished and coated in dust. The king's desiccated fingers held a scepter, while the queen's, oddly enough, clutched a sword.

No matter. I lugged the bodies without shame, to the middle of the dirt floor. Considering how badly the ghosts of these people had harassed me, this was retribution, not desecration.

"Goodbye," I said and lowered the torch.

But before the flame touched the corpses, powerful, invisible hands threw me against the wall. My senses flashed white from the impact with the stone. My head swooned. The hands pinned my arms outspread across the wall. I heard metal sliding across the lip of a sheath. That snapped my head clear. With my vitals exposed, I didn't need to see a ghost with a sword to know what was about to happen.

By God's mercy I still gripped the torch. With a twist of my wrist, I flung it. It landed on one of the bodies. The shriveled flesh burst into flame and a man's scream pierced the air. At the same time, the grip on my right arm let go.

It was only the king. The queen gripped the sword.

The invisible blade cut the air with a swish, rising high to a position poised to strike. With my right hand free, I lunged for the torch while the queen's spirit clung to my left arm. Her ghostly fingers dug into my flesh like claws. I stretched, and with only a heartbeat's worth of time before the sword would strike, I thrust the torch into the queen's body.

At once my arm was released. A woman's scream joined the man's. I covered my ears. Only after the bones smoldered did their cries cease.

Exhausted, I climbed out of the stone chamber with the torch. Smoke billowed from the stable, filling the courtyard with black clouds. And who did I find waiting for me outside the stable but Uncle Irnik.

"Bitch! Do you realize what you have done?" Uncle Irnik's eyes bugged with rage. His face turned purple as a prune. "You destroyed the castle's interior defense! All it takes is one soldier to get through the grove and that will be the end of me—of all of us!"

"It's your fault!" I shot back. "I told you to make them leave me alone!"

He grabbed my jaw, sinking his nails into my cheeks. "You don't tell me what to do. I tell you."



Enraged, I struck him with the torch. He stumbled back, flailing his arms. It wasn't a clean blow. Only a bit of his hair was singed.

He took a threatening step toward me. I brandished the torch with both hands. Gazing at the flame, Uncle Irnik contained his rage. His complexion paled into a frightful color.

"Fine," he said, stepping back to the gate. "You have your torch. I have my army." He opened the gate and spoke toward the grove. "Come in. We have a traitor in our midst."

Once again I heard the branches tangling together, and then footsteps. They sounded like tree stumps treading the dirt. Long shadows lumbered through the gate. I didn't wait to see what was coming. I bolted into the keep, crashing into Greta.

"What's this about," she yelled, "running through the house with a torch?"

I ignored her and ran upstairs, slamming the door to my room. Cowering against the far wall while the footsteps closed in, I held the torch out, praying for God's protection.

The door opened. My uncle stood framed within the entry, glowering at me. Crouching figures crowded behind him. Their bodies were made of intertwined branches. Tightly woven vines formed their heads. Rose thorns tipped their fingers and bristled from their sap-dripping jaws as teeth. Tiny firefly-like lights burned deep within their shadowy eye sockets.

My uncle shook his head in disapproval, and, with the manner of an executioner, he pointed toward me.

With the first step his plant minions took into the room, the sense of peace returned, and this time a bright light appeared before them, filling me with awe and joy. I thought an angel had been sent, but the creature which appeared out of the light left me stunned.

The manifestation stood head and shoulders above everyone present. Its skin was mottled in shades of brown. Its limbs, body, and head were lumpy, yet the lofty beast held its shoulders back in a regal stance. Its odor filled the room with the tangy scent of fresh soil. The creature motioned the plant demons to halt with a wave of its hand and then pointed toward the grove. The plant demons bobbed their heads in agreement.

My uncle shook his head. "No! Wait!" He rushed toward the creature.

A gust of wind blew from the corridor, carrying a multitude of tangled branches and vines through my room and clattering out the window. When my uncle reached the brown beast, it vanished, along with the

overwhelming sense of peace. The wind ceased, and all that remained of the demons in the hall were a few scattered leaves.

My uncle turned a resentful eye on me. He looked deflated, standing where the brown creature had stood a moment before.

I tightened my grip on the torch.

"The spirits of this land don't have leaders," he said at last, "but they recognize power, and you have gained favor with the most powerful of their number." For emphasis, my uncle pointed to where the brown beast had stood a moment ago. "The being you saw is a spirit of tranquility. The birds are its angels; their songs are its hymns. It rests in the ground. The only people a tranquility spirit favors are the humble. Congratulations, Kalina. The castle is yours."

All this time, the peace I had thought was the presence of God was really the brown beast, and to think God would allow the brown beast to answer prayers meant for Him, wouldn't that make God complicit with idolatry? There was an answer. But I feared the answer would cost me my faith.

"I did not come here seeking lordship." I handed the torch to Uncle Irnik. "I am leaving."

"But I lost favor." He wrung his hands around the torch. "The spirits will not listen to me anymore. This castle is defenseless unless someone can control the spirits. If Lord Kostov discovers he can get to me, he will boil me in oil!"

"Then relearn your lessons about hubris," I said.

Despite everything, I kissed my uncle's cheek. I pitied him, because he probably no longer had it within him to make his heart contrite. Once a man has donned a cloak of arrogance, he feels naked in humility.





Woodsman, Don't Spare That Tree



by Ken St. Andre

WARNING: *This is the most difficult and challenging GM dungeon that I have created in years, possibly decades. This is a quest, with a goal that must be accomplished in order to win. You can't just let the players wander in, kill the monsters, get some treasure, and escape. Such an adventure is a failure. Players who enter here should be both powerful and smart. And even so, they may all be slain.*

Of course, I may be wrong, and the players who take on this adventure may be so good that they waltz through it with little or no difficulty. If that should happen, I tip my hat to them, and wish them all a Happy Halloween.

Ken





INTRODUCTION

Who knows why wizards do the things they do? They are all crazy, seeking knowledge and power. Some of them seem to revel in pain and perversion. The one who made this place must have been one of that type.

We know a little bit about this place. It only appears on one night of the year, always on the thirty-first night of the tenth month, always in a cemetery. It is a great block of stone with only one door. Out of that door pours a horde of horrors: monsters of every variety, skeletons, vampires, werewolves, and even stranger things. They carry sacks and squeal the same strange warcry: "Trickertree! Trickertree!"

Last year a bold party of adventurers entered this Tomb of Terror and fought their way through it. Only one returned to tell the tale. She said there is a monstrous tree growing at the end of the maze, and the monsters that pour forth into our world grow on its branches like strange fruit. When they are ripe, they fall off, and emerge to plague us. Several thousand monsters can emerge in a single night. The Trickertree must be stopped!

This is a Tunnels and Trolls adventure for up to 10 characters of up to 10th level. The rules of edition 7.5 are appropriate, but you may play with 5th edition rules if you wish.

Game Master, there are things you should know that the players should not know. The most important one is that once players enter the dungeon they are cut off from the outside world. Kremm does not replenish. Magical energy, once used, is gone. Everything needed to survive and accomplish the mission is actually inside the dungeon. It is up to the players to find these things, and figure out how to use them.

Do not share the dungeon map with the players. Although it looks like a simple cube on the outside, it can be as confusing as you wish to make it on the inside. This is a Halloween dungeon—there may be anachronisms inside that are not found in the players' world. Deal with it. Strange magic is everywhere.

There is no reason why this adventure should be limited to medieval fantasy characters. The players could be superheroes from the world of Power Trip or starfarers from New Khazan. The menaces should be just as deadly (or not) whether the players use swords, ray guns, or super powers.

Let the delvers bring whatever they wish in the way of armor, equipment, and supplies. However, this is a god-level dungeon. If the text says the walls cannot be harmed, then they cannot be harmed—not by dwarven pickaxes or disintegrator rays. By the way, the walls cannot be harmed. The only way through them is by the doors.



STARTING THE ADVENTURE

It is a blustery, cold night in a cemetery. The moons of Trollworld are full this evening, and they cast red and gray shadows on the ground. A cold wind blows in the faces of the characters. A few mausoleums dominate this desolate area, and many crumbling tombstones rise from the weedy soil. This is not a place where any sane person would want to be at night.

The dungeon shimmers into existence, somehow fitting between the family tombs and individual graves. That part of the cemetery that would have been beneath it has faded out of existence, replaced by this new block of stone. It is a huge, monolithic construction, perfectly square, some 1,000 feet on each side and 100 feet high. The stone is a poisonous shade of orange, and seems to be carved with demonic faces peering out of a screen of vines. In the center of the wall facing the party is an open doorway some 30 feet tall and 15 feet wide. Out of this door shambles a thing from Nightmare—something like a skeleton scarecrow. It is 12 feet high and carries a huge scythe. Scampering about its knees is a horde of smaller creatures, all carrying sacks and screaming "Trickertree! Trickertree!"

The skeleton scarecrow sees the party members and grins at them. Two of its front teeth are missing. It raises a bony finger and points at the delvers. The gang of little monsters at its feet immediately streams toward them, still howling "Trickertreeeeeeeee!"

Note to the GM

This is a fight the players should win, but this doesn't mean you can't make it scary for them. Let us call the attackers mawgs. Describe them as you would describe children in costumes, but arm them with long claws and knives. If the players have guns or any sort of high-tech weaponry, then give the same sort of equipment to the mawgs. The mawgs are terrible shots; they will miss their target nine times out of ten, but require a 1st lvl SR Lk from each PC within range. PCs only get hit if they fumble the saving roll. Each mawg should have a monster rating of 20 (3d6+10), and let there be one for each character level that your players have. For example, if one dwarf is a level three Warrior, he would have to face three mawgs.

By the time the players have dealt with the first wave of mawgs, the giant scary thing will have passed them and run off into the night. If it seems that the mawgs are winning the battle, have them break off and follow it after a combat round or two.

When the fight is over, there will be a momentary lull, and the players could use this time to enter the dungeon. If they fail to do so, hit them with another wave of mawgs coming out, but add an additional



creature for each of them to fight. The mawgs have nothing worth taking, with the possible exception of the bags they all carry. Each bag is filled with candies—Halloween candies—sugary skulls, tiny pumpkins, the usual gruesome stuff you might find in a trick-or-treater's bag. The candy is in fact magical: each bite-sized piece will heal one point of Con damage, but will not raise any Con attribute above its starting value. Each bag will contain 3d6 pieces of candy, and there is one bag per mawg.

The players must enter the dungeon of their own free will. If they fail to do so, then end the adventure.

Note No. 2

Once the characters are inside the dungeon, what the GM reads and how he behaves is controlled by the number of the room they are in. The key to this dungeon is arranged by room numbers. If a PC goes from Room 10 to Room 15, then the GM switches his key from 10 to 15, and vice versa. The dungeon is not strictly linear, and the players will be forced to retrace their steps from time to time.

ROOM 1: GRAVEYARD

Once they are inside the room, it looks to the delvers as though they have stepped into another world. This is partly true. They are no longer in the world they started in, so the supply of kremm is cut off, but they are not in the other world either. They are now inside a kind of physical illusion, and this will remain true as long as they are in the dungeon, except for the last room, Room 16.

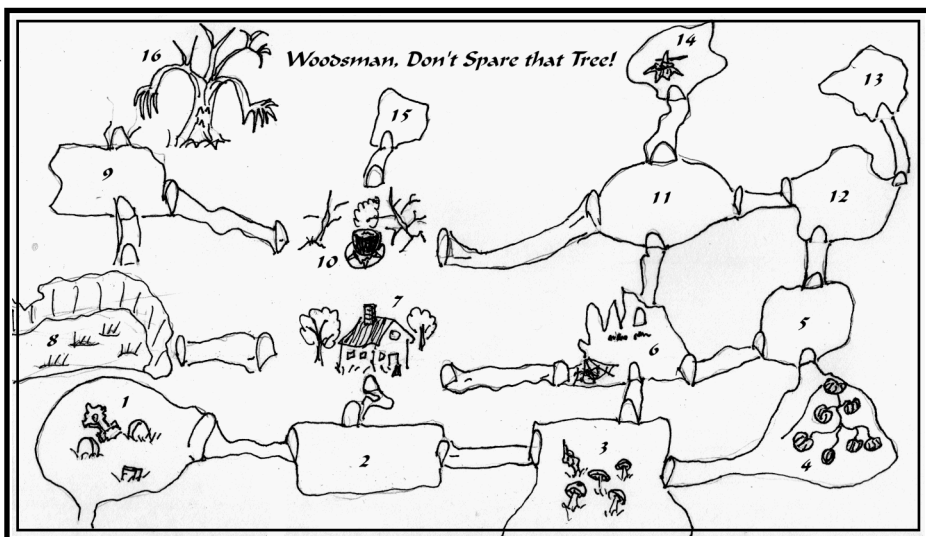
They still appear to be in a graveyard at night. The ground is a dirt floor. There are old, broken headstones everywhere. These stones glow with a flickering, pale blue light—a ghastly color. The inscriptions are mostly obliterated. If any PCs try to read them, have them make a 4th lvl SR Lk. If they fail, say the words are too worn to be legible. If they succeed, give them a partial reading: something like “Mandl—; Born 26,966, Died —.”

The party appears to be outside in the open, but this isn't true. The room is 200 feet square, 100 feet high. Characters enter at the south center edge. There is no breeze, and the stars overhead are strange: mostly orange in color. Call for saving rolls on Intelligence; it's really perception we're testing. If they make their saving rolls, tell them they catch glimpses of shadowy figures in the distance, scurrying from one tombstone to the next. Or tell them they find a skeleton hand coming up through the dirt. Or tell them they hear a very faint howl of a wolf—as if it is very far away. However, there is nothing in this room that will actually attack them.



If they walk far enough to reach a wall, it will be as if they encounter a force field. They will see the graveyard extending into the distance and murk ahead of them, but will not be able to take another step. If the characters are running when they hit the wall, have it knock them down and do 1d6 Con damage. These walls cannot be breached by anything the delvers have. Nor can the ceiling, which is the same kind of illusionary surface. If they should dig downwards, they will find that the walls continue below the surface for 100 feet, and then they will reach the true floor of the dungeon. They are well and truly enclosed in this box.

Monkey Lot



In the northeast corner of the room is a gravestone shaped like a treasure chest, and the inscription on it says, "Dig here." If players dig down three feet they will find a buried treasure chest. The chest is trapped, of course. The latch is coated with a contact poison that will make those who touch it ill and reduce their Cons by half. Wearing gloves, however, is protection enough. Inside the chest are two items: (1) a large stone key and (2) a sack of candy. There are 3d6 pieces of candy in the sack, and each one will heal one hit of damage.

In the northwest corner of the room is a huge sack, about 30 feet long and wide. Things are moving around inside the sack, and occasionally a mawg will find the opening and crawl out of it. The sack can't be cut or burned, and, with all the mawgs inside it, it is far too heavy to carry, not to mention the fact that it is five times as big as our PCs. The mawgs that make it out of the sack, one about every 10 minutes, will not fight but will run away and hide behind tombstones.



The players really should do something about the sack. It appears to be the source of the little monsters that come out of this place. They cannot burn it or carry it. An ideal solution would be to tie it shut, that is, if the players brought any rope with them. Give the player who thinks of this solution and actually accomplishes it 100 Adventure Points (APs).

The only exit from Room 1 is a door in the center of the eastern wall. It is painted to look like the rest of the wall, but has cracks around the edges, where a flickering orange light shows through. An Oh There It Is spell would easily reveal the door. There is no handle or lock; the door must be pushed open. It is made of heavy stone, and it is 30 feet high and 20 feet wide, so it is massive. This will be true of all the doors found in this dungeon. It would require a Strength of 200 to push this door open. If enough characters work together to contribute that amount of Strength, they can do it. Failing that, a level one Knock Knock spell will cause the door to open on its own and remain open for two minutes before magically closing again.

ROOM 2: ZOMBIE SKELETONS

Room 2 appears to be a continuation of Room 1: an unending graveyard at night. The tombstones glow with a faint orange light instead of blue. It goes without saying that Wizards sense magic.

After the delvers get at least 30 feet away from the door, start calling for saving rolls based on Luck. Start with level one, but go up by a level once each game turn until someone misses an attempt. Those who make the saving roll see skeleton hands and arms coming up out of the soil.

When a saving roll is finally missed, it is time to hit the players with a zombie skeleton attack. A full skeleton claws its way out of the ground and attacks. Once it does, others will also appear, clawing their way out of the earth all around our delvers and perhaps even under their feet. Summon 4d6 skeletons in this fashion. Each skeleton in the group has the same monster rating; determine that by rolling 1d6+1 and then multiplying that number by 10. Thus, a die roll of 3 would produce skeletons with monster ratings of 40 each. Note that players must state they are using smashing attacks to break the skeletons. They are undead. A sword thrust or a bullet wound won't stop them—won't even seriously slow them down. Magical attacks like TTYF are ineffective also: they are already dead. Award APs based on the skeletons' monster ratings; for instance, the destruction of a skel with a monster rating of 40 would be worth 40 APs.

There is nothing but graveyard and zombie skeletons in this room. If the players defeat the first group of zombie skeletons they meet, start



the process over, and when a saving roll is failed, hit them with another wave of zombie skels coming out of the ground.

The exits from this room are in the center of the eastern, western, and northern walls, with doors 30 feet high and 20 feet wide, just like the one in Room 1. It requires a combined Strength of 200 to push a door open or a Knock Knock spell to open it magically. The door in the north wall has a large keyhole 15 feet above the ground. It must be physically unlocked with the huge stone key from Room 1. No Knock Knock spell will unlock this door; one will only elicit an eerie voice that says, "Go away!"

Note: Characters are no longer in Trollworld, or wherever their home world may be. They may or may not be able to increase attributes in this dungeon. If they get a quiet moment and want to increase an attribute by spending AP, have them make a saving roll on their own level vs. the attribute in question. Example: Gunkk, a level two dwarf, has 300 AP accumulated and wishes to raise his In of 12 to a 13. He has enough APs to do so, but he must make a 2nd lvl SR In for it to work. That means he would have to roll at least an 11 on 2d6. (He can add his level to the attempt if he fails to roll the 13 he really needs.) Gunkk rolls the dice, getting a 4, 5. He fails. The APs are gone; the attribute does not increase. But if Gunkk had tried to increase his St from a 24 to a 25, he would have easily succeeded.

ROOM 3: MUSHROOM FOREST, SKELETON FAIRIES

The third area is very dark. There are stars in the (fake) sky above, but they give only enough light to see them. The ground has changed consistency. Now it is squishy, squelchy mud. Growing from the mud are hundreds of thousands of mushrooms and toadstools. There are giant puffballs, spike-caps, coralheads, shaggy manes, oxtongue, fistfuls, crystal-cyst, milkycaps, sulphureans, redcaps, parasols, cauliflower mushrooms, cowheads, and many others. They range in size from very small to knee high. There is no place to walk; players must just force their way through the mushrooms, breaking and treading them underfoot. The room is full of moving points of light, none of which is very close to the door.

The delvers hear a very faint chirping sound that grows louder as they move out into the room, which is 200 feet square. There are exit doors in the centers of the north and east walls. They are concealed and can only be found by searching, although a clue to their presence is on the ground. The mushrooms in front of each are all very small. Larger ones in that area have been broken and crushed. Players might notice the same thing in front of the door by which they entered.





Little, glowing sparks of light in the air are moving around erratically. Sometimes they dip down to land on a mushroom. Sometimes they soar way up towards the ceiling. These flying lights are lightning bugs: deadly lightning bugs. They bite, and when they bite they inject a tiny amount of toxin and also give off a small electrical charge. It takes 10 bites to do a single point of damage, but there are thousands of the lights in the room.

The GM should have players make 1st lvl SRs Lk each game turn to see if they are bitten by lightning bugs. Once a character has been bitten, it will be marked as food that the other bugs can sense. 2d6 (DARO) other bugs will be attracted to that character each game turn.

The bugs are annoying, but they aren't the real menace in this room. Flying around invisibly—except when they get silhouetted by a bug's light-filled tail section—are hundreds of skeleton fairies. Each one has a monster rating of 2 (1d6+1), but they attack in swarms. Although these creatures do have skin and muscles and all interior organs necessary for life, they are so emaciated that every tiny bone shows through and they appear to be skeleton fairies. They mostly live by hunting and killing lightning bugs.

After the delvers have spent three game turns in the room, the fairies will become aware of them, and, after some scouting, they will decide the delvers are a wonderful new food source. The word will go out to all the fairies in the room, and by turn six they will attack by the hundreds.

Fairy Attack

When the fairy attack comes, each character will be attacked by a different swarm of fairies (3d6 fairies per swarm—TARO). Add their combat dice and Adds for the attack. Example: 10 fairies on the attack get 10d6+10, not 2d6+5). The fairies are incredibly agile and swift; although a delver might fend off their attacks, he can only hit and slay one if the GM fumbles a combat roll. For each round of combat, the GM should make a saving roll for each swarm. On a roll of 1, 2, one of the fairies is hit and slain. Magic would be more effective against the fairies and bugs, but only spells that do area affect damage.

There is nothing the players can do but try to get through this room as quickly as possible. If they can find the door in the north or east wall fairly quickly, they may survive and move on. Otherwise they might need to retreat, or they might die here.

ROOM 4: FLAMING PUMPKIN HILL

Room 4 is also very dark, but the nature of the terrain has changed. The delvers find themselves at the foot of a very steep hill; it has about a 45-degree slope and is steeper in some places. As they begin to climb



the hill, they will come under attack. Dark humanoid shapes on the top of the hill will begin throwing flaming pumpkins down the hill at them.

Each flaming pumpkin will do 2d6 of fire damage. Armor will only give half protection against a pumpkin that hits. If the delvers charge all out, it will take them four combat turns to reach the top of the hill. If they go more slowly, it will take at least twice that long. On each combat turn, have each player make either a 2nd lvl SR Lk, a 3rd lvl SR Dx, or a 2nd lvl SR on any applicable Talent, such as Dodge or Agility. If a saving roll is missed, the character gets hit.

Three-quarters of the way up the hill, delvers might notice a tumble-down shack at the apex with hundreds of pumpkins surrounding it. The hurlers are man-sized goblins who glow with a demonic energy. Every time a goblin picks up a pumpkin, it bursts into flame, but the flames do not harm the goblin. If it comes to hand-to-hand combat, the goblins will try to bash their foes with flaming pumpkins. They get 3d6 in combat, and 10 Combat Adds. If a goblin takes damage in combat, it explodes in a puff of flame that might do 2d6 direct damage to its slayer. GM, roll 2d6 for each exploding goblin. If doubles are thrown, do that much damage to the slayer; if no doubles, then have the slayer feel a wave of heat but suffer no actual damage.

The shack is empty except for two scrolls hidden in a mass of smashed pumpkins. If players say they search the place carefully, have them make 2nd lvl SRs In.

Scroll 1 says: The Evil Old Man has part of the answer.

Scroll 2 says: The Witch knows the question.

The exit door for this room is on the north wall, hidden behind a boulder. A systematic search would find it, or else a 2nd lvl SR Lk. Like all the doors, to push it open requires either 200 St points or else a Knock Knock spell.

ROOM 5: CHON CHONS

Room 5 is not as dark as the previous ones, but it is still hard to see. The room is full of cold gray fog. Visibility is less than 10 feet. Since this room is large and open, it may be best for the players to describe how far they move forward on each turn. In the center of the room is a pit trap lightly covered with a thin coating of stone. It is 40 feet square and 20 feet deep, and filled with stakes at the bottom. Falling in will do 4d6 of damage.

The real menace in the room is the flying skulls—the chon chons. The GM should roll a d6 each game turn. On an odd number, chon chons will come screaming out of the fog to attack, one for each party





member. Chon chons attack the heads and faces of their foes. They are agile and hard to ward off, and they will do 2d6 damage if they get through. In order to do damage against a chon chon attack, the player must make a 2nd lvl SR Dx. Chon chons have monster ratings of 24: it takes 24 hits to kill one. Making the saving roll gives a PC a *chance* to hit a chon chon, but the player must still beat the chon chon's combat roll in order to actually hit it.

There are exit doors in the centers of the north and west walls. They are guarded very well by the chon chons: two of them will attack each party member as they try to exit.

ROOM 6: SPIDERS AND BATS

Once again the party appears to be outside, this time in a desolate forest. It is the same kind of illusion as in Room 1: the dead trees in the room are real, and so are the spiderwebs that stretch between them. The ones in the distance are illusions, painted on the walls. Will-o-wisp flames flit eerily through the treetops, wafted on breezes that only they can feel. The room is infested with zombified spiders, as there is no real food to keep spiders alive. Their webs are everywhere. Players will have to hack a path between the trees and the webs in order to advance.

There are hundreds of undead spiders in the room, but most of them are very small: too small to notice, too small to stop except by squashing them after they bite. For each game turn in the room, players should roll 1d6 to see how many spider bites they suffer that turn. The spider bites are more of an annoyance than anything else. For every 10 bites, temporarily reduce In by one point. The itching caused by the bites makes it hard to think. A Too-Bad Toxin spell would cure all the bites at once and restore any lost In. If In is reduced to half its normal level, stop reducing it with spider bites. Apply additional damage to Sp instead, as reflexes will degrade with so much poison in the system. If Sp gets down to half, switch the damage to Dx, and if that gets to half, switch to Con. It is possible to die of these tiny bites, but one would have to take an awful lot of them.

There are exit doors in all four walls, but characters will have to get very close to one to find it. As long as they are relatively far away from it, the GM should just torment them with spider bites and the occasional tree spider attack. Tree spiders are the size of dogs and cats, and have monster ratings of 30 (4d6+15). They are fast and scuttle forward to bite their prey. They used to be poisonous, but their venom dried up centuries ago. Now they are just painful. Before a tree spider attack, let the target player make a 1st lvl SR Lk to see if he sees it coming. Tree spiders attack on every third turn; roll 1d6 to see how many come out. The door



in the northern wall is partly open. Players can scurry through it without the effort of pushing it open or casting a spell.

The room also contains a host of blood bats with monster ratings of 16 each (2d6+8). They sleep in the upper branches of the trees, above the spider webs. They are the chief source of food for the spiders, and they have a secret exit hole in the roof that allows them access to the outside world. If a player is wounded and bleeding, the scent will attract blood bats. Bats attack wounded players only. They bite and scratch and batter with their wings. Bats on the wing are very hard to hit—players must make either a 2nd lvl SR Dx or a 3rd lvl SR Lk each combat round in order for their hits to count.

The spiderwebs are vulnerable to flame, but they are stretched between dead trees. Torching them might start a forest fire that would roast our delvers as well. Start a forest fire if more than one delver applies flame at a time. In case of forest fire, characters must escape the room within three combat turns or perish.

If the players get close to the exit in the western wall, have a trapdoor open in the soil in front of them and have a gigantic trapdoor spider attack. This spider is the size of a grizzly bear and has a monster rating of 200 (21d6+100). If that isn't enough of a challenge for the party, have two or three of them attack.

The spiders are just an ordeal that must be overcome in order to reach Room 7.

ROOM 7: THE WITCH'S HAUNTED HOUSE

Once the players enter Room 7, they will find a large old house with a very steep roof. It is made of wood: old, cracked, splintery wood. It seems to be early evening in this room, with the last rays of the sun fading in the West. The sun is not visible, but there is enough light to keep things from being totally dark. The house is surrounded by a fence of iron spikes. Except for a few feet right in front of the door to Room 6, the fence seems to run right up to the walls of the room. They don't look like walls; they look like other houses, but they can't be reached.

There is a sign on the front door, which is hanging open—Solicitors Welcome! There is a mailbox on the front porch with a name on it—it says "The Witch." No mail in the box, though. There is the tiniest bit of yard between the fence and the house. One could walk around the house, and nothing would happen. The yard is full of dead grass, and dead weeds.

The house has a hallway that leads to six interior rooms. Although it is a two-story house, it has no stairway going either up or down, and the ceilings seem quite high. The only light in the house comes through the

open doorway and a few dusty, spider-webbed windows. It is dim and very gloomy.

The hall goes straight into the house and ends in a door. There are also doors on the right and the left.

The Parlor

Door 1, to the right, leads into a parlor. A huge polar bear-skin rug covers most of the floor. There is a dilapidated sofa, a rocking chair, and a curio cabinet. An ancient hag of a woman sits in the rocking chair and creaks back and forth. There is a fireplace on the south wall, but neither fire nor fuel near it. The curio cabinet is full of knickknacks: a single gold coin, a crystal ball, a deck of cards with strange pictures on them, a small pewter statue of a dragon.

If the delvers attempt to talk to the woman in the chair, she will ignore them and keep rocking. If they attack her, they will find out she is a ghost and cannot be harmed with weapons; even magical weapons have no effect upon her. Kill spells have no effect either; she's already dead. If they attempt to take anything from the curio cabinet, she will tell them to leave that stuff alone; it does not belong to them. If they persist, she will cast a Limbo spell on them. Everything will grow dim and hazy and fade to gray, and the delvers will find themselves in Limbo, surrounded by howling in the shadowed, foggy air. Limbo is actually Room 8, and the adventurers have been teleported into it.

If the delvers talk to the ghost after her warning, she will ask them if the Witch has sent them for her crystal ball. If they say no, she will warn them not to take anything and tell them to leave. If they say yes, she will tell them this isn't the right crystal ball—the one they want is in the Divining Room. After imparting that information, the ghost will become silent and resume rocking.

The Bedroom

The door to the left opens into a bedroom. The room is dominated by an ancient, four-poster, canopied bed. It is covered with a Halloween quilt appliqued with black cats and jack-o-lanterns. Someone seems to be sleeping in it: an ancient woman. In fact, she looks just like the ancient woman in the parlor—old, wrinkled, and hideous. This woman is also a ghost, and the bed furnishings are likewise ectoplasmic. She cannot be awakened, but if the players remain in the room, she will start to snore. The snore will be loud, raspy, and actually harmful. The first game turn of snoring makes the players uncomfortable. After that, they will begin to lose Intelligence points at a rate of one per game turn. After three game turns, the player with the lowest In will fall asleep, and after each following game turn another player will fall asleep. If they all

fall asleep in this room, they will die here. If they're smart enough to get out of the room, the sleepers will wake up. Lost Intelligence remains lost. Since the old woman is a ghost, she cannot be harmed by anything the players do, nor can she be awakened.

The Kitchen

The door at the end of the hall opens into a kitchen. There is a big open hearth in the center of the room, and on it sits a huge iron kettle full of some nasty green liquid. An old woman stands beside the kettle, stirring it with a huge iron spoon. She doesn't say anything; she just stirs the kettle. Yes, she is the same old woman, and she is also a ghost. The kettle, however, is real, and the broth inside it is real: it's real poison. Putting it on weapons will double their damage dice. There is also a table nearby with a cleaver and some vegetables: all round things—cabbages, pumpkins, onions.

There are three doors in the room. Door 1 leads back out into the hall. Door 2, on the far side of the room from Door 1, leads out of the house into Room 8, Limbo. Door 3 leads into another hall at right angles to the first one.

The Second Hall

The second hall has four doors opening from it. Door 1 leads back to the kitchen. Door 2 is on the left and leads to a library. Door 3, on the right side of the hall, leads to the Divining Room. Door 4, at the end of the hall, leads to a commode.

The Library

The library is an excellent place for magic users to be. It contains many books and scrolls on magic—mostly of the dark and dreadful kind. An old lady ghost sits in a big chair, reading a book. She looks up and sees the party, chooses the wizard or rogue with the lowest In, and says in a squeaky ghost voice, "You will be allowed to learn one spell from the library. The rest of you can wait outside." The chosen character may master any spell from the spellbook for which he or she has sufficient Wiz, In, and Dx. If a delver objects, the witch ghost says, "frog," and the objector is turned into a frog: a giant frog that still fits his clothing, but is nevertheless a frog. The spell will end once the delver leaves the library. However, he is cursed. Should he ever hear the word "frog," he will turn into a giant frog again for the next game hour.

The Divining Room

The Divining Room has a black-covered table with a Ouija board on it and an old woman sitting at it. She asks if anyone would like to have their fortune told. If anyone agrees, the ghost cackles madly, looks at



the person's hand, and says, "You will die soon." That person will feel a terrible shock, like electricity; turn pale; and begin to sweat. Upon leaving the room, that person's Con will drop immediately to zero, and he or she will fall down (mostly) dead. Since Con is only at zero, a Poor Baby spell cast by another delver, or immediate first aid of some sort, will be able to bring the Con back into positive numbers and thus bring the delver back to life.

The GM may indulge in as much "fortune-telling" as he wishes with this ghost. If the players care to talk to her, she will gladly tell their fortunes. Beware, GM: if you predict something for a player, you will have to make it come true some time during the game.

If the players remember or know that they are looking for the crystal ball, and ask for it, the ghost will tell them to find it. It is not visible anywhere in the room. They may search, and may make saving rolls as much as they wish. They will only find the ball if someone thinks to say they look under the table, which is draped with a floor-length black tablecloth.

The Commode

The last room in the house is the commode. In addition to a wash basin, a bucket of water, and a toilet, there is also a cabinet with three potions in it. The green potion is an aphrodisiac; drinking it increases the player's Ch by 10 points for members of the opposite sex. The blue potion is a healing potion that will do 2d6 points of healing when drunk. The black potion is a sleeping potion that will put the drinker to sleep for 3d6 game turns. They are not labeled, and the players may not be able to figure out what they do unless they try them.

The Exit

That's the whole house. The exit is in the kitchen, through the door that leads to Limbo.

ROOM 8: LIMBO

Room 8 is nothing but cold gray fog. The delvers can feel the hard surface of the floor under their feet, but they cannot see it. They can't see their hands at arm's length in front of their faces. But they hear sounds: whispers on the edge of hearing, low moans, faraway laughter.

The exit door is in the north wall. There is also a door in the east wall that leads back to the Witch's kitchen.

After giving the players a few minutes to accustom themselves to Limbo, the GM should suddenly shriek at them—really let loose a frightening scream. Note who jumps, and have their characters suddenly dash a few steps into the mists, where they will be immediately lost to view. If they lose contact with the wall, they will have nothing to orient

themselves with. Each double step covers about four feet; 50 of them would take the delvers across the room. The doors cannot be seen from the inside, but can be felt. An Oh There It Is spell would reveal them if the caster were within about 50 feet. These also require 200 Strength or Knock Knock magic to open.

Players not in contact with the walls cannot control the direction of their steps. Get an eight-sided die or some other randomizing item, and roll to determine which way they go on each step, with 1 being due north, 2 being northeast...5 being south, and so forth.

Limbo can cause terror. Force of personality fights terror. Once every two or three game turns, have each player make a 3rd lvl SR Ch. To fail is to be overwhelmed by fear, lose a point of In that won't come back until they leave the Limbo room, and dash wildly into the fog for **x** number of steps, with **x** being the number they missed by. Players holding onto each other can stay together. If, for any reason, they should lose their grips on each other, they will be separated and may never find each other again.

ROOM 9: MASKS

When the delvers push through the door to Room 9, they find themselves in an alcove guarded by three skeleton men. The skeleton men are impeccably dressed in formal attire, and each holds a wand that fairly shrieks with magical power. They tell the party to halt, and they explain, if given a chance, that the delvers cannot proceed through this room unless they are wearing masks.

Characters who have masks or can improvise them will be allowed to exit the alcove and enter the room. Players who don't have their own masks get a chance to buy one from the third skeleton, who has a sack full of masks. Virtually anything you can imagine is available as a mask, though the common things are animal masks, goblins, demons, ghosts, vampires, golems, witches, etc. Masks may be purchased cheaply, for a gold piece each. The skeleton men want the delvers to have masks.

Alternately, the characters may attack the skeletons. Each has a monster rating of 50 (6d6+25), and its wand will magically convert into a great axe worth 6d6 in combat. If the skeletons are defeated, the PCs will find the axe-wand weapons and a sack full of masks.

To leave the alcove and enter the room, the delvers must pass through a black curtain. On the other side, everything is dimly lighted. Characters wearing masks will be able to see better than those not wearing masks. A trail leads across the room to the south, around in a curve to the west, and then, on a higher level, directly across the room to the door in the eastern wall. Only delvers wearing the masks can see



the trail, and only on the trail, which is barely wide enough for a single player at a time, is there any safety. Delves who step or fall off the trail find themselves in quicksand; within a game turn they will be sucked under and asphyxiated. The quicksand is full of leeches, small creatures that get inside the characters' clothing and suck their blood. Players in quicksand will pick up 2d6 leeches (DARO). Each leech will do a quarter of a point of Con damage each combat turn.

The masks are perfectly safe when worn inside Room 9 or 10, but any masks provided by the skeletons are also magical. If worn outside Rooms 9 and 10, they change the character into the being portrayed by the mask. The GM will have to use his or her imagination to adjudicate how being turned into a wolf, a goblin, or a vampire actually affects the character.

Dexterity Saving Rolls

The path through the room is narrow and treacherous. At some point during the walk, the GM should ask the player with the lowest Dx rating to make a 1st lvl SR Dx. To fail the saving roll is to fall off the path and into the quicksand. On the next turn, the GM should ask the player with the next lowest Dx to make his 2nd lvl SR Dx. And so on until each player has had a chance to test his Dx. The difficulty of the saving roll goes up by one point per player tested. There is only one path when the players leave the alcove, and it spirals through the room. At the halfway point it splits into two paths. The first path leads to an exit door in the eastern wall. It is a normal door and can be opened normally. It leads to Room 10. The second path leads to a door with a tree image carved into the stone. The keyhole in it is set within a wooden plate about eight feet above the ground. This door must be unlocked with the wooden key that the players probably have not found yet, or it will not open. It leads to Room 16, where the Trickertree grows.

ROOM 10: CAULDRON

Room 10 appears to be a continuation of the forest in Room 9, but the trees are more widely spaced and in the exact center is a clearing. In the clearing is a bonfire, and on the bonfire is an enormous cauldron at least five feet high, with flames licking at its base. Around the cauldron dance three witches clad in scarlet, emerald, and onyx robes. They sing an ominous ditty as they dance.

*Hocus pocus,
Toil and trouble,
Bone fire burn and
Cauldron bubble.*



If the delvers approach the witches, they will stop their obscene dance and talk to them, saying silly, suggestive, and obscene things, like: "Why don't you take your clothes off and hop into the cauldron for a nice warm bath with me, pretty boy?" Game Master, if you ever wanted to roleplay a witch, this is your chance.

If the characters are still wearing their masks, the witches will be delighted and very nice to them. If they have taken their masks off, the witches will revile them and threaten to curse them. To speak to the witches and get good information from them, at least one character must be wearing a mask.

The Witch dressed in black is, of course, the leader, and she is willing to answer questions if the players can get her to talking. One way to befriend her would be to offer ingredients for the kettle or Halloween candy from the mawgs' bags. The witches all like candy.

One thing the delvers could learn from the Witch is that to end this cursed existence, the great Tricketree at the end of the maze—they call it a maze—must be chopped down. To do that, they will need the Crimson Axe. If the delvers ask where the axe can be found, the Witch will tell them it is far away and well hidden. And that if they will fetch her crystal ball from her house, she will tell them how to obtain that axe.

If the delvers attempt to attack the witches, they will shriek and vanish in puffs of foul-smelling, colored smoke that match their garments. If the delvers ask what's in the kettle, the witches will claim it is an herbal tea and ask if they would like to have some. The witches will claim it cures werewolf bite. It does cure any werewolf damage and also heals wolf-inflicted wounds, but there is a curse associated with it. Anyone who drinks the witches' tea will always have to make their saving rolls one level higher than requested to succeed. Of course, they do get the extra AP for attempting the higher-level saving throws.

Should the players have the Witch's crystal ball, or return to her house, find it, and bring it to her, she will tell them that the Crimson Axe can only be wielded by the wearer of the Negatory Gloves. Once the gloves and the axe have been obtained, the party must still get the final key from the Evil Old Man. The Evil Old Man can only be harmed by...you guessed it...the Crimson Axe.

The doors leading out of Room 10 are in the north and east walls.

ROOM 11: WEREWOLVES

Room 11 is an ancient forest of oak, ash, and hawthorn trees, distorted into grotesque shapes and seeming to have faces. The ground is irregular and stony. There are twisting paths that move between the trees. Through gaps in the trees the sky can be seen, with strange stars and a single huge, gray-white, cratered full moon. Think of it as Luna.



And hiding in the forest are werewolves. There should be one werewolf with a monster rating of 100 (11d6+50) for every two members of the party. They will be cautious at the beginning, waiting to see if the party will separate, but by turn three or four the weres will attack. Frighten the players with werewolf howls before the actual attack. Try to break the combat into separate battles.

This room is life and death. The werewolves will kill and eat the players if they can. There is also the possibility of infection. Delvers wounded by werewolves will become werewolves themselves three rooms later. At that time, they must make 5th lvl SRs In to retain their sanity. Failing that saving roll would turn them into bloodthirsty monsters who would attack their own party. Having drunk the witches' tea will negate the curse, but not the damage of werewolf wounds. Drinking the tea after being wounded both negates the curse and quickly heals all damage. Having a supply of the tea would be good.

There are exit doors in the centers of all four walls, but they will be hidden by the forest until the players are very close: within 10 feet of a door. If the players find one too quickly, have the wolves attack them before they can go through it, and if they flee through it, have the wolves follow them into the next room. The door to the south is partially open, and leads to the spider room; players could make a quick exit there.

ROOM 12: GHOSTS, GHARGS, AND SNOLLYGOSTERS

This room is absolutely lightless. Delvers may, however, bring their own light in with them. A cold wind seems to be moving in a circle, and it will blow out any open flame once about every third combat turn. The surface of the ground is riddled with tunnels, and in these tunnels lurk ghosts, ghargs, and snollygosters. These beasts have never been seen by living creatures.

The **ghost** is an invisible thing that moves with the wind and comes at the players in a cold rush of freezing claws capable of ripping through metal. It has a monster rating of 100 (11d6+50), and, because it is invisible, players must make 2nd lvl SRs Lk or else their combat totals do no damage when fighting it. There will be one ghost for every four members of the party.

The **gharg** is a master of disguise. It can take any form it wants, but anything much larger than a man is too hard for it, since it cannot change its total mass. The gharg cannot speak; it can only say *gharg*, *gharg*, hence its name. Its favorite trick is to emerge from a tunnel in the guise of either a party member or just another adventurer, holding what looks like gold, and then to point excitedly at the treasure and dart back inside. If a delver enters, the gharg will attack from behind. It has a monster rating of 36 (4d6+18). It will not fight with more than two people at a time.

The **snollygoster** always attacks from behind its victim. Always. It is always where the character is not looking. The distinctive things about a snollygoster are the bubbling laugh it emits just before attacking and the three-toed footprints it leaves behind. If a snollygoster is slain in some fashion, it melts away. Snollygosters attack party members who fail their Luck saving rolls. For each 10 minutes spent in this room, have every player roll a saving roll on Luck. First time is level one, second time is level two, third time is level three, etc. Snollygosters have a monster rating of 24 (3d6+12), and their first attack is always unblockable. Armor may protect the victim, or, if the player hears the laugh and reacts instantaneously with some form of dodge or evade maneuver, give him a 3rd lvl SR Lk to see if he managed to avoid being struck by a snollygoster claw.

Of the three monsters, only ghargs have treasure. They hide it in their tunnels. If a gharg is slain, roll on a random treasure generator of your choice to see what treasure is found in its lair.

There are exit doors in the centers of the north, south, and west walls.

ROOM 13: THE EVIL OLD MAN

Room 13 seems like an enormous pillar-studded plain, but it is only 200 feet square like the rest. The pillars that recede into infinity are part of an optical illusion painted on the walls.

In the center of the room is a throne. Seated upon the throne is what looks like an ancient wizard, clad all in blood-red robes. His face is so wrinkled and craggy that it is hard to even see his eyes. A horde of some 20 goblins—monster ratings 30 each, armed with broken bronze swords and daggers and bucklers—dance and cavort around the throne. There are some baskets of putrid fish nearby. The players who are sensitive detect vile, evil magic coming both from the old wizard and from the throne he sits on.

The old man cannot leave his throne, and he wants nothing more than to leave the throne. He begs the players to help him. If he could only get his Negatory Gloves back, then he could help the players, and would gladly do so.

The Evil Old Man is happy to talk to the players as long as they want. He will tell them stories about the Trickertree, about the witches, about the monsters that haunt the maze—he, too, calls it a maze. The GM may make up as much as he wants when role-playing the Evil Old Man. He is evil, and under no obligation to tell the truth.

The Evil Old Man cannot be harmed by any spells or weapons the players may have. He cannot even be touched. Think invisible force field surrounding him. However, if the players should attack him, he will have his 20 goblins fight back.



The Evil Old Man wants the delvers to get his Negatory Gloves and return them to him. He will promise them anything if only he could regain his precious gloves; with them, he could get the Crimson Axe and cut down the Trickertree. If the players have already passed through the room with the Negatory Gloves in it, they might already have them. If they give them to the Old Man, he will leave his throne and join the party. This can be a point of cruel deception for the GM. Make them think that with the Evil Old Man as their ally they are going to win this scenario. In fact, they will have almost certainly doomed themselves.

Do not tell the players that in order to “win” this scenario, they must slay the Evil Old Man, search him, and find the Wooden Skull Key, which he keeps hidden in his hat. The Evil Old Man is impervious to all harm except from the Crimson Axe; it is his weapon, and the only thing that can harm him.

Should the Evil Old Man get the Negatory Gloves and the Crimson Axe, the scenario is lost. He will slaughter the players and end the game. No stopping him. If he only has the Negatory Gloves, he could still be slain or tricked. The Witch in black has equal power, and she can immobilize him long enough for a character to strip the gloves off of him.

The door in the south wall by which the players entered is the only entrance to or exit from this room.

ROOM 14: THE AXE IN THE STUMP

Room 14 is a desolation of tree stumps—hundreds of them. Some are have been cut down only a few inches above the ground. Others may be seven or eight feet tall. Near the center of the room is a stump about five feet high. Stuck in the wood is a woodsman's axe. The blade is of some strange crimson metal (or maybe it has just been painted that color). For those who can sense magic, the weapon/tool radiates the most malevolent magic they have ever felt. Anyone getting near it will feel certain that it is a cursed weapon.

Aside from the cursed axe, this is a peaceful room. Nothing will attack the players in here. PCs might have the time to actually spend APs, or plan their next moves, or rest in this room. There are plenty of tree stumps to sit on.

The Crimson Axe can only be touched safely by someone wearing the Negatory Gloves. Anyone else who touches it will be cut by invisible blades that come from nowhere and chop right through any known armor, doing 17d6 damage. Those not wearing the gloves will also fail to pull the axe out of the stump if they try.

The door in the south wall is the only entrance to or exit from the room.



ROOM 15: GLOVES GALORE

Room 15 is like a department store or perhaps a warehouse. It is full of furniture: chairs, beds, tables, dressers, mirrors, and so forth. The four walls of this room are made of thick glass. A player standing by the wall can see through it. North of the room is the world outside, east is the stump forest with the Crimson Axe, south is the cauldron room where the witches gather, and west is Room 16, where the immense Trickertree stands. Although the walls are transparent inside Room 15, they are opaque on the other sides.

Occupying this space are dozens of mannequins. They are featureless and nude, but they each wear a pair of gloves and a Halloween mask. Some of them carry weapons—swords, knives, pistols; their armament is on a par with whatever the party of players is using. PCs who make a 3rd lvl SR In will notice that all of the gloves are double-colored, except for those of one mannequin found near the northeastern corner, whose gloves are scarlet. (They are the exact same color as the woodsman's axe in Room 14.)

Every pair of gloves in the room radiates magic. Although the dummies have no eyes or other facial features except those on the masks they wear, they will watch the party as it moves around the room.

If anyone tries to remove a pair of gloves from a mannequin, the dummy will come to life and fight back with the nearest weapon it can find. The first dummy approached in this fashion will have a monster rating of 100 (11d6+50). Each following dummy will have a monster rating 20 points higher. If a mannequin seems to be losing a fight, it will attempt to run away, and players will have to chase it and hold it down to take its gloves.

The gloves are all magical—every single pair in the room. They have the ability to animate lifeless objects, like mannequins, when worn. They also add 2d6 to the wearer's fighting ability. They all have the same powers, except the scarlet gloves. That pair also has the power to protect the wearer from curses; even god-level curses can be negated by them. The wearer of those gloves is the only person who can touch the Crimson Axe and not be harmed by it. The wearer is the only person who can take the Crimson Axe from the stump in Room 14.

The only way in and out of Room 15 is the door in the south wall leading to Room 10.

ROOM 16: THE TRICKERTREE

Room 16 has no ceiling, and it is fully within the other world. It is a dark, strange world. A gigantic, Jupiter-like planet fills the sky, which is a dark purple color. The walls show a strange cratered landscape of blue,

black, and red stone with an occasional tree growing up out of patches of grassy green spots. In the center of the room is what looks like a gigantic oak tree. It is 40 feet in circumference and towers about 200 feet into the sky. There are holes in the trunk near the ground that look like two eyes, a nose, and a mouth. The branches bear strange fruit, creatures of many different types: mawgs, skeletons, chon chons, wolves, bats, spiders. Lying near the base of the tree is a huge sack, at least 30 feet long and 20 feet wide. Things are moving inside it.

The tree is impervious to all harm. Weapons used against it will shatter. Spells cast at it will rebound on the caster. And it can talk. It will scoff at the delvers' attempts to destroy it and take glee in any harm they do themselves by trying to destroy it.

The only thing that can cut it down is the Crimson Axe. If the Crimson Axe is shown, the tree will change its tune and beg for its life, offering riches, servants, or magical knowledge if only the axeman will spare it.

The axe is so powerful that it can chop down the tree in three strokes. The first stroke will cause the tree to howl painfully and shake so hard that its roots make the very earth shake and roll; players will be knocked down. The second stroke will make the earth shake twice as violently, and all the strange fruit growing on the tree will fall off. Every player should make a 3rd lvl SR on Dx, Sp, or any kind of dodging or agility Talent they may have to avoid being struck by a falling monster. If struck, a character takes damage equal to the number by which the saving roll was missed times 3. Example: miss the saving roll by 5 points, take 15 points of damage. Armor will not protect from this damage. The third stroke will cause the tree to fall in the direction opposite the chopper. When it crashes to earth, it shatters the very magical framework of the dungeon itself. The dungeon vanishes, and the players find themselves back in their own world.

At this point the adventure is over. Surviving players are awarded 1,600 AP and whatever they managed to bring out with them. They have defeated the Trickertree.





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