

# The Manor

Issue #1



# The Manor

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### DEDICATIONS

Without a doubt this first issue goes out to my wife, Ivy. She's the one that puts up with all my gaming.

And the second dedication goes out to my old time gaming crew and friends, Dwayne Gillingham and Rob Conley. I have these two in mind when I write adventures.

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# INTRODUCTION

Before I start I need to thank Christian for inspiring me to create a zine. This is something I've wanted to do for many years, but I never pursued it. *One Square Equals Five Feet*, got me thinking about it, and when he released *Loviatar*, he showed me the way. Ivy told me I should do it. Now I've gone and done it.

I'd like to take a few sentences to give my philosophy on how I see this zine working:

1. It will be adult oriented. There will be swears. There will be graphic material. And there will be naked women if I can sneak them past Ivy.
2. The intent of The Manor is to provide a view of what it looks like behind my GM screen--without the loud music playing.
3. I plan on having a guest contributor in each issue. While this zine will reflect my way of gaming, I also want to include others who influence the way I game.
4. I use a generic gaming system that is retro-clone friendly. I like them all. Most of the content will focus on fantasy gaming, but I am not beyond slipping in other genres.
5. I use a silver standard. Silver is the money of the everyday person. Gold is the currency of wealthy merchants, clergy and nobility.
6. And lastly, I do this for fun, not to change minds or challenge gaming philosophies. I roll dice, laugh, and try to make my funny voices sound convincing.

So now it's time to start this. Go help Paco and his family. His little boys are starving and you're still reading this introduction. Go forth. Go roll dice. Go kill something. Go on. What are you waiting for?

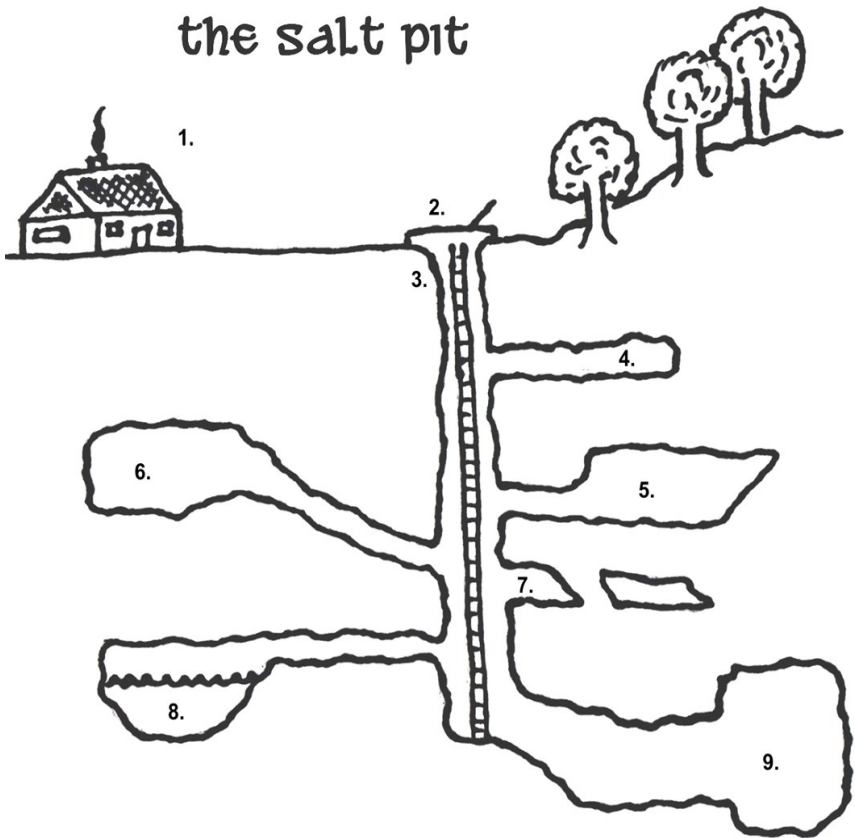
Enjoy.

Tim Shorts May, 2012

# MICRO ADVENTURE: THE SALT PIT

## BACKGROUND

Paco and his family have worked in the salt pit for the past five years. It's too small for the local nobility to take notice other than the additional tax of salt three times a year. Recently, something has taken up residence within the salt pit and Paco needs help or he and his family will lose everything.



Paco knows these mines well and will provide the players information about the tunnels. This information is given with the room description.

This can be plugged in as a side adventure near a village, town or in the wilderness. If the GM feels the encounter is too weak for the party then add an additional creature or increase the hit dice.

## THE SALT PIT

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### 1. Paco's House

This one and a half story house sits just outside the salt pit's entrance. Paco is nervous. The tax collector is due within the week. Since the creature moved into the salt pit he's lost two weeks of work. Paco lives with his wife, Gwen, and two sons. They are not allowed to leave the house until the creature is killed. He shows the players where the creature gouged the door and walls. In addition to the lost work, much of his livestock has been killed. If the creature isn't removed soon, Paco will lose everything he's worked for.

Paco gives a description of the pit and warns the party of the dangers. Paco can offer two lanterns, a small cask of oil (holds 20 flasks of oil), and 300' of rope to the players. These supplies are in Area 4.

### 2. Mine Cover

Paco built a simple wooden platform to cover the pit. It keeps his children safe and keeps out the rain. He installed a trapdoor for the entrance. This has been ripped off its hinges and lies next to the platform. Only the top of a ladder can be seen.

### 3. The Long Ladder

A ladder descends to the bottom of this 50' shaft. Paco reinforced the rungs with nails and rope. There are fresh gouges in the wood.

#### 4. Storage Tunnel

Paco uses this tunnel as a supply area. This is where the player will find the items Paco mentioned. Also lined neatly along the walls are a dozen baskets filled with salt.

Paco will warn the players not to trust the ladder, especially those wearing armor. There is a 5% chance each time a player uses the ladder one of the rungs will break. This chance increases to 10% if the player is wearing heavy armor or carrying a lot of weight.

#### 5. Tunnel One

Over the entry of the tunnel is a faint '1' painted on a water-soaked barrel top. The smell from the tunnel is horrendous. Within the tunnel are several piles of dung\*. Paco exhausted the salt from this area and no longer mines here.

\*Please refer to the next section, **There's Something Shiny in the Troglodyte Dung Heap** to add some treasure...so to speak.

#### 6. Horseshoe Tunnel

Hanging over the tunnel are three horseshoes with their ends pointing upwards. This is a salt rich tunnel. At the end of the tunnel is a stack of ten empty baskets and a broken pick. On the west wall is a large flask hanging from an iron spike. It is half full of water.

#### 7. Cave-In

This tunnel has collapsed. A few months ago the cave top started crumbling. Paco suggests the players stay away from this area. He tells them that there could be another cave-in that could seal the lower two tunnels. This section of the ceiling is cracked and hanging. Small piles of fallen rock are on the floor. Towards the back wall there is a bear skin littered with animal bones.

This section of the tunnel roof is brittle and dangerous. Any jarring causes a collapse doing 2d6 damage (save halves). If over 10 points of damage is caused, the lower two tunnels will be blocked. The creature used this area first before moving to the larger cavern below. The bear skin is worthless, but if searched a pair of silver rings (10sp) will be found.

## 8. Water Trap

This section of the mine floor was washed away by an underground spring. The water is a thick, gray soup. It is impossible to see the bottom.

Getting too close to the edge of the pool will cause the ground to give way, spilling the character into the brackish water. The water is ten feet at the deepest. The sides are loose so climbing out without assistance is nearly impossible.

## 9. The Creature's Lair

The walls and ceiling glisten with salt. A horrible odor fills the cavern (a save is required vs. poison, failure means the character will lose 1 strength point/round for 2d8 rounds). Six baskets of salt rocks sit against the base of the far wall along with two picks and a shovel. In the center of the room is a pile of large rocks.

Hidden within the cavern is a troglodyte using its chameleon power to blend into the cavern wall. There is a 1 in 6 chance the character can detect its location, otherwise the troglodyte waits to attack the party from behind. Hidden within the pile of rocks are three uncut garnets of varying shades of red (25sp each) and a dented iron ring with a rare star garnet set into four prongs (150sp).

**Troglodyte** HD: 2, HP: 11, AC: 14, MV: 12, Dam: 1d3/1d3 (claws), Special: Excretes a poisonous odor that causes victims to lose 1 Strength/round for 2d4 rounds, save negates. Chameleon power to blend into earthen surfaces.

## CONCLUSION

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When the party kills the creature Paco offers a share of his salt. He can't say how much it will be, but now that the mine is safe again he can return to work. If the party returns in a month he will have 100sp waiting and another offer: "*See, there is this other piece of land I've been interested in and all I need is...*"





## THERE'S SOMETHING SHINY IN THE TROGLODYTE DUNG HEAP D12 BY JASON SHOLTIS

1. A glass eye--near-mint condition.
2. A glass gem, cracked.
3. A low value (but real) gem.
4. A skillfully cut emerald coated in disease-ridden slime.
5. Poorly digested chunks of gelatinous cube tissue (trog will try anything once).
6. Bits of chewed-up but still golden brooch.
7. An ancient coin, rare and valuable to collectors of antiquities, raises suspicion of theft when presented.
8. A golden fang, matches trog dentition (evidence of cannibalism).
9. Several links of mail, still luminous with wasted enchantment.
10. A huge, shiny intestinal worm desperate to enter a new host.
11. A ring of protection. Finger included.
12. Car keys.

**Note:** roll twice if searchers are willing to roll up their sleeves and really dig in.

# RURAL PENNSYLVANIA: GHOUL



The Ghoul House is just outside Mercer County. It was built on an intersection of negative energy ley lines. A small sect of necromancers, led by Mandris Hollen, funded its construction in 1935. With the Great Depression strangling the economy and the killer Black Blizzards to the south, the ley lines were strong.

Mandris gathered his necromancers to build the house to focus the energies. Then they meticulously planted trees on the ley lines to absorb and store the power. They discovered white pine trees to be the best. The necromancers used the bark to dye their skin red during ceremonies, twigs entwined to make upside down crosses to ward off good and the water from the roots as the base of the undeath potions. He taught each of his followers the recipe for ghoul creation. He wished to create an army of undead.

Transients came through using the railroad. Mandris promised meals and work. He had them dig the holes for the hundreds of trees and then buried their bodies there. Using the

trees drawing power it created a stronger undead.

Only his closest followers knew the true intent of Mandris. He sought the power of Lichdom. He carried the knowledge within him and constructed a phylactery from the heartwood of a white pine tree. Once the change was complete he planned to release his army and build a realm of death that the earth seemed to beg him to create. Mandris sat in his secret chamber, a granite throne built at the nexus of the ley lines and waited for his change.

### **Present Day**

When Mandris awoke from his change he did not realize how much time had passed. The ley lines had shifted in his sleep and he no longer sat upon a place of power. The world he knew vanished. Mandris knows he needs to move or face oblivion.

Only Mandris remains in the house. Two hundred ghouls are planted at the base of the white pines, those that remain. They await the day to be released.



# Stats

## **Mandris Hollen**

Lich Lord

HD: 14, HP: 90, AC: 20, MV: 12, Dam: by spell, Special: see below.

Mandris can cast as a 14th level magic-user. He casts to kill. He has no interest in speaking to anyone. He has grown mad with his hatred of the living and when he finally attacks or is attacked, he will unleash his full power.

The phylactery Mandris wears around his neck needs to be destroyed to cause his final death.

## **200 Dire Ghouls**

HD: 4, HP: 20 each, AC: 13, MV: 9, Dam: 1d4 (claw)/1d4 (claw)/1d8 (bite), Special: Paralyzation.

A ghoul's touch causes paralyzation for 3d6 rounds. Save negates.

POETRY SLAM BY RUSTY BATTLE AXE



**UMBER HULK**

Four eyed bafflement.  
Addled brains wonder:  
"Umber who?"  
"Umber what?"  
"Umber where?"

# 20 RANDOM FOREST ENCOUNTERS

#	ENCOUNTER	#	ENCOUNTER
1	Dead Spiders	11	Panning for Gold
2	Silvery Grains	12	Underground Shrine
3	Half a Hut	13	Goblin Tears
4	One Big Pecker	14	Pit Trap
5	Oh, Orc	15	Straw Arrow
6	Fickle Bard	16	Sticky Seeds
7	The Hospitality Door	17	Red Grave
8	Bloody Belt	18	Hanged Man
9	Undead in the Rain	19	Bush Beast
10	Perv Rock	20	Round Bread and Stew

These encounters were created for a party who is *traveling* through the forest.

## 1. Dead Spiders

Spider webs stretch from tree to tree. Several of the webs have been burned. Blacken carcasses of large spiders smolder on the ground. Mixed among the spiders is a war dog with its flank pierced by a pincher.

The center section of the webs can strengthen a Web spell. It effectively doubles the area. Three web centers can be harvested.

## 2. Silvery Grains

A portly man drives a one horse cart through the woods. He is Montrose, taking 30 sacks of grain to the market. He will chat for a short time, but apologize that he's in a hurry. The earlier he gets the grain to market the better the price.

**Martin**, 0-level fighter, HP: 4, AC: 11, MV: 9, Dam: 1d4 (dagger), Special: An exceptional liar.

His real name is Martin, a tax collector. He has hidden the taxes within the grain sacks. He is hoping this modest disguise will allow him to travel unmolested. In his greed he pocketed the money he was to have spent on guards. There is 460sp in the grain.

### 3. Half a Hut

A crude hut stands between two large trees. One of the hut's walls has fallen outward and leans against a tree trunk. From the outside it looks to be a simple one room hut with a fireplace still intact.

The hut has been ransacked several times. Nothing of obvious value remains. There is a loose stone in the fireplace where a small pouch hides. It contains 12sp and a silver ring with a moon engraving. It acts as a +1 Ring of Protection. A prayer to the moon goddess spoken into the ring will activate it for one month. It is not currently activated.

### 4. One Big Pecker

An ancient 30' statue of an armored warrior stands with his sword ready. At its base is a 7' bird pecking at a pair of corpses. Between the statue's legs is a large nest with two eggs.

The corpses carry spellbooks. One spellbook is trapped. Anyone who opens the book will take 3d4 damage (save halves). Both books contain six, first level spells. At a market the eggs can be sold for 100sp. An arena will pay 150sp. If one of the players is good with animals they may train the axebeaks. Both eggs will hatch in three days.

**Axebeak** HD: 3, HP: 15, AC: 13, MV: 18, Dam: 1d3/1d3/1d6.

### 5. Oh Orc

The players hear shouting. Face down in the forest undergrowth is a short orc with big feet. He pounds the ground with his fists, an arrow is in its side. If approached he orders the players to kill him. He's got nothing to live for.

This is Cholum Hamhock, a former halfling cook and thief. He was polymorphed into an orc after he stole from a mage. If the players are compassionate he will join them and help the best he can.

**Cholum Hamhock** 2<sup>nd</sup> level thief, HP: 8, AC: 13, MV: 12, Dam: 1d6 (short sword).

He has three lock picks and a backpack with items from his former life. This includes a silver necklace (25sp) he stole for his girlfriend. If treated well, Cholum can be recruited as a henchman.

## 6. Fickle Little Bard

A loose paper floats in the breeze and snags on a branch. More papers are scattered on the ground and stuck in the tree branches.

The bard, Trumbor the Lily, compose a story of his conquest of a beautiful maiden, but thought it was crap after fourteen pages. He tossed it into the air. If the players decide to take the time to gather the papers they too will discover the story is in fact crap.

## 7. The Hospitality Door

A door stands in the forest. If the players approach the door it will ask, "Where to?". If the players tell the door where they wish to go it will open and the place they spoke will appear within the doorframe. Going through the door will teleport the person to the destination spoken. Should the players try to lift the door or pry it open, it will say "Don't be stupid. Just tell me where you want to go." If the players attack the door it will say "That was rude." And disappear.

## 8. Bloody Belt

Tangled in a tree limb is a blood soaked leather belt with an empty scabbard attached. There is blood splattered on the surrounding fauna. If the players search the area they will find a short sword snapped in half and a bloody boot.



## 9. Undead in the Rain

A sudden rain washes away a section of ground revealing a shallow grave. Two skeletal figures lay in the muddy ground. One wears a rusted suit of chain mail and the other wears the tattered remains of clothing.

If someone approaches the corpses, the one dressed in clothing rapidly rises into the air and releases a horrific howl. **Rage Skeleton** HD: 2, HP: 12, AC: 14, MV: 12, Dam: 1d3/1d3, Special: Howl, save vs. spell or become enraged and attack a random target. Rage Skeletons are formed when someone watches a loved one be murdered and is then murdered themselves.

## 10. Perv Rock

A large boulder is covered in crude drawings. Several of the paintings depict animals having sex.

## 11. Panning for Gold

Three men are digging in the middle of a creek bed. A fourth kneels on the side of the creek panning dirt.

If the players approach the men will drop everything and run. It is illegal to pan for gold. They've hidden a pottery jar with 44sp worth of raw gold under a stone. If caught they will plead for their lives. They will explain they only wanted to earn extra money to pay the tax collector (see **2**). They will hold out for as long as they can, not to tell the players the location of their stash.

## 12. Underground Shrine

A giant snake rears out of the ground and attacks.

The snake hole winds down 40' to an underground shrine. Within the shrine is a crude, stone altar with spiral engravings. Atop the altar is a handful of bird feathers, the skull of a deer, and a tattered, silk cloth. The cloth is worthless at face value, but if

**Giant Snake** HD: 2, HP: 10, AC: 14, MV: 12, Dam: 1d6 + poison, Special: save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 2d12 rounds. When

not in combat, the snake will swallow the paralyzed victim whole. washed with holy water it will look new. If placed on a wound, it will heal 1d6 points of damage. Each healing requires the cloth to be washed in holy water. One vial of holy water is required for each cleaning.

### **13. Goblin Tears**

A goblin is stuck on a high branch wailing for someone to save him.

No coaxing short of magical will get him to move. Should the players save the goblin he will award them with his lucky rock, a white quartz (value 1sp). If they kill him they still get his rock.

### **14. Pit Trap**

The ground collapses beneath the lead character. This camouflaged pit trap is 8' deep with wooden spikes at the bottom.

The fall does 1d4 damage. The player will also be impaled on 0-2 spikes and take 1d3 damage for each spike. A shriveled corpse is impaled on one of the spikes. It clutches a doll made of a piece of dirty cloth, sticks and straw.

### **15. Stray Arrow**

An arrow with bright yellow feathers is stuck into a tree near the path. Small runes are etched into the light metal of the shaft. The arrow is master crafted (a +1 non-magical arrow).

Aberden, a huntsman, was given four arrows by his lord. If the arrow is returned to Aberden he will award the player monetarily or in the form of a favor.

### **16. Sticky Seeds**

A sticky green sap with small seeds covers a half buried chest. Next to the chest are several small animal skeletons.

If the seeds are damaged in any way they will squeal, alerting the mandragora. The chest is locked, but the wood has been compromised from the sap. A money pouch with 200sp and four finely crafted silver goblets kept in a custom made case are within the chest. The set can fetch a price from 100sp to 200sp to a collector.

**Mandragora** HD: 1, HP: 5, AC: 16, MV: 12/9 (burrowing), Dam: 1d4/1d4 (tentacles), Special: -1 to hit when exposed to bright lights, 50% magic resistance. If a seed is planted in fertile ground a small mandragora will spout.

### 17. Red Grave

There is a pile of stones at the base of a tree. On top of the stones is a bone.

This is the grave of a woodsman's hunting dog, Red. He placed the bone on the grave so Red would have something to chew on in the afterlife. Under the stone is a skeleton of a large dog. It still wears a studded leather collar.

### 18. Hanged Man

A man hangs from a rope slung over a high tree branch. The rope is tied to another nearby tree. He is naked from the waist down and his genitals have been cut off.

Boris was falsely accused of raping a woman. The villagers strung him up last night. They intend to let him rot there. If Boris is not buried in hallowed ground within two days he will become a revenant and seek his revenge on the villagers.

**Revenant** HD: 5, HP: 30, AC: 10, MV: 9, Dam: 1d8/1d8, Special: Paralyze Stare for 2d4 rounds. It will not stop until every person in the village is dead.

## 19. Bush Beast

A deer corpse lies halfway under a leaf pile that trembles.

**Archer Bush** HD: 2, HP: 10, AC: 14, MV: 3, Dam: 1d4/1d4 (thorns).

If the party approaches the archer bush will shoot its thorns. It will move towards the party to continue its attack.

## 20. Round Bread and Stew

A short, red haired woman sits at the edge of the trail. She stirs a small pot hung over a fire. Wonderful smells fill the air. A couple sits on a blanket eating from bowls and sharing a small, round bread. Another man leans against a tree slurping from a large bowl. When the red haired woman sees the party she smiles, "Please, come and eat. I'm nearly out, but there should be plenty for everyone." There is enough for three bowls of stew and one round bread. She has a cup beside her with a few coins inside. "If you enjoyed the meal, give what you like. Or ingredients for the next meal would also be appreciated."

There is nothing strange or insidious going on, just a woman who loves to cook and share it with others.

# STREET VENDOR: OREN'S BOOTS



Father used to say, "The three most important things in life are your family, your honor, and a good pair of boots." Oren can't help you with the first two, but he can make sure the third is never a worry. Oren has made boots all his life, just like his father and his father's father. He's easy to find, he's got the squeakiest cart pulled by the slowest mare in town. Or he can be found hunched over his makeshift worktable telling a story about how he made boots for the king

himself. Oren has a reputation for being a quality craftsman and a drunkard. He charges above standard rates, but his boots never disappoint.

## THE PEOPLE

**Oren** (cobbler: human, male, 44 yrs, 5'8", 240lbs, black hair, brown eyes)

Oren is a round man with a round head who enjoys telling tales of all the famous people he's met. He is well liked although some are tired of his boasts. The more he drinks the louder and more outrageous he gets.

Oren escaped from the king's dungeon seven years ago. He escaped with two other men, and only he survived.

He killed a woman in a fit of rage. He'd been in a foul mood, drank too much, and when the barmaid cursed him for not paying, he hit her. She broke her neck when she fell against the wall. The image still haunts him.

Oren traveled extensively for the next few years. Then he met a washerwoman, Laura. He fell in love, married and settled. He started the business with the help of his friend Gerald who provides Oren with his leather.

He complains often about stomachaches and headaches. It's a result of his constant worry of discovery. When he was originally caught he was a thin man. He put on weight to disguise himself. There are times when he will not leave his home, paranoid that someone is watching him. He hasn't told anyone about his past, but when he's drunk, he hints at what happened.

**Laura** (*wife: human, female, 28yrs, 5'2", 130lbs, long blond hair, blue eyes, birthmark on the back of her left hand*)

Laura is a washerwoman for one of the local inns and takes in private wash for extra money. She is a hard worker who never seems to sit down. She the one stabilizing force in Oren's life and knows how to deal with him when he drinks too much. Oren has suggested something terrible about his past, but has never told her exactly what happened. If she does find out it will not change her love for Oren or her loyalty towards him.

Laura is not sure what to think of Gerald. He is nice enough, but dislikes the other people he calls friends.

**Gerald** (*trapper/hunter: human, male, 33yrs, 5'8", 160lbs, cropped red hair, shaggy red beard*)

Gerald is an outdoorsman who took on his family's trade of trapping. The market in town is always in need of hides and furs. He makes a good living. He befriended Oren one night at the tavern. He is one of the few people who enjoy Oren's tall tales. He provides Oren with quality leathers. He doesn't understand Oren's problems and won't push the situation. He figures when Oren is ready to tell him, he will.

Gerald's three brothers are mercenaries hired on by slavers. They are a rough group, well-trained fighters. If there is a problem, Gerald will ask them for assistance. He likes Oren and Laura and will do anything to help them.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS:

### Bugbear Boots

Oren is in need of special hides, bugbear hides. He's heard of a group of bugbears harassing travelers along the main road outside of town. He can't offer much in the way of money, but if the players bring back enough hides he will make them a pair of boots. Oren advises against using hacking weapons. The boots are very resistant to cold and water and have better traction on slippery surfaces.

**2 Bugbears** HD: 3, HP: 15 each, AC: 14, MV: 12, Dam: 1d6 (bow), 1d8 (long sword), Special: Stealthy, surprise 3 in 6 chance. If more than 10 points of damage is done with a hacking weapon the skin is worthless.

### I'm Not Paranoid

After a long night of drinking, Oren believed one of the town guards recognized him. He led the guard into a secluded spot and hit him over the head. The players arrive as Oren is frantically trying to hide the body. He will deny any wrong doing, then break down and cry, and eventually become angry and attack. He is very drunk. The captain of the guard has a search party looking for his missing man. The GM can decide which would be more interesting, if the guard is dead or alive.

### Albino Skin

Oren is on the ground bleeding from a head wound. A large man with a full black beard stands over Oren with a cudgel in his hand. He watches two other men tossing items out of his cart. Bort is a bounty hunter looking for Gerald, but Oren won't tell them anything. Gerald poached one of the baron's rare albino deer. Bort is looking for evidence of it in his cart. He has an official writ from the baron. Bort won't get into a fight with the players. There's no money in it. He will offer them 50sp if they have any information of Gerald's whereabouts. Oren has the pelt tied beneath the cart in a protective wrap. He plans to sell it out of town and get 250sp. It will be enough money to buy a building and retire his cart.



# WEIRD ADVENTURES

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DOWN THESE  
**WEIRD STREETS**  
A Guide to the City

**ON THE ROAD**  
A Travelogue of a  
Strange New World

**IT LURKS  
IN DARKNESS**  
A Guide to  
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