

# The Manor

Issue #4



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### DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to David B. Silva, a friend of Ivy's and mine that passed away in March this year. David was generous and kind, and one hell of a writer. He won a World Fantasy Award and Bram Stoker Award. He was someone I would go to for writing advice and opinion. Ivy and I miss his friendship. We'll keep a Diet Coke in the fridge and Peanut M&Ms on standby for him. This issue goes out to Dave.



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## INTRODUCTION

There are so many things I could discuss in the introduction. It's the first thing you read and the last thing I write. I'll start with the obvious. This is the biggest Manor yet, coming in at 36 pages, not including the cover. In the print version I've used a better quality paper because the artwork is fantastic. On the cover, is Mike Varhola's depiction of a shadow panther. Mike is someone I work with and I saw him doodling during one of our boring trainings and immediately asked him to 'draw me something'. He did two other pieces for *Incident at Butcher Creek*. The crappy picture of the stalagmites is mine. The second section is *From Beneath the Manor*, a mini manual of monsters. Jason Sholtis, OSR artist extraordinaire, did all the pictures for this section. Amazing stuff. I've got more artwork in this issue than the other three combined.

Writing this issue was easier and more difficult at the same time. Easier, because I had others create monsters; Jason Sholtis, Ken Harrison, Rob Conley and Boric G helped out by taking the time to contribute. What was difficult was the Hamlet of Low Rigde. Why? Because I originally tried to fit a 30+ village into a space a seven house hamlet barely fit. I rewrote the adventure four different times. I think it works with the help of my proofreaders, Sean Robson and Ken Harrison, directing me. Adventures are easy until you try to write them down on paper.

I've dedicated this issue to David B. Silva. A long time friend of Ivy's and I've had the pleasure of getting to know him over emails. He passed away this March to our surprise. He was an excellent writer and editor. He wasn't a gamer, but I sent him issues of *The Manor*, and while he may have not understood everything, he appreciated the time and creativity that went into it. When I was going through pre-addressed envelopes to those I send out each month automatically, his envelope was there. It's strange how such small things like this catch you by surprise.

I guess, like most deaths that strike close to you, reminds us to put more effort into getting together with friends to game, to tell stories and to laugh.

Tim Shorts

July 28th, 2013

# INCIDENT AT BUTCHER CREEK

An adventure of the grotesque.

**Ruleset:** Swords & Wizardry Complete  
**Level:** 5th to 7th  
**No. of Characters:** 4 to 6  
**Setting:** Village, Cave, Underground  
**Difficulty Level:** Difficult  
**Size:** Medium  
**Rating:** Teen

## ADVENTURE HOOK

The party is lounging in the tavern after another successful dungeon crawl. The money pouches that were overflowing with coin a few days ago have been lightened significantly by all their new found friends. After the fourth morning of waking with headaches and nausea, the party realizes they have fewer coins than teeth.

As the party sits to drink their breakfast, a man in extravagant finery walks into the tavern and slowly unrolls a scroll. He clears his throat and starts to read. His voice bangs around in their heads like a dull axe.

*Hear me. Hear me. The Hamlet of Low Ridge is calling for the assistance of a group of brave individuals to rid the region of a pack of horrible creatures. Any interested parties are to travel to Low Ridge and meet with Walter, Bailiff of Low Ridge. Reward will be negotiated upon acceptance.*

If questioned, the crier knows nothing except what he was given to read. He is late for his next reading gig so he's in a bit of a rush.

Players that make a successful IQ roll, recognize Low Ridge. It is a hamlet off the main trade route, but very few people travel there. Low Ridge is populated by a small group of people who work or have worked for the mage guild.

## GM NOTES

The Incident at Butcher Creek is broken into three areas. The Hamlet of Low Ridge is where the party will encounter a small group of eccentric individuals with secrets. The second area is the shadow panther caves. The shadow panthers are the obvious problem. The final section of this adventure is the Lair of the Or'Drog, a creature of chaos, who is warping the minds of the people of Low Ridge.

The party may find the lair of the Or'Drog early in the adventure. That is okay. They will still need to exterminate the shadow panthers. The shadow panthers now sense the people of Low Ridge as creatures of chaos and will continue their attacks.

### Viz

I have included viz in this adventure, a tangible object of pure magic that forms in nature and in magical creatures. It can come in any form and can be used to assist in casting of spells or the creation of magical items. For casting, one viz is equal to one spell level of casting and can be consumed instead of losing the memorized spell. Market value, one viz is worth 100sp.

## HAMLET OF LOW RIDGE

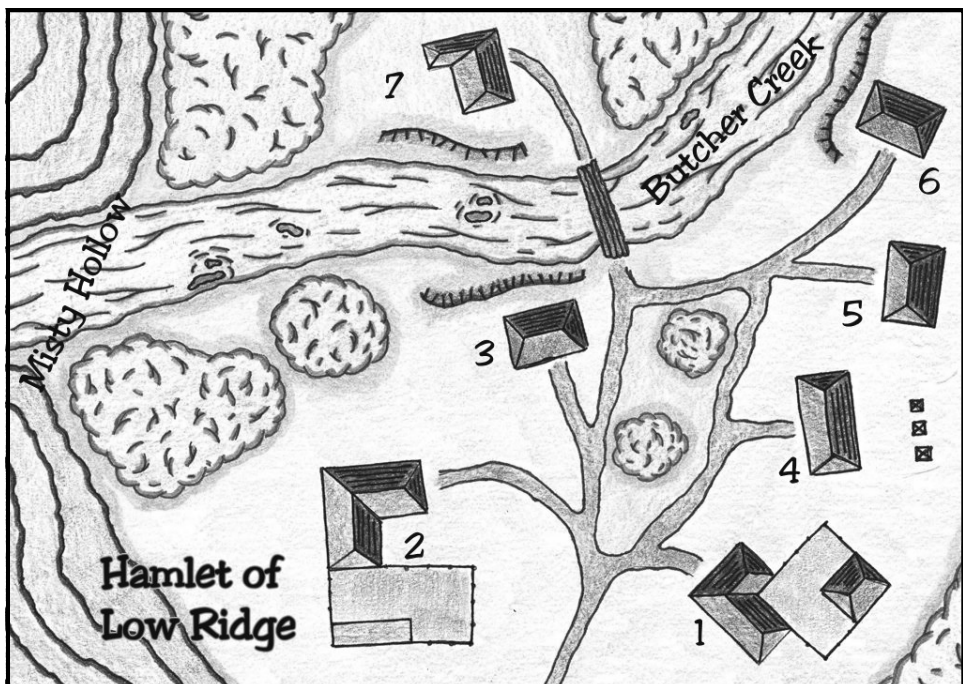
The Hamlet of Low Ridge, except for the Misty Hollow, is located in a civilized area. None of the people of Low Ridge go farther than the edge of Butcher Creek. This is where Walter tracked the predators, but he does not dare go into the hollow. Low Ridge consists of six households at this time. It is an eclectic collection of personalities that are connected with the local mage's guild. The adventurers are here to assist the people of Low Ridge by ridding Misty Hollow of the shadow panthers.

### BUTCHER CREEK

Butcher Creek is fast and shallow. The water is very cold. It winds through Misty Hollow for a few miles before emptying into the Sanchee River. Small game fish and fresh water clams are abundant. A log bridge spans the creek, but it can be easily crossed at any point.

### MISTY HOLLOW

Misty Hollow is within the Sheer Hills. The only way to travel through Misty Hollow is to follow Butcher Creek. The banks are thick with undergrowth and it would take hours to cut through just to make the smallest progress. Misty Hollow has been home to unnatural creatures through the years. Dwarves are rumored to have once lived in the Sheer Hills.



# RESIDENTS OF LOW RIDGE

## 1. Mandrake Farm

A large woman sits on a tree stump in front of a well-kept cottage. Three children chase each other in the yard. Behind the cottage is a fenced in crop and a small barn. A man stands guarding the barn door.

The large woman is Marta. She is the one who grows the mandrake. Henry guards the barn, a homunculus of her husband. He will not allow anyone enter the barn except Marta. There is a large padlock on the door. Marta has the key.

The real Henry is in a secret room under the barn. Marta keeps him in a coma with a powerful sleep potion. She bleeds him each night (2hp) to nourish her mandrakes. She keeps him alive with healing potions.

**Marta, 1st level magic-user**, HP: 3, AC: 9[10], MV: 6, SV: 15, Atk: none, Special: can make the following potions healing, sleep, and remove poison. Spells: *Sleep*.

The Or'Drog provided Marta the knowledge to adjust her sleeping potion to put someone into a coma for a week. Marta was an easy target for the Or'Drog to influence since Henry was an abusive husband. She is much happier now.

**Henry the Homunculus** HD: 5, HP: 25, AC: 5 [14], MV: 12, Dam: short sword (1d6), or bite (1d3+poison), CL/XP: 6/600, Special: poison bite puts target into a coma for 1d6 hours. Has been enlarged to the size of an average man. Spells: *Hold Portal, Darkness 15' radius, Invisibility, Web*.

The homunculus protects the barn because there is a hidden passage in the secret room where the real Henry is kept. The passage drops into the Or'Drog lair (area 1). The homunculus will not fight to the death, but will use its magic to escape. It will not provide any useful information if captured. It will weave a lie in everything it says. If the homunculus is killed, the Or'Drog will have 10 fewer hit points.

## 2. Pig Farm

Two men stand by the fence that is filled with pigs. They watch with dull eyes and slack jaws as the party enters Low Ridge. The pigs are loud and the stench burns the party's eyes. The house is unkempt, there is no door in the back. A sheet covers the opening and a board props up a section of the roof that sags.

These two are Prow and Eugene, brothers and expert pig farmers. They were given permission to farm here from the Baron because they have won the pig contests the last seven years in a row at the baron's harvest festival. In addition, the mage guild uses the pig excrement as a component. Neither brother is very bright, but they know their pigs. They are suspicious of new people, but easily won over if their pigs are complimented.

At night they get drunk if they have the money and time to run into town. On such occasions, they dress a pig in their clothing and laugh about it until they pass out. Prow has recently taken to violent tantrums. He will take a long knife to one of the pigs and slice it to pieces. He has been wiping the blood on his bedroom walls.

Both Prow and Eugene hear the Or'Drog speaking to them while they sleep and when they get drunk. It can easily influence them into doing tasks. Prow believes it is an evil spirit and he is trying to ward it off with the pig's blood. He makes random shapes with the blood believing they are magical symbols. Eugene does not like that Prow kills the pigs, but is not alarmed by the behavior. His family was always prone to bouts of violence. They've blamed the slaughter of the pigs on the shadow panthers.

Both brothers are 0-level farmers. Prow will attack if provoked while drunk or if the Or'Drog needs a distraction. He is easily subdued. The Or'Drog's cave is near the surface here. It wants to add these two to its servant roster, like Samuel.

### **3. Empty Cabin**

The wood is black as if it had been in a fire. The edge of the roof is curled. Despite the apparent fire damage, the structure looks solid. There is a large chain wrapped around the cabin and secured with a pair of large padlocks.

Samuel used to live here. As the others tell it, one night there was an explosion and his cabin was surrounded in a yellow glow. Those who tried to get close suffered burns. Walter the Bailiff (4.) has the keys to the cabin. Inside the cabin is a 20' deep hole. Everything that was inside the cabin disappeared that night.

A character experienced with working underground has a 2 in 6 chance of detecting that the walls are thin within the pit. They will take 50 points of damage before shattering. Anyone within the pit will suffer 3d6 damage from the 30' fall into the Or'Drog's lair (area 4).

Samuel is the one who accidentally allowed the Or'Drog to enter into this realm as he studied the chaotic nature of magic. The Or'Drog took advantage of the momentary rift to gain access. The Or'Drog then used *Polymorph Other* to changed Samuel into a gibbering mouther (see Or'Drog's Lair area 5).

### **4. Bailiff**

The house is old and the front porch is tilted to the right. A middle-aged man with a large mustache chops wood while a younger man is stacking it near the back of the house. There is one man shackled to a post in the back.

Walter is the hamlet's bailiff. He is a man of few words and no nonsense. He will welcome newcomers, but tell them to keep to the laws of the hamlet or they will end up like the last sorry bastard who came through. He thumbs at the man in the shackles. That man didn't think the law applied to him. His equipment was sold for compensation and now he's headed to the baron's dungeon.

Walter will offer the players 100sp/shadow panther killed. He is not interested in any found treasure. He will also put in a good word to the mage's guild and the baron should they rid the area of shadow panthers. If the players demand more, he will go as high as 200sp.

Walter is sure that shadow panthers are the problem. John, the young man,



agrees with him. John has tracked one that has come into the village, but he knows they hunt in packs. He fears that, since one is scouting the area, the rest of the pack will attack soon.

**Walter, 5th level fighter**, S: 14 (+1,+0), D: 13 (+1), C: 13 (+1), I: 13, W: 10, Ch: 10, HP: 22, AC: 2[17] armored, MV: 9, SV: 10, Atk: short sword (1d6+3) or light crossbow (1d4+1), When dressed for battle he wears scale mail, shield and arms himself with a crossbow and a short sword. The short sword is magical. It provides +2 to hit and damage and can attack with a reach of 3 (or 15').

Walter pockets the money he steals from his prisoners (342sp inside his home) and, on occasion, keeps an interesting item. The three pits in the back have been used on many these past few months. Walter has become embittered by criminals who have, for years, taken advantage of the system to escape justice. His bitterness has now blossomed into homicidal rage. These days he slits the throats of his prisoners then dumps their bodies into the third pit. He knows something dark and horrible is down there, but it is doing its part by ridding the world of unlawful types.

The young man is John. He will talk to the party and show them his new bow. He is a good shot and likes to impress people with his ability.

**John, 4th level ranger**, S: 18 (+2,+3), D: 16 (+1), C: 15 (+1), I: 13, W: 12, Ch: 11, HP: 24, AC: 6 [13], MV: 9, SV: 11, Atk: long sword (1d8+3) or short bow (1d6+1/1d6+1, Special: Does +4 damage to giants, trolls, ogres, orcs, goblins and kobolds.

John is the youngest brother of four. His slow talk and his fascination for simple things fools folks into believing he is a half-wit, but he is much smarter than he appears. He knows something is wrong in the hamlet, but his mind has heavy, making it difficult to think. He's been suffering from bad headaches for the past few weeks.

John has a fine bow. It bestows a non-magical +1. He also carries a long sword that was given to him by his oldest brother. It is an orcish blade, but is of excellent quality. John will tell the story of how his brother stormed the orc stronghold and pried the sword out of the orc king's dead hand.

John can be swayed to help in disposing of the shadow cats and the Or'Drog.

## 5. Painted Cabin

There are two stools in front of the cabin. An ancient man sits on one with a pipe between his lips as smoke curls from the bowl. His lips are stained red as are the tips of his fingers. The walls of his cabin are painted with strange, but fantastic designs.

Restor is a retired mage who decided to pursue his love of the mysterious world of art. He spends his days weaving magic into his designs and believes he has tapped into another source of magic. The effects are still random, but he is starting to understand how to stabilize it. He is addicted to Red Leaf tobacco that causes hallucinations. At night he can be found inside his cabin painting on his walls.

He keeps the second stool out for anyone who wishes to visit. He loves visitors and will share his tobacco and wine. He is knowledgeable of many things. He likes to

tell stories and is pretty damn funny. The inside his home is decorated exactly like on the outside, as if the paint seeped through the walls and appeared on the inside. His house is magically protected from elements. He has a small library of 24 various magical scrolls. The GM can roll to determine what is available.

The Or'Drog is tricking Restor into opening a permanent gate into the abyss. While Restor can construct the runes and foundation of the gate he does not have the magical power to tear a rift between the realms.

**Restor, 7th level magic-user**, HP: 15, AC: 9[10], MV: 4, SV: 9, Atk: by spell, Special: spell ability. Spells: *Charm Person, Hold Portal, Shield, Sleep, Continual Light, Invisibility, Wizard Lock, Hold Person, Suggestion, Polymorph Self*. Restor is not much of a combat mage. He finds the entire idea of fighting a little too crude for his tastes. His spells are to gather information or his own entertainment and protection.

## 6. Viz Miner

There is a sign on the porch, "Stay Out". This is the home of Uthgar, a viz miner. He doesn't want visitors. Anyone who dares to ignore the sign will get an ear full of rage. His wife and three children stay inside. While he is out mining, Hilda, his wife, may be outside with the children, but if anyone approaches she will rush them inside and close the door. She refuses to speak.

**Uthgar, 6th level fighter** S: 17 (+2,+2), D: 14 (+1), C: 17 (+1), I: 11, W: 10, Ch: 14. HP: 40, AC: 7[12], MV: 12, SV: 14, Atk: Fist (1d3+1d6 electrical damage) or Pick-Axe (1d6+1), Special: Gauntlets of the Storm, light metal gauntlets. They allow him to do 1d6 electrical damage when he touches his target. They also make him immune to electrical attacks.

Uthgar purchased a license to mine the viz from the area. While he has no ability to cast spells, he has a knack for identifying and finding viz. They come in the form of quartz shards he finds. The richest deposits tend to be under boulders. He is paranoid of people following him and finding his mining spots. Beside one of the larger boulders are two shallow graves. A month ago a hunter who did not know the area came upon Uthgar and attempted a conversation and as he reached for the wine flask at his side Uthgar's pick-axe found its way into his head. The second grave belongs an adventurer who followed Uthgar, wanting to know where he was getting his viz. The adventurer was caught in a simple snare trap. His scream was cut off quickly.

Inside Uthgar's cabin is a lockbox containing 12 viz, hidden within the base of his fireplace. Out in the back he has four hiding places with 100sp hidden in each. Not even Hilda knows about the locations of his stashes.

The Or'Drog is causing Uthgar's natural paranoia and anger to escalate and the Or'Drog has sapped any hope from Hilda. The Or'Drog wants access to the supply of viz. If it gains access to it then the gate to the abyss will be completed much sooner.

## 7. Horta's Home

Horta has lived in this area longer than anyone. He lives across Butcher Creek and is the only person in Low Ridge who is not affected by the Or'Drog. Horta was an elder in the mage guild, but he tired of the politics and he spent most of his time managing people instead of practicing magic. He adventured for a short time to get enough money to live comfortably. He lives here with a family: husband, wife and two children. They do the daily maintenance and chores while he continues his studies.

Horta is aware of a disruptive force within the hamlet. He has not found a way to get to the truth without harming the other folks. He considers them friends and will protect them from harm. Should the party ask him, he will say there is something alien in the ground. That it should not be there. He will also inform the players that it all started after Samuel disappeared that night.

**Horta, 11th level magic-user** HP: 31, AC: -1 [20], MV: 6, SV: 5, Atk: By spell, Special: Spell ability. Spells: *Charm Person, Magic Missile (2x), Sleep, Invisibility, Phantasmal Force, Web, Wizard Lock, Dispel Magic, Explosive Runes, Fireball, Hold Person, Confusion, Dimension Door, Massmorph, Cloudkill, Passwall, Teleport.*

Horta wears the **Ring of Prajora**, which provides him protection (+4 to AC and +2 to saves vs. area of effect spells), and is enchanted with *Protection from Normal Missiles*. He has several scrolls at his disposal. He will sell them for 100sp/level. To see if he has a certain spell scroll, roll a d10 and if the result is higher than the spell level he will have a copy. Example, a 4 or higher would need to be rolled for a 3rd level scroll to be available. He possesses scrolls with spells up to the 5th level.

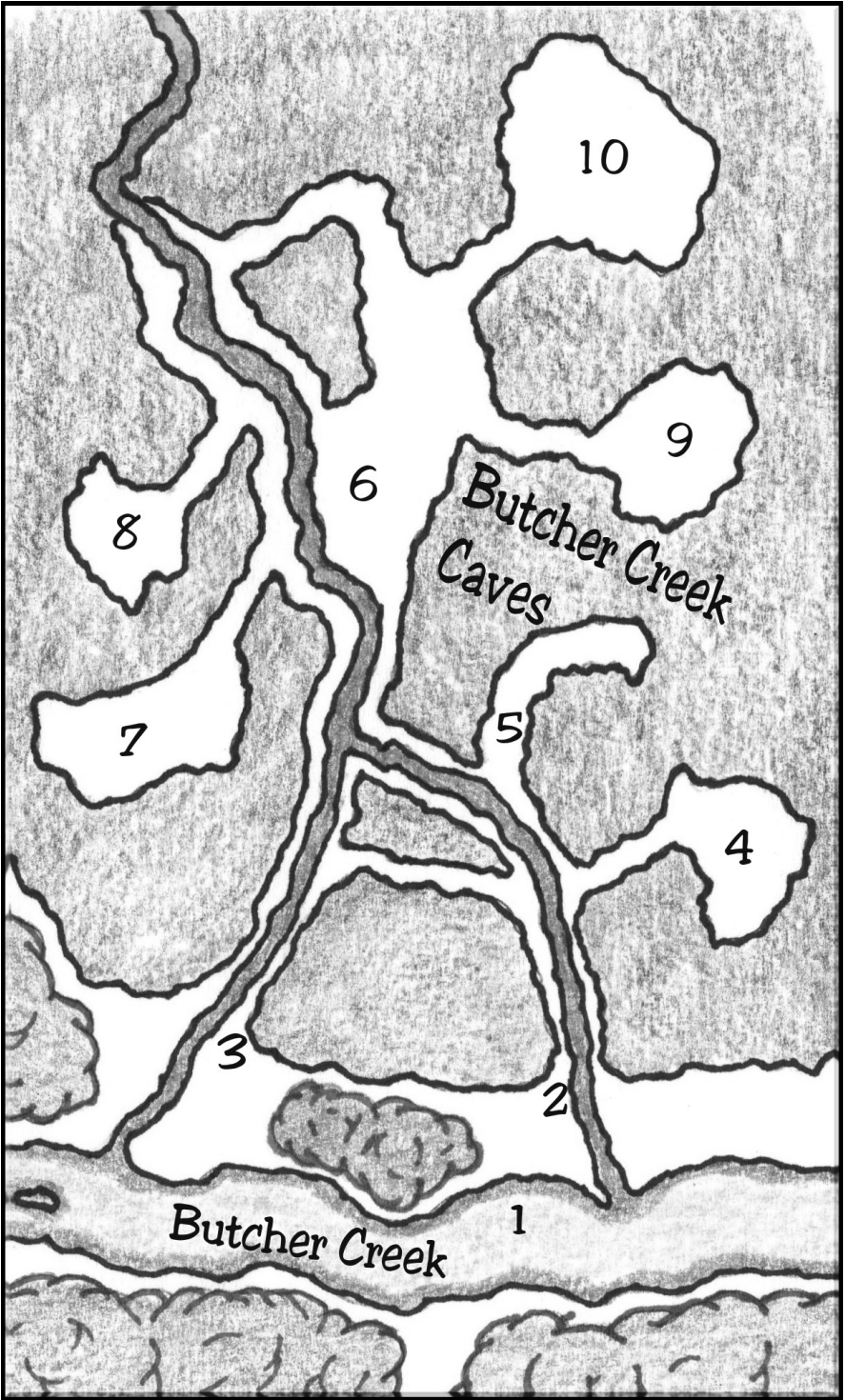
While not a violent man, Horta will defend his friends and family. If someone should harm or kill one of them, Horta will use his full abilities to destroy the offender. Horta recognizes that the shadow panthers are the more immediate threat than the Or'Drog. He will provide information about the shadow panthers powers. If the party seeks assistance against the Or'Drog, Horta will provide them with a few scrolls and potions, but he is afraid if he confronts the creature he to would fall under it's influence.

## SHADOW PANTHER CAVE

The cave is an hour's walk through the Misty Hollow. There are no random encounters in the daytime. The shadow panthers have frightened off or eaten most of the critters in the area. Should the party approach the lair at night, there is a 2 in 6 chance of encountering one of the shadow panthers.

### 1. The Chest and the Carcass

In the center of the creek is a large carcass and an overturned metal chest. There is the glint of gold and silver in the water. Several large flies crawl on the mound of rotting flesh. Just to the north is a cave opening. A small stream trickles out of the cave and into the creek.



The carcass was once the occupant of this cave, an owlbear. The shadow panthers killed the owlbear and tossed its collection of coins into the creek. The metal chest is locked and has an overlapping lid making it nearly impossible to pry open (-2 to bend bars/open gates). It contains eight broken potion vials, the contents of which have spilled and intermingled. This liquid will explode when it contacts any water doing 8d6 damage to those in a 30' radius. There are 132sp and 13gp scattered in the water.

## 2. Cave Opening

The cave opening is 8' high and 5' wide. A stream flows out of the opening. The air within smells of carrion. There are large claw marks high up on the stone, just outside the cave.

If the players approach the opening at night, the shadow panther from area 4 will be waiting outside. It will attack a random character from the rear, gaining surprise.

## 3. Collapsed Entrance

A large chunk of stone partially blocks the entrance. A section of the hillside has slid down. It would take two turns to clear an area to crawl through. This will alert the shadow panther in area 4.

## 4. Den of the Defiler

The tunnel is narrow and the floor is worn smooth. The tunnel narrows to a 5' high ceiling. There is a strong animal smell here and a low, dangerous growl rumbles through the cavern. It's difficult to judge the location of the growl.

A shadow panther is hiding above the entrance on a ledge. It will pounce on the first character that enters. If it hits, that player will be knocked prone. This is the shadow panther that scouted the hamlet looking for an entrance into the Or'Drog's lair. This shadow panther is the largest of the pack.

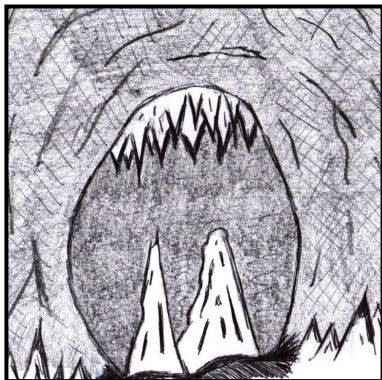
**Shadow Panther** HD: 6, HP: 34, AC: 1[18] in the dark or 5[14] in the light, MV:15, SV: 11, Atk: 4 tentacles (1d3+drain), 1 bite (1d6), CL/XP: 8/800, Special: Shadow Teleportation, Strength Drain.

## 5. Two Stalagmites

The tunnel is blocked by two large stalagmites. There is a gap that will allow a small, unarmored individual to squeeze through.

The stalagmites are actually a pair of ancient gargoyles. This pair was together for centuries and chose this place to die. The female has already returned to the stone. The male gargoyle is still aware, but only when someone comes within few feet of his location. The gargoyle will not speak to the players unless they try to pass through or damage him. He will then attempt a brief conversation. If the players attack him or his companion, the gargoyle will break free of the stone and attack.

Beyond the gargoyles, at the end of the tunnel, are their possessions. A small



coffer filled with 22 emeralds (100sp each), a goblin spear, its tip drips with a silver liquid that evaporates when it hits the floor. The spear is small sized, and inflicts 1d4 damage. If maximum damage is rolled, the spear will inject the silver venom into the target (save negates), which will cause 1hp of damage/round until the venom is removed. If a creature is susceptible to silver, it will suffer 1d4 damage/round.

**Gargoyle** HD: 4, HP: 19, AC: 5[14], Atk: 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d4), and horn (1d6), MV: 9 (Fly 15),

SV: 13, CL/XP: 6/400, Special: Fly, magic weapon required to hit.

## 6. Central Cavern

The stream rushes through the center of the cavern. The left side of the cavern's floor is worn smooth. To the right, is an uneven ground cluttered with stalagmites and stalactites. With the low ceiling (only 6' high here), it looks like a large mouth with broken teeth, ready to close.

If there was a battle before entering this area, both shadow panthers from area 7 will be hiding in the shadows of the cavern, waiting to attack. These two strike in tandem, attacking a single target. The shadow panthers fade in and out of shadows and are difficult to see. They receive an additional +1 bonus to AC and saving throws when engaged in combat.

## 7. Hunting Partners

The tunnel opens into an open cavern, and its floor is very smooth and slippery (half move, -1 to hit). The ceiling ten feet high at the center. There are small beams of light shining through holes in the ceiling.

Scattered on the floor are several carcasses of large game, but some wear the remains of armor. The shadow panther killed a hunting band of orcs. The armor is mauled beyond use. The weapons are stacked in the corner: a pair of pitted short swords, three spears and a long bow. The longbow is in good condition. There is a collection of adventuring gear (40sp value), with 26sp and 41cp scattered among it. If the players search the gear they will find a dark purple gemstone that has fallen to the bottom of the loot. It is worth 50sp.

**2 Shadow Panthers** HD: 6, HP: 30 each, AC: 1[18] in the dark or 5[14] in the light, MV:15, SV: 11, Atk: 4 tentacles (1d3+drain), 1 bite (1d6), CL/XP: 8/800, Special: Shadow Teleportation, Strength Drain.

## 8. Empty Cavern

This cavern is partially flooded. Water covers the floor and reflects the top of the room like a mirror. This is pure spring water and any potion made with it will have increased benefit (more hit points healed, extended duration, etc).

## 9. Cub Lair

There are two cubs in this room. They are no larger than a cat. They are wrestling around with an arm bone they found in one of the other caves. A fully grown shadow panther lies nearby, watching the cubs. It's eyes are struggling to stay open.

If the cubs cry out, every shadow panther remaining will charge into the room to protect them. The mother had difficulty with the birth and is only at half hit points, but if the cubs are threatened, she will attack with a savage rage. Even in her weakened state she gains +2 to all damage rolls. She will not leave the room no matter what she hears outside the cavern.

If the cubs are captured, they can be trained, but only by a very skillful animal handler. Otherwise, once they grow into maturity (12 to 18 months) they will become feral. They can be sold on the market for 500sp and higher.

**Shadow Panther** HD: 6, HP: 15, AC: 1[18] in the dark or 5[14] in the light, MV:15, SV: 11, Atk: 4 tentacles (1d3+drain), 1 bite (1d6), CL/XP: 8/800, Special: Shadow Teleportation, Strength Drain.

## 10. Remnants of the Dwarves

The shadow panthers will not enter this cavern. On the back wall there is a relief carved into the rock. The pillars and dwarven warriors are expertly sculpted into the limestone wall. Two pillars and two dwarven warriors bookend an archway. Within the archway is different type of rock.

A dwarf will recognize this archway as a passage through the Living Stone. It allows the dwarves passage across great distances. Because the stone is still vibrating it will still function.

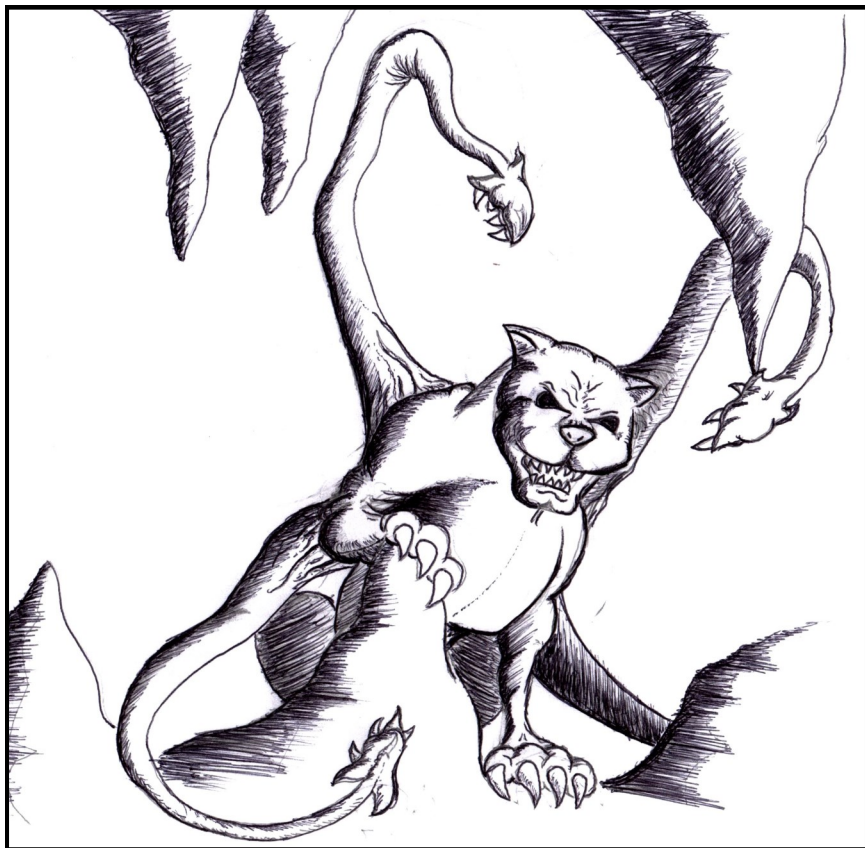
The four pillar reliefs are functional and contain supplies for travelers. The pillars will rotate into the stone surface. A successful search for secret doors will need to be made to discover how to open the pillars. Dwarves will get +2 to this roll.

**1st Pillar:** Food store, there are 100 days of dwarven food rations.

**2nd Pillar:** Ale store, ten half kegs of dwarven ale.

**3rd Pillar:** Weapons, 10 dwarven axes all fine quality (+1 non-magical bonus to hit and to damage).

**4th Pillar:** Health & Wealth, 10 Potions of Healing and 10 silver bars (100 sp each).



## SHADOW MANUS

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**Hit Dice:** 6

**Armor Class:** 1[18] in the dark, 5[14] in the light

**Attacks:** 4 tentacles (1d3 + drain), 1 bite (1d6)

**Saving Throw:** 11

**Special:** shadow teleportation, strength drain

**Move:** 15

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**Number Encountered:** pack 2d4

**Challenge Level/XP:** 8/800

Shadow panthers appear as large, black felines with four tentacles sprouting from their back. A successful strike with a tentacle will drain the target one strength point (save negates). The strength can be restored at the rate of one point/day. A victim that is drained of all its strength dies.

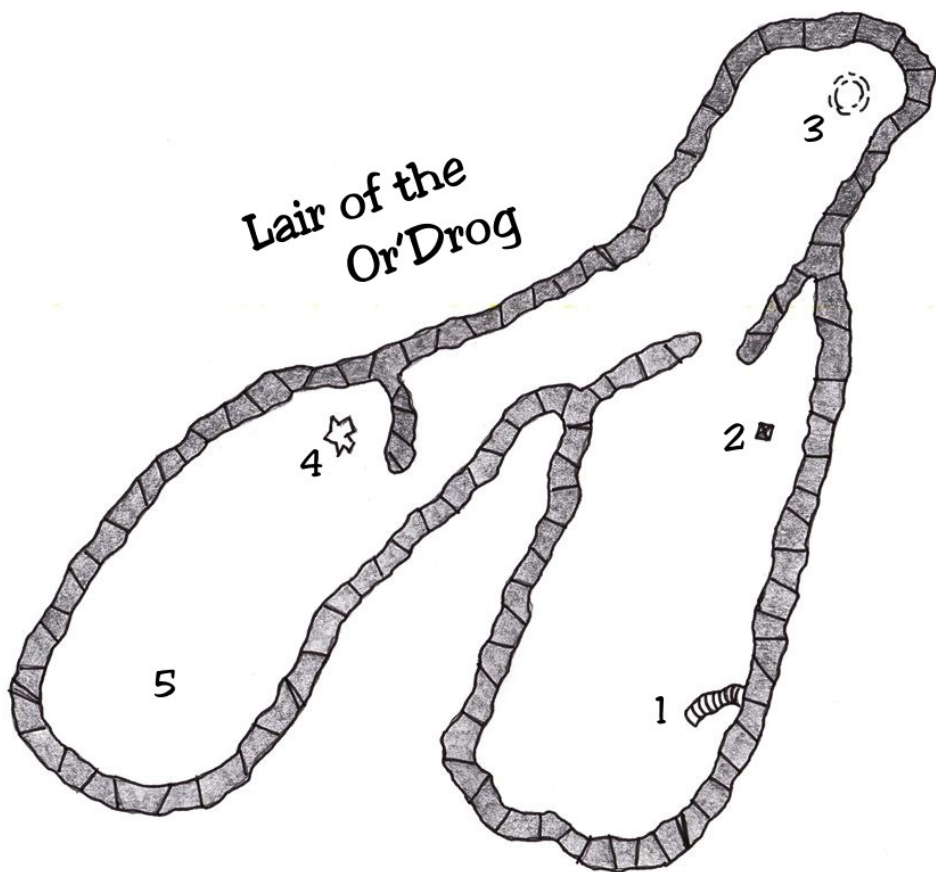
Shadow panthers are able to travel through shadows at will. They use this ability to gain a combat advantage by attacking from behind. In darkness, they can instantly teleport anywhere they wish each round. The spot must be within line of sight. In direct, light they are susceptible and suffer -4 to AC and 'to hit' rolls.



## LAIR OF THE OR'DROG

The Lair of the Or'Drog was carved by its using raw magic. The ceiling is 50' high to provide more area for the Or'Drog to maneuver. The walls and floors are uneven, but very smooth. One section of the floor may be a foot higher than the next. It has also dug pit traps to discourage any walkers. They are randomly placed. Each time the party leaves an area roll d6, on a roll of 1 or 2 there is a pit. The pits are hidden by illusions. Each pit is 20' deep (2d6 damage), if more than 10 points of damage is suffered, the character will need to make a save or be awarded a broken leg.

The lair is lit by an unknown light source and everything is tinted red. And noise does not carry here. Characters must be standing next to one another to hear what the other is saying. Spells can be cast, but any that requires the target to hear are nullified.



## 1. Below the Mandrake Farm

There is an opening in the root cellar that leads to this rough stone stairwell that ends 10' above the floor. Beneath the stairwell is a pair of gray oozes, which resemble patches of wet stone. If a player drops into the area they will attack.

**2 Gray Oozes** HD: 3+3, HP: 15 each, AC: 7 [12], MV: 1, SV: 14, Atk: 2d6 acid splash, CL/XP: 5/240, Special: Immune to spells, heat and cold damage, and take no damage from blunt or crushing attacks. Metal weapons and armor must make a save or be destroyed.

## 2. Walter's Best Pit

The Or'Drog has made Walter's prisoner pit a little deeper. It's true depth is hidden by an illusion. Anyone placed into the pit will fall 70'. Walter has been particularly diligent in enforcing the law and feeding the Or'Drog. On the floor beneath the pit are several bodies in various states of decay. There are a small group of rats sifting through the guts.

The party sees a total of four giant rats. If the rats are engaged, twelve more rats rush from holes hidden within the stone to join the attack. They are led by Montrose, a wererat. If more than half the rats are killed, Montrose retreats into his hole using the remaining rats to give him time to escape. His home is at the end of a 60' winding tunnel.

**Giant Rats** HD: 1d4, HP: 2 each, AC: 7[12], SV: 18, MV: 12, Atk: bite (1d3), CL/XP: A/5, Special: these rats do not carry disease.

**Wererat** HD: 3, HP: 14, AC: 6[13], SV: 14, MV: 12, Atk: bite (1d3), short sword 1d6, CL/XP: 4/120, Special: Controls giant rats, can be hit only by silver or magical weapons.

In Montrose's lair, there is basic furniture for when he is in human form; a table, stool, lantern (this area does not share the same lighting as above) and five sacks. Two of the sacks contain dirty clothes. The third contains two books and a handful of scrolls. The books are personal journals that bore the reader within the first few pages. A few of the scrolls look to be personal letters and one is a magical scroll that contains the spell *ESP*. In the fourth sack is a collection of weapons, mostly daggers, but there is a short sword of quality. The sword has scrolling letters along the blade. If read it will activate its power, *Ghoul's Bane*. It instantly turns any ghoul struck by the sword into a harmless pile of ash. It takes one round to activate the sword and the power lasts for one turn. Its power can be activated once per day. Against all other foes it acts as a normal short sword. The last sack sits on the table and holds 143sp, 33cp and a pair of rough gemstones worth 25sp.

## 3. Beneath the Viz Farmer

The Or'Drog has dug carefully into the ceiling to get at the viz storage that it knows that lingers just a few feet above. It is trying to compel Uthgar to dump his viz into Walter's pit, but the Or'Drog has not been successful in overcoming Uthgar's powerful greed. It has now turned its will on Uthgar's wife, but she does not know where Uthgar

hides his viz. The Or'Drog is draining her of her will. She may still breathe, but there is very little life remaining.

If a destructive spell is cast in this area, there is a 50% chance the roof will collapse. This will cause Uthgar's entire home to collapse within the hole.

#### 4. Samuel's Demise

There is a strange-looking cyst protruding from the ceiling. The Or'Drog was careless in its excavation and collapsed the floor of Samuel's cabin into its lair. It has sealed the breach the best it could. The cyst is made of 2' thick stone. It will take some effort to break through the stone shell. It will take 50 points of damage before the party can break through. Should this happen they will need to make a save or fall the remaining 30' (3d6 damage) as the shell breaks apart.

#### 5. The Or'Drog

The floor in this, the largest section of cavern, is even and covered in what looks like tall black grass. From below, a loud guttural noise echoes through the cavern and the black grass thrashes back and forth as something moves toward the party.

This is Samuel (see Hamlet of Low Ridge, 3. Samuel's Cabin) charging at the party, but he's now a gibbering mouther with humanoid legs. The party will need to make a saving throw vs. *Confusion* each round he is allowed to gibber. Samuel has been polymorphed into the gibbering mouther by the Or'Drog and his mind has melted into madness. He will fight to the death. Once he is killed he will revert to his original form.

**Gibbering Mouther** HD: 4+4, HP: 25, AC: 1 [18], MV: 9, SV: 13, Atk: 6 mouths (1hp), CL/XP: 6/400, Special: Gibbering, spit, pull prey underneath. Once a mouth hits, it automatically does damage in the following rounds. If more than three mouths hit, it will try to drag the victim towards it and envelop them. At which time 12 mouths may attack/round.

Hovering high in the cavern is the Or'Drog, under an invisibility spell. It specializes in illusions and mind effecting spells. Its gaze causes *Confusion*.

**The Or'Drog** HD: 11, HP: 44, AC: 0[19], MV: 18 (fly), SV: 4, Atk: by spell, CL/XP: 13/2300, Special: Spell ability, Confusion Gaze (see spell). Spells: *Charm Person, Sleep, Invisibility, Phantasmal Force, Suggest, Confusion, Fear, Polymorph Other, Quest*.

It has cast invisibility upon itself. It will begin casting spells once the party is engaged with Samuel. It will attempt to charm the spell casters and sway the fighters with its other magics. In the end, it wants to enlist the party. If it can, it will cast *quest* and have the party rid the area of shadow panthers. If the shadow panthers are killed, it will send the party to collect 100 viz that is plans to open a gate into the abyss. Should it complete the ritual, a permanent gate to the Abyss will allow easy passage between the two realms.

# The Or'Drog

**Hit Dice:** 11

**Armor Class:** 0 [19]

**Attacks:** by spell

**Saving Throw:** 4

**Special:** Confusion Gaze

**Move:** 18 (fly)

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Number Encounters:** 1

**Challenge Level/XP:** 13/2300



Or'Drog, the Gate Builders, originate from the Abyss, the Chaos Realm. They spend their time seeking cracks or seams that connect

with other realms and listen for the summons of the desperate. When they gain access to a different realm, they begin their work -- building a permanent gate to the Abyss.

Or'Drogs appear as floating heads with tentacles hanging from their lower halves. They have large, white eyes that cause *Confusion* (as per the spell). They use powerful mind and illusion spells to manipulate others. When they gain access to a new realm of existence, they will use a their Polymorph Others spell to create gibbering mouthers for assistance and protection.

Once a base is established, the Or'Drog will attract creatures of chaos to its location. Petty evil creatures fall under its influence easily and make their home in its lair.

If an Or'Drog completes the gate, then all manner of chaotic abominations will appear in the area. The Or'Drog will then move on to begin work on the next gate.

## Possible Creatures in the Or'Drog Lair

Roll	Creature
1-8	Gibbering Mouter (1d3)
9-12	Abyssal Larva (1d4)
13	Chaos Knight (1)
14-15	Growling Shadow (1d2)
16-18	Dark Creepers (1d10)
19-20	Tsalakian (1d10)

# From Beneath the Manor

A mini collection of horrible creatures to populate your game. These creatures have crawled out of the minds of long time gamers and brought to life by the deft hand of Jason Sholtis.

**Basitrice** by Jason Sholtis

**Beer Ooze** by Ken Harrison

**Boglings** by Rob Conley

**Corpse Flies** by Tim Shorts

**Linen Golem** by Ken Harrison

**Molten Spiders** by Tim Shorts

**Sneachta Kin**, Lesser by Boric G

**Sneachta Kin**, Greater by Boric G

**Temple Guardian** by Rob Conley



# BASITRICE

**Hit Dice:** 4

**Armor Class:** 3 [16]

**Attacks:** Bite/s (1d3 per head)

**Saving Throw:** 13

**Special:** Gaze power (see below)

**Move:** 12 (note: despite vestigial bat-like wings, basitrices do not fly)

**Alignment:** Neutrality

**Challenge Level/XP:** 9/900

The original basitrice, an unholy amalgam of basilisk and cockatrice, brewed in some vile sorcerer's cauldron, escaped whatever terrible service it was created to perform and took to the nearest cave/dungeon/underworld, enthusiastically reproducing itself with clutch after clutch of self-fertilized eggs. These eggs are highly sought-after by sorcerers as an excellent source of raw chaos in a biotic matrix and is required in a number of outré rituals and spells of making. Owing to this chaotic infusion, basitrices take on a variety forms. Consult the tables below:

## Basic Body Plan - d6

1. Snake with golden hide
2. Rooster with black iron feathers
3. Lizard with blinding chrome scales
4. Multiple fused snake bodies, constantly writhing
5. Front half rooster, rear half snake
6. Lizard fore, snake aft

## Heads - d6 (roll 1d3 for number of heads then roll below)

1. Rooster with serrated beak and radiant eyes
2. Snake with saber-tooth fangs, black pits for eyes
3. Lizard with jewel eyes
4. Rooster with armor piercing spike on beak; flaming eyes
5. Snake with tongue with another smaller snake head on it
6. Lizard with black bile constantly streaming from mouth (caustic, +1 to bite damage) and hypno-disc eyes

## Gaze Effect - d12 (saving throw applies)

- 1-6. Petrification
7. Spontaneous human combustion (1d6 damage first round, 2d6 on the second, 3d6 on the third, etc)
8. Transmute to salt
9. Transmute to water
10. Instantly age 1000 years
11. Brains melt out of head
12. Victim instantly explodes in blinding flash, followed by mushroom cloud



# BEER OOZE

**Hit Dice:** 1

**Armor Class:** 9[10]

**Attacks:** Slosh (1d2)

**Saving Throw:** 17

**Special:** Surprise, nausea, inebriation

**Move:** 10

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 1d2

**Challenge Level/XP:** 3/60

Beer ooze forms when barrels of beer are stored for exceedingly long periods near magical locations. They appear as foamy puddles on the floor near kegs or barrels of beer.

**Combat:** A beer ooze will attack those who come close to it. It has the ability to form appendages that slosh its opponents for 1d2 in damage.

**Surprise:** A beer ooze can surprise an unsuspecting opponent on a roll of 1-4 (1d6).

**Nausea:** The beer ooze has a nasty odor that causes nausea in those creatures with a sense of smell. Creatures coming within 10' of the beer ooze must make a saving throw (fortitude) or be stricken with nausea for 1d4+1 turns. The nausea causes a 1d4 temporary loss of dexterity and a penalty of -2 on all attack rolls.

**Inebriation:** When a beer ooze successfully strikes its opponent, that opponent must make a saving throw (Con) or become inebriated. The effects of the beer ooze's inebriation powers are cumulative. The first time an opponent is affected, the opponent becomes slightly inebriated and temporarily loses 1 point of intelligence and wisdom. When a slightly inebriated opponent is affected a second time by the beer ooze, the opponent becomes moderately inebriated and temporarily loses 2 more points of intelligence, 3 more points of wisdom, 2 points of dexterity and has a -1 penalty on attack rolls (in addition to any other penalties). The third time an opponent is affected by the beer ooze, they become greatly inebriated, losing 3 more points of intelligence, 3 more points of wisdom, 2 more points of dexterity, and in penalized an addition -4 on attack rolls (in addition to any other penalties). The fourth time the opponent is affected, they become comatose.

Note that successful constitution saving throws negate the inebriation effect of that particular attack but do not "sober up" the opponent. Inebriation may be negated with neutralize poison.





# BOGLINGS

**Hit Dice:** 2+1

**Armor Class:** 6 [13]

**Attacks:** 2 claws (1d3)

**Saving Throw:** 16

**Special:** Underwater, jumping, extensible tongue

**Move:** 6/12 (when swimming)

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 5d6

**Challenge Level/XP:** 2/35

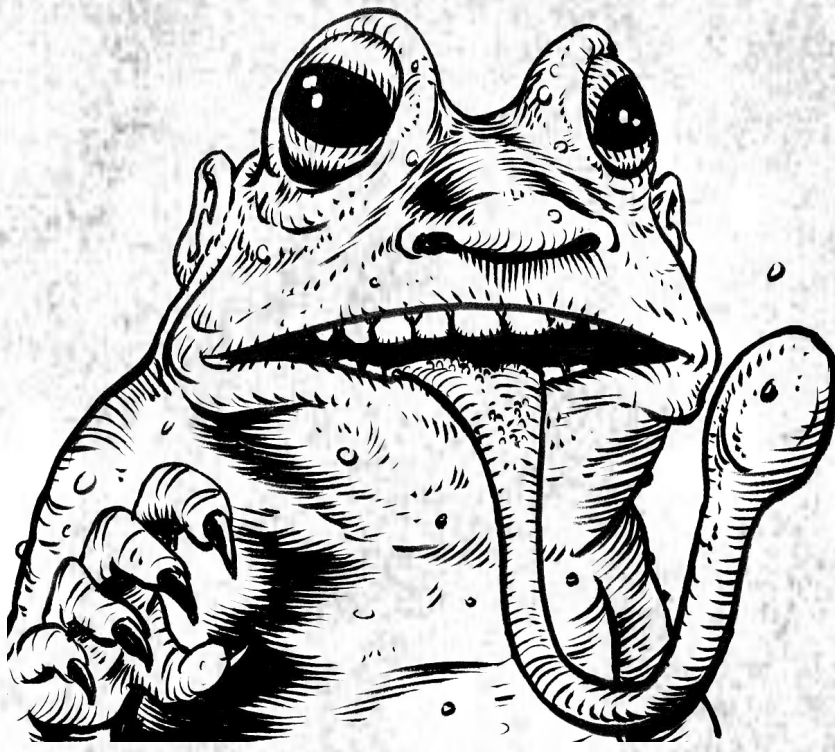
- May breathe underwater indefinitely
- Can jump distances of up to 60 feet across and 20 feet high
- Has an extensible tongue can immobilize a target if it fails it's saving throw

These are amphibious humanoids with bulbous eyes. Boglings are noted for their ability to jump long distances and for their extensible tongues. They form tribes of 5d6 individuals in tropical swamps and rainforests. For every 10 boglings there will be one 3 HD clan warrior and each tribe will have a 4 HD chief. There is also a 33% (1-2 on a d6) chance of a bogling shaman (3<sup>rd</sup> level magic user/3<sup>rd</sup> level cleric)

During the Uttermost War, the demons twisted and perverted the race of man in a quest to find the perfect servitor race. Their experiments crossbreed men with various animals to produce hybrids. The Boglings, were one such race, created from a fusion of man and frog. Later scholars surmised that they were found to be weak and unsuitable and the few dozen test specimens were released to fend for themselves.

The Boglings were greatly underestimated and, despite their weaknesses, managed to survive and even thrive. It is rumored that some even found their way into the outer planes, hiding in the fens and swamps along the River Acheron.





# CORPSE FLIES

**Hit Dice:** 1d2 hit points

**Armor Class:** 7[12]

**Attacks:** Bite (1hp + infection)

**Saving Throw:** 18

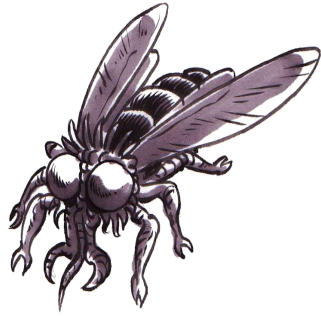
**Special:** Infection

**Move:** 18

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 10d4

**Challenge Level/XP:** B/10



The smell of corpses was thick. Same smell came from the flies. Those goddamn flies. I'd never seen such large flies before. Black as night and as large as a man's clenched fist. Their bite is like someone driving a nail through your flesh. Don't let too many of those latch onto you or they'll drink you dry before you collapse to the ground.

Bury the dead. Burn the dead. If one of those flies finds a body you'll have hundreds of them. For some reason they don't bother with animals. Just people.



I've heard of some folk getting bit by a single corpse fly and getting sick. Very sick. The *corpse cough*. An old priest told me to wash out the wounds with rancid beer. I told the priest that beer never lasted long enough in my house to go rancid. He nodded like I was being a amusing child and told me to flush out the wound as soon as I could. He then pulled back a blood splattered sheet and showed me two people suffering from corpse cough. Gaunt and mindless. They just laid there and moaned until the cough was on them. The cough jerked their bodies and blood sprayed from their mouths. The priest told me to stay clear of the blood. Then he thanked the gods that this would be their last day. He said the corpse cough took a couple of weeks to eat a man from the inside. Nothing but suffering.

Goddamn flies.





# LINEN GOLEM

**Hit Dice:** 2

**Armor Class:** 6[13]

**Attacks:** 2 sleeve slaps (1d3)

**Saving Throw:** 16

**Special:** Spell casting, blunt weapons do half damage, immune to magic

**Move:** 30

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encounter:** 1

**Challenge Level/XP:** 6/400

A linen golem is typically created by a powerful cleric to guard key areas in a temple or shrine. A linen golem is an animated vestment and is capable of following the simple commands of its creator.

**Combat:** The linen golem is not an especially dangerous foe to a well-armed prepared opponent, but it is capable of driving off the weak or casual intruders. The linen golem attacks by slapping its opponents with its sleeves twice per round inflicting 1d3 points of damage on a successful strike.

**Cleric Spells:** A linen golem can cast one first or second level cleric spell per day. Each linen golem is given one such spell at its creation and it can be cast once per day when certain conditions are met or the linen golem is attacked.

**Blunt Weapons:** Blunt and non-edged weapons do half damage against the linen golem.

**Immunity to Magic:** Like other golems, a linen golem is immune to magic. The linen golem will take normal damage from magical and non-magical fire-based attacks.



## MOLTEN SPIDERS

**Hit Dice:** 1+2

**Armor: Class:** 5[14]

**Attacks:** bite (1d3+poison) or web (see below)

**Saving Throw:** 17

**Special:** Venom, web

**Move:** 12

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 4d6

**Challenge Level/XP:** 2/30

These spiders grow to the size of dinner plates and have short, powerful legs that enables them to jump up to 10'. They get their name from the streaks of red on their abdomen. The streaks are luminous when the spider is threatened. The spiderlings are all black. Molten spiders behave much differently than most spiders. They mass in enclosed, dark spaces. They hunt only at night. Molten spiders usually feed on insects, rats, and small game, but if threatened, the spiders will swarm and can take down a human-size target.

**Web:** Molten spiders use their webs to ensnare prey. They shoot it from their abdomen. These webs can reach up to 20'. The webs are very sticky that entraps the spider's prey. If two successful hits are made on the same body part it is considered bound unless cut free.

**Venom:** Molten spiders have a powerful venom that liquifies their victim's innards. A save must be made after each bite or the target suffers 1hp of damage over 1d10 rounds.





## SNEACHTA KIN, LESSER

**Hit Dice:** 1d2 hit points

**Armor Class:** 6[13]

**Attacks:** Disorientation, Acid (1d4/round)

**Saving Throw:** 18

**Special:** Disorientation, half damage from fire, immune to cold, double damage from electricity

**Move:** 18

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 1 swarm (100's of individuals)

**Challenge Level/XP:** B/10

Lesser sneachta kin appear as a swirling mass of snowflakes. In actuality, it is a swarm of tiny creatures. They surround a creature and quickly disorient it. The longer the creature is engulfed by the swarm, the more severe the effect: first disorientation, then nausea, then violent sickness, and finally unconsciousness. In addition, lesser sneachta kin secrete an acid-like solution from their bodies. A creature surrounded by a swarm is considered to be in contact with the lesser sneachta kin, and is subject to 1d4 points of acid damage per round. Lesser sneachta kin prefer to live in places where snow and ice are commonplace, and hibernate during warmer temperatures. Lesser sneachta kin are not particularly susceptible to fire, have a resistance to cold, and take double damage from electrical attacks. A moderate to strong wind will disperse the swarm for 1d6 rounds at which time it will re-form.

## SNEACHTA KIN, GREATER

**Hit Dice:** 1d2 hit points

**Armor Class:** 2[17]

**Attacks:** Bite (1hp + infection)

**Saving Throw:** 18

**Special:** Infection, only miss on a 1

**Move:** 18

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 10d4

**Challenge Level/XP:** B/10

Occasionally the tiny creatures known as lesser sneachta kin collapse upon themselves until they form a tightly-packed sphere. This sphere acts as a cocoon, within which the lesser sneachta kin undergo a metamorphosis into a single semi-sentient creature known as a greater sneachta kin. The outer shell hardens into an icy exoskeleton during the process. These creatures are capable of propelling themselves through the air at tremendous speeds, with a range increment of 30'. Upon impact, they inflict 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage. They have an uncanny ability to successfully strike what they target, and are somewhat laughingly referred to as "magic ice missiles." The hardened exoskeleton neutralizes the acid effects of the lesser sneachta kin and grants them damage reduction to fire for a total of 15 points, after which they take double damage from these effects. Greater sneachta kin retain their resistance to cold effects and damage and their susceptibility (double damage) to electricity. Unlike Lesser Sneachta Kin, they are not dispersed by wind.



# TEMPLE GUARDIAN

**Hit Dice:** 6

**Armor Class:** 0 [19]

**Attacks:** None

**Saving Throw:** 11

**Special:** Breath weapon, limited flying, magic resistance (40%)

**Move:** 0

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Number Encountered:** 1

**Challenge Level/XP:** 8/800

A Temple Guardian is a large floating ram's head that guards a specific location within a temple. The temple's high priest is responsible for creating it. The construct is intelligent, can be named, and have given instructions. It can hold discussions and report on what it has seen.

- Can Breath Fire 1/round, Jet 5' wide, 2d10 damage, 60' range. Save: Half.
- Can Breath Lightning, 1/round, Jet 5' wide, 1d12 damage, 120' range, Save: Half
- 40% magic resistance
- Limited ability to fly, vertical up/down movement only plus the ability to turn in any direction.

## ENCHANT TEMPLE GUARDIAN

**Spell Level:** Cleric 5<sup>th</sup> level

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Permanent

This spell is used to create a Temple Guardian from a cleansed, unblemished skull of a ram. The cost of the components, implements, and vestments is 500 gp per hit point up to the maximum of 36 hp. It requires one month to complete the ritual with the caster spending 8 hours a day in the ceremony. Other high priests may assist to reduce the ritual time. Divide 30 days by the number of high priests participating in the ritual.



# Pulp Mill Press



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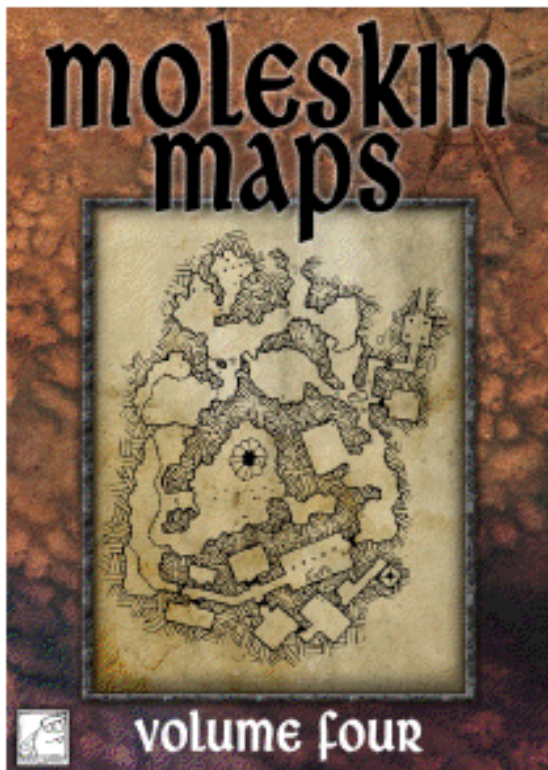
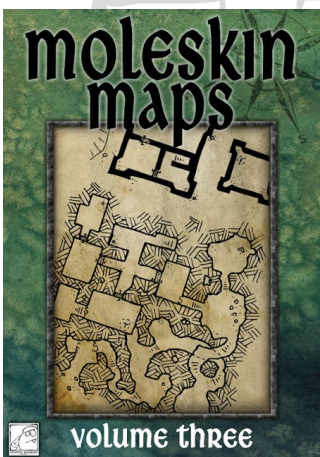
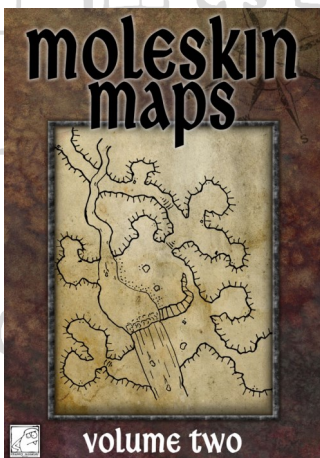
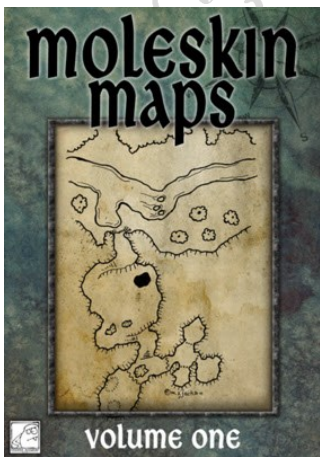
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