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The
CROOKED
MOON
FOLK HORROR ROLEPLAYING



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The CROOKED MOON



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More at Avantris.com and TheCrookedMoon.com

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Introduction:
A Dreadful Folktale

Somewhere, lost in the shrouded realms of death, lies a land of endless night where long-forgotten horrors are revealed to those who travel through the mist.

There, in a crooked house lives a Crooked Man with a crooked grin. He raises crooked arms to a Crooked Tree at the edge of midnight and hears the whispers of the Old Ones.

They speak of a beast that stalks the darkest woods and darkest hearts, a crown of horns upon its head. If you lose your way and feel a warm breath that chills you to the bone, run.

Follow the songs of harvest time, and before long, you'll find revelry in the dancing shadows of blazing wicker. No matter your story, these lonesome, misty rails will deliver you to where the hallowed cannot save you.

Now is the time to brave the dark wood, beware the witching hour, and weave your own dreadful folktale underneath the Crooked Moon.

You are about to embark upon a journey into the unknown, where uncanny folk with strange superstitions revere the Old Ways, and creatures of folklore lurk on the isolated fringes of civilization. *The Crooked Moon* is a tome intended to equip you with all the tools you'll need to bring Folk Horror to 5E and turn your game into a terrifying tale told among friends.

USING THIS BOOK

Within these pages, you'll find a plethora of options, rules, mechanics, and inspiration to craft characters and campaigns rooted in Folk Horror. Whether you are taking up the mantle of the Game Master (GM) or facing the terrors that await you as a Player, this book offers the guidance to make your tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) experience an unforgettably dreadful folktale. *The Crooked Moon* consists of three parts:

PART 1. Chapters 1–7 feature an overview of the setting of Druskenvald, including its thirteen major provinces, and they provide the player options needed to create thematic and compelling characters either hailing from or destined to this realm of eternal night.

PART 2. Chapters 8–26 contain a robust and thrilling Folk Horror adventure campaign in which a group of wayward souls becomes stranded in the isolated valley of Wickermoor Hollow and must contend with the malign machinations and minions of the Crooked Queen, taking the characters from level 1 to 14 (and optionally all the way to level 20).

PART 3. The appendices provide additional options for GMs to enhance the horror in their games with folkloric monsters, eerie magic items, and a table of Chaotic Curses.

WHAT IS FOLK HORROR?

Despite being so deeply rooted in tradition and old superstition, the term "Folk Horror" is a surprisingly new articulation to describe a nebulously defined genre with a wide variety of media under its umbrella. *The Crooked Moon* looks to the work of writer and filmmaker Adam Scovell to help define Folk Horror and guide its influence throughout the book.

A work of Folk Horror might be one that utilizes folklore to instill a sense of uncanny dread (such as the 2015 film *The Witch*), presents the clash between the archaic and the modern (such as the 1973 film *The Wicker Man*), or creates its own folklore by weaving various elements of a culture's collective consciousness (such as the 2014 series *Over the Garden Wall*). However, Scovell's framework of the "Folk Horror Chain" unifies these archetypes and more into a broad but consistent definition.

THE FOLK HORROR CHAIN

To determine what constitutes a Folk Horror story, Adam Scovell denotes four key narrative, thematic, or aesthetic aspects of a work that form a cause-and-effect series of "links" in a chain:



LANDSCAPE. The first link is the prominence of the landscape or environment, often becoming a living, breathing character of its own. These stories most often take place in rural locations and commonly focus on nature or agriculture. Most importantly, these remote landscapes isolate the characters and communities within them.

ISOLATION. The people in these remote environments are cut off from the prevailing society and standard trappings of civilization. Whether a group of several characters or a small community, the folk of these stories find themselves separated from society physically, and most importantly, outside of its dominant ideologies and beliefs. The main action of many Folk Horror stories is initiated by outsiders, often representing modernity or urbanity, interloping into these communities.

SKEWED MORALITY. In these stories, the isolated communities and groups develop skewed belief systems, often manifesting in an adherence to ancient superstitions, the practice of the occult, or a hostile rejection of the morals of society at large. This strange and warped morality inevitably leads to a horrific action and the final link in the chain.

THE HAPPENING. Generally, at the climax of these stories, the skewed morality of the isolated groups living in remote landscapes manifests a supernatural or violent happening. This dreadful event might take the form of the summoning of an otherworldly entity, a ritual sacrifice, a demonic or ghostly possession, a bloody murder, or some other act of killing or occultism.

THE CHAIN IN PRACTICE

When defined in this way, Folk Horror is a broad but thematically consistent genre that can include works from any narrative medium, time period, or global culture. The chain encompasses archetypal Folk Horror stories such as the 2019 film *Midsommar*, as well as unexpected examples like the 1974 film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and even genre-bending works like the 2007 film *Hot Fuzz*.

While *The Crooked Moon* leans heavily upon the aesthetics, tropes, archetypes, and plot threads found in quintessential examples of Folk Horror, this book also draws inspiration from the wide umbrella of works encompassed by the Folk Horror Chain, as well as elements of other horror subgenres such as Gothic Horror, Body Horror, Cosmic Horror, and more. You are encouraged to weave your own inspirations into your campaigns and characters to achieve a cooperative horror story best suited for your table.



FOLK HORROR IN YOUR GAME

Horror as a genre has a notorious reputation for being difficult to execute in a game of heroic fantasy. The goal of this book is to provide as many tools as possible for you to strike the appropriate level of dread in your game, but there are many additional factors to be mindful of when setting off to weave a dreadful folktale with your friends.

ALIGNING ON GOALS

One of the biggest sources of friction between people at a table is a misalignment of what everyone is hoping to achieve in the game. This is especially true when it comes to horror. Some players may want a deeply serious Folk Horror story where the tone and tension are maintained by all at the table. Others may be interested in a more goofy, spooky flavor of horror with plenty of jokes. Certain gamers may prefer to focus on engaging with mechanics and striving for tactically and strategically optimal play.



These styles of play—and many others—are all valid, but if there is a misunderstanding between players and clashing goals, this can lead to interpersonal conflict and soured sessions. Before you begin a campaign that draws from The Crooked Moon, your group should meet for a "Session Zero" to discuss each player's goals for the game and strive to seek full alignment before the first session so that the game runs smoothly and is as fun as possible for all involved.

CREATING COMPELLING CHARACTERS

The quality of a Folk Horror story is inextricably tied to the "folk" who feature in it. A story driven by compelling, multi-dimensional, and thematic characters can elevate a fun game of roleplaying into a deeply moving experience you and your friends will remember for the rest of your lives. The adventure campaign included in this book provides a large cast of memorable NPCs, but the most important characters of the story are the protagonists piloted by the players. Below is guidance to create and roleplay unforgettable Player Characters:

COLLABORATE. The character creation process should be a collaborative experience between the players and the GM. Through working together, bouncing ideas back and forth, and iterating on initial concepts, the Player Characters who emerge from the process will be compelling and well-balanced, both thematically and mechanically, and the GM will be well-equipped to incorporate character-specific elements into the adventure.

PRIORITIZE THEME. The key to an exceptional character is a foundation based on theme first and foremost. Instead of starting with the mechanics of the character sheet, consider what theme you want to exhibit in a Folk Horror story, both aesthetically and narratively. Don't be afraid to leverage classic archetypes and tropes in fiction and borrow heavily from your favorite characters from various media. This will equip you with plenty of inspiration and ammunition to play a thematically rich and consistent character.



INHABIT YOUR CHARACTER. Creating a compelling backstory for your character is useful, but far more important is knowing who they are. Remember that your character is a real person in an imaginary world and not just a collection of statistics, traits, and abilities. If you strive to understand who they are, you will be better equipped to roleplay a wholly realized and multi-faceted character and will know how they would react to any scenario. To help discover who your character is, answer the following questions:

- What are your character's defining personality traits?
- What ideals drive your character forward?
- What are your character's flaws?
- What does your character fear and desire most?
- Which archetype best applies to your character?
- How has your character's past shaped them?
- How would you describe your character without mentioning what they do, what they have, or what they look like?
- Are there any aspects of your character that are superfluous to the answers to the above questions or are thematically unfitting for a Folk Horror adventure?

ONWARD TO DRUSKENVALD

You are now prepared to venture through the Shroud aboard the *Ghostlight Express* and face the terrors that await you in Druskenvald. Nothing in this book is meant to be prescriptive, and you are encouraged to use its contents in whatever way works best for you and your table. With *The Crooked Moon* as your guide, you are well-equipped to craft an unforgettable and haunting Folk Horror story with your friends.

COMFORT AND SAFETY

Many of the themes and topics core to Folk Horror can be deeply distressing for some. While the most disturbing elements of the genre have been greatly diminished, much of the content within The Crooked Moon deals with serious and potentially unsettling themes that should be considered with care and caution to ensure the comfort and safety of everyone at the table. To achieve this, be sure to approach the following topics during your group's Session Zero:

CONTENT WARNINGS. The Crooked Moon contains elements of graphic and gory violence, depictions of mental health issues, cultural and religious conflict, endangerment of children and animals, grotesque body horror, family trauma, allusions to suicide, and more. Ensure that all players are aware of what awaits them so you can gauge everyone's comfort levels.

ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES. Solicit the themes and topics that each player does not wish to engage with in the game. Once established, these boundaries should always be honored and considered hard lines that are never crossed.

SAFETY TOOLS. Utilize safety tools that are understood by everyone at the table, empowering players to safely flag when they're uncomfortable without judgment and enabling the GM to change topic, pause the scene, fade to black, or otherwise steer the game away from the source of discomfort.

REGULAR CHECK-INS. Make sure that all players check in regularly to gauge ongoing comfort levels and establish open and active communication to ensure that everyone feels heard.



Chapter 1: DRUSKENVALD

Here are the old fears. Surrounded by looming walls of shrieking fog and forever trapped between dusk and the Witching Hour, Druskenvald is a realm made from the stuff of nightmares. Equal parts dreamland and afterlife, it beckons forth departed souls to be reborn into strange new folk that call this sinister place home. Lurking within the shadows of the night that never stops are ancient and terrible things that even the lord of the land forgot. Whether living or dead, heroic or humble, none are safe from the beasts that stalk the deepest woods and darkest hearts beneath the Crooked Moon.

It is this ever-present crescent with the face of a grinning witch that makes Druskenvald a bit eerie, uncanny, and crooked. It is a vestige of the forgotten, primordial origins of the realm, casting a wickedly gleeful look upon the land as if weaving a plot that only it knows with an inevitably dire outcome. However, to nearly all who live throughout the domain's provinces, it has simply always loomed high overhead and provided much-needed light in an endless night so filled with terrors.

THE LAND BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

Druskenvald *(DRUSK-in-vahld)* is a realm that exists outside the lands of the mortal and material. Enveloped in a seemingly endless expanse of eldritch gloom, it exists in a paradoxical state of limbo between the warring furies of life and death. Beyond the misty borders of this domain may lie countless worlds and afterlives, but Druskenvald stands apart—a self-contained demiplane where the living, dead, and everything in between can coexist.

Within these confines is a landmass hewn into the shape of a crescent moon and a dark and roiling sea that stretches from its eastern coastline until it disappears into the haze. Looming mountain peaks to the north and south flank the lands between, forming an enormous continent-sized valley that nonsensically spans numerous environments in a relatively short distance and never experiences the turn of a season. The laws of nature and logic have no dominion over a place that is just as much nightmare and folktale as it is a land to explore.

The mystifying nature of Druskenvald is made most apparent by the thirteen major provinces that comprise it. As if pulled from a child's storybook featuring a broad collection of varying tales, each of these territories has a wholly distinct biome, topography, and climate. From forest to moor, desert to tundra, swamp to farmland, they all exist side by side like a collection of bizarre patches stitched together upon a grandmother's quilt. Despite the uniqueness of each Druskenvaldian patch, travel between provinces is not especially difficult, and borders can be crossed with a simple step.

NIGHT OF THE CROOKED MOON

In Druskenvald, the sun never rises. Instead, the land is bathed in an orange glow from the horizon for a few brief hours at the height of dusk, only to be swallowed by the encroaching darkness that dominates the rest of the night.

The Crooked Moon, an eternal crescent with the visage of a leering hag, hangs eternally overhead. Its light waxes and wanes with the cycle of each night as it moves through the sky with no discernible pattern, casting long, creeping shadows. At times, it looms large in the sky, its baleful eye glowering over the land with malicious intent. At other times, it shrinks to a small sliver nearly lost in the night sky, leaving the land blanketed in total darkness.

The people of Druskenvald have adapted to their peculiar 24-hour "day" cycle from the Twilight Hour through the Witching Hour, dividing their time according to the shifting light in their own ways. Some rise as soon as the golden glow of the hidden sun shows itself above the horizon and settle in before the most treacherous hours of night. Others only wake during true darkness. While they may not agree on how to honor Druskenvald's time, all peoples and provinces have aligned on the same naming conventions for the phases of each passing night.



KEHLENN, THE CROOKED QUEEN

Before Druskenvald became the harrowing realm it is today, it was a place of vibrant life and rebirth, ruled by Kehlenn *(KEH-linn)*, the Green Queen. This afterlife demiplane was an enormous forest, teeming with "green magic" that facilitated the natural cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Mortal souls would journey here to be reincarnated as plants, animals, and other natural beings, contributing to the eternal cycle.

Kehlenn was a Fey queen, neither benevolent nor malevolent, but a guardian of this natural order. She believed in the sanctity of the cycle, where each death brought forth new life, and the essence of the departed merged with the vibrant flora and fauna of the realm. Her dominion was one of serene balance, where the natural world thrived in an endless loop of renewal, untouched by the corrupting influences of sentient ambition and desire.

Kehlenn's vision of peace reigned until Phillip Druskenvald arrived. Where he came from and how he discovered this realm of rebirth is forgotten to all including Phillip himself, but his appearance initiated a cataclysmic conflict that left Kehlenn a hollow shell of her former self. The once lush forest became the fog-shrouded landscape of Druskenvald. Kehlenn, now the Crooked Queen, retreated to the deepest and darkest wood within Wickermoor Hollow, a minor province and the only one not under the dominion of Phillip and his Crescent Court.

In this weakened state, she lingers nearly dormant as she waits to reclaim her domain. Her bitterness festers, and she whispers the words of the Old Ways to those who will listen. Many of the monsters and creatures not shaped by the nature of their provinces have been made bent and crooked by the hateful spite of the Crooked Queen.

PHILLIP AND ADELA DRUSKENVALD

Since coming to power, Phillip Druskenvald has attempted to shape the realm he named after himself into a reflection of his own ideals. A master of unchained ambitions, he envisions a realm where civilization crushes the wild pulse of nature, where order reigns supreme over the primal chaos of the afterlife. In his mind, he has crafted a sanctuary—a place where souls are reborn into lives filled with the pleasures and comforts they once knew, no longer bound by the harsh cycles of nature.



In Phillip's eyes, he is a benevolent ruler who has given the inhabitants of Druskenvald a second chance at life, which he believes to be the ultimate desire of every mortal. However, as the years have gone on, he has become out of touch with the people for whom he is responsible. Often aloof and completely unaware of the realities of living in Druskenvald, he presumes that the inhabitants of Druskenvald are having as good and easy a time as he is.

At Phillip's side stands his beloved wife Adela *(uh-DELL-uh)*, the most precious soul in existence to him. Adela was once a mortal woman living in the material world, but one born with immense powers of divination and prophecy. Her unbound curiosity, enthusiasm, and drive, along with an obsession with the spiritual world, drew her to seek out the *Ghostlight Express*. It is there she met Phillip, and the two fell deeply in love and were promptly married. She now assists her husband and is invaluable in the governance of Druskenvald.

THE CRESCENT COURT

The Druskenvalds do not rule the domain alone. There are thirteen major provinces, each with a lord or lady who governs and embodies the essence of their territory. Some of these nobles are members of the origin species of their province, while others, though different in form, still represent the province's spirit. These diverse leaders form the Crescent Court, a council that governs all of Druskenvald.

The nobles of the Crescent Court enjoy a significant degree of autonomy in the governance of their provinces with little direct oversight from Phillip. As long as each province maintains order and does not disrupt the affairs of neighboring provinces or the Druskenvalds themselves, the lords and ladies are free to rule as they see fit.

Several times a year, the Crescent Court gathers at Chateau Clair de Lune *(sha-TOH KLAIR-duh-LOON)*, the Druskenvalds' sprawling manor. The home was built by Phillip to Adela's exacting design, and it serves as an ideal place of residence and headquarters for the domain's leadership. When court is called, there is pageantry and celebration, but important matters are discussed and crucial decisions are made regarding the governance of Druskenvald.

Oftentimes, the primary focus of the meetings is on the malefic machinations of the Coven of the Midnight Moon. This coven of thirteen witches is led by a powerful crone known as Mother Midnight. She and her daughters work in the shadows, terrorizing the thirteen major provinces of Druskenvald to some incomprehensible end.

THE SHROUD

No matter the power of the beings that dwell in Druskenvald, virtually none can pierce the wall of fog that encircles it. The phantom gloom, known among the inhabitants of Druskenvald as the Shroud, appears as a dense gray mist that wails in a chorus of agonized voices. The Shroud is, in reality, the condensed essence of the primordial element of death itself given form. It lingers just beyond the fringes of the mortal realms and serves as the veil that separates the lands of the living and the dead.

All souls not offered salvation by the hallowed or delivered damnation by the hells must pass through the Shroud on their way to the afterlife to which they are destined. They must first be led through the mist by the Strangers—timeless beings with the power to safely guide the dead to the other side. While these entities use many methods and take many forms, such as shepherds, ferrymen, reapers, or angels of death, all are bound to their solemn duty for eternity. Without the protective shield of a Stranger, the phantom mist annihilates wayward souls and devours their anima, the quintessential soul-stuff that provides all beings spiritual identity and sentience.

THE VAGRANT AND THE GHOSTLIGHT EXPRESS

The Vagrant *(VAY-grint)* is the enigmatic Stranger who ferries souls to Druskenvald, possessing the unique ability to come and go from the domain as he pleases. All others must be guided by him aboard the *Ghostlight Express*, a spectral locomotive powered by the Shroud itself. The old black ghost train traverses the boundaries between life and death, unbound to any track as it courses through the mists. This mysterious mechanical ferry is the only means of passage in and out of Druskenvald for all, living or dead.

None know the Vagrant's origin, how he came to cooperate with Phillip, or his ultimate aims. Whether or not it is his true form, the visage he favors is that of an amiable frogman dressed in ragged clothing. The sole conductor of the *Ghostlight Express*, he is known by all passengers for his charming demeanor and love of stories and fiddle tunes.

In the mortal realms, the Vagrant's mirthful fiddle and haunting whistles herald the arrival of the ghost train, which emerges seemingly out of nowhere, rolling in on a bank of dense fog. It is said that only the dead may see this arrival, but there are a few fortunate, or perhaps unfortunate, living souls who have discovered how to gain passage while still alive.

THE PEOPLE OF DRUSKENVALD

Souls that arrive in Druskenvald are reborn into a wide variety of species, including those which inhabit the world of the living. However, the realm's predominant populace is comprised of thirteen distinct species, each having originated from one of the thirteen shrouded provinces.

The origins of these species are as varied as the land itself, some rising from the landscape, others being crafted by the provincial lords, and still more arriving from magical phenomena, emerging into Druskenvald as fully formed adults, infants, or any age in between. In just as many instances, the rebirth is initiated by two parents seeking a child through biological, magical, or technological means.

No matter the species, most inhabitants of Druskenvald emerge anew, their memories of a past life erased, allowing them to live their next life with a clean slate. A few cling to fragments of their former selves, their memories either shrouded in mist or vivid and unyielding. Even rarer are those with a fully clear picture of their past life, even remembering their moment of death. While many of these beings remain in their province of origin, others choose to roam across Druskenvald and settle in other communities.

Besides the thirteen species native to Druskenvald, humans are the most populous species found in the realm compared to other folk such as dwarves, elves, or halflings. This is due to the deep connection that Phillip and Adela Druskenvald have to the domain they rule. Despite having become deathless, immortal beings long ago, their once-human hearts have left a clear imprint upon the land.

DEATH IN DRUSKENVALD

There is no guarantee of the fate that befalls those who die again while in the confines of this realm of rebirth. For many, the cycle starts once more, and the soul of the recently deceased is reborn as one of the species of Druskenvald. Sometimes, they return as the same species they had been in life, but just as often, they awaken as an entirely different one.

Some experience a "Final Death," where the soul simply fades into oblivion and ceases to exist. For those who were particularly wicked in their second chance at life, the Shroud claims it. The soul's anima is devoured, and the spirit is transformed into a shrieking abomination doomed to wander the eldritch fog forever.

Rarely, the souls of the dead are reincarnated by the original nature of Kehlenn's domain and are turned into plants or animals by whatever lingering remnants of green magic still pervade the realm. These souls, marked by the Crooked Queen herself, are warped into the crooked monsters that lurk in the old places and stalk along the fringes of civilization.



PROVINCES OF DRUSKENVALD

As with any folktale, and especially within the genre of folk Horror, the heart of the story can be found in the land itself, with the setting becoming a major character in its own right. In this section, you will discover the thirteen primary provinces of Druskenvald, the people who call them home, and how the unique aspects of each region affect the nightly life of the locals. In addition to major features and pieces of folklore of each province, you'll gain a deeper understanding of its ruler, the witch of the Midnight Moon that terrorizes its people, and notable locations rife with opportunities for haunting adventures.

The forthcoming province overviews are intended to serve as inspiration and guidance for crafting your own adventures in Druskenvald that range across a wide variety of environments, challenges, and themes. The minor province of Wickermoor Hollow, unrecognized by the ruling authority of the Crescent Court, is featured and heavily detailed in this book's adventure campaign, *The Crooked Moon* (see chapters 8–26).



ARDENGLOOM

"Speak not the names of the lost, for the forest has taken them. When wayward souls cross the boundary from their world to wander among the oak, ash, and thorn, they belong to the trees. Dry your eyes. The Elderwood weeps for them now."

- Elder Gallows -

Ardengloom *(AR-din-gloom)* is a warning whispered by candlelight, a wood so ancient that all know its name. In a time beyond memory, the primordial forest enveloped the entirety of Druskenvald. Though now only a fraction of its former glory, its towering, gnarled trees are the last barrier between civilization and the unknown. For as long as there have been voices, songs have been sung of the terrors that lurk in the umbral heart of the wood.

The province of Ardengloom is a land of dark forests, twisting shadows, and echoes of the long-dead feyfolk who once dwelled there. Though dangerous to outsiders, deep within the twisting roots and choking shadows lies a shrouded society. Living in remote settlements throughout the great wood, the gnarlborn (see page 58) are a people grown from the forest itself, resembling their treant ancestors with bark-like skin and haunting, glowing faces. These folk, along with the other species of the dark forest, stand as sentinels against those who wish to exploit their primordial home.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

THE ANCIENT ELDERWOODS

The Elderwoods are the oldest and largest of the trees within Ardengloom and Druskenvald as a whole. Within each of their broad trunks is a face of knotted wood and cracked bark. Should harm come to the wood in which they are rooted, they weep viscous, amber sap in response to that shared pain. It is believed that within each Elderwood is the soul of a long-dead Fey—the last remnants of a once-mighty oaken empire.

The venerable language of the Elderwoods is so ancient that many folk of Ardengloom have forgotten how to speak it. Now, these primordial beings communicate the will of the woods through the subtle shifting of leaves or swaying of branches, while those attuned to the Old Ways may even hear their voices on the wind.

THE MISTS OF TIRNA FÉTH

On nights when the moonlight pierces through the dense canopy, a soft, blue mist forms on the breeze and billows into the surrounding forests. The Mists of Tirna Féth *(TEER-nuh FETH)*, as they are known in legend, blanket the wood in an eerie dew, thought to be the lost souls of the feyfolk that once thrived in the glades and glens of Ardengloom.

Most who find themselves caught in the mist are trapped—forced to wander the gloom forever. The lost no longer have an understanding of time or place, and nearly all meet their end. The lucky few who emerge from the mists tell tales of being helped or hindered by confounding fey spirits or following the ghostly luminance of a will-o'-wisp.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

ELDER GALLOWS

Gnarled treants are not an uncommon sight in Ardengloom, and Elder Gallows is by far the oldest and largest of all who walk the woods. The lord of Ardengloom is so old that only the most timeworn of trees remember his true name, and none, not even the Elderwoods, dare speak it.

True to his name, nooses hang interspersed among his knotted branches as a constant reminder of the fate that will befall those who encroach upon and dare to defile his primordial realm. Having borne witness to so much of the forest's destruction, he has become bitter toward outsiders and even his fellow lords of the Crescent Court. However, his contempt is controlled by his unmatched patience, for he knows that he and the forest will outlast them all.

SISTER SILHOUETTE

It is said that even the darkness fears the witch of Ardengloom, and those venturing into the tree line of the province who do not heed this warning never return. Appearing as a looming shadow with glowing embers for eyes, Sister Silhouette slinks between the trees of the deepest parts of the forest, twisting the shadows cast by her cursed lantern into a wicked extension of her form, enveloping and snuffing out the life essence of travelers lost in the wood. By the time her victims see the pinprick of light through the yawning darkness, it is too late.

Sister Silhouette's shadows are a malevolent, corrupting force capable of blighting even the mightiest Elderwood trees. This sickness corrupts the primordial fey spirits that dwell within the trees, causing black sap to run like tears down rotten bark. Every night, Sister Silhouette spreads the malady deeper into the wood and collects the vile sap to fuel her lantern so that it may eventually cast her shadow across all of Ardengloom.

STORIED LOCALES

GLOAMING GULCH

Deep within the shrouded heart of Ardengloom lies Gloaming Gulch, a flourishing city built into the very trees themselves. Spanning from the tangled roots to the towering canopy overhead, the capital is the center of society for the gnarlborn and the other species that call the forest home. Great rings of standing stones are found on the forest floor, weathered by time and enveloped by moss and lichen. It is here that the Old Ones, a group of revered treants, hold the great Gnarlmoot. This assembly, led by Elder Gallows, gathers to discuss solutions to the problems plaguing the province.

Deeply isolated from the rest of the province, Gloaming Gulch is the closest thing Ardengloom has to a city. The concept of currency is wholly foreign to those who live here. Goods are bartered at grand treetop markets, and the entire way of life for the gnarlborn is predicated on a system of honor and respect. However, those who violate the laws and customs of the gulch find themselves facing merciless justice, and the bones of countless trespassers are forever lost among the roots of the Elderwoods.



MAZE OF THE DREAMERS

Legends are told of a mysterious, overgrown maze built into the forest from stone, earth, branch, and bush. Marked by an archway that shimmers with emerald light, the countless miles of labyrinthian, enchanted woodland murmurs with the faint song of beasts, birds, and the old gods of the forest.

Alluring song beckons unwary travelers into the Maze of the Dreamers. The lost are doomed to wander endlessly or be consumed by grasping brambles, choking ivy, or the gnashing jaws of the impossibly ancient creatures within. However, it is said that those who brave the labyrinth and best its challenges will arrive at the Green Dream, the dwindled ethereal realm of the few surviving fey folk from the lost ages of Druskenvald.

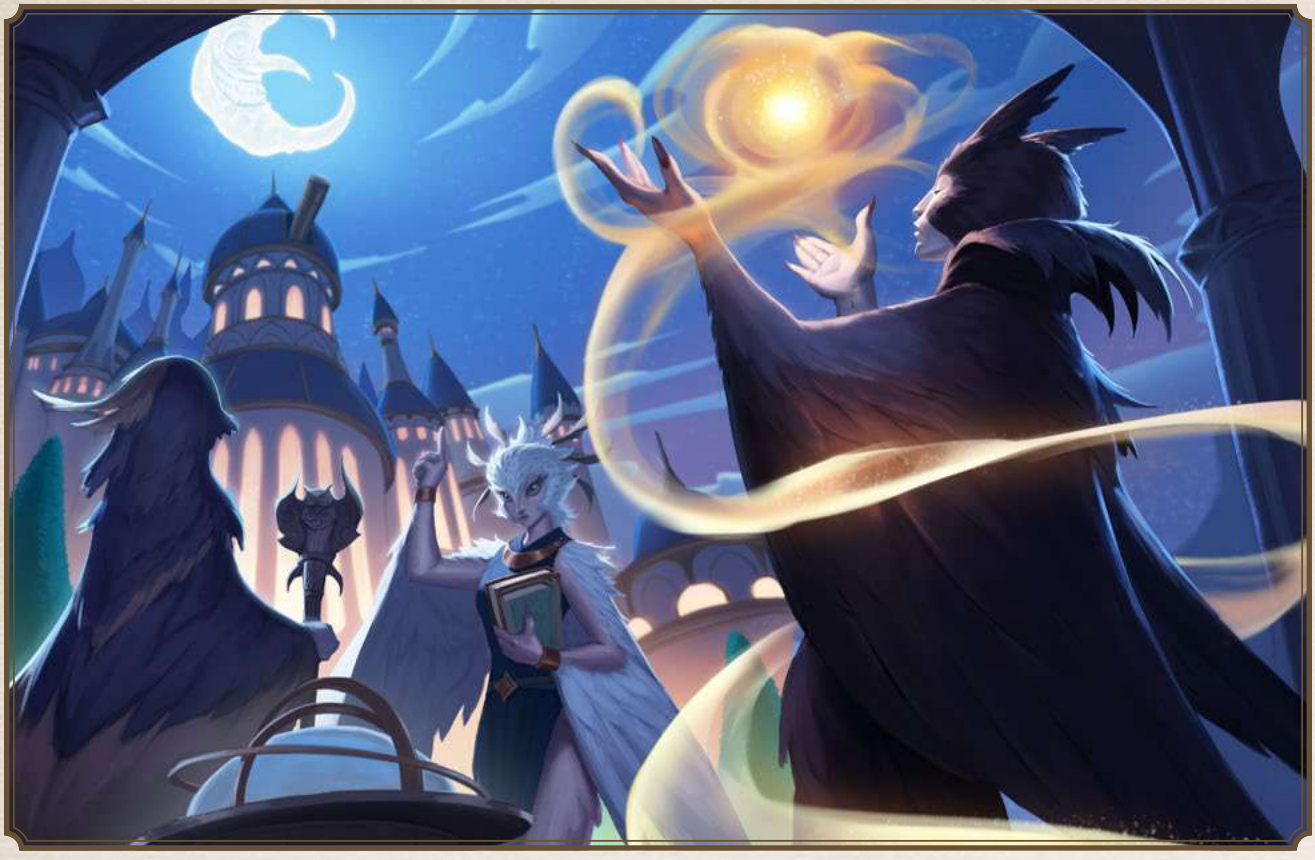


ADVENTURES IN ARDENGLOOM

Each journey into the tangled heart of Ardengloom tempts adventurers to confront the shadows that corrupt the ancient land.

Ardengloom Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook
1	Sister Silhouette's shadow curse threatens Ardengloom's trees, leeching them of vitality. Join a gnarlborn herbalist to discover a cure.
2	A mysterious gale has destroyed the webbed homes of benevolent orange ettercaps. Help a wind priest investigate the storm's origin and assist in rebuilding the ettercap community.
3	A ghost hunter enlists aid to expel phantoms and uncover the secrets of a haunted manor that was built by a forgotten threadborn inventor and filled with deadly carnival rides.
4	A woodsman has ventured into Ardengloom seeking his missing daughter. Accompany him to unravel the mystery of her disappearance.
5	Lead the treants in a decisive counterattack against a Bubonian logging invasion to prevent them from using Ardengloom's enchanted wood to enhance their doomsday devices.
6	Brutal minotaurs who worship evil fire gods threaten to burn Ardengloom. Help a gnarlborn fire warden to quell the threat and prevent a devastating wildfire.
7	Evil Fey have compelled gnarlborn to kidnap children for blood sacrifices. Work with a distressed parent to rescue the children.
8	Gandorhal students from Astramar caught practicing forbidden magic face Elder Gallows' judgment. Persuade the elder to show mercy.
9	Seek the all-knowing Owl of Ardengloom, an awakened giant owl, to answer a question about past, present, or future. A lore keeper serves as guide to the owl's secret hollow.
10	With the help of a mystic's clues to the treacherous Maze of the Dreamers, navigate the fogbound forest labyrinth to find an uncorrupted glade that grants healing and resurrection.
11	In a ruined wizard's tower, stop a curseborn who is attempting to spread lycanthropy. Team up with a local hunter knowledgeable in werewolf lore.
12	Participate in a gnarlborn ceremony to remember the seasons' cycle from eons ago. Guided by an esteemed elder, choose a seasonal blessing and engage with the ancient rituals.



ASTRAMAR

"Among the stars, truth is revealed. Each one is a thread that connects past, present, and future. When woven together in their multitudes, the tapestry of fate is illuminated to those with clear eyes and open minds. No matter the lateness of the hour, if you look to the heavens and truly see, you will never be lost in the darkness."

- Headmistress Narcissa Voss -

Astramar *(ASS-truh-mar)* is a place of light in a realm shrouded in the darkness of eternal night. While the sun never rises, the glittering stars that shine down upon the towering mountains and rolling hills of the province cast it in luminant shades of blue, made even brighter by the magical ley lines that streak across its landscape. This azure brilliance illuminates not only the land and sky of Astramar but also the inquisitive and aspiring minds of the people who live there.

The harpy-like azureborn (see page 54) are most prominent in Astramar, descending from the night sky as they are reborn. However, the province draws all those who wish to study the arcane arts from across Druskenvald—and even beyond the Shroud. While magical energies of all varieties radiate through the province, the cosmic guidance of the stars and other celestial bodies that fill the cerulean skies are especially leveraged by clairvoyants, soothsayers, and other such practitioners of divination magic.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

THE WINDS OF AITHER

In eons past, the domain now known as Astramar was the site of an impossibly powerful ritual that called down storms of arcane energy from the stars themselves. This suffused the entire province with aither *(AY-thur)*—condensed arcane energy that spellcasters can draw upon to empower their magic. This volatile essence whips through the sky and crackles across the land, forming interconnected strands of power that are constantly shifting like complex wind patterns.

The people of Astramar rely on aither for their magical way of life, looking to the skies and the landscape to trace the ley line patterns and following the stars to divine how they will change each night. They collect the arcane substance in azure crystals embedded in the ground or held aloft in the heavens atop great towers. These crystal foci send the winds of

aither across the province, fueling the enchantments, conjurations, and countless other spells that provide a wondrous life to all its inhabitants, even those born without an affinity for magic.

THE STYGIAN DEPTHS

In stark contrast to the illuminated landscapes of Astramar, far below its mountainous surface is a sprawling network of caverns called the Stygian Depths, where far less wondrous and beautiful things lurk. Within these subterranean chambers, death itself thrives—the true cost of harnessing volatile aither.

The aither-touched souls of Astramar's mages are all at risk of being ripped from their bodies with one wrong incantation or misappropriation of a spell. When such a miscast occurs, the spirit is pulled into the underworld and joins the numerous souls that form the River Atropos, which snakes through the entirety of the Stygian Depths. The spectral waters of this river can be utilized for even stranger and more profane rituals, but meddling with the damned is extremely dangerous and can drain one's youth, magic, and vitality in mere moments.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

HEADMISTRESS NARCISSA VOSS

As well as ruling the whole of Astramar, Narcissa Voss *(nar-SISS-uh VAHSS)* serves as the headmistress of the illustrious magical academy Gandorhal. As an azureborn, her features are owl-like, with white feathers that almost appear as spectacles that frame wizened yet determined blue eyes. Voss is known among the other nobles of the Crescent Court for being especially stern, proud, and cold, but she exhibits surprising warmth and patience with all of her students and prioritizes their tutelage above most of her other duties.

When she is not overseeing the academy or ruling the province from her tower in Lunarium, teleporting between both locations with a single incantation, she looks to the stars as a master of divination, seeking to foresee threats to her people. While she can see many possible futures, fate can always be twisted and changed, and she often joins her most powerful mages in weaving monumental spells that protect the peoples of Astramar.

SISTER EFFIGY

The deadly and stunning Sister Effigy dwells in a ruined city-sized stone palace deep within the darkest cavern of the Stygian Depths. Nearly statuesque in her appearance, with a head covered in writhing, venomous snakes, she is consumed by vanity and bitter jealousy for all those she perceives as more beautiful or powerful than her. Effigy draws the waters of the River Atropos and spins them like threads into malign and mutating spells that transform beast and person alike into horrific monsters.



Viewing herself as the loving mother of her creations, she waits and plots for the opportune moment when hordes of her monstrous children will spill up from the underworld and rampage across Astramar, tearing their great and beautiful cities down so that none shall be as impressive as her crumbling ruin of a lair. Until then, she magically molds new stone blocks, pillars, and statues for her ever-growing palace to feed her unquenchable thirst for grandeur.

STORIED LOCALES

LUNARIUM

Lunarium *(loo-NAR-ee-uhm)* is Astramar's grand capital, filled with ornate spires and towers that reach high into the night sky, as if trying to reach the very stars from which the azureborn are created. Despite the diverse population of practitioners of the arcane, the city was constructed with flight-capable beings in mind, including floating domes, landing platforms, and structure entrances that lead out into the clouds. While easily navigable by the azureborn, those without flight must explore the city on floating arcane discs easily controlled by even the least magical of visitors.

The capital, fueled by great arcane crystals thrumming with aither, contains numerous homes, schools, and cultural centers that shine like the stars the province reveres. One of the most prominent and famous landmarks of the city is the Dome of Cygnus, an enormous observatory said to have been built by Lunarium's founder. Numerous enchanted telescopes protrude from the structure, allowing stargazers from across Druskenvald to seek answers from the cosmos above.

GANDORHAL COLLEGE OF THE ARCANE ARTS

Located on Lake Rommeda *(ROM-meh-duh)* in the misty moors of Astramar, Gandorhal *(GAN-der-hall)* is Druskenvald's most prestigious magical academy. Students from across all thirteen provinces are drawn to this influential college to hone their arcane skills and knowledge by following a general curriculum that covers all types of magic.

However, the institution provides the opportunity for students to specialize in one particular school, dividing each year's class into eight houses to foster the growth of talent in each pupil's selected focus. The labyrinthine halls of Gandorhal are filled with mysteries and dangers that some consider unacceptable for students so young, but the professors believe that the necessity to defend oneself with magic is the best path to mastery.



ADVENTURES IN ASTRAMAR

In Astramar, adventurers delve into arcane mastery and celestial mysteries that intertwine with magical academia, the sinister secrets of the Stygian Depths, and the volatile forces of the arcane landscape.

Astramar Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	The monstrous creations of Sister Effigy are emerging from the Stygian Depths to raze libraries, schools, and other places of knowledge. The source of the invasion must be found and dealt with.	7	After a forbidden spell backfires, causing mutations among locals, a distressed alchemist requests help to reverse the effects and contain the outbreak.
2	The head astronomer at the Dome of Cygnus has succumbed to paranoia from disturbing visions. Help decipher his celestial findings and prevent a potential disaster.	8	A librarian at Gandorhal needs assistance to subdue a surge of arcane Elementals accidentally released within its ancient walls.
3	Unique arcane boons for successful initiates are offered by an upperclassman at Gandorhal for those willing to compete for a place in a powerful magical house.	9	The governor of an isolated floating city where it's always daytime suspects a nefarious secret behind the city's eternal light. Investigate and expose the hidden truth.
4	An underworld explorer promising wealth is recruiting for a perilous journey into the Stygian Depths to harness power from the ley lines.	10	Physicians dealing with a surge of aither withdrawal among the populace ask for aid in finding a cure before they start succumbing to their condition.
5	Fishermen seek help with a giant creature disrupting the waters of Lake Rommeda. Investigate its origins and calm the magical disturbances.	11	A teacher from Gandorhal is desperate to recover students who vanished into the Stygian Depths, where they are rumored to be used as anima batteries.
6	A geomancer discovers that critical energy crystals are failing. They ask for aid in their repair to prevent the collapse of Astramar's magical grid.	12	The owner of a renowned vineyard plagued by aither-consuming pests desperately seeks a solution to save his magical crops and preserve his vineyard's legacy.



BUBONIA

"Power can be claimed in many ways. A warrior claims it with strength, a merchant with wealth, a priest with faith, and a monarch with birth. But claiming power does not grant it, and what these claimants hold is the mere illusion of it. True power is held by those who understand that all peoples, from the rulers to the ruled, care not for any of these ideals and are driven solely by the instinct to survive and reproduce."

- Doctor Molder Underfoot -

The plague-ridden province of Bubonia *(boo-BOH-nee-ah)* is bleak and shrouded in clouds of miasma and toxic haze. Amidst the instability of rampant disease and strife, rival guilds work and scheme tirelessly to achieve their individual aims, hoping to become the next predominant faction that wields the power and wealth to control all others. Most of the plagueborn (see page 61) and other species of Bubonia lead humble and often short lives, filled with constant fear. However, the guilds provide an opportunity for a life of larger purpose, excitement, and riches.

Mutant creatures, twisted by the province itself, wander on all manner of appendages and seek to destroy those still spared from their terrible fate. But perhaps even more dangerous are the plots of the province's people, where loyalty is fleeting and assassination, backstabbing, and other heinous acts of treachery are common.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

THE PESTILENT HAZE

A sickly, yellowish-green haze hangs in the air of Bubonia, filled with plague, poison, and mutagenic power. It is from these roiling, stinking plumes that newly rebirthed plagueborn emerge, but while the rat-like people are more resistant to the toxic atmosphere than other species of the province, none are immune to the pestilent haze. It works slowly and insidiously, infecting the body, mind, and soul of those who breathe it. Some exhibit terrible physical symptoms and perish, while others are turned to wickedness and commit acts of great evil, but the victims who suffer the worst fate are the ravening, plagued mutants.

None understand the purpose of the haze or whether it has a will of its own, but every attempt to banish it from Bubonia has failed, and all that's left to be done

is to manage it and hope to survive. The best defense against the haze that the province's people possess are huge, ancient windmills that dot the hills, built long before recorded history. The mills' seemingly decrepit blades are sturdy enough to spin quickly, blowing miles of plague clouds away. However, certain schemers have discovered ways to use the windmills to harness the haze to their own unscrupulous ends.

THE FIVE GREAT GUILDS

While Bubonia is represented in the Crescent Court, the true power resides among the many guilds that operate throughout the province. However, five great guilds dominate all others, spending equal time working together and sabotaging each other.

THE DOOMSDAY GUILD. This league of scientists, alchemists, engineers, and artificers sits at the top of the other four guilds as the ruling faction of Bubonia, simply due to being the only one that can ensure annihilation of the province should they be deposed. Known for their chaotic and destructive weapons of war and doomsday devices, they seek new glory for Bubonia through strange scientific advancement.

THE CHEESEMONGER GUILD. This union of cheese merchants, butchers, bakers, and other tradespeople specializing in foodstuffs is the wealthiest guild, hawking often rotten wares to starving customers at exorbitant rates. Understanding that people are often motivated by their stomachs, they trade nourishment for power, tightening their grip with each transaction as saviors and exploiters.

THE BELLRINGER GUILD. Often hidden away in crumbling abbeys across Bubonia, this order of monks, priests, and prophets worships the pestilent haze as a deity called the Great Plagued One. As the keepers of the primary faith of the province, they command legions of zealous adherents, spreading the holy word while administering salves and ointments that cure and spread the plague, all in the name of their pestilent god.

THE RATCATCHER GUILD. This sordid syndicate of assassins, spies, and saboteurs prefers to skitter through the sewers and run-down alleys of Bubonia's towns and cities. Known for being willing to kill any mark or infiltrate any space if the price is right, they slip through the shadows with envenomed blades to advance the aims of the powerful aristocrats who hire them.

THE BOLTFLINGER GUILD. This order of monster and mutant slayers is filled with highly skilled hunters and trackers that brave the wilds and the haze to seek and destroy the threats to Bubonia. Given their mission to protect, they may initially seem like the noblest of the guilds; however, they believe no means are too extreme in wiping out the abominations that lurch through the miasma.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

DOCTOR MOLDER UNDERFOOT

In a province filled with schemers, its leader must be the one who schemes the best, and that is how Doctor Molder Underfoot maintains control. A plagueborn who has greatly extended her own life through the discovery of alchemical secrets, she serves as master of the Doomsday Guild as well as sitting at the Crescent Court.

Her arsenal of doomsday devices helps keep the other guilds in line, but it is her complete understanding of the minds of those around her that allows her to pull the right strings to always get what she wants. Despite how ruthless and calculating she can be, her ultimate aim is to develop a reliable immunity to the plague and a reversal of the haze's mutations so that Bubonia can experience a new age of prosperity and safety.

SISTER HOMUNCULUS

As a province with such widespread death, Bubonia serves as the perfect laboratory for the unhinged genius known as Sister Homunculus *(huh-MUNG-kyuh-luhs)*. Her advancements in strange science infused with occult magic, as well as her artificer skills in arcane machinery, eclipse even the most prestigious members of the Doomsday Guild. Regularly robbing the mass graves of those killed by the plague or the mutants forged by it, she fuses body parts together into horrific flesh-crafted abominations that serve her unquestioningly and assist her in performing increasingly vile experiments on living subjects.



STORIED LOCALES

CASTLE UNDERBELLY

The capital city of Bubonia is built into the ruins of a colossal castle that had long been abandoned before recorded history. A strange sight to newcomers, this sprawling city is one of the largest population centers in Druskenvald and features ramshackle wooden additions grafted to ancient stone structures.

The city is home to thousands of people of all levels of prosperity, separated by the different layers of the castle, with the rich and powerful residing at the tops of great towers connected by heavily guarded walkways, and the most downtrodden attempting to survive far below in a massive sewer system. It also contains the headquarters of all five of the great guilds, each prospering from the surprising amount of trade, commerce, and travel throughout the capital.



ADVENTURES IN BUBONIA

Adventurers in this plague-ridden land face a myriad of challenges—from thwarting guild machinations to surviving the abnormal mutations that roam the blighted landscape.

Bubonia Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Sister Homunculus is on the brink of completing her fleshcraft titan. A rival alchemist seeks help to sabotage her work before it can be unleashed upon Bubonia.	7	A rural family seeks safety in Castle Underbelly. Guide and protect them on their perilous journey as they brave mutant-infested wilds.
2	The Bellringer Guild has concocted a new strain of plague that could decimate even the plagueborn. Help a concerned monk purify their plague vats before they can be weaponized.	8	A mutated fire-breathing drake rampages through the countryside, incinerating everything in its path. A local farmer seeks brave souls to slay the beast and protect his thatch-roofed cottage.
3	The Boltflinger Guild is desperate for new recruits to combat an upsurge in mutant threats. A monster hunter offers a bounty for every slain mutant.	9	The guilds are throwing a grand fair to show off their latest breakthroughs! Ensure that rival guilds don't sabotage each other's exhibitions.
4	A Ratcatcher assassin has targeted a prominent healer who is providing relief to the infected. Uncover the motive and protect the healer.	10	Rumors of a vicious mutated rabbit have spread fear across Bubonia. Guild representatives offer a substantial reward to anyone who defeats this abomination.
5	An ambitious young merchant has the Cheesemonger Guild's backing to challenge the status quo in Bubonia. Discover the secrets that could shift the balance of power.	11	One of Sister Homunculus's creations is trying to defend itself against an angry mob. It seems well-meaning and in harm's way, but can it be trusted?
6	Amid a toxic miasma storm, a delirious knight mistakes the windmills for enemy giants. Help clear his hallucinations before critical infrastructure is damaged.	12	Doctor Underfoot is seeking assistance to invent a new doomsday device. Various groups are competing for the sizeable award, and only the best idea will survive.



CHERNABOS

"They say that fortune favors the bold, but that's a lie told to the stupid and the drunk so they might throw their lives away on a distant hope of getting their filthy hands on a speck of hell iron. Truth is, fortune comes or goes with a single choice: heads or tails. But here, at least that choice is yours to make. Welcome to Chernabos! And whiskey's half-price for the next thirty minutes."

- Ol' Mister Scratch -

Fiery wind howls above Chernabos *(CHURR-nuh-bohs)* and casts a strange reddish glow across its scorched wastelands and deserts dotted with ashen, skeletal remains. It is a land of extremes: blistering heat, relentless drought, and violent eruptions and earthquakes, all laced with the promise of wealth beyond one's wildest dreams. Beneath fiendish volcanic peaks that belch forth ash and the ashborn (see page 53) that thrive in the province, rich veins of gold and—even more valuable—hell iron ore draw treasure hunters, opportunists, and the truly desperate from far and wide to seek their destiny here.

There is no law in Chernabos, save for what its people get away with or enforce, whether it be through their might, guile, or luck. If all of this wasn't enough, every inch of the province is tethered to the otherworldly realms of the devils, so sin itself suffuses the land, air, animals, and people of this harsh land with one clear ruling vice: greed. No matter how the dice fall, Chernabos is one hell of a place to make one's fortune.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

HELL IRON

Hell iron is a fiendish metal, pitch black and streaked with red, perfectly suited for the construction of devilish machinery that can outperform entire factories owned by the largest captains of industry. When enormous deposits of hell iron were discovered deep within the volcanic landscapes of Chernabos, there was an overnight population explosion that dwarfed the various gold rushes the province had experienced for years beforehand. Enterprising folk from all over flocked to Chernabos to join the ashborn and other species of the province, and everyone profited.

Treacherous hell iron mines dot the hills, mountains, ridges, and volcanoes of the province, with the largest concentration bored throughout the hellfire-spewing Sulfur Mountain. The constant threat of cave-ins, hellfire eruptions, and the unearthing of malevolent Fiends deters many from stepping into a mine. Yet still they flock, for the fiendish metal is more valuable than gold, and coins and bars made from it are used as currency across Chernabos.

THE DEVIL RAIL

Built and operated by the Midas Railroad Company, the *Devil Rail* is an enormous train constructed from hell iron, plated in gold, and fueled by hellfire. Intended to eventually serve as a direct competitor to the *Ghostlight Express*, it currently provides passage across the treacherous landscape of Chernabos on rails of fire and brimstone for a hefty fee of gold or hell iron, emerging from beneath the earth to collect its passengers from wherever they desire at a predetermined time.

This relatively new service allows for once-impossible travel throughout the province in comfort and style, but like everything in Chernabos, it is fraught with risk. Those who board without a ticket, miss the train at the exact time of departure, or request an emergency spiriting from a life-threatening situation forfeit their soul, which is fed into the firebox to fuel the devilish locomotive.



NOTEWORTHY FOLK

OL' MISTER SCRATCH

A hulking devil with red skin, golden eyes, a black mustache, and curved horns, Ol' Mister Scratch maintains a cool and charming disposition despite his imposing stature, which contrasts drastically with the ashborn who comprise a majority of the people he rules over. However, this devil takes the decrees of the Crescent Court as mere suggestions and strives to keep his province lawless, where destiny is determined with free will and the flip of a coin.

Conducting his scant lordly duties from the Deadwood Theater, which also serves as a saloon, hotel, and casino, he deals with the other powerful entrepreneurs of the province through temptation and manipulation. In truth, every soul that succumbs to sin in Chernabos becomes his, so he wheels and deals to ensure that business stays booming and greed remains king.

SISTER MALIGNANCE

Gaunt and shrouded in a billowing black robe, the nearly skeletal Sister Malignance lingers atop Pale Mountain, which stands at the southernmost border of Chernabos. As the eldest of Mother Midnight's daughters, the occult power of Malignance is immense, and she has used her mastery of necromancy to command death itself.

Every night, she rides her white Undead steed along the towering wall of shrieking fog at Druskenvald's border and pulls forth twisted, tormented souls that she dominates to her will. Whether bid by her mother or motivated by her own aims, Sister Malignance works tirelessly to weaken the Shroud's barrier so that, like a breaking dam, a tide of death will spill forth and crash upon Chernabos and beyond.

STORIED LOCALES

BRIMSTONE

Brimstone, the capital of Chernabos, is a boiling cauldron of desire and desperation. Soot and smoke from chimneys mix with the sulfuric air, and its ashy streets are lined with saloons, gambling halls, theaters, and brothels a mere stone's throw from places of commerce, trade, and industry. The city offers the tempting and truthless promise of sin without consequence, which draws folk from across Druskenvald who hope to change their fortune in a heartbeat without realizing that heartbeat may be their last.

Countless games of chance are played throughout the city, with gamblers wagering gold, hell iron, or their own souls to win jackpots beyond imagination. Strong spirits of all varieties flow freely, but most prefer Brimstone's signature liquor, Fiddler Johnny, which is made with poisonous cactus juice and rattlesnake venom. When damnation is on the line, disputes often turn heated and are settled with duels to the death.

HOTEL DURANGO

Despite what some folks say, Hotel Durango *(der-AYNG-goh)* isn't a myth but it sure is hard to find. When someone's luck runs out in Chernabos and they lose everything, they often wander off into the desert in delirious damnation. It's to these lost souls that Hotel Durango appears. An impossibly large and remote hotel in the middle of the desert, it acts as a shimmering oasis for the desperate. The lights are inviting, and the door is always open, encouraging those who see it to stop for the night and forget their troubles.

Within the mirage-like hotel is everything one's heart might desire: water for the thirsty, food for the starving, vices for the craving, companionship for the lonely, or some chips for the gambler who wants one last game. Once a soul checks into Hotel Durango, they leave the world they knew behind, find everything they'll ever need, and can never leave. However, certain tales whisper of ways to find the hotel and free the souls within.



ADVENTURES IN CHERNABOS

In the untamed land of Chernabos, adventurers face a world where lawlessness and hellfire collide. From soul bargains in dusty saloons to fiendish menaces, each encounter promises both danger and opportunity.

Chernabos Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook
1	Sister Malignance leads swarms of spirits from the Shroud as they flood the streets of Brimstone. The mayor begs for protection for him and his citizens.
2	A cryptic businessman asks to sabotage the construction of the Devil Rail to preserve the dominion of the *Ghostlight Express*.
3	A mysterious collector, known for their prized magical artifacts, requests the retrieval of an extremely rare ore from within the deepest mine in Sulfur Mountain.
4	The besieged townspeople plead desperately for liberation from bandit control, though they can offer no reward in return.
5	Called upon by local farmers whose livestock are being terrorized, investigate the strange sightings of ghost riders in the sky.
6	A renowned cavalryman with dreams of an unstoppable regiment offers a contract to capture and tame wild nightmares on the plains.
7	A group of thirsty settlers in a frontier town is seeking help in exposing the mayor for embezzling water shipments.
8	A distraught wife whose husband lost his soul in a poker game asks to break up the soul-gambling ring at the Deadwood Theater.
9	At the mysterious Hotel Durango, outplay a devilish figure in a fiddle contest to win freedom for its guests.
10	Backed by a coalition of concerned citizens, confront a corrupt sheriff in a decisive duel.
11	Aid a desperate farmer trying to save his crops; his land has been overrun by pestilent spirits.
12	Hired by a benefactor with personal stakes in the cargo, plan and execute a train heist to recover a shipment of souls on the *Devil Rail's* inaugural run.



EDWARDIA

"The people of Edwardia never stop moving forward. Why should we? The wheels of time, progress, and industry don't. We may be trapped between them, crushed beneath them, or cut down by them, but we will never be left behind. If we slow or stop for even just a moment, the beast will catch us."

- Charlotte Heady, The Iron Maiden -

Edwardia *(ed-WAR-dee-uh)* is a province of gray. Its sky, water, landscape, settlements, and even its people exist in a grayscale that colors every aspect of their society. The heart of Edwardia is ever pulled between two contrasting extremes, and the balance that its people maintain has allowed them to achieve a level of technological progress far beyond the wildest dreams of most of Druskenvald's inhabitants, with sprawling cities, industrious machinery, and fantastic vehicles all powered by electricity captured from the province's frequent storms. But progress has its cost, and for all the prosperity and comfort the province enjoys, there is just as much hardship and strife.

The society that has resulted is one obsessed with dualities—life and death, good and evil, law and anarchy, wealth and poverty, peace and conflict, progress and regression, city and country. These opposing furies have manifested into a curse that marks every inhabitant of Edwardia and hangs over the province like the dense fog from which the wolfen curseborn (see page 56) emerge. Managing this affliction by maintaining balance is core to life in this province of gloomy hills, moors, and flatlands, with its people divided between a towering metropolis and the quaint countryside.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

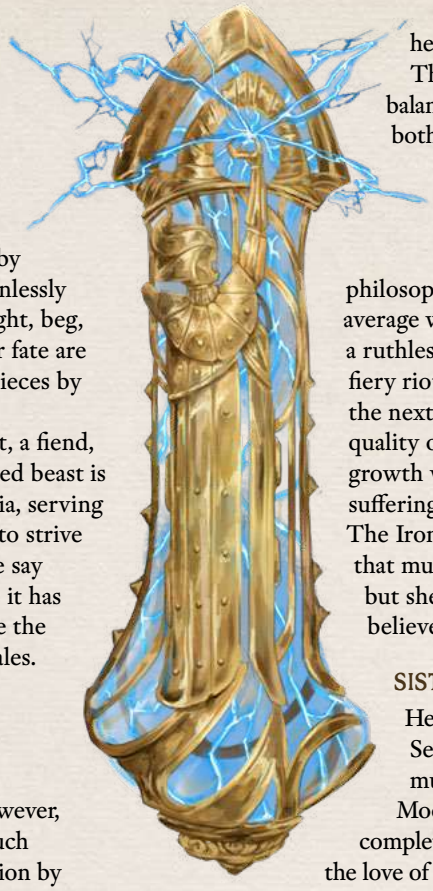
THE GREY

Edwardia is intricately intertwined with the Grey, which is a term that references three parts of a whole. First, it is the name of the dense, gray fog that rolls across the province and shrouds its people in gloom for half of every night.

Second, it is the name of the lifelong curse that marks every native of Edwardia, which some believe to be the result of living in the strange, oppressive fog. This malediction has no ongoing negative effects, but an afflicted individual who lives a life of any extreme meets an untimely end with total certainty.

Third, this death is delivered by an entity called the Grey. It appears to the doomed in the fog as a huge, gray canid beast with two heads—a she-wolf's on the left and a mastiff's on the right—and allows its prey one last choice. Those who accept their fate are nuzzled gently by the mastiff, dying peacefully and painlessly within moments. Those who flee, fight, beg, or otherwise attempt to escape their fate are chased down and violently torn to pieces by the she-wolf.

None know if this being is a spirit, a fiend, an angel, or a god, but the two-headed beast is revered and honored across Edwardia, serving as an eternal reminder to its people to strive for balance between all things. Some say that this malediction is a blessing, as it has driven the province to thrive despite the sacrifices required to balance the scales.



SPARKTECH

Edwardia is filled with industrious folk, including many inventors who have a keen eye toward progress. However, no advancement has had nearly as much of an impact as Sparktech, the invention by which Charlotte Heady transformed the province overnight. This revolutionary technology utilizes magnetized, bulb-shaped rods wrapped in coiled springs to capture electricity from the air and harness its energy to power a wide variety of machines and devices that are now the cornerstones of Edwardia's civilization.

While Sparktech is critical and widely used in Edwardia's industry, transportation, energy, and commercial sectors, it is limited by its great expense to maintain, difficulty to repair, and high rate of fatal accidents. Additionally, attempts to spread the technology outside of Edwardia have failed catastrophically. Because endeavors to improve upon its design have brought the doom of the Grey upon many inventors, engineers, and scientists, the technology seems destined to remain at its current level indefinitely.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

CHARLOTTE HEADY, THE IRON MAIDEN

Charlotte Heady *(SHAR-lit HEE-dee)* was once a curseborn who considered herself the ultimate renaissance woman, finding immense passion and success in every pursuit she tried, from invention to music to dueling to alchemy. But in the process of inventing Sparktech, a catastrophic accident annihilated her body and transmuted her soul into raw electricity. Through quick thinking, she was able to bind her soul inside a suit of iron armor before her crackling new form could dissipate. This was the moment she realized that balance could be achieved by embracing both extremes of duality in equal measure instead of walking a middle ground of mediocrity.

Now called the Iron Maiden, Heady leads Edwardia with this philosophy in mind, battling the Grey and the average with every action she takes. She acts as a ruthless inspector one night, before leading a fiery riot to the sound of raucous electric music the next. She strives to increase the province's quality of life through rampant industrial growth while accepting the sickness and suffering caused by the subsequent pollution. The Iron Maiden takes no joy in the sacrifices that must be made in the name of progress, but she places the blame on the curse that she believes forced her hand.

SISTER SERENADE

Heartbreak defines and consumes Sister Serenade, the consummate tortured musician of the Coven of the Midnight Moon. Although she always possessed a complete disregard for mortal life, when she lost the love of her life many years ago, she was forever changed into a brooding, hateful witch who loathes joy in others. Donning a dramatic white mask and black cape, she weaves witchcraft through her bombastic music and magically manipulates the emotions of her victims toward malign ends.

As if riding the sound waves of her songs, Serenade teleports herself and her massive, enchanted pipe organ across Edwardia and throughout its capital. She gives heart-rending performances that rip out people's passion, joy, and free will, turning them into heartless, living automatons as gray as the fog of the province. She seeks to rob every last inhabitant of Edwardia of their color and vivacity to amass an army of emotionless, gray drones that follow her song and spread her suffering to all of Druskenvald.

STORIED LOCALES

BASKERTON

The fogbound, electric metropolis of Baskerton *(BASK-urr-tin)* is the largest city in Druskenvald, with numerous high-rise buildings that pierce the gloom with bright lights and crackling tendrils of harnessed lightning. A huge, diverse population of industrious folk live here across all social classes, always seeking to improve their lives with hard work. Its cobbled streets are filled with wondrous Sparktech vehicles that zoom past all manner of shops, factories, and other businesses.

Statues, murals, and other imagery of the two-headed Grey are displayed prominently throughout the city, lest its people forget their unbreakable curse. Visitors to this capital can find myriad points of interest and intrigue.

Rex and Romula. The great twin clocktowers that stand at either end of Baskerton set the city's rhythm, with every inhabitant waking, sleeping, and going about their night timed by the booming chimes that echo like howling in the night. They also serve as the primary docking stations for the airships that the wealthy use to travel to other provinces.

Progress Quarter. This district of workshops, laboratories, and universities draws inventors from across Druskenvald and beyond to perfect their inventions, showcase them to the public, and receive critiques from the most brilliant minds in the city.

Sumptown. Underneath the city are near-endless stretches of brick-lined sewers, slums, and service tunnels that have come under the control of rival gangs, forming a sinister haven for serial killers that pick off people who won't be missed.

The Cogs. The industrial heart of the city is polluted by miles of tightly packed factories, warehouses, and energy plants that operate through all hours of the night via revolving shifts that employ a huge portion of the city's population.

The Iron Opera House. This renowned theater, adorned with metal spikes, is owned by Charlotte Heady, providing a venue for avant-garde dramatic and musical performances featuring elaborate set design and experimental stage effects created by Sparktech machinery.

ADVENTURES IN EDWARDIA

In Edwardia, adventures span the sprawling urban surface and below, often involving solving macabre murders, unraveling conspiracies, or delving into the complex criminal underground.

Edwardia Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Sister Serenade plans on crashing one of the Iron Maiden's performances by singing a duet that would cause the curseborn to lose their power over their curse and go feral. Protect the performance and thwart her plans.	7	A renowned scientist loses control of his curse every night and turns into a vicious beast, forgetting everything that occurs during his transformation. His assistant begs for help to find a cure and stop his rampages.
2	On the lonely moors, a wealthy family is terrorized by an enormous black hound that spells doom for those who hear its bays. The family offers a handsome reward to anyone who can rid them of this terrifying beast.	8	A mysterious visitor from Syndramas arrives to purchase a suspicious amount of land in Edwardia with the intention of conquest from the north. Local authorities suspect foul play and seek to expose and stop him.
3	The sewers in Sumptown are taken over by a plagueborn criminal mastermind. The city council hires you to infiltrate their ranks and dismantle the operation from within.	9	The chimes of Rex and Romula are causing townsfolk to go catatonic. A technician needs help to uncover the source of the problem.
4	A serial killer is butchering bodies and arranging their mutilated parts into strange symbols. A desperate detective enlists help to decipher what this means and stop the killings.	10	Sumptown is seeing warfare amongst the most brutal gangs of Baskerton. A merchant guild seeks aid to broker peace.
5	A remote and desolate asylum that seemingly cures its patients is in fact controlling their minds for assassinations. A local magistrate hires investigators to put a stop to the nefarious practice.	11	A new steam ship is christened to cruise down the river Bask into the sea, but there are rumors of a fatal flaw that could kill all aboard. The shipwright is hiring investigators to ensure the safety of the vessel.
6	A top security prison with the wickedest criminals in Edwardia has a breakout, and Baskerton is overrun by villains. The warden pleads for assistance in restoring order and capturing the escapees.	12	An old miser is haunted by the ghost of a former business partner. He wants help discovering why he is being haunted in order to end the nightmare once and for all.



ENOCH

"The song of the harvest is the same as the song of the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. We all were born knowing how it goes, each one of us has a part in the harmony, and everyone will be singing it 'til the very end. Lend me your voice, little one, and we'll help this seed grow."

- Methuselah -

The harvest is a way of life in Enoch *(EE-nock)*, a rustic countryside province that sprawls across miles of rolling farmland, its fields of plenty forming a patchwork pattern across the landscape. Serving as the primary breadbasket for all of Druskenvald, it is known to produce crops of every variety that are tended to by the hardworking people of the province and sold to one and all at vibrant, bustling markets and even shipped to other provinces.

Crystal clear rivers weave through the fertile hills and humble woodlands that comprise most of the region, delivering enchanted water to crops that allow them to grow unnaturally large. The harvestborn (see page 60), crafted with care by the lord of Enoch, join in celebration with the other folk of the province to show thanks for the bountiful and relatively peaceful life afforded to them. However, nowhere in Druskenvald is free from the dangers that lurk on the fringes of society.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

THE MOONLIT HARVEST

Despite having been driven from most of Druskenvald, primeval "Green Magic" hums throughout Enoch like a familiar tune and infuses the soil, water, and air of the province with unbound growth and fertility. The knowledge of how to harness this vital power has been passed from generation to generation through story and song, providing farmers the ability to complete a full agricultural cycle every month. This is a true miracle of nature, especially in a land of eternal night.

After the seeds are sown and planted at the beginning of the month, the verdant magic surges within them, and vibrant stalks, vines, and stems burst to life at an immeasurable pace. If patient, one can actually watch the plants of Enoch grow to enormous size. By the end of the month, the fruits are sweet, the vegetables are

succulent, and the grains are hearty. Then, the Moonlit Harvest is held, and all the folk of the province, young and old, head into the fields and orchards to reap the month's bounty under a brilliant moon before ending the night with a celebratory festival.

CROP TROTTERS

Crop trotters are giant turkeys with substantial speed, strength, and endurance that serve as the primary beasts of burden in Enoch. The province's people have a great respect and appreciation for these birds, which are critical in pulling wagons, plowing fields, serving as mounts, and even guarding farms from predators and bandits. For many families, they are cherished as precious pets that sleep inside the home when the work is done.

The breeding and rearing of crop trotters is an esteemed and invaluable profession, and many farmers donate a portion of their heartiest harvest to newly hatched poults to ensure the next generation is healthier than the last. Each year, a great race across Enoch called the Turkey Trot is held, and folk from across the province compete to win the title of Top Trotter with their trusted, feathered steed.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

METHUSELAH

The oldest living being in Enoch is also its leader—a black-furred cat-man with eyes as gold as the province's grain fields at harvest time. No one knows where Methuselah *(muh-THOO-suh-luh)* came from, how old he is, or how he began crafting and giving life to newly rebirthed harvestborn, but what folks do know is that if there's something to learn about Enoch, the lord of the province can teach it. He bears the immense wisdom befitting his many years but has a sprightly energy that betrays a youthful soul.

When he is not presiding over his lordly duties, he works the fields alongside his people, shares his knowledge of the agricultural cycle with aspiring farmers, tells tall tales with just a hint of truth, and warbles songs of the harvest to all who will listen—it's said that even the crops sway to his tune. Favoring the rustic clothing of a farmer, he prefers a simple and peaceful life but occasionally hosts a lively gathering of Enoch's musicians called the Cornhusk Jamboree and even leads the band while strumming his favorite guitar.

SISTER NIGHTMARE

Not even the seemingly idyllic Enoch is spared from its fair share of terror. The name "Sister Nightmare" is whispered behind closed doors and used as a threat and warning to children who disobey their parents, but the headless witch is very real. Galloping madly through the fields atop her coal-black steed with eyes, hooves, and mane of fire, this pyromaniac sets all ablaze with her flaming whip and pumpkin head that serves as a mockery of the harvestborn she terrorizes.

With every ritualistic burning, the great plumes of smoke and ash surge with magical energy that induces supernaturally intense fear through waking nightmares. As the smoke spreads, so do the shrieks of horror, with many victims even dying from fright on the spot. Sadistically relishing the dread she inspires, Sister Nightmare will not stop until the skies of Enoch are filled with ash and screams.



STORIED LOCALES

PUMPKIN HILL

Atop the highest hillock in Enoch is the capital city of Pumpkin Hill, which overlooks miles of patchworked fields below. Packed dirt streets snake through homes, gardens, shops, gathering halls, and other rustic wooden structures before converging in a lively town square. Here, weekly markets and monthly festivals draw people from across the province to trade and celebrate the harvest. Corn husking and pumpkin throwing contests are common sights, and folk dances are stepped through with joyful abandon.

Standing at the center of the city and rising from the highest point on the hill is Harvesthome Hall, where representatives from every community in Enoch gather to discuss and decide provincial matters, always advised by Methuselah. Just down the road is the famous Candlewick Tavern, which serves pumpkin ale renowned across Druskenvald. One of the yearly events that draws numerous visitors from other provinces is the Emerald Hunt, in which participants seek powerful gemstones said to contain fragments of the powerful green magic of Enoch.

BRAMBLETHORN BROTHERS' BARNSTEAD

The Bramblethorn Brothers—Barnaby, Bertram, and Bartholomew—run the largest and most advanced farm in Enoch, an operation that threatens to take over its smaller neighbors' steads. Favoring technological advancement over tradition, the brothers split up in their youth and studied in Edwardia, Bubonia, and



Astramar, respectively, returning home with knowledge of strange science, engineering, and alchemy to turn the Barnstead into a "modern marvel of agriculture."

Their achievements included altering seeds to complete a full cycle in a single week, constructing tireless harvest constructs to endlessly work the fields, and modifying crop trotters to be even larger, more powerful, and vicious. Their headquarters now also serves as a laboratory, factory, and fortress, with bizarre new "improvements" made monthly. Although they produce extraordinary yields, side effects and mishaps are constant, and if unchecked, the Bramblethorn Brothers' Barnstead could overtake the whole province.

ADVENTURES IN ENOCH

In Enoch, adventurers often find themselves protecting the abundant fields from strange forces, unraveling eerie folklore that has come to life, and uncovering long-buried mysteries hidden in the heart of the province.

Enoch Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Sister Nightmare is burning crops for a baneful ritual. A local farmer is compelled to stop her before the entire harvest is destroyed.	7	Children kidnapped by a hag are turned into servants. Distraught parents ask for help with their rescue, as well as help to break the spell.
2	Giant toads block a riverboat's path, disrupting trade. The captain needs help clearing the obstruction and investigating the cause.	8	A woman's niece is slowly becoming a phantom. She asks for help in reversing the curse before it's too late.
3	A wild gorilla terrorizes a schoolhouse. It must be captured safely, and its origin must be uncovered.	9	Spirits of a family, manifesting as bluebirds, cannot rest. A historian wants to help them find peace.
4	An old grist mill leaks strange ichor that mutates wildlife. The mill owner seeks help to find and seal the source.	10	Ancestors' ghosts return to a harvest festival, and the organizer needs help to ensure the event runs smoothly.
5	Poisoned orchards turn villagers into thralls. The orchard keeper is enlisting help to find an antidote.	11	Bandits, thwarted by farmers, become aggressive, and the town council is in search of a resolution.
6	An unknown blight kills crops. A local herbalist believes it is magical and needs assistance finding a cure.	12	A harvest construct rampages through farm towns, and its creator needs to subdue it and find the cause.



KALERO

"Moments are fleeting, just like life and love. It's the memories that remain at the end of it all. This night, too, is fleeting. So let us live it fully and love it deeply, my sweet, so that we make memories worthy of you and I that endure until the last star takes its final breath. Will you join me for this dance?"

- Catrina the Sweet -

In Kalero *(kuh-LAIR-oh)*, life and death are celebrated with equal exuberance. This province is dominated by deep canyons formed by roaring rivers that snake through the land, their tall earthen walls carved out to construct settlements, roads, and innumerable individual tombs from which newly rebirthed relicborn (see page 62) emerge. These skeletal folk and the other people of the province adorn themselves in vibrant colors and marigold garlands as they paint beautifully intricate murals honoring those who came before.

The dry wind here carries golden sand and the scent of burning incense as it whips through the bustling markets and colorful remembrance celebrations that take place at all hours of the night. But the gold of Kalero is not just from the desert sands, and swashbuckling adventurers are called from far and wide to seek vast treasure troves hidden throughout the province, whether within the ruins of a mesa-top city or lost in a shipwreck in a forgotten cove. In this place where history and legend are honored with great esteem, excitement and adventure await for all daring enough to seek it.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

RIVER OF REMEMBRANCE

The River of Remembrance winds through the deep canyons that comprise most of the province, as wide and turbulent as a nautical strait. This prominent waterway forged Kalero, not just by shaping the landscape to its running course, but also by intertwining the region with the essence of memory. The great river's waters contain the lingering memories of souls lost to the Shroud and are all that remain of who they once were. Those who peer into the rushing waters can see full spectral scenes playing beneath the surface in the fragmented moments of extinguished lives.

This river is also the primary method of travel through Kalero and to the provinces beyond. Numerous ships of all shape, size, and construction navigate the waterways on all manner of voyages from trading to treasure hunting. However, the waters are often treacherous with sudden rapids and whirlpools, hungry river beasts, and the vicious pirates that lurk in the hidden coves throughout the bottom of the canyons.

THE THOUSAND BONES

Rising up from the rocks, rivers, and sands of Kalero are the Thousand Bones—countless towering pillar-like rock formations that reach high into the sky above. Finding the footholds to scale the bones is a near-impossible task, made far more deadly by the violent gales that batter each zenith and the viciously ravenous vultures of colossal size that nest among the jutting spires.

However, an endless number of explorers, fortune hunters, and thrill seekers make the attempt, for legend states that atop the Thousand Bones are the glittering ruins of cities made of gold, rubies, and long-lost magical technology. Adventurers believe that the secret to successfully reaching the top of the bones lies in the lost memories of the first inhabitants of Kalero, waiting in a forgotten tomb built into a remote canyon wall.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

CATRINA THE SWEET

Catrina the Sweet *(kuh-TREE-nuh)* leads the province like she leads the dance during Kalero's unending celebrations—with unbound vivaciousness and a lust for life that can only be truly appreciated by the dead. As a relicborn, her skeletal features are adorned with a rainbow of intricate patterns and draped in swirling silks, jangling jewelry, sweet perfumes, and a veritable mane of curly locks that seem to have a mind of their own.

While her unbound enthusiasm, joy, and passion for dancing and pageantry lead some adversaries to dismiss her as a legitimate threat, such folly always leads to defeat or death. Hand-in-hand with Catrina's gregarious delight is a playful cunning and measured ferocity that she leverages to fiercely protect the past, present, and future of her province. Embracing the beauty of death has made Catrina one of the most respected and even feared leaders among the nobility of the Crescent Court.

SISTER PLAYTIME

As the youngest, smallest, and most frail of Mother Midnight's daughters, Sister Playtime is consumed by envy—of her sisters' power and station, of the joyous community shared among Kalero's people, and of the toys, friends, and parties she never had. Appearing like an uncanny doll with a porcelain face, Playtime has mastered the magic of memory and has the mind to turn her victims into her own living playthings.

Not caring to earn true companions, she wipes and manipulates the minds and memories of the province's people so they will offer her the adoration she desperately craves. She makes them play games with her that often end in disaster and death. Every night, her jealousy builds, and she will not be satisfied until all of Kalero is her personal playground.

STORIED LOCALES

MEMENTO

Built into the sheer stone walls of Kalero's canyons and overlooking the winding River of Remembrance is Memento *(muh-MEN-toh)*. Every corner of this many-tiered capital city is etched with personal memories, and the streets are lined with altars of remembrance and reverence for the dead. Public art, decoration, and monuments of every imaginable hue make Memento a prism of a city that casts its colorful vivaciousness across the great walkways, staircases, and tunnels that connect the hive-like network of districts.

Memento never sleeps, and at all hours of the night, there are lively bands playing, celebratory dances, and bustling shops offering flowers, sweets, and other goods. Visitors come from far and wide to experience the city's famous Screaming Skulls—magical fireworks that scream through the sky in brilliant colors before exploding into complex patterns and images to the delight of all below.



PORT MELEE

Nestled within a protected cove along the River of Remembrance is Port Melee *(MAY-lay)*, the largest port in southern Druskenvald and the center of commerce in Kalero. Goods from every province are bought and sold in the crowded public markets of this flourishing town, and even rare items from beyond the Shroud can be procured in private negotiations. And for those who know where to find it, the infamous Dorado Auction House offers strange artifacts, exotic creatures, dangerous weaponry, and other curiosities found only on the black market.

With so many riches concentrated in one location, Port Melee earns its name from the constant conflict with pirates, bandit gangs, and other cutthroats that conduct raids on the town in hopes of pilfering even a fraction of its wealth. However, the town is heavily defended with magical cannons that turn Screaming Skulls into projectile weapons, and a culture of martial prowess is fostered among the locals so they can sufficiently defend their homes. In fact, Druskenvald's premier school of swordsmanship, the Mastered Hand, is one of the port's oldest institutions, turning young aspirants into agile and deadly Wave Dashers, an elite league of duelists.

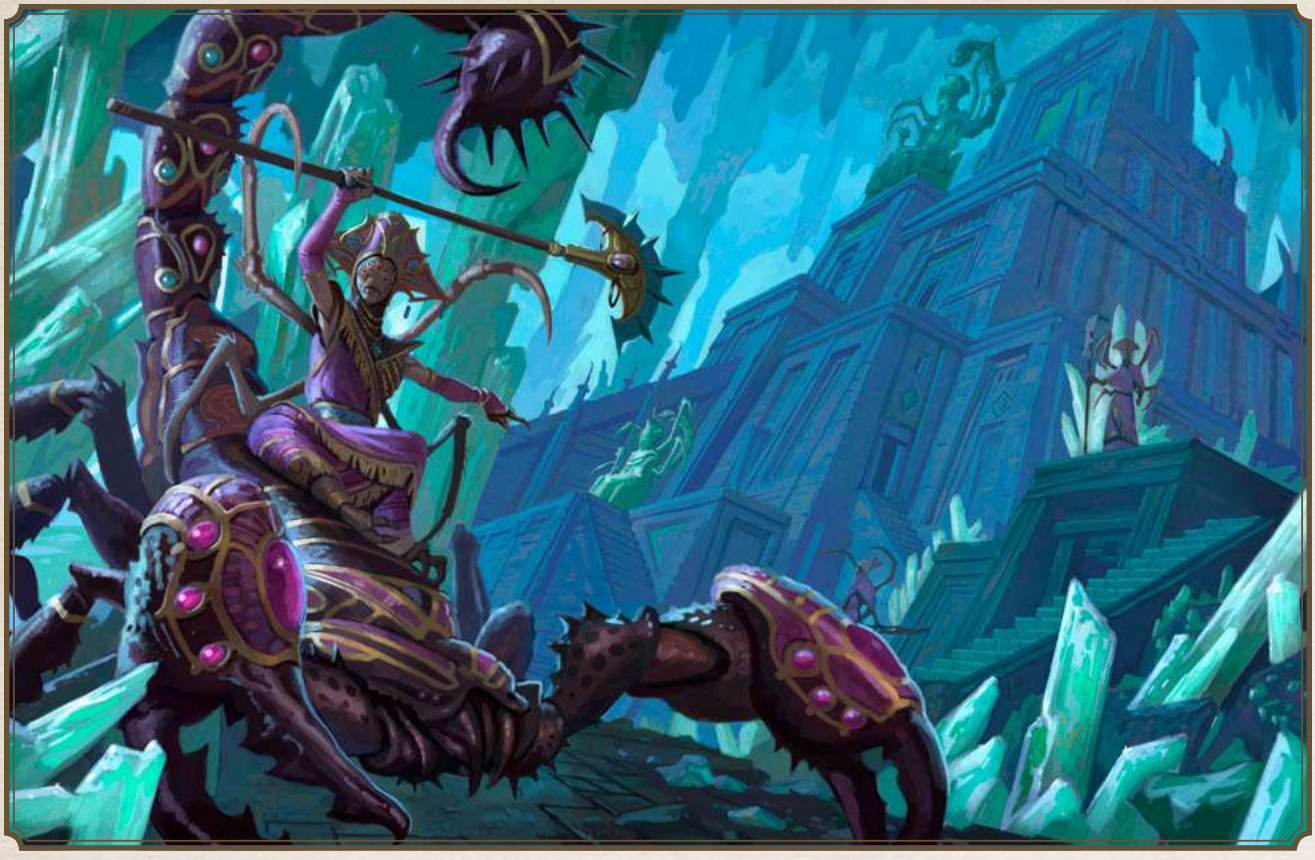


ADVENTURES IN KALERO

Amid Kalero's vibrant celebrations and remembrance ceremonies, swashbuckling excitement and exploration await.

Kalero Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Sister Playtime uses her strings to puppeteer innocent villagers in a never-ending play. A distressed family seeks help to free their loved ones from her magical grasp.	7	Sacred altars across Kalero have been desecrated. Under the guidance of a priest, restore the altars to preserve the cities' spiritual power.
2	Tears from a mysterious woman in white cause the River of Remembrance to overflow, erasing memories. A sage asks for help in halting her sorrowful weeping.	8	Port Melee's richest inhabitant is holding a great sword-fighting contest that rewards bravado and witty wordplay. Join the fray and out-insult the competition.
3	Legends of golden cities atop the mesas beckon treasure hunters, but those who find gold are turned into gold themselves. A daring explorer is recruiting for this perilous journey.	9	Pyromaniacs have sabotaged a fireworks depot ahead of a large festival. The owner seeks help in preventing an explosive disaster.
4	A curator from Memento's museum enlists help to recover sacred relics stolen by river pirates. The curator promises a share of recovered treasures.	10	A grand battle of the bands is disrupted by magical mischief. The musicians ask for help to set the stage right and share in the spotlight.
5	Relicborn are being found drained of their essence by some monstrous creature. A concerned community leader offers a reward for resolving these incidents.	11	Follow the enigmatic march of the cacti to converse with the spirit of the desert.
6	In exchange for glory and gold, a seasoned racer offers to guide newcomers in a race against great winged cats.	12	A masked swordsman who claims to be fighting for justice terrorizes the province claiming lives. A bounty hunter offers a reward for his capture. Claim the reward or aid the vigilante.



NERUKHET

"When doom came to the First Kingdom, we survived. When the gods themselves wept tears of stone, we recovered. When the spiders and scorpions crawled to our call, we prospered. In the forgotten and abandoned places of the world, we did not find this paradise waiting for us. We built it."

- God King Xanatep -

The far southeastern reaches of Druskenvald are covered in desolate, jagged mountain ranges and crumbled ruins devoid of life. However, deep beneath the earth in massive, sprawling caverns is Nerukhet *(NAIR-oo-KET)*, a grand province lit by glittering gemstone geodes that shine kaleidoscopic light across monumental cities and webbed tunnels from which the spider-like silkborn (see page 63) emerge. These people and the other species of the province strive for greatness in all aspects of life, with many hoping to establish their place in history as the chosen of their gods.

However, the threads holding Nerukhet together are thin, with conflict and unrest always lurking beneath the surface of society—and far worse things squirming in the darkest depths.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

TEARS OF THE GODS

The massive, sparkling gemstones found throughout Nerukhet are known as Tears of the Gods, which feature prominently in the long and storied history of the province. Legend says they were gifted by the gods of the land, who wept when the province's First Kingdom upon the surface fell to a great cataclysm, calling the survivors to a new promised land to rebuild their civilization with these magical gems that hum with divine vitality.

Granting long life, sharp mind, strong body, and sturdy constitution, the tears are greatly coveted, but they are collected en masse by the wealthiest and most noble families of the province, passed on from generation to generation through great inheritances. Varying greatly in size, color, and power, they are used as currency and worn as signs of status and influence.

THE BEJEWELED

The people of Nerukhet live in harmony with enormous, divine insects and arachnids known as the Bejeweled, whose carapaces are encrusted with jewels. Believed to be the heralds of the gods, these creatures share a special psychic bond with the province's inhabitants, with the long-lived creatures often loyally serving the same family for generations. Their hides, eyes, and mandibles glow with the same glimmering light that illuminates the province, and they assist with all manner of tasks required by their masters, from boring new tunnels to joining armies in war.

The most numerous of the Bejeweled are spiders the size of large hounds, which can be found in every household, no matter their wealth and station. These spiders assist with everyday tasks and spin the silk that clothes and adorns the province. Huge locusts provide air travel across the vast subterranean province, and enormous scarabs are monumental in the construction of the homes, temples, and palaces of its cities. The rarest, most powerful, and most highly sought-after Bejeweled are dragon-sized scorpions that are used as symbols of divinity by the prominent houses that command them.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

GOD KING XANATEP

Said to be the only silkborn that has ascended to divinity and achieved immortality, God King Xanatep *(ZAN-uh-tep)* is the supreme ruler of Nerukhet. He begrudgingly pledges fealty to Phillip Druskenvald under the condition that he can rule his people as he sees fit. As the master of Vekloriash the Amethyst Dread—the largest and deadliest bejeweled scorpion to ever exist and the only to possess great dragonfly wings—he has remained unopposed since before the doom of the First Kingdom. While his pride is unmatched, his true aim is to increase the greatness of Nerukhet above all else.

Ruling from the top of the colossal monument-flanked ziggurat in Arakir, the Skittering City, Xanatep allows the various factions, houses, and families to squabble and settle disputes on their own, even as it comes to war. However, if such a conflict ever threatens the security or prosperity of the province, he descends upon the battle atop Vekloriash and brings an end to the fighting, often resulting in the total annihilation of both sides. Through the Tears of the Gods, he can see across all of Nerukhet, so few escape his watchful and merciless gaze.



SISTER HOURGLASS

While personal achievement and measured mastery of oneself are paramount in Nerukhet, extreme opulence and over-indulgence are a constant concern, especially among the wealthy and the noble. It is through parties and politicking that Sister Hourglass thrives and weaves an ever-growing web of deceit and treachery that threatens to topple the civilization of the province. While she is tall, curvaceous, and hypnotically beautiful with sleek arachnid features, the danger of her oft-leveraged seduction pales in comparison to her deadly cunning.

Spinning spells that manipulate the mind of her victims, she pulls the strings of the ruling classes and guides Nerukhet to its eventual self-destruction. Aiding her are swarms of spiders that feed her whispers and secrets she uses to tighten her grip around the province. On the rare occasion that her numerous disguises are uncovered, her eldritch webs and venomous fangs leave no witnesses.

STORIED LOCALES

ARAKIR, THE SKITTERING CITY

The massive, many-tiered capital of Nerukhet is perhaps the premier wonder of Druskenvald, and those who have not seen it cannot imagine its sheer size and grandeur. Filled with glittering temples to the many gods of the province, imposing tombs of the most legendary historical figures, and magnificent palaces of the most prosperous houses, Arakir *(AHR-uh-KEER)*, the Skittering City stands as a monument to its people, who have achieved so much in the unlikeliest of places.

Illuminated by radiant geodes, the capital buzzes with countless bejeweled alongside the bustling lives of the silkborn and other people who live there. Beautiful gardens flourish with colorful vegetation that should not be able to thrive underground. The immense Lapis Library contains numerous ancient texts, both historical and poetic, that stretch back millennia. And the most infamous location in the city is the Tunnel of Claws, where wild and vicious bejeweled scorpions unclaimed by masters lurk and hunt.

THE CRAWLING DOOM

In the deepest and darkest pit of Nerukhet lies a ruined place of death and horror. In eons past, the people of the First Kingdom, who once thrived upon the surface, grew hedonistic, envious, and overzealous for grandeur. The province rotted from within, along with the hearts and souls of its people. They began worshiping a strange and terrible entity that promised wealth, greatness, and immortality in exchange for offerings of depravity. The people abided, society degraded, and the thing fed and grew until one awful night when the nameless horror brought doom to the kingdom.

While the surface was left a wasteland, the remnants of the First Kingdom collapsed into a pit, where a fleshy, squirming aberration resides within the cursed depths of the province. This unthinkable horror shatters the minds of all who see it, and the mightiest priests and magicians of Nerukhet have sealed it away with intricate spells and blessings. However, every year that goes by, this protective barrier cracks, and the thing in the darkness waits.



ADVENTURES IN NERUKHET

In the gleaming depths of Nerukhet's gem-lit caverns, peril and intrigue await. Ancient secrets stir, and shifting loyalties demand cunning and courage alike.

Nerukhet Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Suspicions arise that a noble is Sister Hourglass in disguise, using her powers to manipulate dangerous creatures for her own ends. A covert agent seeks help to expose her deception and thwart her plot.	7	Outsiders have come to Nerukhet to hunt the scorpions for their precious jewels, and local wranglers are offering a reward to stop them.
2	Miners have awakened a dormant terror in the depths. The overseer urgently needs help to subdue the creature before it destroys their city.	8	Due to a series of mysterious disappearances, it is vital to infiltrate a secretive society of blood mages believed to be turning victims into vampires.
3	Ritualistic symbols have begun appearing in the tunnels. A worried scholar strives to stop a cult from resurrecting their lich founder.	9	A merchant offers a map to a rare fungal grove, but it requires navigating the dangers of mind-altering spores to harvest it.
4	Navigate the treacherous waters of silkborn politics and secure valuable alliances at a grand banquet.	10	Decide whether to join or stop tomb raiders planning to plunder ancient crypts.
5	A revered artisan, chosen as a scorpion's sacrifice, secretly asks for aid to escape his fate without offending local customs.	11	The high priest requests help to recover stolen canopic jars to prevent a mummified oracle from rising as a vengeful spirit.
6	A general fuels war fervor among the people. Anxious residents ask for expertise to unmask his true intentions and avert a potentially devastating war.	12	After Arakir's domesticated spiders suddenly revolt, the right hand of God King Xanatep is bound to find the cause and restore order.



OLMARSH

"Hark, Leviathan! Hark, Albatross! Betwixt black sea and red sky, we chase the compass to the Fiddler's Green, always a league ahead of the Ferryman! Bellow! Bid the Dread Siren, bulging and bursting, to damnation eternal! May salt foam and bilgewater forget the name of the Drowned!"

- Captain Ephraim Wake -

The roiling black ocean of Druskenvald is unnatural, mysterious, and treacherous. This is also how outsiders perceive the province that is so connected to and supported by the sea and the things that lurk within it. Olmarsh *(OAL-marsh)* stretches along miles of rocky shoreline and flooded salt marshes, and it encompasses numerous islands that dot the waters off the coast. A shadow hangs over the province and slithers up from below, gripping its people in a paranoia of the unknown.

Life here is simple and buoyed by the bounty of fish that the sea provides, allowing the people of the province to live beyond a meager existence limited by the scarce resources of the land. But there is a constant threat from the watery depths. Even the semi-aquatic deepborn (see page 57) fled to the surface in fear of the abyss from which they emerged. Worse still is the ever-present feeling of being watched by something from the night sky overhead. Above the waves, the cold, salty air is thick, almost viscous, and a strange fishy stink lingers in every corner of the province.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

LIGHT OF THE DROWNED

Pervading the dark waters of Olmarsh is an unceasing threat of eldritch, gibbering storms that whip up out of nowhere, swallow ships whole, and turn any survivors to incoherent babbling. The only defense against these storms and other cosmic intrusions are the numerous lighthouses that dot the coastline and isles of the province, each shining with an eerie, ghostly light. Crews that have the skill to navigate between these beacons and stay in the radius of their enchanted light are shielded from such strange phenomena.

However, such a protective boon comes at great cost, for the lamps are fueled by the souls of those lost at sea.

Each lonely lighthouse is manned and operated by a single keeper who also serves as a warden of the souls, keeping the flame lit while being battered by the incessant wails of the drowned. Such a position is considered a great honor and noble sacrifice, for every tender of the light is doomed to have their own mind shattered whilst providing safe passage for the minds of others.

THE HUNGERING ONES

The most calamitous threat to ships and coastal settlements are the various colossal sea monsters that dwell in the abyssal depths of Druskenvald's black ocean. They take myriad forms, including great shelled krakens, ghostly white megalodons, fiendish whale-like leviathans, and titanic adversarial crabs. Feared, yet also worshiped as deities, these Hungering Ones are offered food, treasure, and sacrifice to sate their appetite in the faint hope that a vessel or town is spared from their legendary wrath.

However, for those daring, or perhaps foolish enough, a fortune can be made by slaying one of these behemoths and harvesting its corpse for a valuable psychedelic substance called Tide Ash, which can be found within the heart of each beast no matter its form. Even more desirable is a mythical shell that, when blown like a horn, binds the will of a Hungering One.



NOTEWORTHY FOLK

CAPTAIN EPHRAIM WAKE

Captain Ephraim Wake *(EFF-rum WAIK)* was a renowned deepborn sailor and one of the first lighthouse keepers to ever man the light of the drowned. He lasted longer than any keeper has before or since, but he eventually succumbed to the delusions of the enchantment in the lamp. Hearing a siren's call out on the sea, he swam to meet it and was devoured by a Hungering One. None know what brought him back, but the next night, he returned to shore as a spirit who bore the secrets of the deep and the sight beyond the stars.

As the lord of Olmarsh, Captain Wake appears as a burly green ghost with a great beard of tentacles and seaweed. He is typically clad in his eternally weathered captain's outfit and is mostly lucid, though he is occasionally overcome with ravings of superstitions, curses, and dangers on the horizon—all of which are filled with truth and heeded by his people. This eldritch, perhaps cosmic, knowledge has allowed the people of the province to weather the numerous dangers both natural and supernatural, and his leadership continues to be invaluable in their survival.

SISTER FATHOM

Sister Fathom's sorrow mirrors the sadness of Druskenvald's people. When they cry, she sheds briny, inky tears that spill into the sea. With slimy skin, kelp-like hair, and scaled fins, she is a creature of the ocean and is bound to it as a prisoner of her own misery. When she surfaces and yearns for land, her tears spill forth in a great surge that crushes her back to the deep.

Her eerie witchcraft conjures impossibly acidic ooze that can eat away a galleon in mere moments. A fleshy bulb that hangs from her forehead casts an enchanting light that can hypnotize and draw unwary sailors into her clutches. She seeks to steal the Light of the Drowned into her lure so that she may command all the sea monsters of Olmarsh to flood the land in a tidal wave of her tears, making the land-dwellers suffer as she does. Her misery forever craves company.

STORIED LOCALES

IBBSMOUTH

Ibbsmouth *(IBZ-mith)* is the fog-bound coastal capital of Olmarsh and the biggest port city in Druskenvald. Crooked, drab streets wind their way through gray, weather-worn buildings that are populated with folk who seem just a little off. Despite the gloomy appearance, sailors, traders, fishermen, and hunters come from all other provinces to make port before seeking the supernatural bounty of the strange tides off the coast.

Amidst the salty markets and docks covered in the blood of lesser sea monsters, eldritch and occult relics, often collected from the countless sunken ruins found in the marshes of the province, are traded behind closed doors and away from prying eyes. Unsettling, rundown chapels can be found honoring the various Hungering Ones that are often surprisingly full of worshipers, driven by equal parts adoration and dread. The most infamous location in the city is the Seven Sisters tavern, known for its seafood stew and the raucous clientele of salty dogs, cutthroats, and bad eggs.

DARKTIDE MANOR

Far south of Ibbsmouth, along a stretch of particularly treacherous, windswept cliffs, is a cursed site known as Seabird's Fall, where a legendary mariner once brought down an albatross—a foolish act that invited doom upon himself, his crew, and his entire family line. Here stands Darktide Manor, a towering, gloomy mansion that defies architectural logic. A combination of protective spells, lingering curses, marsh dangers, and sudden gales makes it perilous to reach, but those who knock on its heavy oaken door have found the headquarters of the Nautilus Order.

Bearing the symbol of the spiral shell, this secret society fosters the study of the strange, occult, and forbidden, seeking both magical and scientific pursuits. It also serves as a museum filled with curiosities from across Druskenvald and beyond, as well as a small university where only the most committed can succeed and survive. Initiation into the Nautilus Order involves venturing to a nearby black reef on a night that it rises above the surface of the sea and sacrificing something or someone precious to prove that your old life is over.

ADVENTURES IN OLMARSH

Amid Olmarsh's fog-drenched shores and haunting waters, hidden terrors and twisted mysteries await.



Olmarsh Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook
1	Sister Fathom seeks to harness the Light of the Drowned. Captain Ephraim Wake aims to prevent her from seizing control of a world-ending threat of which he cannot speak.
2	On clear nights, a black reef surfaces with strange lights and eerie sounds. A natural philosopher aspires to uncover what lies beneath.
3	The dean of Darktide University seeks assistance to manage the otherworldly knowledge within the library, which has been driving students to madness.
4	Flying, gaunt creatures have been terrorizing a borough of Ibbsmouth on foggy nights. The local guard is driven to hunt these beings and discover their origin.
5	A local historian seeks brave souls to explore and excavate the ruins of a sunken city—not in the ocean, but found inland amongst the marshes.
6	The recent crash of a comet has warped a nearby town with bizarre and shifting colors. Local authorities need assistance delving into its strange effect on the residents.
7	Mysterious entities are abducting locals, leaving empty husks behind. A desperate town leader asks for help to track these creatures and put a stop to them.
8	A curious scholar calls for a negotiator to journey to the watery court of a mutated giant who thinks himself "king of the sea."
9	An occultist has predicted the awakening of an evil deep within a sunken city and asks for help in preventing it from escaping to the surface world.
10	The shipmasters' guild offers a great bounty for anyone who can confront and vanquish a monstrous kraken that has been terrorizing shipping lanes.
11	Reports of a spectral shark bring omens of doom and misfortune. A seasoned fisherman seeks companions to capture the shark, believing it holds the key to his cursed luck.
12	The ghostship of an ancient mariner haunts the coast. His descendent needs help to uncover the truth and set the restless spirits free.



PHOLSENSE

"The Silver Path of the righteous is beset on all sides by the wickedness of the sinner and the heresy of the witch. Blessed is the one, who in the name of piousness, temperance, diligence, and unity, sacrifices all they have and all they are to follow in the footsteps of the divine. This is the only path to the silver heavens and the blinding light of its joyous rapture!"

- Archbishop Danton Alexandre Renault -

In Pholsense *(FOAL-senss)*, every life is measured, above all else, by its adherence to divine law. In the quiet provincial towns that dot the rolling hills, fertile farmland, and humble woodlands, life is quite peaceful, but there is always a lurking fear of making a wrong move and straying from the Silver Path. For within the province's great cities, built from the same stone that the gargoyle-like stoneborn (see page 64) are carved out of, the zealous militants of this faith seek wayward and wicked souls to judge and purge swiftly and without mercy.

Whether the people of the province walk through crowded streets or sprawling fields, they strive to keep their footfalls along the path of righteousness so they might be rewarded ascension to the blinding light of the one true god. In Pholsense society, it is paramount to put the Silver Path above neighbor, family, and self, vigilantly watching for and reporting any transgression or heresy to the inquisitors responsible for dispensing the silver justice. Magic achieved through any means other than faith is deeply distrusted, and casting the wrong spell at the wrong time can ensure a fiery fate.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

THE SILVER PATH

The Silver Path is not merely a religion or divine philosophy; it is the god itself. Lacking the typical trappings of personification that mortals often attribute to their gods, this deity exists as an imperceivable divine will that upholds the five holy tenets: piousness, temperance, diligence, unity, and sacrifice. There is zero tolerance for sin or apathy that affronts these virtues. Pholsense has suffered far worse from the witchcraft of the Coven of the Midnight Moon than any other province, which has only emboldened their righteous fury.

Most of Pholsense, including many of the stoneborn and other species of the province, serve as devout members of the faith, celebrating with regular ceremonies in a variety of houses of worship, from small chapels to grand cathedrals. All throughout the region, the near-constant ringing of great bells can be heard; the faithful claim this is the voice of the Silver Path and attempt to discern meaning from it. However, members of the hierarchical clergy insist only they can truly decipher the voice of their god, so they act as intermediaries with increasing authority all the way to the head of the church, Archbishop Renault.

THE SILVER HAMMER

The Silver Hammer is a knightly order of inquisitors and crusaders dedicated to purity above all else, traveling across the province and unfalteringly seeking out evil as the Silver Path defines it. While many chapters of the knights genuinely want to protect the innocent of Pholsense from the machinations of Mother Midnight, the methods of some chapters are extreme and often cruel, justified as a necessity to rid the province of witchcraft and wickedness. Fair trials are rare when a suspicion takes root, especially when the malignant effects of curses are discovered.

Practitioners of arcane and primal magic are deeply distrusted by the Silver Hammer and are sometimes dealt with indiscriminately, alongside actual servants of the mother of witches. However, magic-users who report and register their powers with the order and take a vow to use them in the service of good are generally tolerated or even tasked to fight alongside the knights to unleash their spells upon the wicked, fighting fire with fire.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

ARCHBISHOP DANTON ALEXANDRE RENAULT

The ruler of Pholsense holds his lordly duty and loyalty to the Crescent Court firmly secondary to his embodiment and obedience to the Silver Path. Appearing as a tall, thin, silver-skinned human with shimmering angelic eyes, Archbishop Danton Alexandre Renault *(DAN-tawn a-lek-SAN-dur reh-NOH)* leads the province under the same tenets with which he leads the church. He strives for perfection in all things, particularly in the carving of the stoneborn, whom he views, along with the other species of Pholsense, as his flock. He expects similar perfection from his people but regularly offers forgiveness for those who confess to sin and accept harsh penance.

However, sin lurks at the heart of the archbishop, and each passing year, he becomes more fond of indulgence in food, drink, flesh, and coin, as well as the ramping sadistic glee with which he conducts interrogations, complete with torture. While his inner demons gnaw



away at him, Archbishop Renault keeps this truth hidden in his corrupted heart as he delivers blistering sermons from his seat of power in Cyril's Cathedral of the Silver Rapture.

MOTHER MIDNIGHT

Where the hallowed ground of the Silver Path blazes brightest, the Coven of the Midnight Moon is at its strongest due to the oppressive presence of its matron, Mother Midnight, who looms over the province like a gloaming goddess of witchcraft and wickedness—a deliberate and direct mockery of Pholsense's rigid god.

None know where the witch mother came from, but it is whispered that she has been in the domain as long as Phillip Druskenvald has ruled it. And it is the sin that lurks in the hearts of mortals with which she seeks, draws forth, twists, and consumes. While she does bear genuine love for her twelve daughters, she fosters competition and pits them against each other to ensure they are ruthless in the execution of their own machinations.

She is a master of the general magic arts, with particular talent for shapeshifting, corruption of mind, body, and soul, potion brewing, and familiar conjuring and manipulation. She spends her time in Pholsense turning its people to sin and causing them to veer off the Silver Path. She slowly siphons occult energy from their corrupted hearts, which she will use to usher in a single night of sin that turns the province into a hellscape of wickedness and the staging ground for her conquest of Druskenvald.

STORIED LOCALES

CYRIL

The shining, silver heart of Pholsense is its capital city, Cyril *(SEER-ull)*. One of Druskenvald's great metropolises, its grandeur and achievements in architecture and stonemasonry make the other settlements of the province, even its other cities, look like ramshackle frontier camps. Despite widespread poverty, famine, and disease throughout the province, the city is a monument of polished stone and glittering silver, filled with towering statues and complex, multi-tiered fountains. At the city center is the enormous Cathedral of the Silver Rapture, which rings dozens of colossal silver bells that chime through the city and at all hours of the night.

It is also home to the headquarters of the Silver Hammer and its inquisitorium's gaol, where the most wicked heretics are imprisoned and tortured, whether innocent or not. Near the city outskirts is the Cyril Orphanage, the biggest in Druskenvald. It houses thousands of children that have lost their parents to inquisition, witchcraft, or the dangers of living in the overcrowded and unsanitary districts of the city. Sprawling beneath the city are miles of catacombs so famous that visitors from across the other provinces travel to explore them—though not all return.

ADVENTURES IN PHOLSENSE

From grim trials to curses that fester like wounds, Pholsense calls forth those who dare challenge its fervent laws and break the chains of zealotry.

Pholsense Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Mother Midnight spreads the seven deadly sins in Cyril to turn people malevolent and bring about the Night of Sin. A small orphan girl named Anya pleads for help in making the people of her city good again.	7	As a woman faces wrongful execution for witchcraft, her desperate family implores for intervention and proof of her innocence at the trial.
2	When livestock and townsfolk fall ill from strange witch balls, a desperate farmer yearns to track down the source and put an end to the curse.	8	On certain nights, the statues of saints appear before homes, ominously foretelling the deaths of all inside. Investigate the mystery and break the deadly cycle.
3	Deep beneath Cyril's grand cathedral, corruption seeps from imprisoned demons embodying the deadly sins. The archbishop needs help to contain their influence.	9	Farmers seek aid to undo their deals with a cunning green hag, fearing her bargains will soon bring even greater sorrow to their lives.
4	Inquisitors have wrongfully imprisoned an innocent. A sympathetic jailer seeks aid to orchestrate a daring escape.	10	On a night of sanctioned sin, chaos erupts, and a reformist needs help to restore order and prevent further decadence.
5	A monstrous creation wreaks havoc from the bell tower. The creator, overwhelmed with guilt and fear, begs for assistance to subdue it.	11	The community's annual sacrificial lottery draws a beloved villager's name. A desperate friend asks for help to overturn the deadly tradition.
6	A distressed cleric enlists help to sanctify the ground and lay the souls to rest when unhallowed spirits rise from a cursed graveyard.	12	A vengeful huntsman incites a mob against an innocent schoolteacher, and a worried relative desires to prevent this tragic injustice.



PICCO

"Why did Blinski build the happiest place in Druskenvald, you ask? The reason is simple! The world is miserable, and this will never change. You know this. Blinski knows this. The people know this most of all. But if Blinski can show them wonder, make them smile, and help them forget misery for just one night, they might believe that change is possible. Such a thing is truly special, my friend. Blinski built this place to see the looks on the people's faces when they believe."

- Blinski II -

Fun is not just a way of life in Picco *(PEE-koh)*; it's the law of the land. It is a place of high energy and constant motion, where all manner of play thrives outside the world of make-believe, and the wildest imaginations are made manifest by the great and powerful toymaker Blinski II, who wants nothing more than to grant every unfulfilled childhood wish. From within his walking mechanical workshop, he is always creating new toys, attractions, and other inventions of thrill, as well as the doll-like threadborn (see page 65), which he crafts with the most love of all.

To the ever-present tune of a discordant calliope, the people of the province go about their lives in frantic frivolity, surrounded by a fabricated landscape of cloth, decorations, and props as if pulled straight from a school's stage play. While the endless fun is exciting and joyous, it is often dangerous, with the thrills occasionally turning deadly and the lack of rest leaving the uninitiated exhausted and even terrified.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

FUN TICKETS

In Picco, it's not gold that buys goods and services. Instead, Fun Tickets are the province's currency, which take the form of shiny carnival tickets in vibrant colors that represent different uses, from purchasing food to securing passage in one of the huge hot air balloons that soar across the province. These tickets drive Funtopia's economy—which by all reasonable accounts should simply not function—and they can be obtained in a variety of ways, including purchasing with coin, earning through work, winning as a game prize, or rewarded for succeeding in an incredible challenge.



Rare and uniquely designed tickets procured through particularly death-defying feats have specialized magical power. Avid collectors travel from across Druskenvald in the hopes of finding these rare and prestigious prizes. There are rumors of exclusive attractions and artifacts that require one of these precious tickets to gain access.

JOLLY JANGLES

While Blinski's vision of a happy Picco may seem like a lighthearted hope for the inhabitants, it is, in fact, a mandate that is held with immense gravity. To this end, the toymaker created Jolly Jangles, an enormous flying cymbal monkey that serves as the guardian of Picco. It was built with the ability to sense the overall mood of the province and sniff out negative emotions that might threaten to bring others down.

Jolly Jangles flies throughout the province, visiting those experiencing prolonged sadness, anger, or other such unpleasantries. He first attempts to cheer them up with titanic pratfalls and folly, but he will eventually resort to absconding with the individual in question if the mood does not improve. These "downers" are brought to Blinski's workshop for "tinkering" until unbound fun is restored.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

BLINSKI II

The gregarious Blinski II *(BLIN-skee)*, known for booming laughter and infectious cheer, is the creator of Picco and most of its inhabitants, whom he builds and repairs with deep affection and care. A master toymaker, he is an automaton himself, with stout, rounded proportions that presumably resemble whomever "Blinski the First" was, although none remember any master of toys but this second incarnation. Finding the bureaucratic duties of lordship painfully dull, he prefers to travel the province in his mechanical walking workshop, have fun with his subjects, and offer free repairs to the broken.

In a realm of eternal night filled with terror and misery, Blinski believes it his duty—as well as the duty of his people—to bring only joy, laughter, and light to the darkness. This childlike innocence and enthusiasm, despite being one of the oldest lords of Druskenvald, has made him a target of manipulation among his fellow nobles. This occasionally leads to questionable and even disastrous deeds, all committed with genuinely pure intentions but without full understanding of the consequences.

SISTER ANTIC

The most unhinged and unpredictable of Mother Midnight's daughters, Sister Antic is a frenzied witch of sadistic joy and delusion who strives for nothing but pure chaos. Antic has an immensely colorful personality, but her entire form, as well as all her spells and possessions, exists only in grayscale, as if she was made from paper and ink. Her proportions are unnatural, rounded, and elongated, and she wears an eternal grin.

Sister Antic can effortlessly manipulate reality around her, stretching and reshaping her body and her surroundings and conjuring anything from her imagination out of thin air in an instant. In the hands of a witch with a deliberate will, this seemingly impossible magic could make her one of the most powerful beings in existence, but the chaotic Antic never uses it to its full potential, instead favoring its application for comedic or dramatic effect. Her most intentional use of witchcraft is magical explosives, and she hopes that blowing up enough buildings and people will eventually lead to a Druskenvald of pure anarchy.

STORIED LOCALES

FUNTOPIA

While the entire province of Picco is one big circus, the capital of Funtopia *(fun-TOH-pee-uh)* is the heart of the festivities. Equal parts carnival, amusement park, and city, it is a wonder of magical engineering that allows for a society of living toys to thrive. A night's work here usually consists of playing games for hours to earn Fun Tickets.

Funtopia's food is rarely nutritious but supremely delicious, drawing adventurous eaters from across Druskenvald to sample the endless creative options, especially the legendary Jolly Jangles Waffles. The transportation system consists of elaborately constructed rides that carry commuters across town at extreme speeds, filling the air with screams of thrill and delight as they are delivered to any of the city's themed districts.

Crazy Clown Hell. Kept uncomfortably hot and adorned with the imagery of devils, jesters, and hellfire, this is the center of thrill in the city, where all the most extreme, death-defying rides and attractions can be found. It also contains the headquarters of the Honk Legion, the premier union for Picco's numerous fools, led by the beloved clown Chookels-Chookels.

Dinoworld. Amidst towering facsimiles of jungle trees, intricately constructed mechanical dinosaurs fill crowds with awe and delight in a district that encourages exploration and heroic adventure. Also serving as the university district, it features schools that teach only fun subjects.

Strahdanya's Castlemania. Shrouded in endless darkness, this spooky district focuses on delivering fun-filled frights with haunted houses, dark rides, and other scary attractions. It also serves as the drama hub of the city; every night, the castle-sized Cravencroft Theater shows a performance of the critically acclaimed stage play *Curse of Strahdanya.*

Friendlyville. The center of wholesome fun aimed at children and adults who are young at heart, this soft district is filled with cozy, pillow-like cottages and contains a large population of living, snuggly stuffed animals that provide relentless love and encouragement to all who visit. Overseen by Mayor Cream Cheese, a plump, stuffed llama, it also provides homes and support for the lost, broken, and misfit toys of the province.

Captain Bone's Lagoon. This district-sized, pirate-themed water park features year-round aquatic attractions, such as wave pools, lazy rivers, and the infamous, never-ending Captain Bone's Wild Slide. It also serves as Funtopia's port, allowing ships from across Druskenvald to come and go with cargo and passengers that help keep the city thriving.

Neonopolis. Lit by bright, vibrantly colored lights and painted with starry scenes of the cosmos, this is Funtopia's music district, with concert venues and dance halls on every corner that feature all manner of musical performances. However, much of Neonopolis is under construction, with flashing signs bearing the promise that the city's greatest attraction is yet to come.

ADVENTURES IN PICCO

Step right up to Picco's peculiar carnival of wonders, where adventurers will enjoy thrills, chills, and kills.

Picco Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook
1	Sister Antic unleashes a series of high-powered explosives in a chaotic spree. Blinski II urgently seeks to anticipate and thwart her next strike.
2	A local toymaker seeks help after his creations start coming to life and escaping.
3	A major roller coaster transit system has begun randomly switching tracks, creating a logistical nightmare. Figure out the pattern to uncover and end the sinister plot.
4	A grand parade turns into pandemonium when a maniacal mime disrupts the event. The parade organizer pleads for assistance to restore order and capture the rogue performer.
5	A house of mirrors beckons. Trapped souls are discovered, and one of the distressed spirits seeks help to break the curse and free them.
6	A seasoned monster hunter enlists help to eliminate an eldritch horror that feeds off the joy of carnival-goers.
7	A stampede of runaway animatronic circus animals wreaks havoc. The circus ringmaster must decide whether to help corral them back or liberate them, and he enlists guidance and aid.
8	The inhabitants of a haunted dollhouse plead for help. Confronting the spectral menace will require helpers to shrink themselves to enter.
9	Old and broken toys cast out from society gather in despair. A sympathetic toymaker seeks to escort them for repairs and redemption.
10	A mysterious rival carnival on a floating island appears, trapping visitors in an endless cycle of fright and delight. An escape artist secretly reaches out for a daring escape plan.
11	The iconic cymbal monkey, Jolly Jangles, malfunctions and kidnaps a beloved local figure. Lord Blinski II asks for help to understand and repair the underlying issue.
12	An underground teddy bear fight club offers a substantial prize, attracting fierce competitors. A disguised nobleman invites competition, hinting at a greater conspiracy at play.



SYNDRAMAS

"The other provinces recoil when they gaze upon the warriors of Syndramas in the same way a sheep retreats when it spies a wolf. There are no seasons here, yet they reek of summer. Green, soft, warm, weak. We are forged by the endless winter, so they think us monsters. What they do not know is that war makes monsters of us all. They should grovel in thanks that the northern winds do not carry war to their doorstep and make them face the monster that waits within them all."

- Wyrm Queen Sapphira -

Far to the frozen north of Druskenvald is an icy province of perpetual battle, where the dead fight, die, and rise again to perpetuate a war that has persisted so long that no one can remember what sparked the conflict. However, each of the three warring factions would scoff at being the first to suggest peace. Thus, the fighting rages on across the snow-bound landscape, where the bones of long-dead dragons rest and countless graves spawn the ghoulish graveborn (see page 59).

The hollow remnant of a once-great kingdom that united humanity and dragonkind, Syndramas *(sin-DRAH-mus)* is now a place of immense necrotic power. Any living thing that dies within its borders rises again as an Undead creature, joining the endless armies of graveborn and other species of the province. These tireless warriors spill forth from metal fortresses and vast grave cities, clashing with masterfully forged weapons and armor to earn glory for themselves and their legions in the eyes of their Wyrm Queen, Sapphira.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

THE SEPULCHRAL LEGIONS

Syndramas is eternally warred over by three militant legions, each with its own culture, territory, capital, and military hierarchy, as well as specialized tactics, weaponry, and occult arts. Though each is led by a grand general, all three factions pledge fealty to Wyrm Queen Sapphira, who allows and even encourages conflict, so long as it does not spill beyond the borders of the province. The victory condition of each legion is the total annihilation of the other two so they may earn the sole favor of their draconic monarch and prepare for the eventual conquest of the rest of Druskenvald.

The Rimeshade Legion. Clad in heavy plates of drakkonite and armed with icy, runic blades, this legion relies upon the superiority of its war chest. Hoarding more resources than the other two legions combined, its armies are equipped with exceptional weapons and armor engraved with eldritch runes of frost and shadow, and they march to battle alongside immense war machines. Huge floating fortresses powered by ancient magic drift through the sky, allowing the Rimeshade Legion to bring the might of its armory to every front.

The Bloodboil Legion. Every warrior of this faction has total devotion to the legion and their comrades, and this tight-knit fellowship allows this army to fight in perfect synchronicity. Each soldier fiercely pursues mastery of combat, aided by blood magic rituals that provide supernatural strength, precision, and battle instinct.

The Marrowfeast Legion. Sheer numbers and viciousness allow this faction to compete in the war for Syndramas. Emerging from great hives made from dragon bone, hordes of innumerable warriors crash upon their foes like a wave, with each fallen soldier replaced by two more. The legion employs few complex tactics, though it frequently unleashes the vile necrotic magic of the province itself to wither and putrefy its enemies.

DRAKKONITE

In the great conflict that destroyed the ruined kingdom that once thrived in Syndramas, countless mighty dragons perished, and their broken bodies have been covered by the frozen wastes. As mass death fell upon the great creatures by the thousands, their draconic essence was leeched into the province itself, forever changing the land and creating a new metal ore that would be called drakkonite *(DRACK-oh-nite)*.

Vast deposits of this dark and unnaturally cold metal can be found throughout Syndramas. Known for its immense sharpness, strength, and lightness, it is widely used across the province in the construction of weapons, armor, and structures. Because it is so highly sought after, even by warriors outside Syndramas, many of the deadliest battles have been fought over drakkonite mines.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

WYRM QUEEN SAPPHIRA

The wintry dragon that would become the leader of Syndramas was the last being to die in the brutal civil war that destroyed a once-thriving kingdom. Having witnessed such wanton destruction driven by the squabbling of petty lords, including the extinction of her kind, her final moments were consumed by unbound rage and hate. This set off a necrotic chain reaction that turned the province into a land of undeath and resurrected Sapphira *(suh-FEER-uh)* as an immensely powerful necromancer. Now, she appears as a great skeletal dragon with desiccated gray flesh and patches of blue and white scales.

Sparing her dragon kin from such an existence, Sapphira raised the former humans of the kingdom, twisting them into the ghoulish graveborn and becoming their Wyrm Queen. She now rules them and the other species of her frigid domain with pride and ruthlessness, manipulating the three warring factions into constant conflict with promises of glory—in part due to a bitter vengeance but also out of necessity. The hungering necrotic wrath of the province has grown beyond the Wyrm Queen, and she knows that it can never abide peace. Should one legion ever claim victory, it would turn its sight southward to consume Druskenvald.

SISTER HOWL

Sporting a tall, broad, and muscular build, Sister Howl is the most physically imposing of Mother Midnight's daughters. With razor-sharp teeth, long claws, patches of fur, and other bestial features, Howl prefers the thrill of close combat, unleashing primal instinct and raw fury enhanced by a self-empowering witchcraft that most of her sisters consider barbaric.

Although she is disinterested in the broader machinations of the Coven of the Midnight Moon, Sister Howl plays along, taking any excuse to fight and kill. She leads an ever-growing horde of vicious beastmen that thunders across the frozen tundra, conducting raids and guerrilla warfare against all three Sepulchral Legions. They continually spread a curse of bestial bloodlust that twists even the most loyal soldiers into slavering pack members. She one day hopes to turn the Wyrm Queen herself into a mindless beast of mass destruction that would empower Howl to live by her own rules and even break away from her family.



STORIED LOCALES

SEPULTURA

Sepultura *(seh-pull-TUR-uh)* is an enormous, fortified necropolis that stands at the center of Syndramas. Built from gravestone and drakkonite, this mighty capital serves as a neutral territory where all three legions have agreed to a truce while within the city's walls and for ten miles beyond its limits. Violating this non-aggression pact is considered such an egregious and dishonorable taboo that even the most treacherous and power-hungry people of the province find such a thing unthinkable. The rare schemer or brute who engages in any act of war within the city is personally dealt with by Wyrm Queen Sapphira herself within her mighty drakkonite citadel at the heart of the necropolis.

Sepultura is carved up into quarters—the Frost Quarter, the Blood Quarter, and the Bone Quarter for the Rimeshade, Bloodboil, and Marrowfeast Legions, respectively, and the Wyrm Quarter, which acts as neutral ground for meeting and mingling amongst members of opposing factions and for conducting military business with Sapphira's personal army, the Queensguard. While visitors from other provinces are rare, much coin can be made in offering goods and services of comfort to soldiers who experience so few of life's pleasures.

DRAGONS' END

The most sacred site in Syndramas is a vast dragon graveyard in a hidden valley in the northernmost mountain range of the province. At Dragon's End, miles of snowy landscape are covered in the massive skeletal remains of thousands of wyrms, drakes, and other dragonkin. The valley was the site of the bloodiest battle of the civil war that rendered the winter dragons extinct, and Sapphira occasionally makes a pilgrimage here to reflect in solitude—the only time she allows herself to feel any grief.

Legend states that many powerful artifacts of war were lost in the battle and still wait, scattered among the bones. But would-be grave robbers must face numerous dangers, including the unforgiving elements, huge scavenging beasts that still feed on the dragons' marrow, and lingering curses that helped bring an end to a civilization.

ADVENTURES IN SYNDRAMAS

Amid the frozen wastes of Syndramas, conflict is ceaseless as Undead legions vie for dominion, each bound by bitter rivalries and ominous secrets etched in bone.

Syndramas Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook	1d12	Hook
1	Sister Howl unleashes her winter pack across the frozen wasteland, spreading an infectious bloodlust. The Rimeshade Legion recruits soldiers to fight against the incursion.	7	The Marrowfeast Legion is enforcing brutal flesh tithes. Protect a helpless village and put an end to the gruesome levy.
2	A valuable drakkonite mine has been overrun by giant Elemental ice spiders. Clear out the spiders and rescue trapped miners.	8	A cult plans to steal sacred bones from a dragon graveyard. Bring the cultists to justice before they create a bone abomination with their skeletal bounty.
3	A crucial mountain road has become impassable due to hostile yetis. A legionnaire seeks aid to uncover the cause of their aggression and reopen the pass.	9	Stoneborn zealots have invaded Syndramas to purge it with divine fire. A local militia requires assistance to thwart the crusade before it leads to a massacre.
4	A resistance group plots to infiltrate the Bloodboil Legion's citadel, where they imprison and drain outsiders for their blood rituals. Join the mission to stop these rituals and free the captives.	10	The Rimeshade Legion's new floating fortress threatens to dominate the skies. Sabotage the ice crystals that keep it afloat with an ex-legion engineer.
5	The ghoul colosseum's deadly games offer an opportunity to win glory in the eyes of Wyrm Queen Sapphira. The event promises both peril and prestige.	11	A blacksmith has been commissioned by the Bloodboil Legion to forge a legendary arsenal of weapons. He offers a reward for the drakkonite required for the project.
6	After the mysterious hatching of three white dragon eggs in the mountains, a conservationist enlists help to save them from being sacrificed and raised as Undead.	12	As tensions mount, a great council convenes in Sepultura. Influence the proceedings, broker peace, or fan the flames of conflict.



ZULROGG

"Wait. Do you hear that? Night. The spirit of life. It is calling you. Have no fear, child. It is the singing frog. It is your grandfather. It is the rain. It is the old mangrove tree. It is your mother. It is that cloud. It is this grain of sand. It is me. It is you. Look upon your reflection and listen. Will you answer?"

- Tazri Swampcaller -

Despite existing in an otherworldly domain of death, the vast, tropical swamps of Zulrogg *(ZULL-rawg)* teem with life. Underneath a dense canopy of twisting, vine-choked trees, each stage of the cycle of life, death, and rebirth thrives in harmony with the others, as do the plants, animals, and peoples of the province. Primal and ancestral spirits drift back and forth through the veil, offering their wisdom and guidance to those who seek it.

Although this treacherous swamp is rife with dangers of all varieties, it also provides everything needed for survival to the people of the province, including the bogborn (see page 55), who emerge from the mire after rebirth. Forming unbreakable bonds with the bog's beasts, both natural and supernatural, they enjoy rich and fulfilling lives that are intertwined with the wilds and led by the wisdom of the spirit priests revered by this society.

PROVINCIAL FOLKLORE

SPIRIT BEASTS

The province is watched over by great wild spirits that are worshipped by the people of the province. Each one takes the form of a different creature of Zulrogg's swamps, jungles, and shorelines and is said to possess the wisdom of all the ancestors who favored that particular spirit. While some spirits are more benevolent than others, all have a place in the guidance of Zulrogg's inhabitants, from the most humble fisherman to the wisest spirit priest.

Zulrogg's society is based upon the reverence of and communion with these Spirit Beasts, and making regular offerings to different spirits for different things is a fact of life. However, this deep connection to mortals makes the spirits vulnerable, and malevolent ritualists seek to capture them and siphon their essence for their own ends. Some even seek to kill a Spirit Beast and claim its power for themselves.

EVERBLOOMS

Zulrogg is overgrown with countless varieties of flowers, herbs, fruits, and other flora that all have a use as reagents in the rites, rituals, and medical practices of the province. A concoction, salve, or tincture to solve any problem can likely be procured in at least one of its stilted settlements. However, the supremely rare Everbloom is held in the highest esteem for its immense magical properties.

Appearing as beautiful, delicate flowers with petals of pink, purple, orange, and gold, Everblooms radiate with the primal essence of rebirth, new life, and youth. They can only be found in remote locations at certain times under specific circumstances, and seeking them out requires the guidance of a Spirit Beast. If carefully harvested and stored without any damage to the petals, the most skilled spirit priest can utilize the flowers to create mixtures that perform miracles of healing, bring back the dead, and even grant immortal youth. This power is not taken lightly by the people of Zulrogg, and these concoctions are only given to those who have proven themselves in the eyes of the province's spirits.

NOTEWORTHY FOLK

TAZRI SWAMPCALLER

Although the bogborn spirit priest called Tazri Swampcaller *(TAZ-ree)* is a member of the Crescent Court, she eschews any political authority and leads Zulrogg by example and spiritual guidance. Personally chosen by the great Hydra Spirit to be its speaker, she receives many heads' worth of wisdom and is widely considered to be one of the most insightful beings in Druskenvald. Despite her station, she spends much of her nights teaching the youth how to better commune with the spirits and discover which Spirit Beast they should choose to favor—a profound rite of passage for every member of Zulrogg society.



Tazri has lived for many centuries, extending her life with Everbloom concoctions until she can find a suitable replacement to become the next speaker of the Hydra Spirit. However, when one looks upon her, it is difficult to determine her age, appearing youthful one moment and truly ancient the next. This is made more mystifying by her eccentric passion for collecting. She knows that the swamp never gives without purpose, so she takes any trinket or debris she finds and adds it to the stitched sack that holds her collection. It is said that these odds and ends become the most powerful reagents in her rituals.

SISTER GIZZARD

In the twisted boughs of the deepest and most overgrown mire of Zulrogg is the thorn-tangled roost of Sister Gizzard. This fleshy, wrinkled witch with feathered, avian features resembles a bloated vulture and fittingly has a voracious appetite to consume raw, rotting flesh, especially that of sapient mortal species. She loves nothing in the world but her "children," the countless grotesque carrion birds that she commands in huge flocks through the skies of Druskenvald. They serve as eyes and ears for the Coven of the Midnight Moon and can devour the flesh off of a victim's bones in seconds.

Her witchcraft specializes in rot, decay, and disease, and it perfectly prepares any creature for consumption—including supernatural beings, spirits, or gods. It's this ability that makes Gizzard feared by all her sisters and even her mother, since she fully absorbs and claims the power of whatever entity she eats. In Zulrogg, her hungry eyes are set on the mightiest Spirit Beasts, and she hopes to eventually make a meal out of each of them to take the full primal power of the province for herself.

STORIED LOCALES

GURASH'ATAL

While many settlements are nestled throughout the swamps, jungles, and waterways of the province, the largest of the stilted cities is Gurash'Atal *(gur-OSH uh-TALL)*. Built atop the murky water and throughout the mossy trees, the wooden streets and structures are connected by an elaborate network of walkways and rope bridges that are intimidating to visitors but easily navigated by locals. Long-necked reptilian swamp beasts ferry travelers to different parts of the city, and great saber-toothed felines serve as mounts that can easily climb up and down the city's various levels and leap between treetop platforms.

Throughout Gurash'Atal, shrines are dedicated to the numerous Spirit Beasts, where offerings can be made to earn their favor and even receive mystical blessings. Swampstalker Lodge draws visitors from across Druskenvald to see the greatest trophies of Zulrogg's long line of legendary hunters and learn tracking, hunting, and trapping from the masters. The bustling trading post run by the enigmatic Trader Senj has everything one needs for an expedition into the wilds.

SUNKEN TEMPLE OF RAKAN'ZAHL

Built millennia ago by a lost civilization, the ancient stone temple of Rakan'Zahl *(ruh-KAHN ZAHL)* slowly sunk into the swamp until it was completely swallowed by its stagnant waters. However, the chambers within have not flooded, and those who find the temple's hidden entrance can discover a labyrinthian network of hallways, ritual rooms, and grottos overtaken by the flora and fauna of the bog.

This place of ancient mystical power has also drawn the attention of a cult that worships the malevolent Bloodbat Spirit. They practice their malign rites in the damp stone chambers and seek to use the temple's secret knowledge to help their patron become a god that rules all Spirit Beasts. They work toward a monumental ritual that would drain the blood and life essence of every person in the province to initiate and fuel this ascension to godhood.

ADVENTURES IN ZULROGG

Venture into the depths of Zulrogg's overgrown swamps, where spirits call and ancient dangers await those brave enough to test the swamp's primal powers.



Zulrogg Quest Hooks

1d12	Hook
1	Sister Gizzard's carrion birds are devouring bogborn villagers. A desperate chieftain seeks help in expelling these malevolent flocks and discovering their ultimate purpose.
2	Delve into a sunken temple where a sinister sect worships the Bloodbat Spirit, aiming to elevate it to godhood. A concerned elder begs for a disruption of their rituals.
3	Tazri Swampcaller worries about the silence from the Hydra Spirit. Explore the ethereal realms to reconnect with this sacred entity.
4	Track an immortal bogborn cannibalizing his kin in the swamp's heart. A tracker offers guidance to take down this menace.
5	Participate in Gurash'Atal's festival of Swamp Spirits, impress a spirit in its trial, and win a rare boon. The master of ceremonies will introduce the challenges.
6	A rogue spirit priest has absorbed the Whippoorwill Spirit's power, trapping souls for his malicious designs. A seer asks for aid to free the souls and end his tyranny.
7	Investigate the Pallid Rot fungus corrupting swathes of the swamp. A renowned herbalist suspects an ancient curse and needs help to find its source.
8	Accept the Swampsaber Spirit's challenge to tame wild panthers as mounts. A respected beast master provides the necessary training and tools.
9	Address the mysterious demise of a dragon turtle washed ashore and filled with eldritch parasites. A sage seeks assistance to investigate this anomaly and prevent a disaster.
10	An allegiance must be decided when big game hunters clash with a protective swamp Elemental. The huntmaster offers a reward for help, while a spirit priest stresses the Elemental's importance.
11	Retrieve a sailor's body from a shipwreck for a heartbroken fortune teller who promises a valuable reading or boon in return.
12	Infiltrate a rising army of bogborn thralls under a Spirit Naga's sway in an ancient city. A rebel leader recruits support to either broker peace or end the Naga's reign.



Chapter 2: SPECIES

Druskenvald is home to an otherworldly variety of peoples, all reborn from the spirits of the departed who found their ways to this land of moon and mists. Most of these souls arrived on the *Ghostlight Express*, but other Strangers bring wayward souls safely through the mists to live again under the Crooked Moon. The species presented in this chapter are those who arise in the 13 provinces of Druskenvald. While each are most plentiful in the province of their origin, many folks of these species have migrated and drifted to other provinces and could be found in every corner of Druskenvald.

Variant: Humanoid Creature Types

Several of the species presented here are creature types other than Humanoid, such as the ghoulish, Undead graveborn. These type differences reinforce the unusual nature of these species, but they also come with concerns that can make these species more powerful than others. Not being a Humanoid makes a character immune to the *Charm Person* spell, for example. Conversely, it potentially makes them susceptible to other effects, such as the *Protection from Evil and Good* spell. If the GM or players are uncomfortable with these deviations from standard species, changing the creature type to Humanoid solves the dilemma, while the species' other traits preserve their narrative.

ASHBORN

Ashborn are an imp-like species native to Chernabos (see page 22), typically coalescing from the sulfuric ash of the province's hellfire and brimstone volcanoes. Infused with the fiendish power of the Hells, this folk has managed to survive and even prosper in the barrens and badlands of the province through guile, boldness, and industriousness. Said to be favored by fortune itself, ashborn count on luck to twist the balance in the most dire of situations.

Their short stature ranges from slight to stout, but this makes them no less dangerous, for each ashborn has a venomous tail resembling a scorpion's, always ready to strike. They sport horns and skin tones in varying shades of red and gray that reflect their devilish origin, and they typically live 100 years.



ASHBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Fiend
Size: Small (about 2–3 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet

As an Ashborn, you have these special traits.

Ashen Legacy. You know the *Minor Illusion* cantrip. Additionally, starting at character level 3 you always have the *Charm Person* spell prepared, and starting at character level 5 you always have the *Invisibility* spell prepared. You can cast them each once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast them in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast them using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spells you cast with this trait (choose the ability when you select this species).

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Fiendish Fortune. When you're hit by an attack roll that isn't a Critical Hit, you can take a Reaction to magically cause the attack to miss you, and a creature of your choice within 5 feet of you takes Force damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Scorpion Sting. You have a tail stinger you can use to make Unarmed Strikes using your Strength or Dexterity (your choice) for attack and damage rolls. On a hit, you deal 1d4 Piercing damage, and you can deal an extra 1d6 Poison damage. You can deal this extra damage a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus. You regain one expended use when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

When you reach character level 10, this extra damage increases to 2d6.

AZUREBORN



Azureborn *(A-zher-born)* are a harpy-like species native to Astramar (see page 16), often materializing from the bright blue night sky filled with twinkling stars and winds of arcane power. Bearing a connection to the aither that courses through the air and land of the province, they are an inherently prescient folk that can divine the future by looking to the cosmos. They have built a society of magical wonder through grand vision, endless curiosity, and dedication to study.

Sprouting feathers across their entire body and wings attached to each of their arms, this diverse folk can resemble all manner of avian creatures, from raptors with earthy tones to tropical birds of vibrant and colorful plumage. They typically live 100 years, although many of the wisest among them have lived up to 400.

AZUREBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Humanoid
Size: Medium (about 4–7 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet, Fly Speed equal to your Speed

As an Azureborn, you have these special traits.

Azure Legacy. You know the *Guidance* cantrip. Starting at character level 3, you always have the *Augury* spell prepared and can cast it once without a spell slot or Material components, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast it using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spells you cast with this trait (choose the ability when you select this species).

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Glimpse Fate. When you roll Initiative, if you aren't surprised, you can choose a number of creatures that you can see equal to your Proficiency Bonus. The targets have Advantage on their Initiative rolls. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Winds of Magic. As a Bonus Action, you can take the Dash action and increase your Fly Speed by 10 feet until the end of the turn. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

BOGBORN

Bogborn are a troll-like species native to Zulrogg (see page 49), usually rising from the still, dark waters of the swampy province. From the moment of rebirth, they have a symbiotic relationship with flora and fauna of the wild—and often treacherous—mire. Their ability to survive is further enhanced by the naturally regenerative biology often found in trolls.

Towering over most, these hearty folk can face any trial of nature, and they often utilize their athleticism in pursuits of hunting and survival. Bearing prominent noses and tusks, their tough hides are generally shades of green or blue. Bogborn typically live 100 years before moving on to the spirit world.



BOGBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Giant
Size: Medium (about 7–8 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet

As a Bogborn, you have these special traits.

Bog Bulk. You have Advantage on any ability check you make to end the Grappled condition. You also count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Guiding Bond. As a Bonus Action, you can magically place a mark on a creature you can see within 60 feet of yourself. The mark lasts for 1 minute, and takes the form of ephemeral plants, moss, fungus, or swamp animals that only you can see. For the duration, you can add 1d4 to ability checks and attack rolls you make against the marked creature. You can use this Bonus Action a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency in the Perception or Survival skill.

Regeneration. As a Bonus Action, you can expend one of your Hit Point Dice, roll the die, and regain a number of Hit Points equal to the number rolled plus your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 Hit Point).

If you take Acid or Fire damage, this trait doesn't function until the end of your next turn.

CURSEBORN



Curseborn are a werewolf-like species native to Edwardia (see page 25), often emerging from the dense, cursed fog that rolls across the province. Sharing a strong connection to a malediction called the Grey, which demands balance at the threat of certain doom, they have managed to build a civilization of advancement and progress, countered by rampant strife, pollution, and hunger.

Covered head to toe with thick fur and bearing sharp teeth and claws, this lupine species evokes the hallmarks and appearance of wolves but with clearly humanoid physiology. If not brought to an early grave by the Grey, they typically live for up to 100 years, although technological advancement has led to certain individuals approaching 200 years old.

CURSEBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Humanoid
Size: Medium (about 5–6 feet tall)
Speed: 35 feet

As a Curseborn, you have these special traits.

Cursed Claws. You have claws you can use to make Unarmed Strikes, which deal 1d6 Slashing damage on a hit. You can use Strength or Dexterity for attack and damage rolls with your claws.

When you hit a creature with your claws, you can curse the target until the start of your next turn. While cursed, the target emits wisps of fog and has Disadvantage on D20 Tests. You can curse a creature a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Grey Balance. When you fail a saving throw, you can take a Reaction to succeed instead. When you do, you have Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the end of your next turn. You can use this trait once, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a Long Rest.

Lupine Sense. You have proficiency in the Investigation, Perception, or Survival skill.

DEEPBORN

Deepborn are a fish-like species native to Olmarsh (see page 37), typically rising up from the abyssal depths of the province's black sea—home to terrors beyond imagining known as the Hungry Ones. Immersed in a near constant eldritch presence that emerges from the deep and descends from beyond the stars, these folk manage their state of paranoia by embracing and harnessing the uncanny and cosmic.

While they are primarily piscine in their anatomy, they can possess features found in a wide variety of sea creatures, including cephalopods and crustaceans. They typically live for around 150 years, but certain members of occult orders have been known to live for 600 years.



DEEPBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Aberration
Size: Medium (about 5–7 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet, Swim Speed equal to your Speed

As a Deepborn, you have these special traits.

Amphibious. You can breathe air and water.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Eldritch Gibbering. Thanks to your eldritch connection to the Hungering Ones, you speak Deep Speech. As a Magic action, you can gibber in that language. Each creature of your choice in a 30-foot Emanation originating from you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 plus your Proficiency Bonus and Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier; choose the ability when you select this species) or roll a d6 and consult the table below. The effect lasts until the start of your next turn. Once any target fails its save against this trait, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

1d6	Effect
1–2	The target has Disadvantage on attack rolls.
3–4	The target's Speed becomes 0.
5–6	The target can't take Reactions.

Endless Hunger. As a Bonus Action, you can embrace your connection to the Hungering Ones. Until the start of your next turn, you know the location of any creatures that aren't Constructs or Undead within 60 feet of yourself, and your attack rolls against those creatures can't have Disadvantage. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

GNARLBORN



Gnarlborn *(NAR-ull-born)* are a tree-like species native to Ardengloom (see page 13), usually sprouting up from the soil of the twisted, dark forest. Their home is forever haunted by the souls of long-dead Fey, which inhabit the enormous, face-bearing trees known as Elderwoods. These folk commune with these beings to receive primordial wisdom.

Resembling gnarled trees with glowing faces hollowed into the bark, their individual patterns of branches, moss, and lichen can result in a wide diversity of appearances. Most gnarlborn live for over 500 years, but those with the strongest connection to the Elderwoods have been said to live to be thousands of years old.

GNARLBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Plant
Size: Medium (about 5–8 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet

As a Gnarlborn, you have these special traits.

Deep Roots. You have Advantage on ability checks and saving throws against being moved against your will or to avoid the Prone condition.

Elderwood Whispers. You can draw on the memory of the Elderwood spirits. When you finish a Long Rest, you gain proficiency with a skill, a tool, or learn one language of your choice until you next finish a Long Rest.

Grasping Branches. As a Bonus Action, you can magically unleash the binding power of the dark wood. Choose a Large or smaller creature within 30 feet of yourself. The creature must make a Strength saving throw (DC 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, the target has the Restrained condition for 1 minute as branches appear and ensnare it. On a successful save, its Speed is halved until the end of its next turn. A Restrained creature repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The branches vanish when the condition ends.

Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Root Sense. As a Bonus Action, you gain Tremorsense with a range of 60 feet for 10 minutes. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Towering Size. You have Advantage on any ability check you make to end the Grappled condition. You also count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity.

GRAVEBORN

Graveborn are a ghoul-like species native to Syndramas (see page 46), typically rising from one of the countless graves that mark the frozen battlefields of the province. They were first created in a kingdom-wide ritual that twisted countless humans into new Undead creatures that barely resembled who they once were. Graveborn now wage war endlessly and perpetuate a culture of martial prowess, relentlessness, and grave honor. These people are infused with the necrotic and draconic essence of the powerful Drakkonite metal found throughout the province, which has given them a strange taste for spoiled flesh of any variety.

Appearing as the corpses of twisted Humanoids, graveborn have powerful snouts and jaws with elongated teeth and tongues that assist in the devouring of flesh and bone. Their physiology is sturdy, as if magically designed to be perfected for war. If not killed in war, as befalls many of their kind, they can live up to 300 years before decaying away.



GRAVEBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Undead
Size: Medium (about 4–6 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet

As a Graveborn, you have these special traits.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Devour Corpse. You can eat spoiled and rotten food as if it were fresh. Additionally, if you spend 1 minute eating flesh from the corpse of a Small or larger creature that isn't a Construct, roll one of your Hit Point Dice without expending it (even if you have none remaining). You regain a number of Hit Points equal to the number rolled plus your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 Hit Point). Once you regain Hit Points using this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Frozen Waste. You have Resistance to Cold damage.

Infused Drakkonite. When you damage a creature, you can ignore any Resistances it has, and it takes extra Necrotic damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

HARVESTBORN



Harvestborn are a scarecrow-like species native to Enoch (see page 28), most often crafted with great care by Methuselah, the lord of the province. Infused with the vital, green magic that surges through the immensely fertile land, they have a strong connection to the cycle of both the harvest and life, death, and rebirth. They feed much of Druskenvald with the crops they grow in a relatively peaceful society that puts a focus on community, family, and fellowship.

As a constructed species resembling any manner of scarecrow, their bodies are comprised of a mixture of wood, metal, straw, and other implements. Their glowing-eyed heads might be made from a burlap sack or a crop such as a pumpkin or turnip. Staying true to the cycle, they generally live 100 years before accepting the next step of death and becoming reborn once more.

HARVESTBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Construct
Size: Medium (about 4–7 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet

As a Harvestborn, you have these special traits.

Culling. When you damage a Bloodied creature, you can deal an extra 1d12 Necrotic damage to it. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Gift of the Green. As a Bonus Action, you can touch the ground and choose a creature also touching the ground within 30 feet of yourself. That creature can expend and roll one Hit Point Die, and it regains a number of Hit Points equal to the number rolled plus your Proficiency Bonus. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus. You regain one expended use when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Jack-O-Lantern. You know the *Dancing Lights* cantrip. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it (choose the ability when you select this species).

Scarecrow Nature. You don't require air, food, or drink.

Watchful Rest. You don't need to sleep, and magic can't put you to sleep. Moreover, you can finish a Long Rest in 4 hours if you spend those hours in an inactive, motionless state, during which you retain consciousness.

PLAGUEBORN

Plagueborn are a rat-like species native to Bubonia (see page 19), typically coalescing in the pestilent haze that hangs over the province. They are deeply connected to the virulent and deadly plague that afflicts and shapes their society, which persists through cunning, ruthlessness, and the sheer will to live. They are the most adaptable species of Druskenvald, quickly discovering the means to survive even the harshest environments.

Appearing as large plague rats with humanoid physiology, their short fur ranges from grays and browns to various shades of green. They bear jagged teeth and claws that all carry a strain of plague to which they are immune but can prove deadly to others. Their nimble tails can vary greatly in length and thickness, often reflecting their family, clan, or guild. Plagueborn usually live no longer than 100 years.



PLAGUEBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Humanoid
Size: Medium (about 4–6 feet tall) or Small (about 2–4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species
Speed: 30 feet, Climb Speed equal to your Speed

As a Plagueborn, you have these special traits.

Born in Filth. You have Advantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Poisoned condition or magical contagions.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Infected Cunning. The plague you carry binds you to rats and imparts their cunning. You gain proficiency in the Deception or Stealth skill.

Plague Bearer. When you hit a creature with an attack roll, you can spread your magical contagion to the target. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus) or become afflicted with your plague for 1 minute.

While afflicted, the target has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks and takes 1d4 Poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the plague on itself on a success.

Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

RELICBORN



Relicborn are a skeleton-like species native to Kalero (see page 31), generally emerging from the numerous tombs and crypts that line the canyon walls of the province. They thrive in a culture of celebration and remembrance, which infuses the very essence of every member of the species. Dancing between the energy of a vivacious party and the serenity of peaceful reflection, this folk holds a deep appreciation for both the living and the dead.

They appear as skeletons decorated with a wide array of vibrant colors, patterns, and styles, and their bones are encased in a translucent, glowing substance that provides them with a similar mass and shape to other Humanoid species, allowing them to comfortably wear clothing and armor. Some relicborn can even grow hair from their skulls, which is often shaped into bombastic styles.

Relicborn typically live for 250 years before losing their form and collapsing into a pile of bones

RELICBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Undead
Size: Medium (about 4–6 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet

As a Relicborn, you have these special traits.

Dance of Death. As a Bonus Action, you can make a DC 15 Charisma (Musical Instrument or Performance) check. If you succeed, the next attack roll you make before the end of your turn has Advantage. If you succeed on the check by 5 or more, you can roll one of your Hit Point Dice (without expending it) and gain Temporary Hit Points equal to the number rolled.

Eternal Party. You don't need to sleep, and you can finish a Long Rest in 4 hours if you spend those hours enjoying revelry, such as telling stories or playing music.

Moment of Remembrance. When another creature you can see within 30 feet of you fails a D20 Test, you can take a Reaction to let the target add 1d4 to the total, potentially causing it to succeed. Once this trait changes a failed roll into a success, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Soul of Revelry. You gain proficiency in the Performance skill or with one kind of Musical Instrument.

SILKBORN



Silkborn are a spider-like species native to Nerukhet (see page 34), typically emerging from silken cocoons amidst thick webbing that fills miles of tunnels throughout the subterranean province. They have a deep kinship and connection with the bejeweled arachnids and insects that have assisted them in building the grandest civilization in Druskenvald. This folk also channels the great gems that fill the caverns of the province with light and power, bringing them ever closer to the gods that spared their kind from an ancient calamity.

While this species has humanoid proportions, they have arachnid features—hardened carapace skin, numerous eyes, segmented limbs that grow from their backs, and mandibles that sprout from their mouths. They generally live for 250 years, but those at the higher echelons of their civilizations have been known to live nearly 800 years.

SILKBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Humanoid
Size: Medium (about 5–6 feet tall)
Speed: 30 feet, Climb Speed equal to your Speed

As a Silkborn, you have these special traits.

Bejeweled Carapace. When you are hit with an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to add your Proficiency Bonus to your AC against that attack, potentially causing it to miss. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Silken Legacy. You know the *Thaumaturgy* cantrip. Starting at character level 3, you always have the *Find Familiar* spell (the familiar takes the form of a jeweled insect or arachnid) prepared, and starting at character level 5, you always have the *Web* spell prepared. You can cast each spell once without a spell slot or Material components. You regain the ability to cast them in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast either spell using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spells you cast with this trait (choose the ability when you select this species).

Spider Climb. You can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing an ability check and while leaving your hands free.

STONEBORN



Stoneborn are a gargoyle-like species native to Pholsense (see page 40), usually meticulously carved by the lord of the province, Archbishop Danton Alexandre Renault. Blessed by the divine power known as the Silver Path, these people can call upon the godliness that suffuses their construction. In a domain of darkness, they have looked to the light of their god to build a civilization that attempts to uphold what is good and lawful at all costs.

Their stony skin matches the same hue and pattern as the stone they were carved from. While all of their kind have broad wings that carry their dense, heavy bodies, their biology can evoke a wide variety of creatures—including bats, fiends, dragons, birds, angels, dogs, and lizards—often combining features into a chimeric blend. They usually live for 300 years before crumbling into rubble.

STONEBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Construct
Size: Medium (about 4–7 feet tall) or Small (about 3–4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species
Speed: 30 feet, Fly Speed equal to half your Speed

As a Stoneborn, you have these special traits.

Argent Gleam. As a Bonus Action, you can channel a mote of the Silver Path's light with your choice of one of the following options:

PATH'S GRACE. You cast the *Bless* spell, requiring no Material components.
ZEALOUS CHARGE. You take the Dash action. The first time you make an attack roll before the end of your turn, on a hit or miss, the target takes an extra 2d6 Radiant damage.

Once you use this trait's Bonus Action, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

Silver Bulwark. You can call upon the Silver Path to protect you. When you take Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage, you can take a Reaction to gain Resistance to those three damage types until the start of your next turn. Once you use this trait, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Watchful Senses. You gain proficiency in the Insight, Perception, or Survival skill.

THREADBORN

Threadborn are a doll-like species native to Picco (see page 43), most often built with love by Blinski II, the master toymaker and lord of the province. In a land that is mostly fabricated and constructed to maximize the fun of all who live there, the essence of joy, thrill, and friendship are woven into a threadborn's very nature. They cherish the bonds made between loved ones and always maintain a childlike wonder and whimsy, no matter one's age.

As living dolls, these folk are constructed with a variety of materials, including cloth, wood, metal, porcelain, stuffing, yarn, and anything else a toy might be made of. With the most varied body shapes of all Druskenvald's species, each threadborn represents a unique representation of fun. They usually live for 100 years before falling apart and needing to be rebuilt.



THREADBORN TRAITS

Creature Type: Construct
Size: Medium (about 4–7 feet tall) or Small (about 2–4 feet tall), chosen when you select this species
Speed: 30 feet

As a Threadborn, you have these special traits.

Ball-Jointed. You can move through a space as narrow as 1 foot wide as if it were Difficult Terrain.

Innocent Mind. You have Resistance to Psychic damage.

Sewn Nature. You don't require air, food, or drink.

Soothing Heart. You know the *Guidance* cantrip. Starting at character level 3, you always have the *Sanctuary* spell prepared, and starting at character level 5, you always have the *Calm Emotions* spell prepared. You can cast each spell once without a spell slot. When you cast *Calm Emotions* in this way, it can target creatures of any type. You regain the ability to cast them using this trait when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast either spell using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spells you cast with this trait (choose the ability when you select this species).

You've Got a Friend. When a creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself fails an ability check using a skill, you can take a Reaction to cast *Guidance* on the creature, ignoring the spell's normal range. The creature can add the spell's 1d4 to its ability check, potentially causing it to succeed, then the spell ends. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.



Chapter 3: SUBCLASSES

There is great power in Druskenvald for those willing to claim it, often tapping into the old, the eerie, and the uncanny. While many of the wicked and crooked denizens of the realm turn the might and magic of the eternal night toward sinister machinations that bring horror, death, and destruction, just as many would-be heroes take up these powers to protect their homes and loved ones. However, when it comes to the strange and often grim abilities wielded in Druskenvald, morality is never clear, and there is always the chance that they can lead toward a path of darkness despite the best intentions.

Native inhabitants of Druskenvald are more naturally inclined toward these powers, but outsiders who travel to the realm through the Shroud can just as easily discover and harness them. This has led to a wide variety of folk from across the realm and even in the lands of the living that embrace and unleash these fearsome abilities.

FOLK HORROR SUBCLASSES

This chapter presents Folk Horror subclasses for each of the 12 core classes, weaving the themes and inspirations of the genre into characters who can serve as protagonists of their own dreadful folktale. You can find a list of these options and a brief summary of each listed below.

Folk Horror Subclasses

Class	Subclass	Description
Barbarian	**Path of the Experiment**	Unleash strange modifications to the body
Bard	**College of Whistles**	Whistle up ghostly companions
Cleric	**Harvest Domain**	Channel the divine through harvest cycles
Druid	**Circle of the Old Ways**	Unleash the primeval forest's power
Druid	**Circle of Wicker**	Weave primal magic through wicker effigies
Fighter	**Barrow Guard**	Command prowess from beyond the grave
Monk	**Warrior of the Pestilent Haze**	Harness plague against your foes
Paladin	**Oath of Castigation**	Burn away wickedness with righteous fire
Ranger	**Grim Harbinger**	Mark foes with a hound of doom
Rogue	**Sinner**	Bend fate and hex foes through jinxcraft
Sorcerer	**Crimson Sorcery**	Manipulate blood and vitality of allies and enemies
Warlock	**Great Fool Patron**	Harness chaotic laughter to confound foes
Warlock	**Horned King Patron**	Practice witchcraft to deliver curses and boons
Wizard	**Occultist**	Draw power from forbidden knowledge
Wizard	**Philosopher**	Master fundamental truths of creation through alchemy

FOLK HORROR CLASS THEMING

If you do not wish to select one of the aforementioned subclasses, there are numerous ways to flavor any subclass with the themes of Folk Horror to ensure that your character feels thematically appropriate in the setting and story of the Crooked Moon. Below are options to consider when applying Folk Horror theming to all twelve core classes.

Folk Horror Class Themes

Class	Theme
Barbarian	The primal rage that you unleash comes from an ancient entity of the dark woods
Bard	You weave your spells by singing folk songs, performing folk dances, or sharing folklore
Cleric	The deity you worship is an ancient and mostly forgotten god honored at natural shrines
Druid	Your circle conducts its rituals in the most remote and isolated parts of the wilderness
Fighter	The fighting style you practice was passed down by an ancient, nearly extinct order
Monk	You learned your martial abilities from a secretive society that operates in the shadows
Paladin	The oath you swore and the tenets you hold are rooted in superstition and folklore
Ranger	You are a wanderer able to survive in the most isolated and wild places of the world
Rogue	You use stealth and subterfuge to advance the aims of a mysterious, hidden cult
Sorcerer	The event that granted you sorcery was inexplicable and uncanny, leaving you haunted
Warlock	You practice the magic granted by your patron through archaic rituals and sacrifices
Wizard	You learned your arcane arts from lost and forbidden knowledge you unearthed



Barbarian: PATH OF THE EXPERIMENT

Augment the Body with Volatile Serums

Barbarians following the Path of the Experiment supplement their rage with alchemical cocktails that surge in their bodies through syringes and tubes of copper, steel, and glass. These formulas enhance their ability to channel primal might, or perhaps—because of their rage—they are the only people who can survive the chemicals flooding their veins. A Barbarian may have created the implants and serums through their own experimentation, or they could have been subjected to the insidious work of others. Whatever the origin, it could have been well-intentioned and made to enhance or preserve the Barbarian's life, or it might have been an unhinged alchemical exploration.

LEVEL 3: ALCHEMICAL EXPERIMENTS

You gain a set of Alchemist's Supplies, and you have proficiency with it. Additionally, you can use Alchemist's Supplies instead of an Herbalism Kit to craft *Potions of Healing*.

LEVEL 3: VOLATILE SERUM

You have an implanted series of syringes and reservoirs that hold alchemical serums and deploy them into your body. When you enter your Rage, choose one of your serums to inject and gain its benefits.

The chosen serum lasts for the duration of your Rage, or until you choose a new serum as a Bonus Action. You have the following serum options.

Ferocity. This serum throws you into an energized frenzy. You ignore Difficult Terrain, and when you hit with a Melee weapon or Unarmed Strike, you can activate the Cleave mastery property in addition to a different mastery property you're using.

Monstrosity. The serum expands your body to monstrous proportions and can change your appearance in cosmetic ways, such as by altering facial features, skin tone, and hair length or color. Your reach increases by 5 feet, and once per turn when you miss with an attack roll that relies on Strength, you can add your Rage Damage bonus to the total, potentially causing the attack to hit. If you are smaller than Large, you become Large, along with anything you are wearing or carrying. If there isn't enough room to accommodate the size change, your size doesn't change.

Reconstruction. The serum dulls pain and forces wounds to rapidly knit. Upon activation and at the start of each of your turns, you can expend and roll a Hit Point Die. You regain a number of Hit Points equal to the number rolled plus your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 Hit Point). You gain any excess beyond your Hit Point maximum as Temporary Hit Points. If you take Acid or Fire damage, this serum doesn't function at the start of your next turn.

LEVEL 6: AUGMENTATION COMPOUNDS

Through continued experimentation or your natural adaptation to your implants, you can now activate one of the compound options below, in addition to a serum, when you enter your Rage or change your chosen serum. The chosen compound lasts for the duration of your Rage, or until you choose a new compound.

Stimulated Senses. You gain Blindsight out to a range of 30 feet. If you already have Blindsight, its range increases by 30 feet.

Maddening Fumes. Your skin emits aggression-spiking fumes in a 30-foot Emanation. While in the Emanation, an enemy's Speed is halved, and if it starts its turn there it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus) or have Disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you until the start of its next turn.

Corrosive Expulsion. When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can replace one of your attacks with a spray of caustic chemicals from your implants in a 15-foot Cone, or a 30-foot Line that is 5 feet wide (choose the shape each time). Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus). Roll a number of d8s equal to your Rage Damage bonus. On a failed save, a target takes Acid damage equal to the total rolled, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEVEL 10: REACTIVE CATALYST

Your implants are now sensitive to your response to danger and flood you with stimulating chemicals. When you take damage, or when you gain the Blinded, Deafened, Poisoned, or Stunned condition, you can take a Reaction to enter your Rage before the damage or conditions are applied. When you enter your Rage, you end any of those conditions on yourself, including any triggering conditions.

Additionally, while your Rage is active, you have Advantage on Constitution saving throws.

LEVEL 14: BIOCHEMICAL ADMIXTURE

Your body focuses and combines the strength of your serums. When you activate an option of your Volatile Serum, you activate two options instead of one.

Additionally, when a creature within 5 feet of you damages you with a melee attack while your Rage is active, the creature takes 1d12 Acid damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

IMPLANT FORMS

The Experimental Implants table offers examples of different forms your implants can take.

Experimental Implants

1d6	Implant
1	**Alchemical Injector.** Glass reservoir cylinders set in brass and iron frames hold multicolored, bubbling, or luminous alchemical fluids.
2	**Alien Grafts.** Portions of your body have been replaced with parts of a dragon, a werewolf, or an Aberration's rubbery tentacles. When you Rage, the grafts overtake more of your body.
3	**Construct Prosthesis.** You have prosthetic limbs, eyes, or other replacements made of metal, stone, or wood. When you Rage, the parts flare.
4	**Crystal Formations.** Crystals grow from your body across your shoulders and down your limbs. When you Rage, the crystals glow, chime, or ring.
5	**Fungal Inoculation.** Mushrooms and other fungal growths overtake parts of your body, and vein-like mycelium run along your skin from them. When you Rage, the veins pulse and writhe.
6	**Sparktech Augmentation.** Copper, silver, and brass coils in your back and arms run wires along your skin to plugs. When you Rage, lightning crackles across the metal.



Bard: COLLEGE OF WHISTLES

Wander with Wayward Spirits

Old tales speak of the dangers of whistling: the hollow, haunting pitches call to the spirits of the departed and invite them back to the world of the living. Bards of the College of Whistles take these stories and set them to their own warbling tunes, whistling forth their bardic magic and summoning spirits to aid in their travels. These Bards wander even more than most of their fellows, drawn to traveling and gathering both stories and ghosts like patches in tattered clothing.

LEVEL 3: HANDY HAINTS

You can call forth haints—vagabond spirits. When you inspire a creature with Bardic Inspiration, you can summon a ghostly apparition that drifts around the inspired target.

The haint creates an aura in a 15-foot Emanation from the target. The haint vanishes after 1 minute, when you summon a new haint, when you use the Reaction it grants you, or if you have the Incapacitated condition or die. When you summon a haint, choose its form: Grump, Sad Sack, or Scamp.

Grump. This red-tinged, elderly spirit dressed in threadbare rags threatens your foes and harangues your allies to do better. The inspired creature and its allies within the aura have Advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and Strength saving throws. In addition, when a creature inside the aura deals damage, you can take a Reaction to increase the damage dealt to one target by a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die plus your Charisma modifier.

Sad Sack. The blueish, melancholic spirit saps the fervor from your foes. The inspired creature and its allies within the aura have Half Cover against ranged attacks. In addition, when a creature inside the aura takes damage, you can take a Reaction to reduce the damage taken by an amount equal to a roll of your Bardic Inspiration die plus your Charisma modifier.

Scamp. The gold-hued, childlike spirit delights and invigorates your allies. When the inspired creature or its allies starts a turn in the aura, that creature's Speed increases by 10 feet until the end of its next turn. In addition, when a creature inside the aura fails a saving throw, you can take a Reaction to let the creature reroll the d20.

LEVEL 3: WHISTLING WANDERER

You've shaped the superstition of whistling to the dead into a potent instrument. You gain the following benefits.

Wanderer's Bindle. When you finish a Long Rest, you can touch a nonmagical bag, sack, or similar container and turn it into a magical container called a bindle. This container functions as a *Handy Haversack*. If you create a second bindle, if your bindle is more than 1 mile away from you, or when you die, the bindle loses its magic, and anything inside appears in unoccupied spaces closest to the container.

Whistled Spells. You can whistle in place of Verbal components for your Bard spells. Observers unfamiliar with this tradition must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check to recognize your spellcasting for what it is by whistled Verbal components alone.

LEVEL 6: HOMEWARD BOUND

You can whistle to conjure a ghostly train that returns you and your companions to a known destination. When you finish a Long Rest, you can leave a mark at that location using paint, chalk, carving, or some other medium (which can be erased, defaced, or destroyed normally).

Thereafter, you can use this feature to cast *Teleportation Circle* using the mark as the destination. When you cast the spell in this way, a phantom train whisks away creatures who enter the circle, and you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest. You can have a number of marked locations equal to your Charisma modifier at one time (minimum of 1 location). If you mark a location beyond your maximum, one of the previous marks of your choice fades.

When you reach level 9 in this class, you always have *Teleportation Circle* prepared and can use any of your marked locations as the destination when you cast it.

LEVEL 6: RIDE THE RAILS

You can whistle as a Magic action to summon a spectral locomotive into existence. It hurtles forward in a 120-foot-long, 10-foot-wide Line from you, and it passes through objects and creatures.

You and up to six willing creatures of your choice within 30 feet of you can hitch a ride on the train. You teleport to an unoccupied space of your choice in the Line, and any creatures who accompanied you appear in the closest unoccupied spaces to you.

Each other creature in the Line must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or have the Deafened condition until the start of your next turn, be pushed up to 10 feet straight away from the Line's point of origin, and takes an amount of Psychic damage equal to three rolls of your Bardic Inspiration die.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest unless you expend a spell slot of level 3+ (no action required) to restore your use of it.

LEVEL 14: LAST STOP

The ghostly shrill of your whistle now draws the living closer to the world of the dead. As a Magic action, you blow a whistle that is audible up to 300 feet away. Up to six creatures of your choice that you can see within that range must succeed on a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC or be cursed. When a cursed target takes Psychic damage, it has the Frightened condition toward the source of that damage until the end of its next turn. The first time a cursed target takes Psychic damage, it has Vulnerability to Psychic damage. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest unless you expend a spell slot of level 7+ (no action required) to restore your use of it.

WHISTLES AND WANDERINGS

The Wandering Visits table offers suggestions on places you've visited during your travels where you met the various spirits drawn to your whistles. You can use the examples as they're given, mix and match the locations and the spirits, or create your own.

Wandering Visits

1d6	Location
1	You found an abandoned tavern with a single place still set at a table in the corner. A melancholy spirit waited there for someone who would never arrive.
2	Scorched foundations are the only remains of a cottage that burned long ago. The echo of a singing child watched over travelers who stopped there.
3	You stayed in a manor house's haunted tower quarters. The angry spirit there is the remnant of someone who died, old and infirm—helpless to stop the wickedness they saw from afar.
4	The mournful song of a lingering soul drew you to an old, covered bridge—the only place where the spirit found hope in life.
5	An orphanage with a positive reputation housed the hopeful shade of a child who died of sickness. It was a companion to other orphans until they grew or were taken in by homes.
6	A misty roadside meadow was once the site of a terrible battle. The spirit of a soldier who died there vented its fury against con artists and bandits who preyed upon the roadway.



Cleric: HARVEST DOMAIN

Sow, Grow, and Reap in the Harvest Cycle

The Harvest Domain draws from the cycle beginning with creation, reaching abundance, and ending in culling before repeating endlessly. Deities of farming and crops can focus on one of the harvest's aspects, but most draw from each phase of the cycle. Clerics of this domain are drawn to the cyclical nature of existence, and they often take on roles as shepherds of different cycles.

LEVEL 3: COMMUNITY ALMANAC

You gain an Herbalism Kit, and you have proficiency with it. You also gain proficiency in the Nature or Survival skill.

LEVEL 3: HARVEST DOMAIN SPELLS

Whenever you finish a Short or Long Rest, choose an aspect of the harvest cycle: Sowing, Growing, or Reaping. Consult the Harvest Domain Spells table; you have the spells listed in the column of your chosen aspect for your Cleric level and lower prepared.

Harvest Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Sowing	Growing	Reaping
3	*Druidcraft*, *Goodberry*, *Lesser Restoration*	*Guidance*, *Entangle*, *Summer Winds* ⓒ	*Chill Touch*, *Inflict Wounds*, *Hold Person*
5	*Harvest Moonglow* ⓒ	*Plant Growth*	*Culling Sickle* ⓒ
7	*Death Ward*	*Sanctum of the Shepherd* ⓒ	*Consuming Pyre* ⓒ
9	*Awaken*	*Mass Cure Wounds*	*Field of Reaping* ⓒ

LEVEL 3: CORNUCOPIA

If you don't have the Incapacitated condition when you start a Short Rest, you can magically create a cornucopia filled with enough food for a number of creatures equal to twice your Proficiency Bonus. When creatures that eat the food finish a Short Rest, you can distribute a number of d4s equal to your Cleric level among creatures who ate the food. Each creature immediately rolls the dice they're allotted and regains Hit Points equal to the total. The cornucopia and any uneaten food vanish when the Short Rest ends.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 3: BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

As a Magic action, you present your Holy Symbol and expend a use of your Channel Divinity to invoke the spirit of the harvest. Up to six creatures of your choice within 60 feet of you gain Heroic Inspiration. A creature must finish a Long Rest before it can gain Heroic Inspiration from this feature again.

Additionally, you grant all targets one of the following benefits. If your current harvest aspect is a different one, it changes to match the choice.

Sowing. A target gains a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to your Proficiency Bonus plus your Wisdom modifier.

Growing. Until the end of your next turn, when a target makes an attack roll or ability check, it adds 1d4 to the total.

Reaping. A target deals extra Necrotic damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus the first time it damages a creature before the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 6: BLESSING OF THE SEASONS

You can draw upon the powers of the harvest cycle to potentially avert disaster. When a creature you can see within 30 feet of you fails a saving throw of a particular type determined by your current aspect, you can take a Reaction to allow it to reroll the d20 and use the new roll. The type of saving throws you can affect are as follows.

Sowing. Dexterity and Charisma

Growing. Constitution and Intelligence

Reaping. Wisdom and Strength

Additionally, after the saving throw succeeds or fails, roll a number of d4s equal to your Proficiency Bonus. The target regains Hit Points equal to the total rolled.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 17: ETERNAL WHEEL

When you use your Bountiful Harvest, you can invoke the endless cycle of life, death, and rebirth to grant yourself and the creatures affected by your Channel Divinity an additional benefit based on your current aspect:

Sowing. Targets gain the effects of the *Regenerate* spell for 1 minute, or until you lose concentration.

Growing. Targets gain Advantage on saving throws and ability checks for up to 1 hour, or until you lose Concentration (as if concentrating on a spell).

Reaping. Targets gain Resistance to Necrotic, Psychic, and Poison damage for 1 hour.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest unless you expend a spell slot of level 7+ (no action required) to restore your use of it.

RITES OF THE HARVEST

Use the Harvest Rites table for inspiration on observances based on each aspect of the harvest cycle.

Harvest Rites

Sowing Rites
Bury a sacrificial offering into a newly ploughed field, such as dried corn husks, dead fish, robin's egg, or hare's foot
Brew blessed mixtures and concoctions for consumption or irrigation that increase the fertility of crops, livestock, or people
Gift a pouch of seeds to travelers at the start of a journey to ensure they arrive at their destination
Growing Rites
Tend to the sick or injured with natural remedies that utilize pure water, fertile soil, rich ash, or fruit poultice to speed up healing
Bless crops or livestock to usher in favorable weather and a growing season that produces a strong and healthy bounty
Oversee marriages, binding the betrothed with woven grain stalks or linen cords
Reaping Rites
Give funeral rites that return the deceased's body or ashes to the fields, mixing in earth from their home and decaying crops to enrich the soil
Sharpen blades blessed by the harvest gods ahead of a battle or before a harvest to ensure that all that is reaped is offered to the divine
Slaughter adult livestock or reap ripe crops for a feast to celebrate nature's bounty



Druid: CIRCLE OF THE OLD WAYS

Become One with the Ancient Forest

Favoring the heart of the darkest forests, Druids of the Circle of the Old Ways commune with ancient, forgotten entities that lurk within, calling forth truly primeval power to serve as defenders of the oldest and wildest of places.

They harness the power of the Elderwood trees, which are home to the souls of long-dead feyfolk and share their primordial wisdom and might when called upon.

LEVEL 3: CIRCLE OF THE OLD WAYS SPELLS

When you reach a Druid level specified in the Circle of the Old Ways Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Circle of the Old Ways Spells

Druid Level	Prepared Spells
3	*Ancestral Guidance* ☯, *Barkskin*, *Shield of Faith*, *Shillelagh*, *Spike Growth*
5	*Magic Circle*, *Plant Growth*
7	*Freedom of Movement*, *Private Sanctum*
9	*Awaken*, *Tree Stride*

LEVEL 3: BOUGH AND BRANCH

Even the humblest of your weapons channels the might of the old forest. When you cast *Shillelagh*, you can cause a Shield made of gnarled wood to grow into your free hand if you have one (no action required to don it), and it vanishes when the spell ends. You can't be forced to drop the affected weapon or Shield unless you have the Incapacitated condition.

Additionally, for the duration of the spell, you ignore Somatic components of your Druid spells, and the weapon enhanced by the spell becomes a Druidic Focus for you.

LEVEL 3: WOOD WOSE

As a Bonus Action, or as part of casting *Shillelagh*, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape to suffuse yourself with the power of the primordial woods, gaining the following benefits.

Bark Bulwark. While you aren't wearing armor, your base Armor Class is 10 plus your Dexterity and Wisdom modifiers.

Elderwood Sap. When you hit a creature with an attack roll using the weapon enhanced by *Shillelagh*, the target is coated in Elderwood sap until the start of your next turn. While coated, the target has Disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you.

Oaken Resolve. You have Advantage on Strength and Constitution saving throws.

This effect lasts for 10 minutes. It ends early if you dismiss it (no action required), have the Incapacitated condition, or die.

LEVEL 6: OAK AND THORN

The wrath of the Elderwoods drives you and punishes your foes. When you activate your Wood Wose, you gain the following additional benefits for the duration.

Oakenfist. You can attack twice instead of once whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Gnarled Thorns. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a melee attack roll using a weapon, the target takes an extra 1d6 Piercing damage.

LEVEL 10: DEEPWOOD ELDER

Your connection to the Elderwood grows stronger. When you activate your Wood Wose, you now gain additional benefits for the duration.

Primeval Wrath. Once per turn, when you hit a creature with a melee attack, you can force the target to succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or have the Prone condition.

Bramblebark. When a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, the attacker takes 1d8 Piercing damage. A creature takes this damage only once per turn.

Rampant Growth. When you activate Wood Wose and at the start of each of your subsequent turns, you gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to your Wisdom modifier plus your Proficiency Bonus.

LEVEL 14: ANCIENT PROTECTOR

When you awaken your connection to the Elderwood, you now become an incarnation of its ancient might. When you activate your Wood Wose, you now gain additional benefits for the duration.

Old Growth. Your size increases to Large (along with anything you're wearing or carrying) if there is space to accommodate your growth, and your reach increases by 5 feet.

Mighty Trunk. You gain Resistance to Bludgeoning and Piercing damage.

Vengeance of the Elders. When a creature that is covered in Elderwood Sap and is within your reach makes an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to make a melee attack against that creature.

OLD WAYS SACRED SITES

The Old Ways Sacred Sites table offers examples to choose or use as inspiration to create places steeped in the Old Ways where your circle might congregate or where you may commune with primeval powers.

Old Ways Sacred Sites

1d6	Sacred Site
1	Ring of standing stones atop a remote hilltop, each one marked with runes and symbols representing animal spirits
2	Perpetually frozen river at the bottom of a deep ravine with a plethora of oversized and seemingly intelligent fish beneath the ice
3	Hidden cave buried beneath a scorched dune, revealed by the shifting sands for a single night four times a year
4	Turbulent tidepool by the coast with bottomless waters filled with glowing flora, fauna, and crystalline outcroppings
5	Circle of ancient trees with ghost-white bark and blood-red leaves, each one bearing the face of a long-dead druid
6	Massive barrow in the deep woods which contains the spirits of countless fey folk and the old gods of the natural world



Druid: CIRCLE OF WICKER

Craft Effigies of Sacrifice and Protection

Cunning in their ancient art, Druids of the Circle of Wicker fashion twig dolls and effigies, binding their magic into these crude forms. These creations often resemble animals, rune shapes, natural symbols, or people. Protective tokens and promises of retribution against trespassers are these Druids' stock in trade. You can weave the magic of the land through your wicker creations as boons to your friends and banes to your foes.

LEVEL 3: BEWITCHED EFFIGY

Your primal magic can manifest as a wicker effigy and radiate out from it. As a Bonus Action, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape to create a wicker effigy in an unoccupied space you can see within 30 feet of yourself.

The effigy is a Small object (AC 15; HP equal to five times your Druid level; Vulnerability to Fire damage; Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage). The effigy vanishes after 1 minute, when reduced to 0 Hit Points, or when you use this feature again. It radiates one of the following auras (chosen when you create the effigy) in a 30-foot Emanation that is filled with Dim Light.

Sacrifice. When a creature in the aura takes damage, you can take a Reaction to deal Fire damage to the creature equal to 1d8 plus your Wisdom modifier.

Soothe. When you create the effigy, and as a Bonus Action on subsequent turns while the effigy remains, one creature that you can see within the aura regains 1d6 Hit Points. You can use this effigy to restore Hit Points a number of times equal to twice your spellcasting ability modifier.

Ward. You and your allies within the aura gain a +1 bonus to AC.

LEVEL 3: CIRCLE OF WICKER SPELLS

When you reach a Druid level specified in the Circle of Wicker Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Circle of Wicker Spells

Druid Level	Prepared Spells
3	*Bane*, *Bless*, *Summer Winds* C, *Zone of Truth*
5	*Bestow Curse*, *Tiny Hut*
7	*Death Ward*, *Sanctum of the Shepherd* C
9	*Hold Monster*, *Lucky Charm* C

LEVEL 3: WICKER TOKEN

You can weave wicker tokens that carry a touch of your magic. When you finish a Long Rest, you can create a number of tokens equal to your Proficiency Bonus. The tokens are Tiny objects (AC 5; HP 1; Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage). The tokens vanish when you finish your next Long Rest.

You can cast spells with a range of touch on a creature carrying one of your tokens while the two of you are on the same plane of existence.

LEVEL 6: WICKER RISING

The energy you channel through your wicker effigy grows stronger, empowering its benefits.

Sacrifice. The Fire damage increases to 2d8 plus your Wisdom modifier.

Soothe. The healing of your effigy increases to 1d8, and when you target a creature with the effigy, you can expend 5 Hit Points from the effigy to remove one of the following conditions on the target: Charmed, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Stunned.

Ward. Choose a damage type other than Force. You and your allies in the aura have Resistance to the chosen type.

LEVEL 10: SOULBOUND POPPET

As a Magic action, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape and choose a creature you can see within 60 feet of yourself to create a wicker doll that vaguely resembles the target. The doll is a Tiny object (AC 10; HP 10; Vulnerability to Fire damage; Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage). The doll vanishes after 1 minute or when it is reduced to 0 Hit Points. While the doll exists, the target has Disadvantage on attack rolls against a creature carrying the doll, and when a creature carrying the doll damages the target for the first time on a turn, the target takes an extra 2d10 Necrotic damage.

LEVEL 14: WICKER ZENITH

Your wicker effigies reach the pinnacle of their power. At the start of your turn, you can change your effigy's aura to a different one. Additionally, all the auras grow stronger in the following ways.

Sacrifice. The Fire damage increases to 3d8 plus your Wisdom modifier.

Soothe. When you or your allies start a turn in the aura, the Charmed or Frightened condition (target's choice) ends on it.

Ward. Choose an ability. You and each of your allies within the aura have Advantage on saving throws made with the chosen ability.

WICKER EFFIGIES

The effigies, charms, and tokens you weave can take a variety of shapes, each intending a ritualistic effect. Use the Wicker Effigies table for inspiration when determining your wicker token's appearance.

Wicker Effigies

1d12	Effigy
1	Antlered bowman to ensure a successful hunt
2	Bird-headed scarecrow to protect crops from pests and blight
3	Apple-adorned fertility goddess for a bountiful harvest
4	Unsettling stick figures to ward off interlopers from hidden dwellings
5	Goat with curved horns to ensure a safe winter
6	Wolf's head to protect against dangers of the night
7	Crescent moon with a crone's face to amplify magic rituals
8	Fearsome tusked mask to grant ferocity in battle
9	Spiraled sunburst with a grin to herald a long, warm summer
10	Three-sided pyramid with laddered edges to mark the site of a sacrifice
11	Club-wielding troll to guard roads, bridges, and other passageways
12	Intricate ring that represents the cycle of the year to guarantee life, death, and rebirth



Fighter: BARROW GUARD

Command the Might of the Grave

Barrow Guards are warriors who harness the power of the dead, taking upon themselves spectral energies normally forbidden to the living. Some Barrow Guards are those returned from the dead through magical miracles or the whims of the gods. Others stand at the doors of sacred crypts, ready to push back any who attempt to desecrate the dead. No matter their origin, these stoic sentinels are unconcerned with matters of the living. They are separate, other, and duty-bound to their role as crypt-keepers, ensuring the dead—heroes and villains alike—remain at rest.

LEVEL 3: DEATH KNIGHT

You house within you the lingering remnants of souls long-departed, and their knowledge and experience imbue you with necromantic energy. It is represented by Draugr Dice, which fuel powers you have from this subclass. The Barrow Guard Draugr Dice table shows the die size and number of these dice you have when you reach certain Fighter levels.

Barrow Guard Draugr Dice

Fighter Level	Die Size	Number
3	D6	4
5	D8	6
9	D8	8
11	D10	8
13	D10	10
17	D12	12

Some of your powers expend a Draugr Die, as specified in a feature's description, and you can't use a power if it requires you to use a die when all your Draugr Dice are expended.

You regain one expended Draugr Die when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all of them when you finish a Long Rest.

The save DC for any of your powers is 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus.

Dark Rider. As a Bonus Action, you manifest a ghostly steed that only you can mount. The steed uses the **Warhorse** stat block, but its creature type is Undead, it has Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage, and it can only take the Dash, Disengage, and Dodge actions. When the steed takes the Dash action, you can expend and roll a Draugr Die. During the movement from that action, the steed's Speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 times the number rolled. The steed vanishes after 1 hour, if reduced to 0 Hit Points, if you have the Incapacitated condition, or if you die.

Once you take this Bonus Action, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest, unless you expend a Draugr Die (no action required) to restore your use of it.

Grave Guard. When you take damage, you can take a Reaction to expend and roll a Draugr Die. Reduce the damage you take by the number rolled plus your Constitution modifier.

Soul Reaper. When you take the Attack action, you can forego one of your attacks to magically call forth ghostly hands around a creature within 60 feet of yourself. Expend and roll a Draugr Die. The target must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, it takes Necrotic damage equal to the number rolled on the Draugr Die plus your Constitution modifier, and it has the Grappled condition (escape DC = your Death Knight power save DC) for 1 minute. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage only.

LEVEL 7: SIPHONING SOULS

You can capture the fleeing essence of departing souls to glean knowledge and prowess. You gain the following benefits.

Mortal Coil. When an enemy that isn't a Construct or Undead within 30 feet of you dies, you can take a Reaction to regain one expended Draugr Die.

Whisper of the Departed. When you make an ability check, you can expend and roll a Draugr Die and add the number rolled to the total.

LEVEL 10: TOMB CASTELLAN

The powers of your Death Knight feature improve in the following ways.

Phantom Charger. The ghostly steed of your Dark Rider power now ignores Difficult Terrain. Additionally, when your steed takes the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge action, you can expend and roll a Draugr Die. Your steed magically teleports (with you if you're riding it) to an unoccupied space you can see within 60 feet of the steed. Each creature of your choice within 10 feet of the steed when it appears must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, taking Necrotic damage equal to the number rolled on the Draugr Die plus your Constitution modifier on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Death Knell. When you use your Grave Guard power in response to a creature damaging you, the creature takes Psychic damage equal to half the amount of damage the power reduced.

Spectral Shrieking. When a creature Grappled by your Soul Reaper power starts its turn, it takes Psychic damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus. When it does, you can take a Reaction to expend and roll a Draugr Die, adding the number rolled to the damage.

LEVEL 15: GRAVE LORD

You are no longer a mere vessel for spectral energy, but a lord of it. Your powers improve in the following ways.

On A Pale Horse. When you use your Dark Rider power, you can allow one creature of your choice to mount the steed in addition to you.

Additionally, when you expend a Draugr Die during the steed's Dash action, it can move through solid objects and creatures as if they were Difficult Terrain (along with any riders). If the steed ends its turn inside a solid object, it and any riders take 1d10 Force damage and are shunted to the nearest unoccupied space.

Sepulchral Shield. When you use your Grave Guard power, choose one of the triggering damage types. You have Resistance to that damage type (including the triggering damage) until the start of your next turn.

Death Grip. A creature Grappled by your Soul Reaper power has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

LEVEL 18: MIGHT OF THE NECROPOLIS

Your command of the secrets imparted to you is absolute. You gain the following benefits.

Eternal Vigil. You no longer suffer the effects of aging, you can't be magically aged, and you don't die of old age. In addition, you no longer require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Restless Dead. When you roll Initiative, if you have fewer than 3 Draugr Dice, you regain expended dice until you have 3.



Monk: WARRIOR OF THE PESTILENT HAZE

Spread Virulent Plague with a Touch

Warriors of the Pestilent Haze draw plague into their very beings, folding it into their energy and becoming one with the disease. Monks who follow this tradition wander, often following or even preceding waves of pestilence. Some walk with caution, their touch measured, unleashing sickness only where dense populations must be culled. Others revel in the miasma spreading as far and fast as possible.

LEVEL 3: CONTAGIOUS DISCIPLINE

You have brewed and concentrated disease within yourself and can now push manifestations of it outward. You gain the following benefits.

Claws of Pestilence. Your nails grow into a set of vermin-like claws. You can deal Slashing damage when you hit with an Unarmed Strike instead of Bludgeoning damage. When you hit a creature with an attack granted by your Flurry of Blows, you deal extra Necrotic damage equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die.

Miasmic Plague. When you hit a creature with an Unarmed Strike, you can expend 1 Focus Point to force the creature to succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be cursed for 1 minute. While cursed, the creature has the Poisoned condition, and it takes extra Necrotic damage from your Unarmed Strikes equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die. A creature can take this damage only once per turn. The creature repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

If you forego the extra damage granted by Claws of Pestilence, you can use Miasmic Plague without paying its Focus Point cost.

LEVEL 3: GIFT OF PESTILENCE

Through your observation and meditation, you are attuned to the nature of pestilence and the creatures believed to carry it. You gain the following benefits.

Inoculation. You have Advantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Poisoned condition or magical contagions, and you have Resistance to Poison and Necrotic damage.

Vermin Kinship. Through chittering sounds and hand gestures, you can communicate simple concepts to vermin, such as rats, pigeons, and insects, and you gain the ability to decipher their noises and motions. Vermin lack the intelligence to convey or understand sophisticated concepts, but Friendly vermin could relay what they have seen or heard in the recent past.

Additionally, you can cast *Animal Messenger* using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability targeting a Tiny Beast that is considered vermin and thought to spread plague and disease. Once you cast the spell in this way, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 6: POTENT PLAGUE

The strain of your plague becomes more virulent and deadly. When you deal Necrotic or Poison damage, you ignore the target's Resistance to those damage types, if any.

LEVEL 6: TOLLING CENSER

You can unleash a cloud of miasma upon your enemies. As a Magic action, you can expend 2 Focus Points to unleash a cloud of miasma in a 20-foot Emanation originating from you. Each creature of your choice in that area must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes Necrotic damage equal to two rolls of your Martial Arts die and is cursed by your Miasmic Plague. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage only.

LEVEL 11: MIASMIC CONTAGION

The strength of your Miasmic Plague has increased, granting you the following benefits.

Choking Miasma. Constitution saving throws against your Miasmic Plague have Disadvantage.

Scurrying Spread. When you expend 1 Focus Point to use your Step of the Wind, until the end of the turn, when you enter a space within 5 feet of any creature of your choice, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be cursed by your Miasmic Plague. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

LEVEL 17: EPIDEMIC

Your plague has reached the height of its potency and its symptoms rapidly afflict your foes. Your Miasmic Plague ignores a target's Immunity to the Poisoned condition. Additionally, when you deal Necrotic damage to a target cursed by your Miasmic Plague, it takes extra Necrotic damage equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die.

MIASMIC PLAGUE MANIFESTATIONS

Your Miasmic Plague is a unique magical contagion that can take many forms that you weave through your deep connection to the affliction. The Plague Manifestations table offers suggestions for what magical form your signature disease takes as it spreads, as well as its hallmark symptoms.

Plague Manifestations

1d10	Manifestation
1	**Bloodbreath.** Bruise-colored miasma, the edges of which form into slithering tentacles—painful bruises and a hoarse, bloody cough
2	**Drone Spew.** Swarm of monstrous, mutated flies that buzz with a horrifying drone—bleeding ears and intense vomiting
3	**Festergut.** Viscous, gray sewer water that leaves a film on surfaces—intense stomach pain, dehydration, and blood loss
4	**Gutterpox.** Globs of toxic, greenish sludge that oozes erratically to the touch—swollen, green papules and oppressive mucus buildup
5	**Knell Fever.** Hot wind that prickles the skin and howls with the sound of a tolling bell—heat blisters and feverish hallucinations
6	**Rotface.** Numerous spiked, fungal spores that float through the air—rapid rotting of flesh, especially around the eyes and mouth
7	**The Unclean.** Undulating mass of pallid flesh, teeth, and tongues—grotesque, mutated growths such as new tentacle-like appendages and gnashing mouths
8	**Toadscale.** Infected rains filled with venomous, spectral toads—hardened, itchy patches of scaly skin that turn vibrantly colorful and fits of agonized croaking
9	**Verminplague.** Scurrying mass of ravenous, spectral plague rats that gnaw and scratch victims—painful boils and pustules and an incessant, squeaking cough
10	**Yellow Death.** Billowing, skull-shaped clouds of foul-smelling fumes with a sickly yellow hue—debilitating fatigue, muscle aches, and sunken, sallow skin



Paladin: OATH OF CASTIGATION

Seek Out and Burn Wickedness to Ash

Evil and wickedness are widespread and long-lived, but not infinite. Paladins who swear the Oath of Castigation root evil out to burn it away utterly, giving light to all that is innocent and good. Whether bound by the laws of mortals, their deity, or their own personal code, they relentlessly hunt down evil where it thrives. Paladins of this oath know evil cannot hide in any festering place once it burns.

These paladins share the following tenets:

- Burn away all doubt in pursuit of duty.
- Purge the wicked and corrupt; spare the innocent.
- Sin is forgiven through suffering equal to the pain it inflicted.

LEVEL 3: CASTIGATE

As a Magic action, you can expend one use of your Channel Divinity to clap those you would bring to justice in fiery shackles. Choose a number of creatures up to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1 creature) you can see within 30 feet of yourself. Each creature must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be wrapped in fiery shackles and have its Speed reduced to 0. As a Bonus Action, you can cause the shackles to flare. Each creature bound by the shackles takes 2d6 Fire damage. A shackled creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

LEVEL 3: INCITE

As a Magic action, you can expend one use of your Channel Divinity to better seek out wickedness and corruption. For the next 10 minutes, you have Advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Insight) checks.

During that time, you can take a Bonus Action to choose a creature you can see within 10 feet of you. The target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or have the Frightened condition for 1 minute. While the target is Frightened in this way, it can't speak a deliberate lie. The condition ends early if the target takes damage or if you use this Bonus Action again.

LEVEL 3: OATH OF CASTIGATION SPELLS

The magic of your oath ensures you always have certain spells ready; when you reach a Paladin level specified in the Oath of Castigation Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Oath of Castigation Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3	*Divine Favor*, *Inflict Wounds*
5	*Chain of Conviction* C, *Hold Person*
9	*Counterspell*, *Speak with Dead*
13	*Consuming Pyre* C, *Locate Creature*
17	*Flame Strike*, *Hold Monster*

LEVEL 7: KINDLING AURA

You and your allies within your Aura of Protection ignore creatures' Resistance to Fire and Radiant damage, and when an affected creature hits with a weapon attack, it can deal Fire damage instead of the weapon's normal damage type.

In addition, you and affected creatures in the aura can add your Charisma modifier (minimum of +1) to Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Insight) checks.

LEVEL 15: FERVENT INQUISITOR

Whenever a creature damages you or one of your allies within 30 feet of you that you can see, you can take a Reaction to gain Advantage on your next attack roll against the creature that dealt the damage.

Additionally, whenever you deal Fire or Radiant damage to a Bloodied creature, you become aware of any lies the creature has willingly and knowingly spoken to you in the past 24 hours.

LEVEL 20: FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

As a Bonus Action, you embody cleansing flame and gain the benefits below for 10 minutes or until you end them (no action required). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest. You can also restore your use of it by expending a level 5 spell slot (no action required).

Blazing Ardor. You gain Immunity to Fire damage.

Relentless Judgment. Lashes of divine flame increase your reach by 10 feet, and your melee attacks ignore Half and Three-Quarters Cover.

Punish the Wicked. When you hit a creature with an Opportunity Attack, or when a Hostile creature ends its turn within your reach, it must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or have the Prone condition and its Speed is reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

WICKED NEMESES

The Wicked Nemeses table offers examples of malefactors, villains, and other evil beings that you have rooted out and purged in the past, or perhaps one you're still hunting. Facing these nemeses may have put you on the path of purging wickedness wherever it lurks.

Wicked Nemeses

1d12	Nemesis
1	A rotting vampire noble who spreads a deadly plague through the command of countless vermin
2	A brutal contract killer who sells their services to various cults and shadowy organizations
3	A charismatic cult leader who lords over a remote island, making seasonal sacrifices of mortals to ensure a bountiful harvest each year
4	An immensely intelligent flesh golem that killed its creator to pursue its own sinister work with strange science and gruesome experiments
5	A bitterly envious hag of the woods who corrupts the youth of small villages and manipulates them to commit horrific atrocities
6	A proud and vain heretic who gathers zealous followers after a bloody schism to initiate a brutal crusade in the name of their twisted beliefs
7	A once-renowned hunter now cursed with lycanthropy who has gone on bloody rampages
8	A relentless necromancer who scours ancient ruins for forbidden magic to free their otherworldly master from an eldritch prison
9	A strange amphibious creature that emerges from the depths to kidnap innocents and drag them below the water's surface for unknown purposes
10	A brilliant doctor who has perfected a serum that transforms them into a hulking brute to commit a string of murders throughout a city
11	A bloodthirsty revenant who was once a dark knight and now musters other Undead riders to bring about death and decay
12	A tortured artist bearing a mask of comedy and tragedy who strives for their masterpiece through the mutilation of their victims' corpses



Ranger: GRIM HARBINGER

Seal Fate as an Omen of Doom

Grim harbingers wander places touched by death, serving as both a watcher of the dead and the herald of doom for those whose lives are running out. At their side is a guardian spirit and omen of death known as a grim, a constant companion that aids in performing their shared, grave duty.

LEVEL 3: GRIM HARBINGER SPELLS

When you reach a Ranger level specified in the Grim Harbinger Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spell prepared.

Grim Harbinger Spells

Ranger Level	Spells
3	*Bane*
5	*Hold Person*
9	*Fear*
13	*Intrusive Despair*
17	*Dream*

LEVEL 3: OMEN OF DOOM

As a Bonus Action, you target a creature you can see within 90 feet of you and magically seal its doom for 1 hour. Once per turn when you hit the doomed target with an attack, it takes an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage.

In addition, a ghostly creature called the **Grim** appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the target. Grims most often appear as black, spectral hounds, but you can choose an appearance appropriate to its stat block.

The grim is Friendly to you and your allies, and it obeys your commands. It vanishes if you die, when the doomed creature dies, when it is reduced to 0 Hit Points, or when you use this feature again.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Short or Long Rest. You can also expend a spell slot to restore an expended use (no action required).

The Grim in Combat. In combat, the grim acts during your turn. It can move and use its Reaction on its own, but the only action it takes is the Dodge action unless you take a Bonus Action to command it to take an action in its stat block or some other action. You can also command it as part of the Bonus Action you take to use Omen of Doom, or you can sacrifice one of your attacks when you take the Attack action to command the grim to take the Ominous Rend action. If you have the Incapacitated condition, the grim acts on its own and is not limited to the Dodge action.

LEVEL 7: HARBINGER OF DOOM

Your control over doom grows stronger, granting the following benefits.

Graveyard Hunter. The Grim's Ominous Rend action deals an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage on a hit.

Mortal Reminder. When you deal damage to a creature doomed by your Omen of Doom, you can change the damage type to Necrotic.

Mounting Dread. Necrotic damage dealt by you or the grim ignores Resistance.

LEVEL 11: GRAVE BOND

You draw deeper strength from the grave. You gain the following benefits.

Ghastly Hound. The grim gains Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage.

Grave Fortitude. You gain Resistance to Necrotic damage.

Inescapable Fate. When the target of your Omen of Doom succeeds on a saving throw, you can take a Reaction to force it to reroll the save with Disadvantage and use the new roll. Once you cause a save to fail with this benefit, you can't use it again until the current Omen of Doom ends.

LEVEL 15: SEALED FATE

The strength of your Omen of Doom reaches its peak, granting the following benefits while it is active.

Jaws of Doom. The Grim's Ominous Rend action deals an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage (for a total of 2d6 extra damage).

Marked for Death. When you use Omen of Doom, you can force the target to make a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, until the current Omen of Doom ends, the target has Vulnerability to damage dealt by the grim and to the extra damage you deal with Omen of Doom. Once you use this benefit, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest. You can also restore your use of it by expending a level 4+ spell slot (no action required).

GRIM

Medium Undead, Neutral

AC 13 plus your Wisdom modifier
HP 5 plus five times your Ranger level (the grim has a number of Hit Dice [d8s] equal to your Ranger level)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+3	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Immunities Necrotic; Frightened, Grappled, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10
Languages Understands the languages you know
CR None (XP 0; PB equals your Proficiency Bonus)

TRAITS

Incorporeal Movement. The grim can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. The grim takes 1d10 Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Shared Fate. Add your Proficiency Bonus to any ability check or saving throw the grim makes.

ACTIONS

Ominous Rend. *Melee Attack Roll:* Bonus equals your spell attack modifier, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 plus your Wisdom modifier Necrotic damage, and if the target is a creature, it has the Frightened condition until the start of your next turn.

REACTIONS

Baleful Howl. *Trigger:* A creature moves out of the grim's reach. *Response—Wisdom Saving Throw:* Your spell save DC, the triggering creature. *Failure:* The target's Speed is 0 until the end of the turn.



Rogue: SINNER

Deal in Vice to Jinx Foes and Bend Luck

Vice clings to Sinners like a second skin—cheating, drunkenness, and games of chance are their bread and blood. A scoundrel by nature, sin calls their name, and when whispers of malefic powers reach their ears, they listen. Those powers offer more than temptation; they grant the tools to deceive, steal, and even kill with a precision these rogues never dreamed of.

Perhaps it begins with a meeting in a seedy saloon, a ritual under desert skies, or a cursed temple found deep in the jungle. No matter the road, the end is always the same: Jinxcraft. Through hexes, curses, and foul magic, Sinners cast aside judgment and righteousness. The laws of man and gods are nothing to them. Only the cold comfort of the path of sin remains.

LEVEL 3: HEX SLINGER

When you deal damage to a creature with your Sneak Attack, you can unleash the power of your Jinxcraft. When you roll your Sneak Attack dice, designate two of the dice before the roll (such as rolling them separately or using different colored dice). The total rolled on these dice determines the effect of your Jinxcraft as noted on the Hex Slinger Jinxes table. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Short Rest.

LEVEL 3: GET JINXED

You have learned the secret art of Jinxcrafting—drawing magical power from the dark deeds and deals of sin. You gain the following benefits.

Cards and Bones. You gain proficiency with two Gaming Sets of your choice (playing cards and dice recommended).

Jinx Weapon. As a 1-hour ritual using a Gaming Set, you magically create a jinx weapon that channels your Jinxcraft. This weapon takes the form of a Pistol or a Gaming Set (which uses Pistol game statistics). For you, the jinx weapon ignores the Loading property and creates its own ammunition that deals Force damage. In Gaming Set form, you throw cards, dice, or other Gaming Set pieces, or you use them to unleash bolts of hex magic. Alternatively, you can imbue Jinxcraft into a Simple or Martial weapon you have proficiency with, turning it into your jinx weapon. The infused jinx weapon deals Force damage instead of its normal type. If you create a second jinx weapon, the first vanishes or its Jinxcraft ends.

Parlor Trick. You learn one of the following cantrips of your choice: *Dancing Lights*, *Mage Hand*, *Minor Illusion*, *Mysterious Presence*, or *Prestidigitation*. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.

Hex Slinger Jinxes

2d6	Jinx
2	**Snake Eyes.** On the target's next turn, it can only do one of the following: move or take an action or a Bonus Action. If it targets you or your allies with an attack on that turn, it takes 2d6 Psychic damage.
3–4	**The Nightmare.** The target has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn, and it must immediately take a Reaction to move as far as it can away from you, up to its Speed.
5–6	**Whiskey Bottle.** The target drops anything it's holding. Until the end of its next turn, when the target picks up an item, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or drop the item immediately.
7	**Cheap Shot.** Until the end of its next turn, the target's Speed is halved, and for that duration, attack rolls against it have Advantage.
8–9	**Withered Arm.** Until the end of its next turn, the target has Disadvantage on D20 Tests that rely on Strength.
10–11	**Bad Luck.** Until the end of its next turn, when the target makes an attack roll or a saving throw, it subtracts 1d6 from the total.
12	**Dead Man.** If the next attack roll you make before the end of your next turn misses, it hits instead. If that first attack roll hits, the attack is automatically a Critical Hit. If you roll a 20 on the d20, roll the attack's damage dice three times instead of twice.

LEVEL 9: BORROWED LUCK

When you use Hex Slinger, you siphon away a sliver of the target's luck. You gain Heroic Inspiration if you don't already have it. If you do have it, you can expend your Heroic Inspiration instead of expending a use of Hex Slinger.

LEVEL 13: PICK YOUR POISON

When you use Hex Slinger, you can roll the designated Sneak Attack dice twice and choose which total to use.

If the roll you choose is the same number on both dice, the target takes Psychic damage equal to half your level. If the roll you choose is a 2 or a 12, you don't expend that use of Hex Slinger.

LEVEL 17: THE OTHER SIDE

You can call on your otherworldly friends in low places to change the odds of anything you do in your favor. You gain the following benefits.

Crossroads Devilry. When you miss with an attack roll or fail a saving throw, you can expend and roll any number of your Sneak Attack dice (choose the number before you roll) and add the total rolled to the attack or save, potentially turning a miss into a hit or failure into success. Expended dice return after you next use your Sneak Attack.

Lady Luck's Smiling. When a creature hits you with an attack roll, you can expend and roll any number of your Sneak Attack dice (choose the number before you roll) and add the total rolled to your AC against that attack, potentially causing the attack to miss. Expended dice return after you next use your Sneak Attack.

JINX WEAPON FORMS

Sinners wield their Jinxcraft through a wide variety of jinxed items that serve as magical weapons. The Jinx Weapon Forms table offers suggestions for how your jinx weapon might appear.

Jinx Weapon Forms

1d4	Weapon Form
1	A wooden, glyph-covered talisman carved into the shape of a pistol that fires magenta blasts
2	A pair of bone dice that shoot ghastly green bursts of jinxcraft from their pips
3	Enchanted playing cards that can be thrown with explosive magical power
4	A lucky coin that launches toward foes when flipped and always returns



Sorcerer: CRIMSON SORCERY

Control the Vital Power of Your Lifeblood

Crimson Sorcerers harness the ancient magic of blood and life essence. They twist and guide the flow of this quintessential energy as a hunger grows deep within them. They manipulate their power to infuse the vitality of others, or they can rip it away and steal it for themselves.

Crimson sorcery can be acquired in a variety of ways. Some with this power were born with it. Others were infused with it through a dark ritual or grim event. There are those who discover it through lost secrets.

Consult the Crimson Origins table for a possible origin of your power.

LEVEL 3: BLOOD WELL

You hold a reserve of vital energy called your Blood Well, which you can use to empower your magic and fuel other powers from this subclass. When you deal damage or restore Hit Points to a creature, you can expend your Blood Well to add 1d8 to the total for one target.

You regain your expended Blood Well when you finish a Long Rest or when a creature takes 10 or more Necrotic damage from you at one time.

LEVEL 3: CRIMSON SPELLS

When you reach a Sorcerer level specified in the Crimson Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Crimson Spells

Sorcerer Level	Spells
3	*Aid*, *Blood Bolt* ✪, *Cure Wounds*, *Inflict Wounds*, *Blood Sacrifice* ✪
5	*Crimson Harvest* ✪, *Vampiric Touch*
7	*Death Ward*, *Sacrificial Siphon* ✪
9	*Field of Reaping* ✪, *Mass Cure Wounds*

LEVEL 6: POOL OF BLOOD

As a Bonus Action, you can expend your Blood Well to magically dissolve into a pool of blood, along with everything you're wearing or carrying, for 1 hour. The transformation ends early if you drop to 0 Hit Points or if you choose to end it (no action required).

While you are a pool of blood, you use your game statistics with the following changes.

- Your Speed becomes 10 feet.
- You gain Climb and Swim Speeds equal to your Speed, and you can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.
- You have Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage.
- You have Immunity to the Prone condition.
- You have Advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws.
- You can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks.
- You can enter and occupy the space of another creature.
- You can't drop, use, or otherwise interact with anything you were carrying or holding.
- You can't talk, manipulate objects, attack, or cast spells.

LEVEL 6: SCARLET VIGOR

You have Resistance to Necrotic damage. In addition, when you finish a Short Rest, you can expend your Blood Well to reduce your Exhaustion level, if any, by 1.

LEVEL 14: VITAL SIPHONING

You can feed on your own life essence to fuel your magic. As a Bonus Action, you can expend a Hit Point Die and choose one of the following benefits.

Blood Boil. You regain the use of your Blood Well.

Crimson Pulse. Expend your Blood Well to make the next Metamagic option you use this turn cost no Sorcery Points.

LEVEL 18: SANGUINE FEAST

Your hunger for vital essence is unquenchable. As a Magic action, you can unleash tendrils of blood that lash any creatures of your choice within 30 feet of you. A target must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 5d8 Necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If your Blood Well is already expended when you use this action, the targets have Disadvantage on the saving throw. If at least one creature takes damage from Sanguine Feast, you regain a number of Hit Points equal to the damage roll.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest, unless you spend 5 Sorcery Points to use it again.

> **VARIANT: BLOODLESS CRIMSON SORCERERS**
>
> If you're playing a character from a species that lacks blood in the traditional sense, you can still take the Crimson Sorcery subclass. The essence of Crimson Sorcery is lifeforce, or animating energy that approximates life.

CRIMSON ORIGINS

There are a variety of ways you might have received the ability to harness your Crimson Sorcery to manipulate vitality and life essence. The Crimson Origins table offers suggestions of where your power comes from.

Crimson Origins

1d6	Origin
1	One of your parents was a vampire. Though you aren't one yourself, you inherited their hunger, and it drives your magic.
2	You studied blood rites at a monastery that infused your own blood with power.
3	You survived a vampire's bite, though it left you forever changed and awakened your sorcery.
4	Your family suffers under a generational curse that has reared its head with you, driving you to drain vital energy.
5	You studied the secrets of life and death, perhaps to save yourself or a loved one. In so doing, you unlocked the crimson power in your blood.
6	You died, and a cunning entity offered you a second chance at life. You accepted and awoke with crimson sorcery coursing through your veins.



Warlock: GREAT FOOL PATRON

Laugh in the Face of Danger with Foolish Antics

What horrors and sorrows can't be remedied by maniacal laughter? Warlocks that have made a pact with the Great Fool draw their enigmatic power from a powerful, otherworldly being of jolly revelry, whose twisted sense of humor is lost on mortal understanding. They are a mocking mirror to bring low the arrogant and mighty, though the Great Fool's ultimate designs are often nonsensical and incomprehensible.

LEVEL 3: GREAT FOOL SPELLS

The magic of your patron ensures you always have certain spells ready; when you reach a Warlock level specified in the Great Fool Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Great Fool Spells

Warlock Level	Spells
3	*Disguise Self*, *Hideous Laughter*, *Rope Trick*, *Spiritual Weapon*, *Vicious Mockery*
5	*Blink*, *Stinking Cloud*
7	*Phantasmal Killer*, *Puppet Master*
9	*Arcane Hand*, *Mislead*

LEVEL 3: KILLING JOKE

You see the humor in everything—especially in the end of things. When a creature you can see within 60 feet of you takes damage or fails a saving throw, you can take a Reaction to cast *Vicious Mockery* on that creature. You can use this Reaction a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once). You regain one expended use when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 6: JESTER'S JAPES

By calling down an aspect of the Great Fool, you can curse your foes. As a Magic action, you target a creature you can see within 60 feet of you and force it to succeed on a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC or suffer one of the following curses (your choice).

Flower Spurt. You spray a strange liquid at the creature's eyes, giving it the Blinded condition.

Clown Shoes. The creature's feet or similar appendages grow to awkwardly exaggerated proportions. The creature's Speed is halved, and it has Disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws that rely on Dexterity.

Honk Honk. The creature emits sounds, such as honks, chimes, or squeaks, that are audible out to 100 feet with every movement, no matter how slight. The creature can't benefit from the Invisible condition.

Jolly Arms. Any weapon or Unarmed Strike the creature attacks with, including natural weapons such as fangs and claws, takes on a comical appearance as if it were made of wood, stuffed cloth, or balloons. The target deals half damage with weapon attacks and Unarmed Strikes.

The curse lasts for 1 minute. The creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the curse on a success.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

LEVEL 10: MOCKING BANTER

Your witty and insulting japes become biting to the point of needling your foes' very psyche. When a creature damages you, you can take a Reaction to force the creature to make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature takes Psychic damage equal to the triggering damage you took, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Once you use this Reaction, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

LEVEL 14: SEND IN THE CLOWNS

You can call upon the laughing, jeering spirits of the followers of the Great Fool to strike down your foes. As a Magic action, you summon three ghostly fools. The fools are translucent and intangible, and they resemble clowns, jesters, or similar entertainers. Make up to three melee spell attacks against creatures within 60 feet of you. On a hit, a target takes 2d10 Psychic damage and has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn, or the Prone condition (your choice). You can use your action on subsequent turns to repeat the attacks.

The fools remain for 1 minute or until you have the Incapacitated condition or you die. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.

FOOLISH PERSONAS

Many Warlocks of the Great Fool adopt a signature aesthetic and performance style that best represents their folly. The Foolish Personas table offers archetypes of fools with suggestions for corresponding outfits and routines.

Foolish Personas

1d6	Persona
1	**The Harlequin.** An elegant outfit of diamond motley with a painted mask—performs dances, gives eloquent speeches, and plays tricks
2	**The Jester.** A two-toned, checkered motley outfit with cap and bells—favors feats of acrobatics, tumbling, and juggling
3	**The Joker.** A vibrant, colorful suit with wild hair and bowler hat—favors silly jokes, slapstick comedy, and clumsy self-deprecation
4	**The Mime.** A striped, black-and-white shirt with a flat cap and red suspenders—pantomimes comical scenarios without speaking
5	**The Sad Clown.** A monochromatic, one-piece outfit with pointed hat and puffball buttons—utilizes melodramatic melancholy and song
6	**The Tramp.** A patch-covered coat, tattered scarf, scuffed shoes, and cigar—leverages sardonic wit, insults, and mocking observations



Warlock: HORNED KING PATRON

Live Deliciously with Bewitching Power

Whether motivated by desperation or cunning, warlocks that have signed their name in the book of the Horned King have chosen to live deliciously in a pact sealed in blood and a corrupted soul. Bestowed the power of witchcraft by the beast that stalks the deepest woods and darkest hearts, they perfect ancient rituals and weave maledictions toward aims only they know. With each victim of their malign spells filled with rot, hate, and agony, they become more like their patron until they effortlessly wield his kingly might.

LEVEL 3: HORNED KING SPELLS

The magic of your patron ensures you always have certain spells ready; when you reach a Warlock level specified in the Horned King Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

Horned King Spells

Warlock Level	Spells
3	*Animal Friendship, Bane, Spike Growth, Suggestion*
5	*Bestow Curse, Fly*
7	*Phantasmal Killer, Polymorph*
9	*Dominate Person, Scrying*

LEVEL 3: WITCH MARK

When you finish a Long Rest, you can imbue magic into a nonmagical Tiny object you're holding. Choose one of your prepared Warlock spells that has a casting time of an action. A creature holding the marked object can take a Magic action to cast the spell (using your Charisma

modifier, spell attack bonus, or spell save DC). The mark fades when the spell is cast from it or when you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 3: MALEDICTION

You can call upon the Horned King's malice to manipulate luck and fate. As a Magic action, you can curse a creature you can see within 60 feet of you until the end of its next turn. Alternatively, when a creature within range targets you with an attack roll or a spell, you can take a Reaction to curse the creature with your choice of one of the curses below. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Agony. The target has Disadvantage on its next attack roll or Constitution saving throw to maintain Concentration (your choice).

Hate. The target has Disadvantage on its next Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw (your choice).

Rot. The next time the target takes damage, it takes an extra 1d10 Necrotic damage, and it can't regain Hit Points until the end of its next turn.

LEVEL 6: SPITEFUL CURSE

When you use Malediction, you can now cast *Bestow Curse* once without a spell slot as the action or Reaction for that feature, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. If the target succeeds on its saving throw against the spell, your use of this feature isn't expended.

When you cast the spell in this way, its range becomes 60 feet, and it lasts 1 minute with no Concentration required. If the target succeeds on its saving throw against the spell, choose one of the Malediction curses, and the target suffers that curse instead.

LEVEL 10: CROWN OF HORNS

As a Bonus Action, you can manifest the majestic might of the Horned King for 1 minute. For the duration, a visible mark appears on you—such as a crown made of horns surmounting your head, or you grow great antlers—and you gain the benefits listed below. Once you use this Bonus Action, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest unless you expend a Pact Magic spell slot (no action required) to restore your use of it.

Dark Heart. Once on each of your turns when you damage a creature, the target takes an extra 1d8 Necrotic damage.

King of All. You radiate an aura of power in a 20-foot Emanation that originates from you. When you activate this feature, and at the start of each of your turns, you can choose a creature you can see in the aura. The target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC or suffer one of the following effects of your choice until the start of your next turn:

ENTICEMENT. The target has the Charmed condition.

WICKEDNESS. The target has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

TERROR. The target has the Frightened condition and must move away from you by the safest route during its turn unless there is nowhere to move.

LEVEL 14: GATHER THE COVEN

You can now share the Horned King's power with those you deem worthy. You perform a 1-hour ritual, which can be done during a rest, forming a bond with up to six willing creatures that must remain within 10 feet of you during the ritual. You can end the bond for any number of the creatures (no action required), and the bond ends when you die. The bond grants the following benefits.

Witchcraft. Choose one of the curses from your Malediction feature. The bonded creatures can now each use that Reaction option once, and they regain the ability to do so when they finish a Long Rest.

Fly By Night. As a Bonus Action, choose one of the bonded creatures. If you and the target are on the same plane of existence, you magically teleport to the nearest unoccupied space next to the creature. You can use this benefit once, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a Short or Long Rest. If your Crown of Horns feature is active when you use this Bonus Action, the use isn't expended.

Hand of the King. While your Crown of Horns feature is active, the first time a bonded creature damages another creature during its turn, the target takes an extra 1d10 Necrotic damage.

WITCHCRAFT IMPLEMENTS

Warlocks of the Horned King prefer particular implements in working their magic. The Witchcraft Implements table offers options for your favored reagents.

Witchcraft Implements

1d6	Implements
1	Candles made from tallow mixed with blood
2	Dried bundles of herbs or mushrooms
3	Skulls or long bones carved with glyphs
4	Crushed berries or roots mixed into a paste
5	Iron cauldron marked with symbols
6	Curved blade for offering animal sacrifices



Wizard: OCCULTIST

Seek Beyond the Stars for Forbidden Knowledge

Wizardry urges the relentless pursuit of knowledge that pushes every boundary in search of greater power and understanding, but some boundaries are never meant to be crossed. Occultists care not for these limitations, peering behind cosmic veils, devouring forbidden secrets, and pushing their understanding of spellcraft until reality itself tears open. It is from the strange, alien realms that are revealed which they draw even greater power, shattering all limits no matter the eldritch consequences.

LEVEL 3: FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

In your study of proscribed power, you learn Deep Speech or another language of your choice.

In addition, choose a level 1 spell from the Warlock spell list. You always have it prepared. You can change your chosen spell when you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 3: INTRUSION

Your search into the forbidden reaches beyond the universe yields great power but comes at the risk of letting something from beyond intrude into your reality.

You have an Intrusion Die, which starts at a d6, that can change as you use your features. The die can increase or decrease, along this progression of die sizes: d2, d3, d4, d6, d8, d10, d12.

The size maximum for your Intrusion Die is its starting size, which increases by one step when you reach Wizard levels 5 (d8), 11 (d10), and 17 (d12).

When you use a feature that risks Intrusion, roll your Intrusion Die. On a 2 or higher, no Intrusion occurs, and the Intrusion die reduces in size one step on the progression.

On a roll of 1, the Intrusion Die rises in size one step, and you roll on the Intrusion table to determine what happens as reality fractures. Intrusions use your spell save DC.

The Intrusion Die increases in size by one step (up to its starting size) when you finish a Short Rest, and it resets to its starting size when you finish a Long Rest.

Additionally, you can focus alien potency into your spells. When you cast a spell using a spell slot, you can risk Intrusion to choose one of the following.

Overwhelming Mind. One target of the spell has Disadvantage on the first saving throw made against it.

Seeking Eye. You have Advantage on the first attack roll you make for the spell.

LEVEL 6: REALITY TEAR

Choose a spell of level 3 or lower from the Warlock spell list. You always have the spell prepared. You can change your chosen spell when you finish a Long Rest. When you cast the spell, you can risk Intrusion to remove the need to Concentrate on it, and the spell ends after 1 minute or its normal duration, whichever is shorter.

Additionally, you can cause an automatic Intrusion (and increase the die's size one step, up to its starting size) to cast the spell once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a Long Rest.

Intrusion

1d12	Effect
1	You feel a presence behind you that whispers incomprehensible things into your soul. Until the end of your next turn, you can only do one of the following on a turn: take an action, a Bonus Action, or move.
2	Space twists and melts in a 30-foot Emanation around you. Each creature (including you) in the area struggles against the warping of reality. An affected creature's Speed is halved until the end of your next turn.
3	The nearest other creature within 60 feet of you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take Necrotic damage equal to two rolls of your Intrusion Die (at its starting size), and you regain a number of Hit Points equal to the damage dealt.
4	Reality tears in your space until the end of your next turn. You and each creature that can see the tear must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition while the tear exists.
5	One of your arms warps into an alien appendage, such as a distorted version of an arm or a twisting tentacle, for 1 minute. You can make Unarmed Strikes with the limb using your spell attack bonus. Instead of the normal damage, roll a number of your Intrusion dice (at its starting size) equal to your Proficiency Bonus. The target takes Acid damage equal to the total rolled.
6	Alien landscapes overlay your vision, giving you the Blinded condition until the end of your next turn.
7	Unnatural thoughts disorient you, giving you the Incapacitated condition until the end of your next turn.
8	You experience an instant of terrible clarity. You take Psychic damage equal to two rolls of your Intrusion Die (at its starting size), and for 1 minute, your spell save DC is increased by 2.
9	You regain an expended spell slot of level 5 or lower (your choice), and you take Necrotic damage equal to twice the slot's level. This damage can't be reduced or prevented in any way.
10	When you cause this Intrusion and at the end of each of your turns for 1 minute, pulses in the fabric of space fill a 15-foot Emanation originating from you, giving you and each creature in it the Prone condition.
11	For 1 hour, you hear whispered, disembodied thoughts of hateful scorn directed at you. While you can hear the whispers, you have Disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws that rely on Wisdom.
12	An Aberration or a Fiend with a CR equal to your Wizard level or lower (GM's choice) appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of you. The GM decides the creature's attitude (Hostile/Indifferent/Friendly) and actions.

LEVEL 10: OCCULT PRESENCE

When you cause an Intrusion, you can roll twice on the Intrusion table and choose which result to use, and you can negate the Intrusion by gaining 1 Exhaustion level.

Additionally, you gain one of the benefits below, and you can change your chosen benefit when you finish a Long Rest. As a Bonus Action, you can cause an automatic Intrusion (and increase the die's size one step, up to its starting size) to change your chosen benefit.

Alien Consciousness. You gain Immunity to the Charmed and Frightened conditions, and you can't be possessed.

Cosmic Resistance. You gain Resistance to Necrotic and Psychic damage.

Spatial Domination. You gain a Fly Speed equal to your Speed and can hover.

LEVEL 14: BEYOND SPACE

The nature of distance and location is revealed for the lie that it is. You always have the *Scrying* spell prepared.

When you cast *Scrying*, you can risk Intrusion to choose one of the following.

All Knowing. Treat your connection to a target creature as if you have part of its body.

All Seeing. Cast the spell as an action instead of its normal casting time.

When you cast *Scrying*, during the spell's duration, you can cause an automatic Intrusion (and increase the die's size one step, up to its starting size) to teleport yourself, and any willing creatures within 10 feet of you, to unoccupied spaces you can see through the scrying sensor. Once you teleport in this way, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.



Wizard: PHILOSOPHER

Distill the Essence of Creation

Philosophers have focused their study of wizardry on the fundamental nature of existence and reality. They seek the most quintessential truths of creation and manipulate those forces and substances through alchemical practice. Through understanding, deconstruction, and reconstruction, they master the natural energies of the world around them and alter it to their will.

LEVEL 3: ALCHEMICAL KNOWLEDGE

You gain a set of Alchemist's Supplies. You have proficiency with it and can use it as an Arcane Focus. Additionally, you can use Alchemist's Supplies instead of the normal tool to craft a magic item.

LEVEL 3: QUINTESSENCE

You have learned the fundamental process of dissolution. You know the *Dissolution* cantrip. A creature or object you reduce to 0 Hit Points with the cantrip is destroyed. If the target was Small or larger, it dissolves into a measure (1 ounce) of crystalline powder called Quintessence. You can have a maximum amount of Quintessence equal to twice your Intelligence modifier at one time (mimium of 2 measures). If you create more, the oldest measure vanishes. You can use Quintessence you are touching in the following ways.

Material Component. When you cast a spell, you can expend Quintessence to serve as the spell's Material components up to a value of 100 GP per Quintessence expended.

Reagent. When you scribe a spell into your spellbook, or when you use Alchemist's Supplies to craft a magic item, you can expend Quintessence to serve as 50 GP worth of material for the task per Quintessence expended.

Vitriolic Enhancement. When you cast a spell that deals damage, you can expend 1 Quintessence as an additional Material component to change one damage type the spell deals to Force.

LEVEL 6: ALBEDO

You can purify your Quintessence to amplify your spells. When you cast a spell using a spell slot, you can expend 1 Quintessence as a Material component to increase the level of the spell slot by 1, up to level 9. The maximum Quintessence you can expend in this way on a given spell is half of your Proficiency Bonus (rounded up).

LEVEL 10: CITRINITAS

You can now manipulate Quintessence to create, not merely to purify. You always have the *Creation* and *Fabricate* spells prepared, and you can cast each spell once without expending a spell slot, regaining the ability to do so when you finish a Long Rest. When you cast a spell using this feature, you can cast the spell as an action rather than its normal casting time. You can also cast the spells normally using spell slots of the appropriate level.

Additionally, when you cast *Creation*, you can expend a number of Quintessence up to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1) to multiply the spell's duration by 1 plus the amount expended.

LEVEL 14: RUBEDO

The culmination of your great work, you can now distill your perfected knowledge of existence into a physical form. When you finish a Short or Long Rest, you can expend 10 Quintessence to create a philosopher's stone—a translucent red crystal. The stone is a Tiny magical object with AC 19, HP 20, and Immunity to all damage except Force. If you create a second philosopher's stone, the first one vanishes. While you carry the stone, it grants you the following benefits.

Amplification. When you cast a spell, you can expend up to 2 Quintessence as an additional Material component to increase your spell save DC for that spell by the same amount.

Equivalent Exchange. When you fail a saving throw, you can take a Reaction to expend 5 Quintessence to succeed on the save instead.

Longevity. You stop aging and don't suffer any effects from old age, including dying from it.

Sympathy. The stone counts as part of your body for the purpose of the *Scrying* spell and for spells that restore you to life if you die. The stone itself serves as the Material component for the spell (if any) and is destroyed when the spell is cast.

PHILOSOPHICAL PURSUITS

Every Wizard who walks the steps of the Philosopher does so to solve some specific problem, even if only at first. The Philosophical Pursuits table offers challenges or goals that set you onto your study of alchemical magic.

Philosophical Pursuits

1d12	Guiding Goal
1	Someone close to you is lost in time, the planes, or some other esoteric state of being. Unraveling the nature of reality is your path to finding them.
2	You suffered a debilitating ailment or injury and turned to the study of magic to deconstruct the impairment's nature and transmute it.
3	Your teacher was killed by a rival Philosopher, and you must learn all you can of that discipline to protect yourself and bring them to justice.
4	The rediscovered research of a missing mage unlocked the first secrets of your understanding but contains many more you can't yet decipher.
5	Wizardry provides a path to immense power, but you know an even greater state of being awaits your ascension.
6	You encountered a material with miraculous properties, and you can't rest until you discover the secret of its creation.
7	Your sibling's soul was separated from their body in a spell gone wrong, and you cannot forgive yourself until you make them whole.
8	You were a stage performer who wowed audiences with magical acts, and you seek the ultimate magic trick to become a legend.
9	You come from an impoverished hometown and wish to utilize the transmutation of metals to bring prosperity to your community.
10	In your pursuit to be closer to the gods, you have sought the secrets of creating new life forms in your own image.
11	You were raised to revere the four elements, and you hypothesized that mastering the stuff of existence will bring harmony to them all.
12	You had aspirations of joining the military and rising through the ranks, believing that the magic of reality can be used as a weapon of war.



Chapter 4: Backgrounds

This chapter presents folk horror backgrounds for level 1 characters with strong ties to Druskenvald. If you select one of these backgrounds, you gain the feat specified in the description (feats are presented in chapter 5). If the background you choose for a Druskenvald campaign does not provide a feat, you gain a bonus Origin feat of your choice from those presented in this book, or your choice of Origin feat from the 5th Edition core rules.

Some of the backgrounds presented here provide you with a rare language.

Ability Scores

When you create a character using one of the backgrounds in this chapter, increase one of your starting ability scores by 2 and another by 1, or increase three scores by 1 each. These increases can't raise a score above 20.

AMNESIAC

Some portion of your past has been swallowed by nothingness. The missing time could be a short interval—mere days or weeks gone from your memory—or you might have only vague hints at best of who you are and where you are from. Flashes of déjà vu are common, taunting you with recollection, but they almost always slip away, as ungraspable as the mists of Druskenvald. An injury, some traumatic experience, or the magical workings of a spell or curse could be the culprit behind your amnesia.

FEAT: Memory Starved (see page 115)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: *Choose two* (see below)
TOOL PROFICIENCY: *Choose one* (see below)
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Book (personal notes), Ink, Ink Pen, Traveler's Clothes, 11 GP; or (B) 50 GP

SCATTERED MEMORIES

You don't choose skill proficiencies or a tool proficiency when you select this background, and you don't determine the two languages that are part of your origin—these are parts of your past that you are missing. Instead, you can pick one of those proficiencies or the languages during play at any time. The knowledge might return in a spontaneous flash, even as you make a roll that relies on the proficiency, or slowly emerge as you struggle to solve a problem. Once you choose one of these features, you can't choose another one until you gain a level.

The GM might rule that you can choose a new recalled feature early if something reminds you of your past, such as finding a piece of evidence from your missing memories or experiencing an event similar to one you have forgotten. Of particular value is an event relating to one of the story threads or trinkets presented below.

BUILDING AN AMNESIAC

Any character can face misfortune or a choice that steals their memory. Consider how your character came to lose their memory. Was it lost through injury or illness, or did something more sinister steal it with a toxin or curse? You might decide to leave this choice up to the GM, letting you as a player discover the cause alongside your character.

Suggested Story Threads. This background presents a paradox when considering threads to weave through a campaign, since the character may not remember them. Work with the GM to create some leading events or people that can serve as constants to trace a path through the void of the character's past, especially if the GM can insert existing nonplayer characters into the thread to strengthen these connections. The Amnesiac Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of these threads.

Amnesiac Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	You have recurring dreams of someone you might recognize on your adventures.
2	You absent-mindedly doodle the same design or symbol over and over.
3	A friend has been traveling the provinces of Druskenvald with a caravan, searching for any hint of your past as they do.
4	A rhyme or song you've never heard before comes to mind when your thoughts wander.
5	Rainbow colors, such as those on a soap bubble or oil slick, fill you with unexplained terror.
6	You have a fragmented recollection of traveling to a remote place in the mountains.

Amnesiac Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Amnesiac Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Amnesiac Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	Half of a tarnished silver ring with a partial inscription in a language you don't understand
2	A music box that plays a sad tune you recognize but can't identify
3	A short note addressed to you signed with a name you don't recognize
4	A thin silk scarf with a fading scent that stirs familiarity
5	A toy horse with unfamiliar initials inked on it
6	A locket whose portrait is burnt and unrecognizable

CRIMSON ASPIRANT

You have delved into the forces that animate all life—even those that counterfeit life, such as Constructs and Undead. Many of these studies concentrate on the nature of blood and its power to sustain life and transmit vital essence, binding the soul to the flesh. You might have apprenticed under a sly-hearted mentor or a secret cabal focused on understanding or even manipulating life and death. You may have learned from a detailed treatise that you've put into practice, daring to become versed in the forbidden arts.

FEAT: Crimson Ritualist (see page 113)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Arcana, Medicine
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Herbalism Kit
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Herbalism Kit, Dagger, Fine Clothes, Healer's Kit, 3 Vials, 10 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A CRIMSON ASPIRANT

Characters who value study and learning, as well as those with a capacity to heal the injuries and illnesses of others, readily become crimson aspirants. More physically inclined characters can be drawn to the teachings of blood to tap into their increased vital energies, as can those who are sickly or weak in hopes of overcoming that adversity.

Suggested Story Threads. The Crimson Aspirant Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.



Crimson Aspirant Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	Sometimes when you bleed, you hear whispers from your fallen blood that tease with meaning.
2	You were trained by a remote monastery, but your mentor ushered you out one morning in a panic and sent you away.
3	A plague carried in the blood defies cures, and you must find its origin.
4	Your mentor, who inducted you into the secrets held within life and blood, vanished suddenly.
5	Your studies reveal a spate of anemia cases, some ending in death, as the predations of blood-drinking monsters.
6	A loved one, such as a paramour or sibling, has died, and your studies hint at a way to bring them back.

Crimson Aspirant Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Crimson Aspirant Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Crimson Aspirant Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A glass pendant with a single drop of blood suspended within
2	A long scroll with an anatomical study and description of how life energy flows through the body
3	A handkerchief with a blood drop pressed into the center
4	A polished bloodstone for balancing vital energy
5	A vial of blood that never coagulates or dries
6	A small box of ashes said to be from a martyr who was falsely accused of vampirism and burned at the stake

CROSSROADS GAMBLER

You've made your bones on games of chance, and one day your games crossed the line into something far more serious. You might have played for your soul against a Fiend, matched wits with ancient forest Fey in a riddle contest, or rolled dice with the fabled Mister Crossroads.

FEAT: Fate Gambler (see page 114)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Deception, Insight
TOOL PROFICIENCY: *Choose one kind of Gaming Set*
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Gaming Set (same as above), Caltrops, Fine Clothes, Fine Wine (bottle), 23 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A CROSSROADS GAMBLER

Characters who live by their wits, such as Rogues and Bards, find the call of a crossroads gambler appealing, though anyone could find themselves in the position of playing for stakes higher than they could ever imagine.. or pay. A spellcaster who conjured the wrong entity may find themself a gambler. The desperate who sought out a mysterious figure to throw dice and match wits for power or salvation can find their fates bound to the crossroads.

Suggested Story Threads. The Crossroads Gambler Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Crossroads Gambler Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	Someone you thought was a friend tricked you into making your bargain.
2	You've found that if you go too long without making a wager, your luck starts to turn sour.
3	You only feel alive in the midst of a contest.
4	You lost your bet, and you're on the run from the thing surely coming to collect.
5	Someone close to you made a wager and lost. You made your deal to try and find them.
6	You've been gambling for a long time, and you're tired. Now all you want is a way out.



Crossroads Gambler Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Crossroads Gambler Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Crossroads Gambler Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A lucky coin made of a strange material, such as green steel or bone
2	A battered, blood-stained six of hearts playing card
3	A torn journal page of a long-missing gambler who was hopeful to win their fortune from a being they describe but fail to name
4	The preserved foot of a rabbit, owl, or weasel
5	A six-sided die that somehow seems to have too many 2s when closely examined
6	A silver-plated ivory chess rook

CULTIST

You have been inducted into a secret society that venerates or pursues power from some otherworldly source. The cultists might serve as minions of an entity they worship, or they may seek to understand and claim its might for their own. Depending on the malevolence of the cult's patron or the malefic purposes they may serve, cultists could be a force of wickedness or a group of closely bonded and dedicated people who pursue a common, if esoteric, goal.

FEAT: Cult Initiate (see page 113)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Arcana, *choose one* (Cultist Affinity table skill recommended)
LANGUAGE: *Choose one* (Cultist Affinity table language recommended)
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Calligrapher's Supplies
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Calligrapher's Supplies, Costume (cult garb), Holy Symbol (Amulet: cult insignia), Traveler's Clothes, 10 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Cultist Affinities

Cult Patron	Skill	Language
Aberration	Perception	Deep Speech
Celestial	Religion	Celestial
Fiend (Demon)	Religion	Abyssal
Fiend (Devil)	Religion	Infernal
Fey	Nature	Sylvan

CULT VENERATION

Cults propitiate beings of otherworldly power in hopes of sharing in that potency. Choose what type of cult you joined, such as the following.

Aberration. Alien creatures with inscrutable mindsets and motivations. Many originate from outside the known multiverse.

Celestial. Beings of the Upper Planes, and paragons of order or benevolence. Many can be overbearing and uncompromising.

Fiend (Demon). Creatures of utter evil and destruction that want to see all worlds and planes burn.

Fiend (Devil). Beings of cunning wickedness who prize structure and obedience. They seek to subjugate others and condemn souls.

Fey. Capricious beings often associated with nature and emotional extremes. They can be beautiful, terrible, intoxicating, and horrific.

BUILDING A CULTIST

Cultists are often lost souls—individuals severed from the fabric of society whose cult became a manipulative, surrogate family. Consider if your character agrees with the aims of the cult, if they fled the group, or if they remain for infiltration purposes.

Suggested Story Threads. The Cultist Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Cultist Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	You learned that the cult that took you in manipulated you throughout your life.
2	A member of your cult betrayed and killed your leader and mentor.
3	Your cult's activities aroused the ire and superstition of locals, deserved or not.
4	You followed a loved one into joining the cult, trying to find out what happened to them.
5	You met someone who forced you to see the cult you always venerated in a different light.
6	You joined the cult to save yourself from an incurable illness or other certain doom.

Cultist Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Cultist Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Cultist Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A sealed scroll of esoteric knowledge
2	A steel ball bearing etched over its entire surface with your cult's sacred text
3	A crystal that feels strange to the touch
4	A ritual knife stained with blood, sap, or oils
5	A set of copper tattoo needles
	An embroidered cloth half mask

DRUSKENVALD DWELLER

You hail from one of the thirteen baneful provinces of Druskenvald. You might be a member of the unique species known to originate from those diverse biomes, or you may be of a different heritage altogether. The skills and culture of your home (summarized below) shape your knowledge and early experiences.

FEAT: *Choose one Origin feat* (see page 113)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Survival, *choose one* (Province Affinity table skill recommended)
TOOL PROFICIENCY: *Choose one* (Province Affinity table tool recommended)
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Artisan's Tools (same as above), Map (Druskenvald's provinces), Traveler's Clothes, 10 GP; or (B) 50 GP

Province Affinities

Province	Skill	Tool
Ardengloom	History	Herbalism Kit
Astramar	Arcana	Navigator's Tools
Bubonia	Medicine	Poisoner's Kit
Chernabos	Deception	Calligrapher's Supplies
Edwardia	Investigation	Tinker's Tools
Enoch	Nature	Leatherworker's Tools
Kalero	Performance	Musical Instrument
Olmarsh	Arcana	Cartographer's Supplies
Nerukhet	Persuasion	Weaver's Tools
Pholsense	Religion	Mason's Tools
Picco	Performance	Woodworker's Tools
Syndramas	Athletics	Cook's Utensils
Zulrogg	Survival	Herbalism Kit

BUILDING A DRUSKENVALD DWELLER

Any sort of character can be a Druskenvald dweller. When you make your character, decide if you belong to the species associated with your home province, or if you are of another kind who was raised outside the home of most of your species. This decision itself may determine truths about your character to be experienced throughout your journeys in Druskenvald.

Suggested Story Threads. The Druskenvald Dweller Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Druskenvald Dweller Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	You were left on a church doorstep as an infant. The only clue to your origin is the torn cloak used as a blanket.
2	You fled your home province after being accused of a crime, whether justly or not.
3	After hearing stories of other provinces, you struck out to see more of Druskenvald.
4	Members of a trade caravan stole something or harmed someone dear to you.
5	You made a desperate pact with an ashborn and now seek to nullify the contract.
6	A vicious bogborn bounty hunter trails you.

Druskenvald Dweller Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Druskenvald Dweller Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Druskenvald Dweller Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A brass needle with a dangling bit of broken thread
2	A dull, rusty sickle with a bone handle
3	A star chart etched onto a crystal plate
4	A wicker doll with bloodstained bead eyes
5	A length of chain that sometimes rattles when left unattended
6	A mummified hand preserved in bog peat

EXPERIMENT

You are forever altered in some drastic, physical way, perhaps even made monstrous. A blasphemous fusion of science, alchemy, and magic changed you, possibly to mend some unrecoverable malady, or to test the limits of your biology. The process was a success, at least to a point, but the change left its mark on you. The indelible warping of your form can be a source of fear for those who do not understand what they see.

FEAT: Altered (see page 113)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Intimidation, Medicine
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Alchemist's Supplies
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Alchemist's Supplies, Manacles, Perfume (to cover chemical smell), Traveler's Clothes (with hooded cloak), 5 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING AN EXPERIMENT

An experiment can come from any class or walk of life. Were you kidnapped and altered against your will, or did you volunteer for a heinous procedure? Was the experimenting done purely for discovery, to overcome a worse fate, or for someone to play at being a god? Whatever the reason, the process is never pleasant, and it always leaves scars—both those you can see and those that have marked your very soul.

Suggested Story Threads. The Experiment Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.



Experiment Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	A particular song stirs feelings of sadness and overwhelming anger in you, reminding you of the process that changed you.
2	A portion of your altered body is very clearly grafted from a different person, and they might want it back.
3	Another person was changed alongside you. They fled before you left, urging you to do the same.
4	You have recurring nightmares of the procedure you endured, sometimes seeing glimpses of faces in the dream that you don't recognize.
5	Your physical difference invites curiosity and attention, which for some reason is more disturbing than disdain or fear.
6	A peculiar symbol is branded on or near your alteration.

Experiment Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Experiment Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Experiment Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A syringe with a faintly glowing purple residue
2	A wrench that is the only one that fits a bit of simple machinery built into your body
3	A sheaf of chemical-stained parchments covered in incomprehensible notes and schematics
4	A spool of silver thread that matches stitches in your altered body part
5	A metal hip flask with strange runes scratched into one side
6	A smooth stone that comforts and soothes you when you hold it tightly

GHOSTLIGHT PASSENGER

Once, even before your most recent travel to Druskenvald, you rode the deathly train known as the *Ghostlight Express*. Your memories of that journey might be hazy and dreamlike, or they could be sharp and jarring in their clarity. You learned some of the workings of the ghostly engine and formed a connection with the conductor and fellow travelers that has stayed with you. At times, you are even more comfortable with the dead than the living.

FEAT: Ghostlight Medium (see page 114)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Insight, Persuasion
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Smith's Tools
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Smith's Tools, Bullseye Lantern, Fine Clothes, Oil (3 flasks), 5 GP; or (B) 50 GP



BUILDING A GHOSTLIGHT PASSENGER

Every person in Druskenvald travels the *Ghostlight Express* at least once, but very few form the deep and lasting connection that you have. Your first trip on the train might have been a near death experience from which you were saved, or perhaps you did die in earnest but were resurrected later.

Characters attuned to spirits or the lands of the dead, such as Clerics, Paladins, or those who had brushes with death, are the most common to exhibit this deep connection.

Suggested Story Threads. The Ghostlight Passenger Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Ghostlight Passenger Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	Sometimes when you dream, you find yourself back on the *Ghostlight Express* in more than just a dream image.
2	Your first journey to the lands of the dead was confusing, but you realized you now may be able to find the departed spirit of a loved one once thought lost forever.
3	A specific spirit returns to speak to and through you repeatedly.
4	People sometimes speak to you as if they know you but later have no recollection of the conversation. During those moments of recognition, they know details from your visits on the *Ghostlight Express*.
5	You sometimes see people in your travels who you recognize from your time on the *Ghostlight Express*.
6	Someone greeted you with knowledge of your first journey on the *Ghostlight Express*, but you don't remember them.

Ghostlight Passenger Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Ghostlight Passenger Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Ghostlight Passenger Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A slate board smeared with erased chalk, where you sometimes find words scratched
2	A lump of coal that never burns away and gives off wispy smoke
3	A torn ticket stub that is slightly translucent
4	A dented train conductor's whistle that only the dead can hear
5	A pocket watch that runs backwards
6	A battered train conductor's hat

NIGHT STALKER



Once you were prey, stalked by a monster through the dark of night. Now, you are the hunter, and the things which you once feared will learn the true meaning of dread. You have become far deadlier, hungrier, and crueler than the monster that once hunted you. You are, yourself, the monster now—a fearsome creature once thought to slake its hunger on you or those close to you. You survived, and your would-be killer will have its own destruction in turn.

FEAT: Hunter of Hunters (see page 114)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Stealth, and one other of your choice from the following list: Arcana, History, Religion, Nature
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Leatherworker's Tools
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Leatherworker's Tools, Book (one creature type), Hooded Lantern, Hunting Trap, Oil (3 flasks), Traveler's Clothes, 8 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A NIGHT STALKER

Consider how you joined the hunt against the creatures of the night. Did you lose someone close to you or survive an attack? Perhaps you were raised in a family line of dedicated hunters. Rangers, Rogues, and Barbarians make fearsome night stalkers, as does any character with a passion to oppose these deadly creatures.

Suggested Story Threads. The Night Stalker Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Night Stalker Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	You're hunting the creature that slew your loved ones.
2	You started your hunt with zeal but quickly find that you're losing your stomach for it.
3	As you learn more about the creatures of the night, you discover that some of your initial thoughts about them were wrong.
4	You failed to stand up to a creature and saved yourself instead of someone else. Now you try to make up for that shame.
5	The monsters you hunt terrify you to your soul, and you lash out to deny your fear.
6	Your fervent hunt is a cover for your desire to become something more than mortal.

Night Stalker Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Night Stalker Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Night Stalker Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A necklace of yellowed fangs
2	A series of letters showing a person's personality sharply eroding into incoherence and raving
3	A knife made from a massive creature's claw
4	A casting of a monstrous footprint
5	A hide or pelt from a vicious beast
6	A glass eye that normal animals shy away from

REFLECTED WANDERER

You were once whole, but part of you has been separated from your being and now also wanders the world. This aspect of you took your reflection and shadow with it, and it travels about as a mirage that looks identical to you. You know this other self is out there—you can feel it—but what it wants and why is lost on you. Sometimes you encounter a stranger that knows you—for good or ill—though you've never met them before, and you can't help but wonder if they met the other you.

FEAT: Unreflected (see page 115)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Deception, Investigation
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Disguise Kit
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Disguise Kit, Mirror, Traveler's Clothes, 16 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A REFLECTED WANDERER

Any character can be a reflected wanderer. How was it that your being came to be divided? How much do you understand about your situation? Are you truly who you think you are, or are you, in reality, the very castoff reflection of your other self?

Suggested Story Threads. The Reflected Wanderer Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Reflected Wanderer Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	A close, long-term relationship went suddenly sour as if you wronged the other person.
2	Your other self leaves you messages and signs as it travels, sometimes seeming fond and other times resentful.
3	Animals are unsettled by you, becoming skittish and restless in your presence.
4	You're wanted for several minor crimes you never committed, though eyewitnesses named you. Over time, more crimes of increasing severity occur.
5	Someone you've been at odds with begins treating you with more respect and kindness.
6	Mirrors sometimes crack when you touch them.

Reflected Wanderer Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Reflected Wanderer Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Reflected Wanderer Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A shattered hand mirror
2	An invitation to a powerful person's home whom you've never met
3	A locket with your silhouette painted in it on both sides, facing each other
4	A short, derisive letter from yourself that you don't remember writing
5	A brooch delivered to you that you didn't purchase
6	A piece of chalk that writes in a different color than it appears to be



REST WARDEN

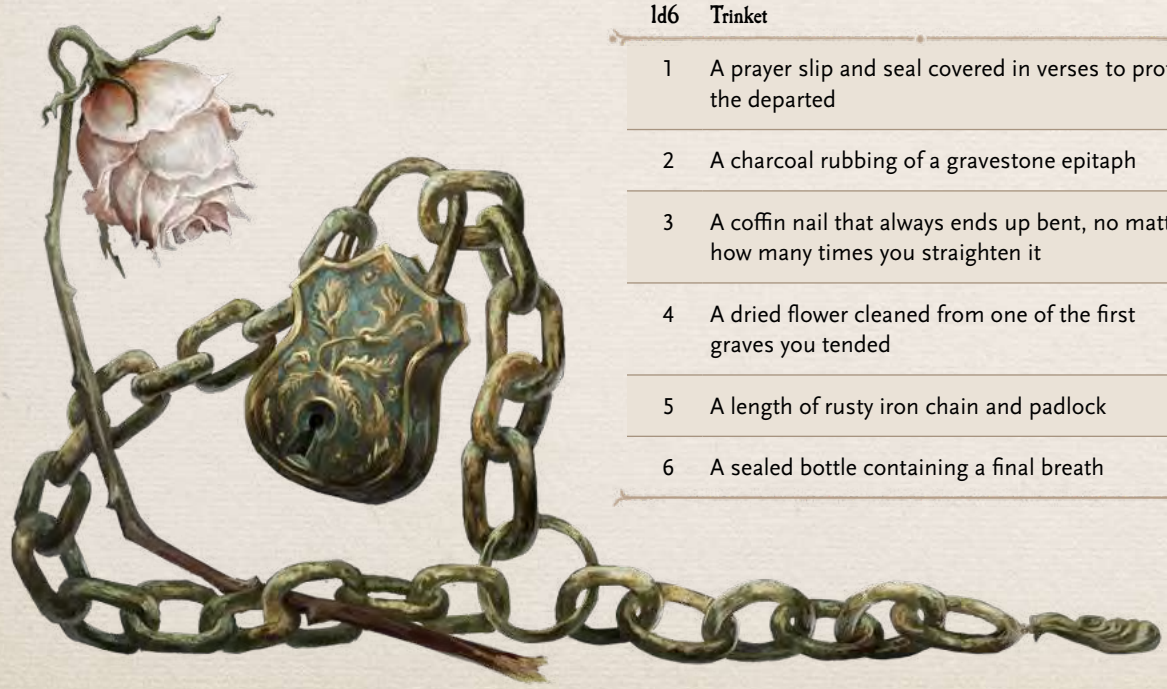
In a place closer to the lands of the dead than the living, those who tend the eternal rest and disposition of the deceased are held in a mixture of high esteem and apprehension. You have plied the trade of the gravedigger, the mortician, and the embalmer. There are times when you have been the only one to say a kind word in honor of those who passed. The depredations of the Undead are well-known to you, and you don't suffer their meddling in the rest of your charges.

FEAT: Grave Keeper (see page 114)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Religion, Survival
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Mason's Tools
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Mason's Tools, Hooded Lantern, Oil (3 flasks), Shovel, Soap, Traveler's Clothes (with thick gloves and dark-colored hood), 10 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A REST WARDEN

Rest wardens tend to be either a dour and somber lot or—in contrast to their trade—are filled with the vibrance and joy of life. Those who understand the thin thread between life and death or who possess the strength to dig graves beneath moonlit skies and tend the bone orchards where the dead sleep are called to serve as rest wardens.

Suggested Story Threads. The Rest Warden Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.



Rest Warden Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	A strange figure commissioned you to carve a headstone for someone who is very much in the prime of life.
2	In a time of desperation, you once accepted a sizeable bribe to look the other way when someone robbed a grave.
3	You spent time learning from Yorgrim, gravedigger and caretaker of the Maidenmist Cemetery.
4	Someone violated graves under your watch and stole away with the corpses.
5	You comforted a child at their parent's funeral and have taken a protective shine to them.
6	A loved one once rose from the grave as an Undead creature. You vowed to bring them to their final rest.

Rest Warden Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Rest Warden Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Rest Warden Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A prayer slip and seal covered in verses to protect the departed
2	A charcoal rubbing of a gravestone epitaph
3	A coffin nail that always ends up bent, no matter how many times you straighten it
4	A dried flower cleaned from one of the first graves you tended
5	A length of rusty iron chain and padlock
6	A sealed bottle containing a final breath

REVELER



For a time, you traveled with the Lord of Fools' strange and unsettling revelry. Whether you are still welcome in that company, or you've struck off on your own, your time with the troupe revealed some of its nature to you—that the Lord of Fools serves some great entity who prizes humor and merriment, often at the expense of the mighty. But he is no mere jester. Beneath the mask of mockery and merriment is a mad creature who demands sacrifice.

FEAT: Reveling Fool (see page 115)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Performance, Stealth
LANGUAGE: *Choose one* (Abyssal recommended)
TOOL PROFICIENCY: *Choose one kind of Musical Instrument*
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Musical Instrument (same as above), Ball Bearings, Costume (jovial character with a laughing mask), Hunting Trap, Manacles, 3 Torches (for juggling), Traveler's Clothes, 10 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A REVELER

The simultaneous beauty and uncomfortable truth of the revelers is that they can be anyone. Hidden by their masks and costumes, one's friends, family, servants, or lords could be capering about the ribbon-twined pole and leading impressionable folk away when the revel withdraws. How might a reveler behave differently in each guise?

Suggested Story Threads. The Reveler Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Reveler Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	Posters depicting drawings of your reveler guise have started showing up in towns after the fool's revel leaves.
2	Once you learned the truth of the revels—that some of the people who vanish ostensibly to join the revel are sacrificed—you seized the first chance to slip away.
3	Recently, more people than usual have gone missing from towns in the revel's wake.
4	Crows, owls, and other birds seem to cackle and laugh in your presence.
5	You have grown suspicious that another reveler has a sinister motive concealed by their jester's guise.
6	You left the revel when you caught a glimpse of the wickedness lurking beneath the Lord of Fool's jovial veneer.

Reveler Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Reveler Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Reveler Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A small wind-up bell that you can conceal in the palm of your hand with a button to activate it
2	A dented metal spray bottle
3	A string of colorful handkerchiefs tied together
4	A tarnished silver bell that sometimes refuses to jingle
5	A pair of boots or slippers that squeak comically with each step
6	A short scepter or baton with a horn on the cap

SCHOLAR OF THE FORBIDDEN



Delving into the brittle pages of ancient tomes and weathered tablets carved with blasphemy, you have unearthed secrets of eldritch beings of unfathomable might. Most of their meaning slips like whispers out of your grasp, but you have seized both forbidden knowledge and cursed power from them. The deeper you plunge into depravity, the more certainty you feel that you are not there alone.

FEAT: Dread Speech (see page 114)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Arcana, Intimidation
LANGUAGE: *Choose one* (Deep Speech recommended)
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Calligrapher's Supplies
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Calligrapher's Supplies, Book (a topic of arcana), Ink, Ink Pen, Lamp, Oil (3 flasks), Paper (10 sheets), 2 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A SCHOLAR OF THE FORBIDDEN

Wizards and Warlocks make the most common scholars of the forbidden, but any character who stumbles onto the dread truths waiting beneath the surface of reality can find themselves walking the path. The secrets you unveil could threaten to destabilize any number of powerful beliefs and organizations, which makes you dangerous to them.

Suggested Story Threads. The Scholar of the Forbidden Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.

Scholar of the Forbidden Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	A wealthy patron paid you handsomely to research what led to your discoveries, and they want what you found.
2	When you spoke aloud the first secret word you deciphered, you passed out and woke hours later to find your lips cracked and blackened.
3	Something has been following you since you uncovered the illicit secrets. You sense it always behind you, drawing closer.
4	Your shadow converses with you when you're alone, acting as a debate partner and sounding board in your studies.
5	The reflections of your eyes are black voids, but no one else seems to notice.
6	An order of inquisitors or witch hunters hound you wherever you travel, seeking to silence you and your discoveries forever.

Scholar of the Forbidden Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Scholar of the Forbidden Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Scholar of the Forbidden Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A broken fragment of a stone table carved with symbols that seem to slither and writhe
2	A desiccated bit of tentacle
3	A small soapstone idol that always seems to end up in your pocket, bag, or otherwise on your person
4	A book bound in Humanoid skin with blank pages that absorb ink or other pigments
5	An alien eyeball floating in a jar of preservative fluid
6	An antique amulet with indecipherable symbols, that whispers at the edge of consciousness when worn

WICKER WEAVER

You know the ancient rites kept alive by secretive druids and hedge practitioners in the shadowed groves of the primordial forests. Remedies and hexes woven into wicker charms can stave off misfortune and ward away evil. They could just as likely invite gloom and the ire of the old spirits.

FEAT: Charm Twister (see page 113)
SKILL PROFICIENCIES: Insight, Nature
LANGUAGE: Sylvan
TOOL PROFICIENCY: Weaver's Tools
EQUIPMENT: *Choose A or B:* (A) Quarterstaff, Weaver's Tools, Basket (with dry reeds ready to weave), Book (druidic lore), Iron Pot, Traveler's Clothes, 19 GP; or (B) 50 GP

BUILDING A WICKER WEAVER

Compassionate characters driven by a deep connection to the land and a passion to protect it become wicker weavers. Druids of other circles might trade knowledge with the Circle of Wicker. Healers and guardians alike may seek out the Old Ways for remedies and protective charms to ward off evil. Not all who come to the wicker craft do so with noble intent—some, broken by spite and twisted by their pain, wield the power of the wicker into malicious revenge, lashing out with curses bound in twig and bone and inflicting the wrath of the forest upon those who wronged them.

Suggested Story Threads. The Wicker Weaver Story Threads table suggests events and people who can be the start of story threads for your character that weave through the campaign.



Wicker Weaver Story Threads

1d6	Thread
1	One of the charms you created ensured a baby was born healthy, and their family sends you small but heartfelt gifts.
2	Your mentor who taught you the craft has become increasingly withdrawn and uncharacteristically agitated.
3	An order of druids, the Circle of Wicker, taught you their ways. You aren't certain why.
4	Someone offered you a shocking sum of coin to twist a wicker charm for them. You're tempted but unsettled by the unwarranted generosity.
5	You traded a wicker charm for a child's toy that bound misfortune to its owner. You must keep it until you can sell it, it's stolen, or you lose it.
6	You wove a hex into a wicker charm to punish a criminal, and they nurse that grudge still.

Wicker Weaver Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Wicker Weaver Trinkets table instead of on the normal starting Trinkets table.

Wicker Weaver Trinkets

1d6	Trinket
1	A crescent woven from wicker and laced with silver wire
2	A glass bauble that was the first payment you received for your hedge wisdom
3	A Tiny figure made of acorn caps from the oldest oak in the woods
4	A rough-forged knife with an etched blade
5	A snake skull in a wicker cage
6	A battered stuffed animal missing one eye



Chapter 5: FEATS

This section introduces feats that connect to the folk horror backgrounds presented in chapter 4,though any character could take one of these with the GM's permission.

VARIANT: GENERALIZED ORIGIN FEATS

Origin feats are designed to be taken at level 1, which means they are overall less powerful than General feats, but that can also make them less appealing to select at higher levels. At the GM's discretion, characters who select an Origin feat at level 4+ can add the following benefit to the feat.

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 1, to a maximum of 20.

ORIGIN FEATS

ALTERED

Origin Feat



You have been changed through magic, science, or a volatile blend of the two. You have a blatant physical augmentation of your choice from the options below. The augmentation is obvious—such as with stitches, grafts of other creature's body parts, or implants—unless disguised.

Aquatic Adaptation. You have gills or mucus membranes that allow you to breathe water, and you have webbed extremities that grant you a Swim Speed equal to your Speed.

Natural Armor. You have scales, plates, or thick hide that grants you an AC of 13 + your Dexterity or Constitution modifier (choose the ability when you select this feat).

Natural Weapons. You have claws, fangs, horns, or some other natural weapon that you can use to make Unarmed Strikes that deal 1d8 damage on a hit. The damage is Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing as appropriate to the form.

Night Vision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If you already have Darkvision, its range increases by 30 feet.

CHARM TWISTER

Origin Feat



You know hedge remedies and hexes passed down through Old Ways teachings, and you can impart them into small wicker charms you weave. You gain the following benefits.

Old Blessing. You can cast the *Bless* spell once using this benefit, targeting only creatures carrying a wicker charm you've woven, and you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have. Your spellcasting ability for casting the spell in this way is Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (choose the ability when you select this feat).

Twisted Hex. As a Magic action, you can weave spite into a wicker charm you touch. Choose an ability. When another creature is carrying the charm, or while this charm is within an area that the creature considers home, it has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls using the chosen ability. When the creature fails one of these rolls, it can make a Charisma saving throw, destroying the charm on a success (DC = 8 plus your Proficiency Bonus and the ability modifier you chose for Old Blessing). You can only have one Twisted Hex charm at a time. If you make a new one, the previous one loses its magic.

CRIMSON RITUALIST

Origin Feat



Your study of blood magic and life force has borne fruit, granting you the following benefits.

Blood Lash. You learn the *Blood Bolt* cantrip. Your spellcasting ability for it is Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (choose the ability when you select this feat).

Bottled Life. When you finish a Long Rest, you can perform a 1-minute ritual to transfer some of your life essence into a vessel for later use. Expend a number of Hit Point Dice up to your Proficiency Bonus, and bleed into a vial of water or other liquid. As a Bonus Action, a creature can drink the vial to roll the Hit Dice you expended. The creature regains a number of Hit Points equal to the total rolled plus its Constitution modifier. The vial remains potent until you finish a Long Rest.

CULT INITIATE

Origin Feat



Your cult instructs you in eldritch rites, granting you the following benefits.

Two Cantrips. You learn two cantrips of your choice from the Warlock spell list. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this feat's spells (choose the ability when you select this feat).

Level 1 Spell. Choose a level 1 spell from the Warlock spell list. You always have that spell prepared. You can cast it once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Short or Long Rest. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.

Spell Change. Whenever you gain a new level, you can replace one of the spells you chose for this feat with a different spell of the same level from the Warlock spell list.

DREAD SPEECH

Origin Feat



You have articulated a few words of forbidden truth that resonate with—and fray—the fabric of creation, granting you the following benefits.

Eldritch Word. As a Bonus Action, you can speak a magical word aloud to force a creature within 60 feet of yourself to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 plus your Proficiency Bonus and Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier; choose the ability when you select this feat). On a failed save, the target has the Frightened condition until the start of your next turn. You can use this benefit safely once, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a Short or Long Rest. You can use it again before resting, but you take 1d6 Necrotic damage, which can't be reduced or prevented in any way.

Shred Fate. Your dread secrets can unravel the destiny of your foes. You always have the *Bane* spell prepared, and your spellcasting ability for it is the ability you chose for Eldritch Word. You can cast it once without Material components or a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.

FATE GAMBLER

Origin Feat

Coming out ahead, whether in games of chance or in life-or-death contention, fills you with resolve and vigor. You gain the following benefits.

Bet Big. If you don't already have it, you gain Heroic Inspiration whenever you succeed on an ability check made against another creature, when you reduce a creature to 0 Hit Points, or when a creature fails a saving throw you forced it to make. If, in any of these cases, the creature has a CR of 0 or lacks a CR (such as another player character), you don't gain Heroic Inspiration.



Win Big. As a Bonus Action, you can expend your Heroic Inspiration to gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to your level.

GHOSTLIGHT MEDIUM

Origin Feat



You formed a mystical connection to the *Ghostlight Express* that affords you insight into the nature of spirits, granting the following benefits.

Ghostly Touch. When you damage a creature with the Incorporeal Movement trait, you can ignore the creature's damage Resistances, if any.

Spirit Sense. As a Bonus Action, you can sense any Undead within 60 feet of you, or any creatures in the Ethereal Plane that overlaps that area. You learn the distance and direction to any creatures you detect (or an Ethereal creature's equivalent position on your plane). Once you detect a creature with this benefit, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

GRAVE KEEPER

Origin Feat



Studying funeral rites and tending the dead's rest has made you a conduit between the worlds of the living and the dead. You gain the following benefits.

Divine Channel. You gain one use of the Channel Divinity feature from the Cleric class, and you can create the Turn Undead effect with it. If you already have Channel Divinity, you add this use to the feature from one class of your choice. Your save DC for this benefit is 8 plus your Wisdom modifier and Proficiency Bonus.

Last Rites. You can enact a 10-minute ritual to prepare the corpse of a Medium or smaller creature, expending at least 10 GP worth of incense, oils, linen wraps, or similar trappings. The prepared corpse can't become Undead.

HUNTER OF HUNTERS

Origin Feat



You are adept at hunting monstrous prey, granting you the following benefits.

Dead Aim. As a Bonus Action, you can scrutinize a creature to spot its vulnerable points. The next time you deal damage to the creature before the start of your next turn, you ignore the creature's damage Resistances, if any.

Studied Quarry. You have Advantage on ability checks made to recall information about a creature.

MEMORY STARVED



Origin Feat

Your mind ravenously gathers details and desperately clings to its memories and faculties, granting you the following benefits.

Desperate Detail. You have Advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks.

Iron Mind. You have Advantage on saving throws made to avoid or end the Charmed condition and to avoid having your memories read or altered.

REVELING FOOL

Origin Feat

You joined a troupe of madcap revelers and learned to take on the guise of a fool, channeling otherworldly laughter and joviality. You gain the following benefits.

Fool's Mask. By donning a jovial mask and a fool's, jester's, or clown's costume, you take on a new identity that hides your own. In the guise of the fool, you can get away with minor transgressions against people in positions of authority or station.



Jester's Repartee. You always have the *Hideous Laughter* spell prepared, and your spellcasting ability for it is Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (choose the ability when you select this feat). You can cast it once without Material components or a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.

UNREFLECTED

Origin Feat



Your image is separated from you, making you unable to cast a reflection or a shadow, but you're able to easily slip notice. You gain the following benefits.

Inscrutable. Creatures have Disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made against you.

Unremarkable. The loss of some part of yourself leaves you able to fade into the background. While you are within a group of at least two other creatures of your type and that there are no more than one size larger or smaller than you, you can take the Hide action from creatures outside that group by making a Charisma (Deception) check instead of Dexterity (Stealth), with no need for being behind cover or Heavily Obscured. If you are ever more than 5 feet from at least two other such creatures while hiding this way, you are revealed.

GENERAL FEATS

DEATH DEFIER

General Feat (Prerequisite: Level 4+)

When the hand of death reaches for your soul, you have found a way to reject its call. You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Cling to Life. You add your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1) to Death Saving Throws.



Enduring Vitality. If an effect would kill you outright without Death Saving Throws or would reduce you directly to 0 Hit Points without dealing damage, you are instead reduced to a number of Hit Points equal to your level. You can't use this benefit again until you finish a Long Rest.

SWIFT WITCHCRAFT

General Feat (Prerequisite: Level 4+, Spellcasting or Pact Magic Feature)

You have honed your skills in the rituals of witchcraft and can quickly weave your magic in times of need. You gain the following benefits.



Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Swift Invocation. You can use an action to cast a spell that has a casting time of 1 minute. Once you use this benefit, you can't do so again until you finish a Long Rest.



Chapter 6: DARK BARGAINS

Dark bargains weave Druskenvald's essence into the characters who dare to strike them. These ancient agreements bind the land, its magical energies, its creatures.. and you. The effects bring boon and bane alike. It may be best for some sinister characters to offer their bargains plainly, letting the lurking curses reveal themselves only when the time is right. Beware your entry into these iniquitous accords.



SHAKE ON IT

Any bargain offered by an utterly unknowable, unfathomable power such as those that position themselves within the realm of Druskenvald must be carefully considered by you, your character, and the GM. These gifts are not to be offered lightly and should not be accepted lightly; their mere presence should herald significant roleplaying opportunities now and in the future.

ENTERING A DARK BARGAIN

In nearly all cases, the power that is proposing a Dark Bargain is uninterested in negotiating the duration or eventual cost of this gift. However, there may be extenuating circumstances. There could be roleplaying scenarios or simply the current events in the adventure's narrative that could cause the power to briefly—briefly!—consider negotiating. The GM has the final say on whether a given bargainer has the inclination to haggle. Generally, characters need the Dark Bargain far more than the powers need to grant it.

In any event, Dark Bargains reflect the entity imparting them, as well as the circumstances and any prices asked in exchange. You and the GM should tailor the cosmetic details of the bargain to the character's situation.

There are multiple ways a character might be tempted with power in Druskenvald.

CHARACTER CREATION

With the GM's permission, you can choose a Dark Bargain when you make your character. Work with the GM to determine the circumstances of your character entering into the bargain, who offered it, and what terms your character had to fulfill—or is still expected to fulfill—to make good on the deal.

DURING PLAY

Dark Bargains can also come about during play in a campaign. There might be times where inscrutable powers have their own designs and see an opportunity for a character to further those ends in exchange for gifts. Others might be willing to negotiate a bargain as an alternative price to death or worse.

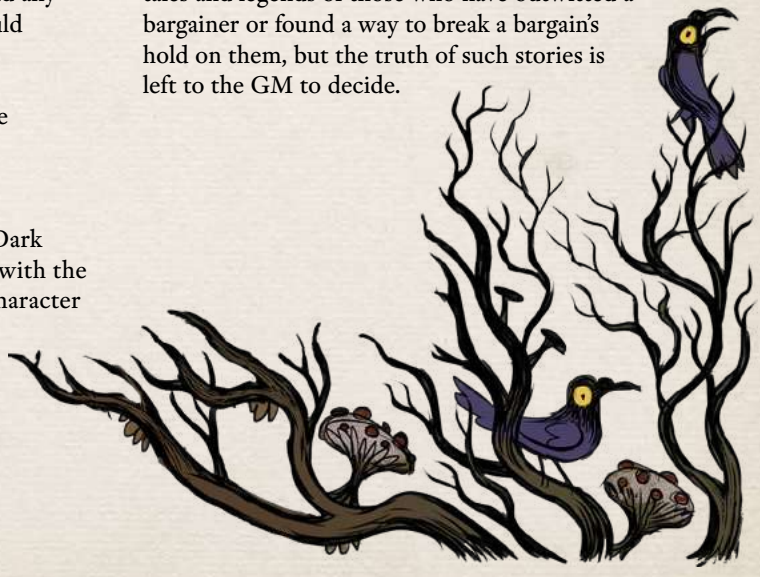
In these cases, the GM might alter terms of the bargains, such as increasing, lessening, or even waiving the prices of the bargains entirely—though perhaps only for a short time, or as long as some other condition is met.

UNIQUE BARGAINS

Each Dark Bargain is unique, and a character can enter into a given bargain only once. A character could be bound to multiple Dark Bargains at one time, but each one only once.

REMOVING DARK BARGAINS

Dark Bargains are binding once sealed. There are tales and legends of those who have outwitted a bargainer or found a way to break a bargain's hold on them, but the truth of such stories is left to the GM to decide.



DARK BARGAIN DESCRIPTIONS



BESTIAL AWAKENING

The feral world calls to your soul, howling for you to join it. You can give in to the call and transform into a beast, but the touch of silver bites you more deeply than the sharpest fang.

Beast Skin. You always have the *Polymorph* spell prepared. You can cast it once without a spell slot or spell components but can target only yourself, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast it using slots you have of the appropriate level. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spell when you cast it without a spell slot (choose the ability when you select this Dark Bargain).

Searing Silver. Damage from *Silvered Weapons* ignores any Resistance or Immunity to damage you have. If you take damage from a *Silvered Weapon* or touch silver with your bare skin (or its equivalent), you can't regain Hit Points until you finish a Short or Long Rest.



CALL OF THE LONELY

In the depths of your solitude, and when your hope withered on the branch, you were granted a companion you can call on. You never have to be alone again. This companion is Friendly toward you but is deeply unsettling to your allies.

Never Alone. When no other creature can see you, you can use a Bonus Action to call your companion, which appears in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of you. It takes the form of a person or a vague silhouette, and it uses the **Doppelganger** stat block. It is Friendly toward you and acts as your ally, and it takes its turn on your Initiative in combat. It disappears after 1 hour, when it dies, when you die, or when you use an action to politely dismiss it. When it disappears, it drops anything it was wearing or carrying.

Once you use this Bonus Action, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest.

Precocious Friend. The companion sometimes appears with trinkets, Cursed Curios, or other items. It might tell you where it got them, or it might not (GM's choice). If it took the object from someone who misses it or wants it back, that could create difficulties for you.

Unsettling Presence. While your companion is summoned, both it and you exude a frightful air that unnerves your allies. While the companion is summoned, a creature that isn't Hostile toward you that starts its turn able to see you or the companion must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn.

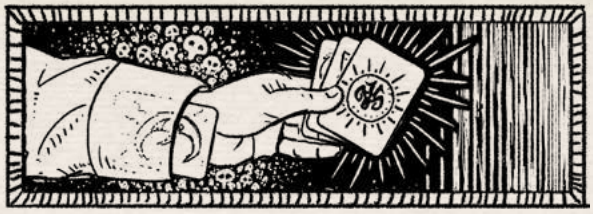


COLLECTOR OF STORIES

You have an insatiable desire to gather the tales of the world. Sometimes, you inadvertently take the story of meeting another person and keep it to yourself, forever.

Gathered Tales. You always have the *Legend Lore* spell prepared. You can cast it once without a spell slot or spell components, and you regain the ability to cast it in that way when you finish a Long Rest. You can also cast it using slots you have of the appropriate level. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spell when you cast it without a spell slot (choose the ability when you select this Dark Bargain).

Hoarded Stories. When you use this bargain to cast *Legend Lore* without a spell slot, a Friendly NPC (the GM chooses) forgets ever meeting you. You can meet them again and attempt to rebuild a relationship, but you forever cause an unsettling discomfort in them. That NPC's attitude toward you can't ever improve beyond Indifferent, and you have Disadvantage on all Charisma checks against them.



CROOKED FORTUNE

The crooked fate that governs Druskenvald has taken a liking to you. You can avoid calamity, but you must pay back your good fortune eventually.

Cheat Fate. When you fail a saving throw, you can choose to succeed instead. When you do so, if you would take half damage on a successful save, you take no damage instead. Once you use Cheat Fate, you can't use it again until you pay the price (see below).

Delayed Price. After you use Cheat Fate, your next three saving throws have Disadvantage and can't have Advantage, and you gain 1 Exhaustion level when you succeed on one of the saves. Once you succeed or fail on the third saving throw, you regain the use of Cheat Fate. The powers that govern the warp and weft of fate don't take kindly to cheating outside their terms—at the GM's discretion, saving throws made intentionally or without true consequences simply to pay this price painlessly don't count.



CULT OF PERSONALITY

You are a force of charm and allure with which to be reckoned. While others fall over themselves to stumble into your good graces, you might find that you end up needing them more than they need you.

Honeyed Words. As a Magic action, you can speak sweet words to a creature within 60 feet of you. The creature has the Charmed condition for 24 hours, until you use this feature again, or until you or your allies deal any damage to the target or force it to make a saving throw. The Charmed target is your ally and follows your commands as long as they don't require the target to harm itself. If the target carries out a command it finds odious, it makes a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, ending the condition on itself on a success. Once the condition ends, the target is immune to this feature for 24 hours.

If the target has Immunity to the Charmed condition, it instead has Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the start of your next turn, and you gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to your level. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Solitary Weakness. If you start your turn with no allies that you can see or hear within 20 feet of you, you lose any Temporary Hit Points you have from any source, and you have Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the start of your next turn.



HAND OF DEATH

Death has no claim on you. In exchange for staying its cold hand without that hand closing, you become a maw through which death feeds on the world around you.

Adamant Endurance. You have Advantage on Constitution saving throws.

Cling to Life. When you have 0 Hit Points at the start of your turn, or when you die, you can instead choose to regain a number of Hit Points equal to half your maximum. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again. After using it, whenever you regain Hit Points through any means, you gain only half that amount. Once a Humanoid (other than you) dies within 30 feet of you, you regain the use of this feature, and you can regain Hit Points as normal.

Death Knell. Other creatures within 10 feet of you have Disadvantage on Death Saving Throws, and you can't restore Hit Points to a creature with 0 Hit Points by any means.



MIGHT OF THE OLD

Ancient and primeval power dwells within the oldest forests of Druskenvald. These powers pour their strength into you but can overwhelm you with their unchanging nature.

Ancient Might. Your Strength score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22, and your Dexterity score decreases by 2.

Primeval Strength. As a Bonus Action, you can call upon the might of the ancients to raise your Strength score to 25 for 1 minute, during which time you deal double damage to objects. Once you use this Bonus Action, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest.

Pyre's Price. When you activate Primeval Strength, your skin takes on a bark-like texture, during which time you have Vulnerability to Fire damage. Your skin returns to normal when you finish a Long Rest.



SELF-SERVING SACRIFICE

You can snatch others from the jaws of death, but your own grip lingers too tightly. The feeling of saving others from suffering fills you with resolve, even as it drains the vigor from those you rescue.

Critical Savior. When a creature within 120 feet of you is subjected to a Critical Hit or is reduced to 0 Hit Points, you can use your Reaction to magically switch places with the target. Each of you teleports to the other's space. Roll a number of d6s equal to half your level. You take Force damage equal to the total rolled, you gain Heroic Inspiration, and your Exhaustion level, if any, is reduced by 1. The target regains Hit Points equal to the total rolled and gains 1 Exhaustion level. You can't use this feature again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Draining Presence. When you finish a Short or Long Rest, each creature within 100 feet of you loses one Hit Point Die (before spending Hit Dice in the case of finishing a Short Rest).

Final Sacrifice. You can cast *True Resurrection* using this bargain requiring no spell slot or spell components. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for the spell when you cast it without a spell slot (choose the ability when you select this Dark Bargain).

When you cast the spell this way, you die, and nothing can prevent it. Your soul is bound to torment the creature you returned to life, and you can't be raised from the dead by any means. When the creature takes a Long Rest, it must roll a d20 halfway through the rest's duration. On a 1, your soul takes the form of a **Wraith** within 100 feet of the creature and tries to kill it. The wraith vanishes after 8 hours, or when it dies. Once the wraith appears, it can't appear again for 30 days.



SHROUDED SPIRIT

The pall of death drapes over you like the Shroud of Druskenvald. This shroud protects you from the depredations of the Undead, but it draws you ever nearer to their cold embrace.

Inured to Undeath. You have Resistance to Necrotic damage, and you have Advantage on saving throws against spells and effects created by Undead.

Unholy Appetite. You must consume one pound of raw flesh (it needn't be fresh) per day or suffer Malnutrition.

Withering Soul. Features that detect your creature type, such as a Paladin's Divine Sense or the *Detect Evil and Good* spell, treat you as Undead if your creature type isn't Undead already.



SKIN OF COFFIN NAILS

Your body becomes as coldly unrelenting as iron nails sealing away the dead. You can shrug off staggering punishment, but the waters of the world no longer embrace you, as if spiting your defiance.

Iron Grit. You gain Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage (your choice when you select this Dark Bargain). You can change the damage type to one of the other options when you finish a Short or Long Rest. When you suffer a Critical Hit from the chosen damage type, it becomes a normal hit instead.

Watery Doom. When you are immersed in water or splashed with at least 1 gallon of water (such as from a bucket or being rained on), your skin tightens and grows rusty until you finish a Short or Long Rest. During that time, your Speed and the time you can hold your breath are halved, and your Resistance to the chosen damage type for Iron Grit becomes Vulnerability instead. At the GM's discretion, other liquids can also trigger this feature.

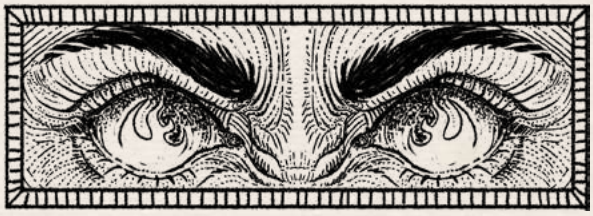


STILLED HUNGERS

Food, drink, and maladies of the flesh have lost their hold over you, but these are the very things that keep a soul vital while in the land of the living. Your mind grows ravenous absent those urges—your thoughts crack with gnawing fears, and your dreams wither into crooked nightmares.

Sated Cravings. Forgoing food and drink doesn't give you Exhaustion levels. You have Resistance to Poison damage, and you have Advantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Poisoned condition.

Tenuous Psyche. You have Vulnerability to Psychic damage and Disadvantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Frightened condition. A *Calm Emotions* spell cast on you suppresses this feature for its duration.

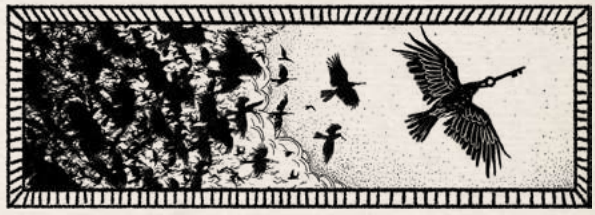


UNQUENCHABLE FURY

Anger is a powerful tool. This bargain stokes it into a formidable inferno, but it threatens to consume everything in its path.

Furious Onslaught. As a Bonus Action, or when you take the Attack action on your turn, you can choose to enter a fury. While in this fury, you can make one additional melee attack when you take the Attack action on your turn, and you reduce all damage you take by an amount equal to your Proficiency Bonus. The fury ends if you have the Incapacitated condition, if you die, or if you end your turn and there are no creatures within 60 feet of you that you can see or hear. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest. You also regain the use of this feature when you kill a Humanoid.

Red Haze. While you are in a fury, you must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw at the start of each of your turns. On a successful save, you can choose to end your fury or continue it. On a failed save, you no longer make the saving throw at the start of your turns, and you regard the creature nearest to you that you can see or hear as your enemy (if there are multiple, choose one at random). On each of your turns, you must move as close to the creature as possible and take the Attack action, targeting that creature with melee attacks. If you're unable to get close enough to the creature to attack it, your turn ends after you've used up all your available movement. If the creature dies or can no longer be seen or heard by you, the next nearest creature that you can see or hear becomes your new target.



WINGS OF WHISPERS

You have been gifted with secrets that you can call upon in the form of ravens and crows to bear you aloft, but at the risk of revealing your own secrets in turn.

Murderous Flight. As a Bonus Action, you can magically gain a Fly Speed equal to your Speed (and you can hover) for 10 minutes. During this time, a mass of shadows takes the shape of a murder of crows and ravens (but they aren't truly creatures). The birds appear in a 20-foot Emanation originating from you and take flight and whirl around you when you fly. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest, unless you gain 1 Exhaustion level to use it again early.

Whispered Secrets. The birds that appear when you activate Murderous Flight remain and continue to follow you until you finish a Short or Long Rest. While the birds are present, you have Disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, and the birds whisper your secrets into the minds of other creatures, granting them Advantage on Wisdom (Insight or Perception) checks made against you.



Chapter 7: SPELLS

This chapter introduces forty spells steeped in the essence of Folk Horror. Outside of being granted these spells by features, the GM decides how player characters can learn them. For spellcasters who have access to their entire spell list, they might simply become aware of the magic of Druskenvald now available to them. Alternatively, a character might need to experience, research, or otherwise learn of a new spell before selecting it.

SPELL LISTS

This first section in this chapter presents additions to class spell lists. The spells are organized by spell level and then alphabetized, and each spell's school of magic is listed. After the school, C means the spell requires Concentration, R means it's a Ritual, and M means it requires a specific Material component.

Bard Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
0	*Mysterious Presence*	Illusion	C
1	*Captivate Undead*	Necromancy	C
2	*Chorus of the Lost*	Necromancy	C, M
2	*Harrowing Ballad*	Enchantment	C
2	*Unraveling Whisper*	Enchantment	—
3	*Cursed Cacophony*	Enchantment	C, R
3	*Sanctum of the Flock*	Transmutation	M
4	*Call of the Wild*	Enchantment	C
4	*Intrusive Despair*	Enchantment	C
4	*Puppet Master*	Enchantment	C
5	*Lucky Charm*	Transmutation	C
5	*Mirrored Agony*	Abjuration	—

Cleric Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
1	*Ancestral Communion*	Divination	C
1	*Captivate Undead*	Necromancy	C
2	*Chorus of the Lost*	Necromancy	C, M
2	*Summer Winds*	Evocation	—
3	*Harvest Moonglow*	Evocation	—
3	*Martyr*	Necromancy	M
3	*Sanctum of the Flock*	Transmutation	M
3	*Scarlet Dawn*	Evocation	—
4	*Sacrificial Siphon*	Necromancy	C
4	*Sanctum of the Shepherd*	Abjuration	M
5	*Field of Reaping*	Necromancy	C

Druid Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
0	*Eye Burn*	Transmutation	—
0	*Mysterious Presence*	Illusion	C
1	*Ancestral Communion*	Divination	C
2	*Summer Winds*	Evocation	—
3	*Creeping Rot*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crooked Ward*	Abjuration	C
3	*Culling Sickle*	Necromancy	C
3	*Harvest Moonglow*	Evocation	—
3	*Scarlet Dawn*	Evocation	—
4	*Buried Alive*	Transmutation	—
4	*Call of the Wild*	Enchantment	C
4	*Consuming Pyre*	Evocation	C
4	*Murder of Crows*	Conjuration	—
5	*Field of Reaping*	Necromancy	C

Paladin Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
1	*Hungering Blade*	Necromancy	—
2	*Chain of Conviction*	Conjuration	—
2	*Summer Winds*	Evocation	—
3	*Martyr*	Necromancy	M
3	*Sanctum of the Flock*	Transmutation	M
3	*Scarlet Dawn*	Evocation	—
4	*Consuming Pyre*	Evocation	C
4	*Sacrificial Siphon*	Necromancy	C
4	*Sanctum of the Shepherd*	Abjuration	M
5	*Lucky Charm*	Transmutation	C

Ranger Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
1	*Ancestral Communion*	Divination	C
1	*Hungering Blade*	Necromancy	—
2	*Sanguine Secrets*	Divination	M
2	*Summer Winds*	Evocation	—
2	*Veil of the Reaper*	Illusion	C
3	*Creeping Rot*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crooked Ward*	Abjuration	C
3	*Harvest Moonglow*	Evocation	—
3	*Scarlet Dawn*	Evocation	—
4	*Call of the Wild*	Enchantment	C
4	*Murder of Crows*	Conjuration	—
5	*Lucky Charm*	Transmutation	C

Sorcerer Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
0	*Blood Bolt*	Necromancy	—
0	*Mysterious Presence*	Illusion	C
1	*Ancestral Communion*	Divination	C
1	*Captivate Undead*	Necromancy	C
1	*Devil's Due*	Necromancy	—
2	*Blood Sacrifice*	Necromancy	—
2	*Chorus of the Lost*	Necromancy	C, M
2	*Harrowing Ballad*	Enchantment	C
2	*Sanguine Secrets*	Divination	M
2	*Unraveling Whisper*	Enchantment	—
2	*Veil of the Reaper*	Illusion	C
3	*Creeping Rot*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crimson Harvest*	Necromancy	—
3	*Culling Sickle*	Necromancy	C
3	*Cursed Cacophony*	Enchantment	C, R
3	*Mist of Mourning*	Enchantment	C
3	*Shadow Drain*	Necromancy	C
4	*Buried Alive*	Transmutation	—
4	*Intrusive Despair*	Enchantment	C
4	*Murder of Crows*	Conjuration	—
4	*Puppet Master*	Enchantment	C
5	*Mirrored Agony*	Abjuration	—
6	*Ghastly Charge*	Necromancy	—

Warlock Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
0	*Blood Bolt*	Necromancy	—
0	*Eye Burn*	Transmutation	—
1	*Captivate Undead*	Necromancy	C
1	*Devil's Due*	Necromancy	—
1	Hungering Blade	Necromancy	—
2	*Blood Sacrifice*	Necromancy	—
2	*Chain of Conviction*	Conjuration	—
2	*Chorus of the Lost*	Necromancy	C, M
2	*Sanguine Secrets*	Divination	M
2	*Unraveling Whisper*	Enchantment	—
2	*Veil of the Reaper*	Illusion	C
3	*Creeping Rot*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crimson Harvest*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crooked Ward*	Abjuration	C
3	*Culling Sickle*	Necromancy	C
3	*Cursed Cacophony*	Enchantment	C, R
3	*Isolation*	Enchantment	C
3	*Mist of Mourning*	Enchantment	C
3	*Scarlet Dawn*	Evocation	—
3	*Shadow Drain*	Necromancy	C
4	*Buried Alive*	Transmutation	—
4	*Call of the Wild*	Enchantment	C
4	*Consuming Pyre*	Evocation	C
4	*Intrusive Despair*	Enchantment	C
4	*Murder of Crows*	Conjuration	—
4	*Puppet Master*	Enchantment	C
4	*Sacrificial Siphon*	Necromancy	C
5	*Lucky Charm*	Transmutation	C
5	*Field of Reaping*	Necromancy	C
6	*Ghastly Charge*	Necromancy	—

Wizard Spells

Level	Spell	School	Special
0	*Blood Bolt*	Necromancy	—
0	*Dissolution*	Transmutation	—
0	*Eye Burn*	Transmutation	—
1	*Captivate Undead*	Necromancy	C
1	*Devil's Due*	Necromancy	—
2	*Blood Sacrifice*	Necromancy	—
2	*Chorus of the Lost*	Necromancy	C, M
2	*Harrowing Ballad*	Enchantment	C
2	*Sanguine Secrets*	Divination	M
2	*Unraveling Whisper*	Enchantment	—
2	*Veil of the Reaper*	Illusion	C
3	*Creeping Rot*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crimson Harvest*	Necromancy	—
3	*Crooked Ward*	Abjuration	C
3	*Culling Sickle*	Necromancy	C
3	*Isolation*	Enchantment	C
3	*Martyr*	Necromancy	M
3	*Mist of Mourning*	Enchantment	C
3	*Scarlet Dawn*	Evocation	—
3	*Shadow Drain*	Necromancy	C
4	*Buried Alive*	Transmutation	—
4	*Intrusive Despair*	Enchantment	C
4	*Murder of Crows*	Conjuration	—
4	*Puppet Master*	Enchantment	C
4	*Sacrificial Siphon*	Necromancy	C
4	*Sanctum of the Shepherd*	Abjuration	M
5	*Mirrored Agony*	Abjuration	—
6	*Ghastly Charge*	Necromancy	—

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

ANCESTRAL COMMUNION

Level 1 Divination (Cleric, Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You invoke the wisdom of your ancestors to gain insight into your trials. When you cast the spell, and at the start of each of your turns for the duration, you gain Heroic Inspiration if you don't already have it.

BLOOD BOLT

Necromancy Cantrip (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You hurl a twisting bolt of blood at a creature within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 Necrotic damage, and you gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

Cantrip Upgrade. The damage increases by 1d6 when you reach levels 5 (2d6), 11 (3d6), and 17 (4d6).

BLOOD SACRIFICE

Level 2 Necromancy (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a drop of your own blood)
Duration: 1 minute

You sacrifice a portion of your life force to enhance your magical power. When you cast this spell, you take 1d6 Necrotic damage, which can't be reduced or prevented in any way. For the duration, when you cast a spell that deals damage, one target of the spell (your choice) takes an extra 1d6 damage of the same type as the spell's normal damage type (your choice if there are multiple).

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage you take and the extra damage your spells deal both increase by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 2.

BURIED ALIVE

Level 4 Transmutation (Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of grave dirt)
Duration: Instantaneous

You send your enemies to their graves even if they aren't dead yet. A creature that you can see within range that is standing on the ground must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the ground opens and swallows the target, burying it up to 10 feet deep. While buried, the target has Total Cover, has the Restrained and Blinded conditions, and can't breathe. On a successful save, the target has the Prone condition, and its Speed is 0 until the end of its next turn. A buried creature can dig out of the grave by using its action to make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, it digs 5 feet closer to the surface. If it succeeds by 5 or more, it reaches the surface. When the creature reaches the surface, it exits the ground with the Prone condition.

The target automatically succeeds on its saving throw if it's standing on any thickness of stone or metal, or at least 2 inches of wood.

CALL OF THE WILD

Level 4 Enchantment (Bard, Druid, Ranger, Warlock)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a bit of animal fur or hide)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You unleash a primal howl that calls lesser creatures to your command. Each Beast in a 100-foot Emanation originating from you when you cast the spell must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target has the Charmed condition, it can understand your commands, and it follows them on its next turn to the best of its ability. On your subsequent turns, you can take a Magic action to issue a new command. On a successful save, a target has the Charmed condition until the start of your next turn, but you have no additional ability to command it. The howl is audible within 300 feet.

CAPTIVATE UNDEAD

Level 1 Necromancy (Bard, Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of bone dust)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You usurp the negative energy animating an Undead creature that you can see within range, attempting to take control of it. The target must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, for the duration, the target has the Charmed condition (ignoring any Immunity to that condition), and it is Friendly toward you. On a successful save, the target has Disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes against you before the start of your next turn. If you or any of your allies damage the target or force it to make a saving throw, the spell ends.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. You can target one additional creature for each spell slot level above 1.

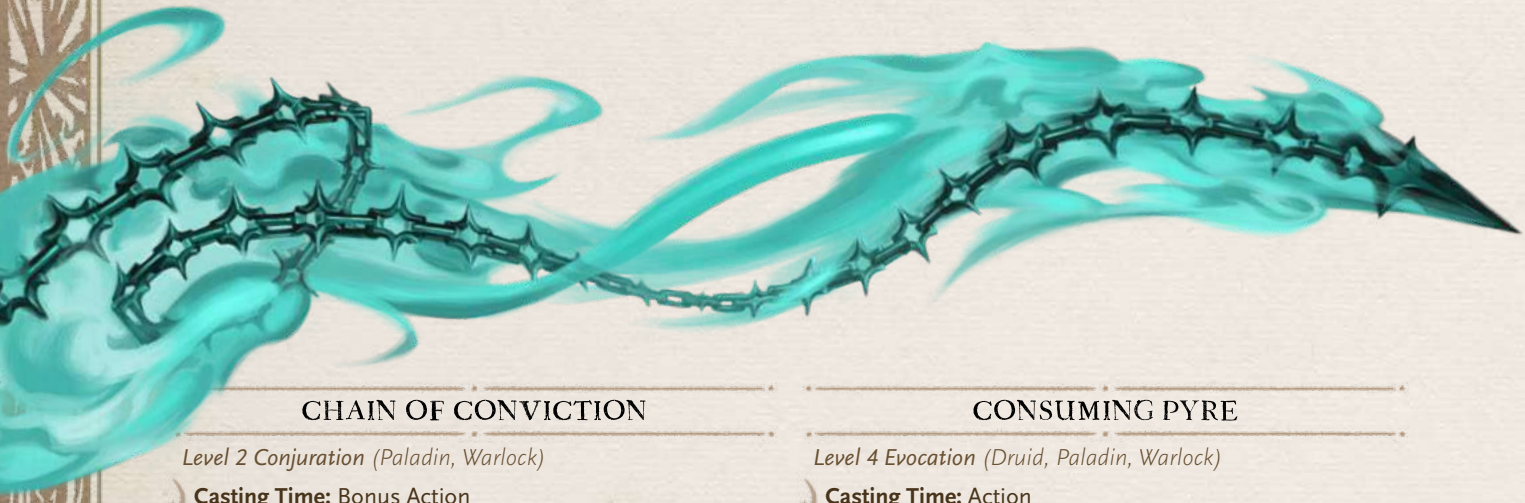
CHORUS OF THE LOST

Level 2 Necromancy (Bard, Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a silver bell worth 10+ GP)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You summon the eerie song and wailing of lost souls from a point you can see within range. Each creature in a 15-foot-radius Sphere centered there must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 2d6 Psychic damage, and it has the Frightened condition for the duration. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage, and it has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn. A Frightened target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the spell on itself on a success.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 2.



CHAIN OF CONVICTION

Level 2 Conjuration (Paladin, Warlock)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: 30 feet
Components: S
Duration: 1 minute

You hurl a spectral, barbed chain at a creature that you can see within range. The target makes a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 2d6 Force damage, is pulled up to 30 feet toward you, and is bound by the chain. While bound by the chain, the creature is tethered to you and can't move or teleport to a space more than 30 feet away from you, and you have Advantage on attack rolls made against the creature.

On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage only. The bound target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the spell on itself on a success. If you are ever more than 30 feet away from the target, the spell ends.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 2.

CONSUMING PYRE

Level 4 Evocation (Druid, Paladin, Warlock)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause a creature that you can see within range to burst into consuming, relentless flames. The target must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 2d8 Fire damage and 2d8 Necrotic or Radiant damage (choose when you cast the spell), and the radiant flames linger. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage only.

While the flames linger, the creature takes the damage again at the start of each of its turns. The target, or another creature within reach of the target, can take an action to allow the target to repeat the saving throw, ending the spell on a success.

A creature killed by the damage from this spell is reduced to ash, along with any nonmagical equipment it is wearing or carrying.

CREEPING ROT

Level 3 Necromancy (Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 minute

You send tendrils of black and gray rot toward a target that you can see within range. Three tendrils then leap from that target to as many as three other targets of your choice, each of which must be within 30 feet of the first target. A target can be a creature or a nonmagical plant that isn't a creature, such as a tree or shrub. In either case, each can be targeted by only one of the tendrils.

A target that is a creature must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 3d8 Necrotic damage and has the Poisoned condition for the duration. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage only. A creature Poisoned in this way takes 1d8 Necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. A Poisoned creature repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the spell on itself on a success.

A Plant creature automatically fails the initial save, and a nonmagical plant that isn't a creature simply withers and dies.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. One additional tendril leaps from the first target to another target for each spell slot level above 3.

CRIMSON HARVEST

Level 3 Necromancy (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a vial of blood)
Duration: Instantaneous

A wave of blood sweeps out from you in a 15-foot Emanation. Each creature of your choice in the wave must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d10 Necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

If you damage at least one Small or larger creature, one creature of your choice that you can see within the Emanation regains a number of Hit Points equal to half the damage roll.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d10 for each spell slot level above 3.

CROOKED WARD

Level 3 Abjuration (Druid, Ranger, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a five-pointed wicker star)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You touch an immobile surface and mark a symbol that causes agony in twisted creatures. An Invisible, 30-foot-radius Sphere springs out from the point you touch. Each Aberration, Fey, Fiend, Monstrosity, or Undead in the Sphere has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls. When an affected creature enters the Sphere for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. You can maintain Concentration on this spell for longer if you cast it using a spell slot of level 4 (up to 1 hour) or 5 (up to 8 hours). If you use a level 6+ spell slot, the spell doesn't require Concentration, and the duration becomes 24 hours.

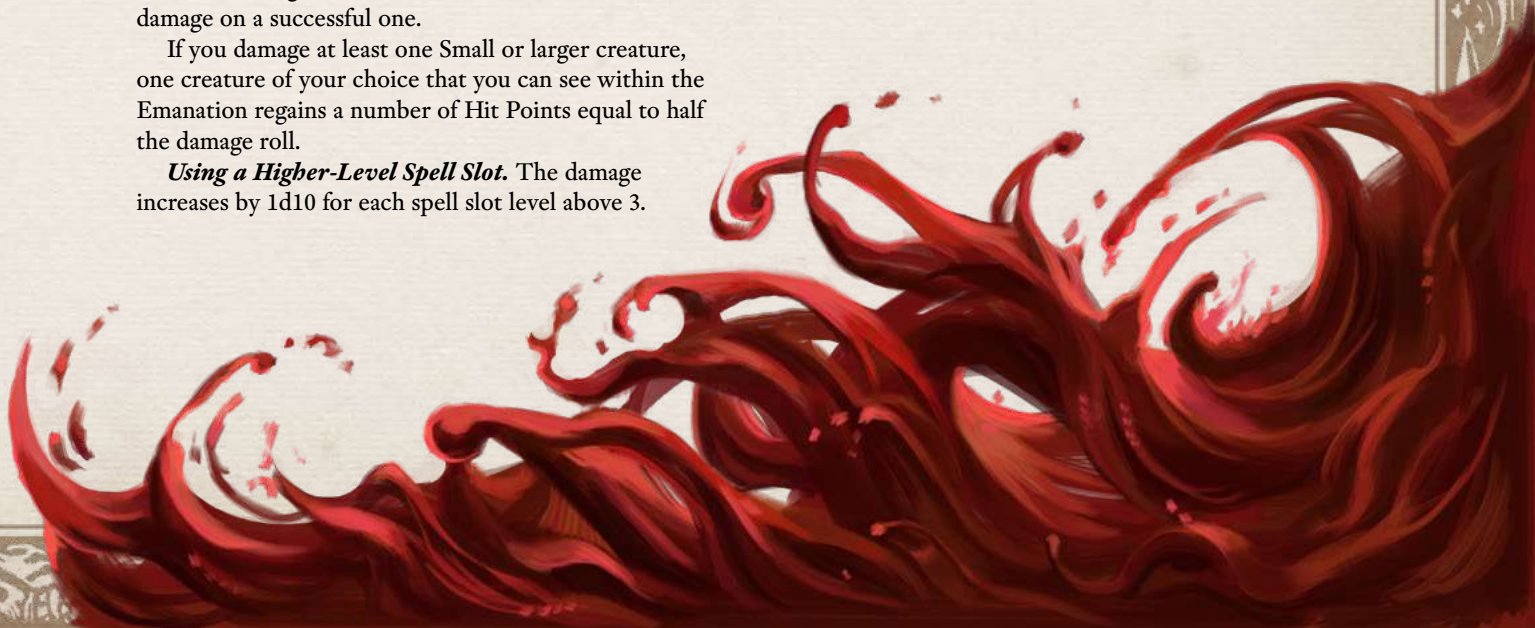
CULLING SICKLE

Level 3 Necromancy (Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a ghostly sickle that lasts for the duration and can strike out at your foes. The sickle appears hovering in your space and moves with you. When you cast this spell and as a Bonus Action on each of your turns, you can direct it to fly at and strike a creature within 30 feet of you. Make a ranged spell attack. On a hit, the target takes 2d8 Necrotic damage, and you gain Temporary Hit Points equal to half the damage dealt. After the sickle hits or misses, it returns to hover in your space.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d8 for each spell slot level above 3.



CURSED CACOPHONY

Level 3 Enchantment (Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock)

Casting Time: Action or Ritual
Range: Special
Components: S, M (a sheet of music)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You focus on a creature that you are familiar with that is on the same plane of existence as you. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be cursed for the duration. Once a target fails its saving throw against this spell, you can't target it with a ritual casting of the spell for 24 hours.

While cursed, the target hears haunting, discordant music and has Disadvantage on D20 Tests. The first time the target fails a D20 Test during a turn, it repeats the save against this spell with neither Advantage nor Disadvantage, ending the spell early on a success.

DEVIL'S DUE

Level 1 Necromancy (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Reaction, which you take when another creature within range takes damage
Range: 30 feet
Components: S, M (a glob of pitch)
Duration: Instantaneous

You absorb a measure of a creature's suffering and escaping vital essence. Expend and roll one Hit Point Die. You regain a number of Hit Points equal to the number rolled plus your spellcasting ability modifier.

If the creature took damage from a Critical Hit, double the number of Hit Points you regain.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. You can expend one additional Hit Point Die for each spell slot level above 1.

DISSOLUTION

Transmutation Cantrip (Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You touch a creature or nonmagical object and break the target's substance down into its most fundamental components. Make a melee spell attack. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 Force damage, and its AC is reduced by 1 against the next attack roll made against it before the end of your next turn.

Cantrip Upgrade. The damage increases by 1d8 when you reach levels 5 (2d8), 11 (3d8), and 17 (4d8).

EYE BURN

Transmutation Cantrip (Druid, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Reaction, which you take when a creature you can see within range targets you with an attack
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a smear of camphor)
Duration: 1 round

You sting the eyes of a creature attacking you. The target must make a Constitution saving throw (a creature with Blindsight or Immunity to the Blinded condition succeeds automatically). On a failed save, the target has the Blinded condition until the end of the turn. On a successful save, it must subtract 1d4 from the triggering attack roll. The target automatically succeeds on its saves against your subsequent casting of this spell for 24 hours.

FIELD OF REAPING

Level 5 Necromancy (Cleric, Druid, Warlock)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a dried corn husk or wheat hull)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a shadowy field that reaps escaping life force in a 30-foot Cube originating from a point within range. A creature Hostile to you in the field when it appears, or when it enters the field for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there, is cursed until the end of its next turn. While cursed, the first time the creature takes damage during a turn, it takes an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage, and a creature of your choice within the field that isn't cursed by it regains a number of Hit Points equal to the Necrotic damage taken.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 5.





GHASTLY CHARGE

Level 6 Necromancy (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a scrap of a banner)
Duration: Instantaneous

You call forth the spirits of long-dead knights, which charge forward from you in a 90-foot long, 20-foot wide Line, and then vanish. Each creature of your choice in the Line must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 5d12 Necrotic damage, has the Frightened condition until the start of your next turn, and must immediately use its Reaction, if available, to move as far from you as it can, using the safest route. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage only.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d12 for each spell slot level above 6.

HARVEST MOONGLOW

Level 3 Evocation (Cleric, Druid, Ranger)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a piece of moonstone)
Duration: 1 hour

You call upon the light of the harvest moon to illuminate a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point within range. The area is bathed in silvery Dim Light. Creatures and objects with the Invisible condition in the light become visible as translucent, shimmering images. When one of your allies is within the light, it can use a Bonus Action to absorb some of the light and gain 2d6 Temporary Hit Points.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The Temporary Hit Points increase by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 3.

HARROWING BALLAD

Level 2 Enchantment (Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You inflict a mind-eroding song on a creature that you can see within range. If the creature has an Intelligence of 4 or higher, it must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or have the Charmed condition for the duration.

While Charmed in this way, the target is struck with a rapidly repeating ballad that only it can hear; it takes 1d6 Psychic damage at the start of each of its turns, and it has Disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on Constitution saving throws made to maintain its Concentration. The target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the spell on a success.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 2.

HUNGERING BLADE

Level 1 Necromancy (Paladin, Ranger, Warlock)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 minute

You imbue a weapon you are holding, or your Unarmed Strikes, with ravenous negative energy. For the duration, when you hit a creature with an attack using the empowered weapon or Unarmed Strike for the first time on a turn, the target takes Necrotic damage equal to your spellcasting ability modifier, and you gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to the Necrotic damage dealt.

INTRUSIVE DESPAIR

Level 4 Enchantment (Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a devil's trumpet blossom)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You curse a creature within range, filling its mind with creeping paranoia and despair. When the target takes the Attack or Magic action, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or waste its action. Once the target succeeds on three saving throws against this spell, the spell ends.



ISOLATION

Level 3 Enchantment (Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a small metal cube)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

One creature that you can see within range must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have its mind shrouded in the dread of total isolation. For the duration, all other creatures have the Invisible condition toward the target, which the target can't see through—even with Blindsight, Truesight, or magic such as the *See Invisibility* spell—and the target can't perceive other creatures with any of its other senses. The target moves around other creatures, or otherwise rationalizes not moving through spaces occupied by them (such as perceiving a door as closed or as a wall if another creature is standing in the way). The target still feels pain but can't identify the source of any injury caused by another creature. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the spell on itself on a success.

LUCKY CHARM

Level 5 Transmutation (Bard, Paladin, Ranger, Warlock)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a four-leaf clover and a shard of broken mirror)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a Tiny, nonmagical object, infusing it with a portion of your own luck for the duration. While another creature carries the object, that creature has Advantage on D20 Tests, and you have Disadvantage on D20 Tests.

MARTYR

Level 3 Necromancy (Cleric, Paladin, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a Dagger worth at least 1 CP)
Duration: Instantaneous

You touch a dead creature that died within the last minute and transfer your life essence into it. The target returns to life with Hit Points equal to your current Hit Point total. You immediately drop to 0 Hit Points (which nothing can prevent) with two failed Death Saving Throws, and you must immediately make a Death Save. You can't regain Hit Points or become Stable until after you make this save.

MIRRORED AGONY

Level 5 Abjuration (Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard)

Casting Time: Reaction, which you take when a creature you can see within 60 feet of you damages your ally
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pin or needle)
Duration: Instantaneous

The triggering creature makes a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it takes an amount of Psychic damage equal to the damage it dealt to your ally. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage.

MIST OF MOURNING

Level 3 Enchantment (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a vial of tears)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You summon a thin mist that saps joy and vigor in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point within range. Each creature in the mist when it appears, or when it moves into the mist for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there, must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or be filled with deep melancholy until the end of its next turn. An affected creature's Speed is halved, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls, and it subtracts 1d8 from all its damage rolls.

MURDER OF CROWS

Level 4 Conjuration (Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a crow feather)
Duration: Instantaneous

You summon and unleash a murder of deadly crows. Each creature of your choice in a 30-foot Cone originating from you makes a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 5d6 Force damage and has the Blinded condition. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage only. A Blinded creature repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The effect also ends if the creature regains any Hit Points. The crows disperse and vanish after they strike.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 4.

PUPPET MASTER

Level 4 Enchantment (Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a marionette string)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

One creature that you can see within range must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition for the duration.

Magical marionette strings attach to the Charmed creature's limbs or body, and it must use its action on its turn to make a melee attack against a creature other than itself that you mentally choose, moving to reach the target if necessary. The target can act normally on its turn if you don't choose another creature, or if the creature isn't within the target's reach after it moves. The target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the spell on itself on a success.

On your later turns, you must take a Bonus Action to maintain control of the target, or the spell ends.



MYSTERIOUS PRESENCE

Illusion Cantrip (Bard, Druid, Sorcerer)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You touch a willing creature and shroud its presence. Until the spell ends, other creatures must subtract 1d4 from any Wisdom (Insight or Perception) checks made against the target.

SACRIFICIAL SIPHON

Level 4 Necromancy (Cleric, Paladin, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Touch
Components: S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You touch another creature and lay a curse that drains the target's vitality and transfers it to you. The target must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target is cursed for the duration. While cursed, the target must subtract 1d4 from its attack rolls and ability checks, and when the target takes damage, you can take a Reaction to gain 10 Temporary Hit Points. On a successful save, you gain 5 Temporary Hit Points, and the target must subtract 1d4 from its ability checks until the start of your next turn.

SANCTUM OF THE SHEPHERD

Level 4 Abjuration (Cleric, Paladin, Wizard)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 5 feet
Components: V, S, M (adamantine or diamond powder worth 200+ GP, which the spell consumes)
Duration: 24 hours

You create a 20-foot-radius Sphere of faint, shimmering light centered on a point within range. You and a number of creatures of your choice up to your spellcasting ability modifier (minimum of 1 other creature) can absorb protective magic from the Sphere. When any of the chosen creatures finish a Long Rest in the area, the Sphere vanishes, and those creatures gain a +1 bonus to AC for the remainder of the duration. Chosen creatures who don't finish a Long Rest in the Sphere gain no benefit.

SANCTUM OF THE FLOCK

Level 3 Transmutation (Bard, Cleric, Paladin)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 5 feet
Components: V, S, M (powdered silver worth 25+ GP, which the spell consumes)
Duration: 24 hours

You create a 20-foot-radius Sphere of faint, shimmering light centered on a point within range. You and a number of creatures of your choice up to your spellcasting ability modifier (minimum of 1 other creature) can absorb empowering magic from the Sphere. When any of the chosen creatures finish a Long Rest in the area, the Sphere vanishes, and those creatures gain 2d10 Temporary Hit Points, and for the remainder of the duration, they have Advantage on Charisma checks that use one of their skill proficiencies. Chosen creatures who don't finish a Long Rest in the Sphere gain no benefit.

SANGUINE SECRETS

Level 2 Divination (Ranger, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a drop of blood, which the spell consumes)
Duration: 1 round

You draw knowledge through the power of blood about a creature you can see within range. You learn the target's species and creature type, its current Hit Points, and any conditions affecting it. You also learn if it has any of the following, and, if so, what they are: Vulnerability, Resistance, or Immunity to damage or conditions.

Additionally, the next ability check or attack roll you make against the target before the end of your next turn has Advantage.



SCARLET DAWN

Level 3 Evocation (Cleric, Druid, Paladin, Ranger, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

Crimson light shines down in a 20-foot-radius, 60-foot-high Cylinder centered on a point within range. Each creature in that area that isn't a Construct or Undead must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 4d10 Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Constructs and Undead in the area regain 4d10 Hit Points.

If any of this spell's area overlaps with an area of Darkness created by a spell of level 3 or lower, that other spell is dispelled.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d10 and the level of spell that can be dispelled increases by 1 for each spell slot level above 3.

SHADOW DRAIN

Level 3 Necromancy (Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You siphon away the vitality and sense of self through the shadows of nearby creatures in a 15-foot Emanation originating from you.

When you cast this spell, you can designate creatures to be unaffected by it. Whenever any other creature enters the Emanation or starts its turn there, or when the Emanation enters a creature's space, the creature must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 2d6 Necrotic damage and has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage only. A creature makes this save only once per turn.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot level above 3.

SUMMER WINDS

Level 2 Evocation (Cleric, Druid, Paladin, Ranger)

Casting Time: Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You unleash a blast of light and wind in a 15-foot Cone. Your allies in the Cone regain 2d6 Hit Points. Undead within the Cone that are Hostile to you must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 2d6 Radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. The damage and healing increase by 2d6 for each spell slot level above 2.

UNRAVELING WHISPER

Level 2 Enchantment (Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round

Choose a creature you can see within range and whisper a frightful phrase that only the target can hear. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 2d6 Psychic damage and has the Frightened condition until the start of your next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage only.

While Frightened in this way, the creature has Vulnerability to your choice of Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage.

Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot. You can target one additional creature for each spell slot level above 2.

VEIL OF THE REAPER

Level 2 Illusion (Ranger, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard)

Casting Time: Bonus Action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a dried corn husk or wheat straw)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You wrap yourself in shadows that veil you between strikes. At the end of any turn in which you hit a creature with an attack roll, you gain the Invisible condition until the start of your next turn.



Chapter 8: THE CROOKED MOON

At the stroke of midnight, a ghastly fog rolls in, and with it, the blast of a haunting train whistle that sounds more like a choir of wailing souls. When the old black locomotive rolls out of the gloom, you know deep in your trembling heart that you have a one-way ticket to the afterlife. The *Ghostlight Express* thunders its call, and it's time for you to hop aboard. You're off to Druskenvald.

The dreadful folktale you are about to weave, titled *The Crooked Moon*, is the primary adventure campaign of this book. This chapter and all chapters beyond are intended for the eyes of the Game Master (GM) only. If you are a player hoping to embark on this damnable journey, beware! The entirety of the adventure is summarized below, so turn back now if you do not wish to be spoiled.

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

In this adventure, characters find themselves in possession of a ticket to ride the *Ghostlight Express*, a spectral train that ferries souls to the afterlife. This trip through the mists of death leaves them stranded in the mysterious valley of Wickermoor Hollow, where isolated peoples are terrorized by restless dead, wicked hags, ravenous monsters, and many other creatures of the night that never ends.

From the very beginning, the characters' fates are intertwined with that of Phillip Druskenvald, the lord of the land that he shaped and named after himself, as well as his clairvoyant wife, Adela. Despite their power, these well-meaning but naïve nobles are doomed to perish in the story's climax from the machinations of a twisted fey goddess known as the Crooked Queen.

This primeval entity named Kehlenn is served by countless minions, including a secret cult of human worshippers, a coven of verminous crones, and a malevolent spirit called the Crooked Man—all of whom do her bidding throughout the valley to free her from her ancient prison deep within the dark wood.

The means of this eventual return lies with a fledgling god born from sin itself. Known only as the Horned King, this fiendish black goat seeks to incarnate and be made flesh so he may free his Crooked Queen and sit at her right hand, annihilating the people of Druskenvald and disintegrating the land ahead of the domain's twisted rebirth.

The whispers and promises of this lord of sin are alluring and have brought about the fall of six formerly heroic wayward souls who now terrorize all corners of Wickermoor Hollow. Known to the followers of the Crooked Queen as the Fallen, these six villains serve as sacrifices to be made and the seals to be broken to unleash the full power of the Horned King.

It is this complex web of evil with which the characters must contend if they hope to survive their time in the valley and save the lives of Druskenvald's inhabitants. While victory is possible, the cost will be tremendous, and many souls cannot be saved no matter what the would-be heroes do.

And yet, while there is only a ghost of a chance that salvation can be achieved, it is a hope all the same. Only the characters who embark on this adventure can determine the fate of all who dwell beneath the Crooked Moon.



MAJOR CHARACTERS



The larger-than-life nonplayer characters (NPCs) are the heart of *The Crooked Moon*. There are numerous villains for the characters to face, offering a wide variety of threats, and critical allies that serve as the story's stand-ins for the "Folk Horror Protagonists," who are doomed through their inability to grasp the severity of the situation they find themselves in. You can learn more about the history of the primary characters in chapter 1.

Review these important NPCs and understand their motivations so you can accurately improvise encounters with the characters. By striving to make each of these major figures complex, three-dimensional, flawed, and even sympathetic, you can deliver a truly unique Folk Horror experience set apart from traditional heroic fantasy.

PHILLIP DRUSKENVALD

Phillip Druskenvald is the lord of Druskenvald. His dapper appearance and affable personality belie the immense power he holds. While he appears to be a tall, thin man with perfectly slicked back hair and a pencil-thin mustache as black as night, the truth is that he is a timeless lord of death with his origins lost deep within the Shroud itself . . . even to him.

Despite ruling in Druskenvald for many years, he was not always the realm's master. Formerly, it had belonged to the fey goddess Kehlenn, who utilized the reincarnation magics of the domain to rebirth souls as flora and fauna in a natural world where life was brutal and short.

Phillip is another kind of deathless being who arrived from beyond the mist eons ago. He usurped the realm of rebirth, claiming its reincarnating powers for his own. He then reshaped the land into his own design, even renaming it after himself. In this new afterlife, Phillip provided souls the opportunity to be reborn as sapient mortal beings to enjoy a second chance at a "normal" life.

After the slow passage of millennia, Phillip forgot about his battle with Kehlenn or that there was ever a world before the one he forged himself. He now oversees the domain with his Crescent Court, composed of the thirteen lords and ladies of Druskenvald (see chapter 1). However, he finds governance tedious and prefers to enjoy the good life he brought to the afterlife, with all the messy and sinful comforts and indulgences that come with it.

While he maintains a general grasp of the current affairs of the thirteen major provinces of Druskenvald, Phillip is mostly ignorant of the happenings in

Wickermoor Hollow, heightened by the crooked power of Kehlenn that shrouds it from his view. Even worse, while in the valley, Phillip has none of the supernatural powers that make him the most formidable being in the land.

He does not know, and will only learn too late, that in Wickermoor Hollow, Kehlenn has seized his power and weaves it toward her own aims in the creation of a newborn god of sin: the Horned King. While within the confines of the valley, Phillip is very nearly just a mortal man, which will lead to his inevitable destruction.

Phillip's newfound impotence frustrates him, but he still decides to remain in the valley after being stranded there with the characters. His curiosity is stronger than his sense of preservation, and he cannot fathom a scenario where he could be in any real danger. He sees the presence of the characters as an opportunity to get to the bottom of what's happening in Wickermoor Hollow while also helping the citizens he's neglected for so long.



ADELA DRUSKENVALD

Adela Druskenvald is the loving partner-in-crime of her husband Phillip. She rules Druskenvald alongside him, and while she similarly has a distaste for politics and bureaucracy, she often serves as a voice of reason and a reminder of the responsibility to help the people across the thirteen provinces.

While Phillip is an otherworldly entity from regions unknown, Adela was born a mortal woman and lived in the material world for the first three decades of her life. As a child, her paranormal experiences and prophetic visions led to her discovery of immense powers of divination and a strong connection to the spiritual world.

As a young woman, Adela's curiosity and dauntlessness brought her face-to-face with Phillip aboard the *Ghostlight Express*, and the two fell in love at first sight. They were quickly married, and as a Druskenvald, Adela became immortal, enjoying her endless youth by seeking every new and exciting experience she could find.

While Adela has an exceptional gift of second sight, she doubts her own abilities, which often leads to her misinterpreting her visions. Despite this anxiety and her cheerful, almost ditzy demeanor, there is reason to believe that she is far more crafty, calculating, and deliberate than she lets on.

Even with her gift of prophecy, she is powerless to stop her fate as a sacrificial lamb in the ritual to free the Crooked Queen. Throughout the adventure, her visions become increasingly grave but also more difficult to interpret.



KEHLENN, THE CROOKED QUEEN

Kehlenn is a primordial fey goddess who first created the plane of existence now known as Druskenvald. Before Phillip Druskenvald invaded her realm and made it his own, she was the Green Queen, who tended an afterlife of reincarnation into a realm of pure nature. Mortal souls would be reborn as plants and animals, and while the verdant world she ruled was natural, each life after rebirth was brutal and short.

When Phillip Druskenvald arrived in her green realm and supplanted her, he was unaware that a being of such power could never be completely destroyed, especially within the confines of the dimension she created. In her defeat, Kehlenn managed to slink into the darkest wood she could find and crawl beneath the roots of a single tree. Her physical form withered in the barrow, and her essence compressed into the trunk, bough, and branch of the tree that grew from it.

From this solitary spot, she slumbered in a near-deathlike stasis for eons, slowly reabsorbing the power of the land that surrounded her—a valley that would eventually come to be called Wickermoor Hollow. But what never slept was the hate she felt for Phillip Druskenvald and the mortal beings he brought with him to her once green domain. The bitterness and desire for vengeance twisted Kehlenn and the tree where she dwelled until all the Green withered and she took up the new title of the Crooked Queen.

Kehlenn has slowly been regaining strength century after century, eventually calling to minions that gathered around her like moths to a flame. The worship they paid her and the twisted rituals they conducted in her honor made her even stronger until all Wickermoor Hollow was her domain, despite still being entombed and imprisoned in the forest that had come to be called the Wytchwood.

With her servants enacting her heinous machinations, she readies herself for freedom and the revenge she so desperately seeks against Phillip and the people he rules over. Now she plots toward the disintegration of all sapient beings into nature and the annihilation and crooked rebirth of the world she had been robbed of.



THE HORNED KING

Deep within the Wytchwood stalks a terrible beast that is the manifestation of sin itself. A fledging god of mortal desire that seeks to achieve incarnation to usher in the annihilation and crooked rebirth of Druskenvald, the Horned King is the fiendish servant of the Crooked Queen and her ultimate weapon in claiming vengeance against the man who usurped her.

Despite Kehlenn's overall defeat, her eventual reawakening and growing power in Wickermoor Hollow has allowed her to achieve her greatest victory since she was cast down. Just as Phillip stole her domain in the forgotten past, she has claimed his inherent power within the confines of the valley, rending the usually-mighty lord of the land as little more than a mortal human.

What she found in the powerful and even eldritch energies spawned from the heart of Phillip Druskenvald was sin. The darkness and desire that lurk within humanity and nearly all sentient mortal beings are what the new lord of the land brought to her once-beautiful, green kingdom. And with it was the desperate, fear-driven desire to not just survive, but to thrive and live deliciously in comfort and abundance.

Kehlenn held onto this newfound fragment of Phillip's soul, siphoning it to slowly regain her strength and weave a fledgling god of sin, desire, and wickedness into existence to serve as her consort and right hand. Taking the form of an enormous black goat with three blood-red eyes, the Horned King exists as an incorporeal fiendish spirit bound to the haunted Wytchwood where the Crooked Queen remains entombed and imprisoned (see chapter 24).

However, his sinful power spreads through Wickermoor Hollow, offering the mortals of his queen's realm the chance to live the life they've always wanted at the cost of pledging and sacrificing their very soul. With each new covetous and terrified mortal who falls to sin and signs their name in the book of the Horned King, Kehlenn's plan comes closer to fruition. And soon, with the inevitable downfall of Phillip Druskenvald, the beast that stalks the deepest woods and darkest hearts will be made flesh and ascend as an instrument of the Crooked Queen's vengeance.



THE CROOKED MAN

The essence of this ancient spirit has existed since the forgotten ages, a lingering remnant of the Crooked Queen's twisted power of rebirth. Despite this primeval origin, the Crooked Man has taken a myriad of forms over the millennia, always corrupting and killing a mortal host before being reborn with a new visage every century or so, favoring a brutalized human shape for as long as the species has dwelled in Wickermoor Hollow.

His current incarnation is the twisted shade of a man named Eustace Lockwood, who slaughtered his entire household in one bloody night after a slow descent into paranoia and malevolence through a malign witchcraft that plagued his dreams. His neck, torso, limbs, fingers, teeth, and even his top hat are bent at unnatural angles, truly living up to his name. While he can move about the whole valley, he primarily resides in the manor home built atop a remnant of Kehlenn's power, aptly dubbed the Crooked House (see chapter 12).

Serving as the mouthpiece and instrument of the Crooked Queen while she remains trapped within the Wytchwood, he has orchestrated many of the horrors that have befallen the residents of Wickermoor Hollow. He also serves as a guiding force of the malevolent Cult of the Crooked Queen that has infiltrated the Followers of the Old Ways within the valley, constantly working in secret to bring about Kehlenn's return.



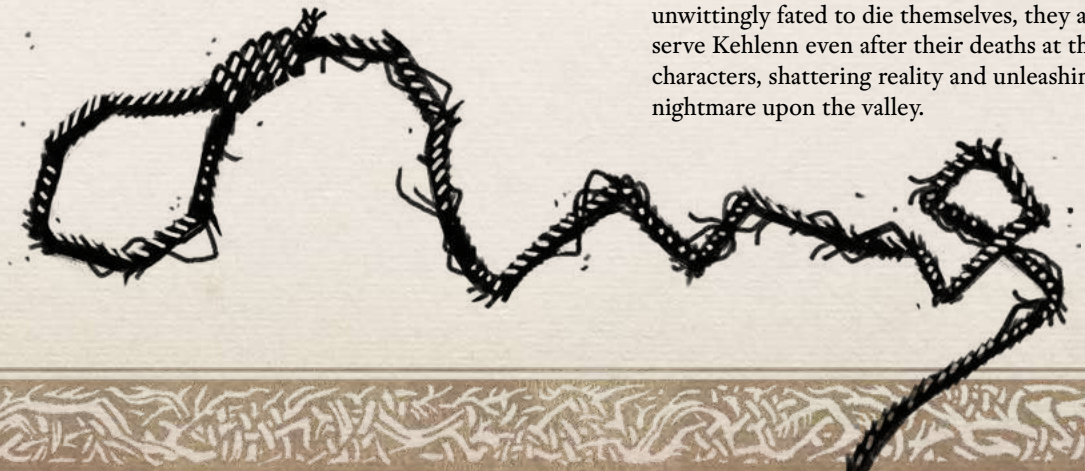
THE VERMINTOLL COVEN

The only minions of Kehlenn on par with the Crooked Man are the three vile hags that form the Vermintoll Coven. All three of the ancient crones are fey beings from the time before Phillip, now just as twisted and hateful as the queen they've served for eons. Each member of the coven obsessively favors a verminous creature and has taken on the physical traits of the foul animals they command.

The ultimate purpose of the coven is to toll the death knell of the living beings fated for sacrifice and prepare their mind, body, and soul for the sacrificial rituals conducted in honor of the Crooked Queen. While these three sisters are united in their malign purpose, they truly despise each other, all seeking a place at Kehlenn's left hand.

The youngest sister is Vessla Browntooth, the weasel hag, who corrupts the soul through wicked witchcraft and twisted dreams from the attic of the Crooked House (see chapter 12). The middle sister is Stonoga Blackstinger, the centipede hag, who corrupts the body through disease, venom, and loathsome fleshcrafting from the depths of Skitterdeep Mine (see chapter 16). The eldest sister is Golub Graygullet, the pigeon hag, who corrupts the mind through manipulation of information as the disguised postmaster of Wickermoor Village from her Roving Rookery (see chapter 20).

This coven is a constant threat plaguing the people of Wickermoor Hollow and subtly assisting the Cult of the Crooked Queen from the shadows. And despite being unwittingly fated to die themselves, they are destined to serve Kehlenn even after their deaths at the hands of the characters, shattering reality and unleashing the ultimate nightmare upon the valley.



THE FALLEN

The greatest victory of the Horned King after his birth from the sinful soul of Phillip Druskenvald was the fall of six powerful and wayward souls that found themselves in Druskenvald from the material world. Each of these beings had once been heroic in their own way, but all had deep flaws and demons both within and without.

While these former heroes never once directly heard the seductive voice of the goat in the woods, the sin that dwelled in each of their hearts was plied by the Horned King until they brought about their own downfall one by one. With each turn to despair, hopelessness, and eventually wickedness, the Fallen, as they came to be known by the servants of the Crooked Queen, turned into the monsters they once fought against.

The increasing evil perpetuated by the Fallen has added to the Horned King's power as he seeks to spread sin from his prison within the Wytchwood. Now, each of the Fallen must die so that their wicked essence may be consumed and used as the catalyst for the black goat's inevitable incarnation.

However, none of the Fallen actively serve the forces of the Crooked Queen and purely seek to achieve their own aims. They have no alliances with each other or even the lord of sin, who is ultimately responsible for each of their falls. These villains intimidate and slaughter the people of Wickermoor Hollow on their own volition, each offering a unique threat and challenge for the characters to confront.

RAUM, THE HARVEST TERROR

The friendly and helpful scarecrow tunesmith named Ol' Jericho Sticks was once a beloved member of the agrarian community of Foxwillow, but his construction contained a ravenous demon of secrets within. Eventually, the whispers corrupted him into a fiendish crow-like fiend that terrorizes the people he used to cherish. Feasting on his victims' flesh, souls, and secrets, Raum strikes from a demonic dimension of infinite cornstalks and replaces the bodies of his prey with grotesque pumpkin-headed effigies (see chapter 13).

FATHER RENATHYR, THE CRIMSON ABBOT

Sir Marius Renathyr was once a gallant knight who served a god of morning and protected the innocent. However, he was tricked by a succubus duchess of hell into sacrificing everything he once stood for, transforming him into a bloodthirsty vampire. Now, Father Renathyr leads a rigid faith from the Crimson Monastery sworn to destroy wickedness at every turn, commanding legions of zealous followers to kidnap innocents so they may burn at the stake or be drained of blood to feed his undying hunger (see chapter 14).

MISTER CROSSROADS, THE GRINNING SINNER

Once a pirate of fearsome renown, Captain Briggsy "The Kutlass" Kratch practiced hexing magic granted to him by a powerful death spirit he had bargained with. Driven by the desire for more wealth and power, he tricked and imprisoned his patron, harnessing the magic of jinxcraft for himself to become a master of misfortune. He now lurks in the swamps of the Drowned Crossroads, offering the truly desperate their hearts' desire in a bargain that always ends in misery. After each deal turns bad, Mister Crossroads rips the spirits from his associates' bodies and binds their shambling corpses to his will (see chapter 15).

MATRON LETHICA, THE WEEPING WIDOW

Lethica Nightborne was once a high priestess of a night goddess and committed to healing the sick and injured with blessings of the divine. However, following the painful loss of her husband, she turned to vile science fueled by the alien biology of a cosmic horror which she called forth into Druskenvald. Now, Matron Lethica oversees the gloomy sanatorium called Memory's Rest, wiping the minds of her patients with an eldritch serum and performing grotesque experiments on their bodies (see chapter 17).

GORTHOS, THE BEAST OF BLIGHT

A young antlered satyr named Farryn once devoted her life to tending a lush forest called the Greenwood until she became heartbroken following the death of her only love. In an attempt to bring this lover back, she followed the call of a dead god and transformed into a vile rotting husk of an abomination and blighted the entire woodland with her newfound power. Now, Gorthos lurks within Hartsblight Forest, spreading rot and decay with the help of a circle of twisted druids who revere and serve her (see chapter 18).

YORGRIM, THE CHAINED REAPER

The orc gravedigger known as Yorgrim is the last to fall. Once a shaman who inadvertently led to the death of his entire clan, he spent a lifetime performing a penance before dying himself. However, he found no rest in death and his spirit became bound to Maidenmist Cemetery, where he tends to the spirits of the dead and serves as a jailer of the ravening souls from the Shroud within. Now, he is doomed to become a harbinger of death called the Chained Reaper following the incessant corruption of the gibbering spirits he guards (see chapter 19).





A PROPHECY OF SACRIFICE

In order to achieve the incarnation of the Horned King, the ascension of the Crooked Queen, and the disintegration of Druskenvald, a complex sacrificial ritual is under way the moment that the characters step onto the Ghostlight Express. The prophecy that has been whispered by the cult of the Old Ways and the servants of the Crooked Queen demands the slaughter of all six of the Fallen, a sacrificial fool called Chuckles, and both Phillip and Adela Druskenvald. And only Kehlenn herself knows that even the Vermintoll Coven and the Crooked Man must be destroyed for the ritual of her glorious rebirth to achieve its full power.

Throughout the adventure, the characters will inadvertently advance the will of the Crooked Queen through their good deeds. Although they are viewed as pawns by Kehlenn, it's through their actions that she might ultimately be defeated and sealed away within the Crooked Moon in the climax of the story.

This means that all the NPCs mentioned above are doomed. If the characters survive to the end of the adventure, Phillip and Adela, the Fallen, the Vermintoll Coven, and even many innocent residents of Wickermoor Hollow will all be dead. The events that take place will save the lives of Druskenvald as a whole, but it will come at great cost, perhaps even requiring the sacrifice of the characters themselves (see chapter 24).

REDEMPTION AND SALVATION?

In Folk Horror, there is scarce redemption for the wicked, and the protagonists rarely survive unless they pay a terrible cost. *The Crooked Moon* adventure is written with this in mind. The villains are meant to be destroyed, and the Druskenvalds are doomed to perish, as is required by the ritual to unleash the Crooked Queen.

However, your players may sympathize with some of the villains and wish to spare them or find it unconscionable that major NPCs cannot be saved from a terrible fate. While the campaign is designed and written so that all of the Fallen, the Vermintoll Coven, and the Druskenvalds are dead by the end of the story, you may decide to allow the possibility to spare them.

The simplest way to achieve this is to remove the prophecy and rituals that require the sacrifice of the major figures in the campaign. Kehlenn can simply draw more power as wicked deeds spread through Wickermoor Hollow, eventually allowing for her attempted ascension in the climax of the story.

Alternatively, you can interpret the requirement for sacrifice in ways that do not lead to death. For instance:

- The Fallen must have the Horned King's sin driven from their souls, causing the death of their wicked identity. For example, sparing and redeeming Lethica Nightborne still "kills" her Fallen identity of the Weeping Widow.
- The Vermintoll Coven must be driven from their lairs so that they lose their source of power without being slain.
- Phillip and Adela Druskenvald must lose their hope and their pride, with the act of falling so low being enough for Kehlenn to achieve her goals.
- Any surviving and redeemed villains leave Wickermoor Hollow forever and don't aid the characters in their quest.

It is up to you how you approach the adventure and account for the changes and potential "butterfly effects" that result from choosing to spare these figures.

WICKERMOOR HOLLOW

The entirety of *The Crooked Moon* adventure takes place within the valley known as Wickermoor Hollow. This minor province of Druskenvald is isolated from the rule and watchful eye of the Crescent Court and especially Phillip Druskenvald, thanks to the rising power of Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen.

LOCATIONS AND LANDSCAPES

In Folk Horror, the landscapes where the stories take place are just as important as the vile antagonists and doomed protagonists that drive the action forward. The wide variety of rural locations and natural settings throughout this adventure are intended to increase the feeling of isolation among the characters.

Review the details of each location within Wickermoor Hollow so you can incorporate them into the adventure and leverage evocative descriptions to best achieve an atmospheric tone perfect for Folk Horror.

WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

At the heart of Wickermoor Hollow lies the town that shares its name. The oldest and largest settlement in the valley, it is still a relatively small and isolated village that does not get many visitors. Its people have built a community that lives in harmony with each other and with nature to survive the incredible dangers and lurking horrors that dominate the valley.

However, beneath the surface operates a sinister cult that serves the Crooked Queen and seeks to bring about her return, even in the face of their own annihilation. Even the friendliest, smiling face can belie a wicked worshipper of Kehlenn who intends to sacrifice their neighbor when the time is right.

Wickermoor Village sits on the banks of the Silverbell River that cuts through the valley from the Drowned Crossroads to Moonsong Lake. Nestled within the gloomy moors that rise near the center of the hollow, it serves as the hub of trade and commerce between the primarily human residents that call this place home (see chapter 11).

THE FOXWILLOW FARMLAND

To the east of Wickermoor Village stretches miles of fertile farmland that has been turned into fields that grow all manner of crop. Many small farming settlements dot the landscape, but at the center of the farmers who work the soil is the community of Foxwillow. These nearly picturesque fields and hills serve as the breadbasket for the rest of Wickermoor Hollow (see chapter 13).

THE HOWLERS

The western border of the valley is walled in by a towering mountain range with snow-capped peaks. The Howlers, named for the wind that rips through the towering summits, stand as the impassable barrier to much of the rest of Druskenvald. The town of Dawn's Gate sits in the foothills, surviving on the hunting and mining that the mountains provide (see chapter 14).

THE DROWNED CROSSROADS

At the lowest point of the valley is the teeming swamp called the Drowned Crossroads. This treacherous bayou is known for its miles of still, black water, choking overgrowth, and lurking predators that threaten to swallow even the most experienced swampfolk. Its largest town, Murkwater Bend, is a lawless haven for anyone hoping to escape the societal rule of the other settlements across the valley (see chapter 15).

MOONSONG LAKE

The Silverbell River empties into the vast Moonsong Lake at the western edge of the valley, which is prone to bouts of rain that can last for weeks. At the center of the lake rests the Isle of Mourn, which once served as a place of healing despite the near-constant gloomy weather. However, its seemingly placid waters are teeming with wriggling parasites (see chapter 17).

HARTSBLIGHT FOREST

The wood in the northwest corner of the valley has been overrun by a terrible blight that afflicts all plants, animals, and people that enter Hartsblight Forest. Thousands of varieties of fungus thrive in the alien-looking woodland as the dominant life form, and even the air between the trees is choked with virulent spores (see chapter 18).

MAIDENMIST CEMETERY

The sprawling hills south of Wickermoor Village roll all the way to the southern border of the valley, covered in tombstones and crypts. Serving as the final resting place of the dead of Wickermoor Hollow, the vast Maidenmist Cemetery is a region of its own, and it's even said that the iron gates inch further outward every passing night (see chapter 19).

THE WYTCHWOOD

The oldest and wildest part of Wickermoor Hollow is the forbidden forest called the Wytchwood. All those who venture past its shrouded tree line never return, and the eerie howls, roars, snarls, and bellows of the strange creatures within can be heard from miles away. People across the valley feel drawn to the wood, called by the beast that stalks between its primeval trees (see chapter 24).

IDEOLOGIES AND POWER GROUPS

While various beliefs are spread throughout Wickermoor Hollow, four primary ideologies have taken hold among most of the common folk of the valley. These factions are most prevalent among the residents of Wickermoor Village but can be found in other settlements as well. While some of these groups might have more members that are good or evil, membership in any of the ideologies doesn't guarantee how any of its adherents will act.

Additionally, these groups are not factions in the traditional sense with official membership and processes for joining. Instead, people might be associated with a group based on their beliefs or actions but are not necessarily zealots or advocates for any particular worldview.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE OLD WAYS

The Followers of the Old Ways kneel to the natural and supernatural world that surrounds them. This faith is the standard belief system of the people of Wickermoor Village, and its members believe that adhering to the Old Ways has allowed for their settlement to have survived for centuries and grow to a level of relative prosperity in Wickermoor Hollow.

Highly superstitious, those who revere the Old Ways bow to and seek to appease the protective and destructive sides of nature and its spirit world counterpart. The personification of the Old Ways is a primordial fey entity called the Green Queen who embodies both nature and magic. However, most worshipers do not know that the true identity of their goddess is Kehlenn, who has turned crooked after millennia of hateful imprisonment.

The Followers of the Old Ways believe that survival in a world such as Druskenvald is a privilege and a miracle—and never guaranteed. They accept with open arms nature's blessings as well as the utter destruction and death it can cause.

To them, individual life is a tiny insignificance in the scope of the community; they are happy and willing to sacrifice themselves or others if it means honoring and appeasing the Old Ways and guaranteeing a greater existence and prosperity for the collective whole in the years to come. Most practitioners of the Old Ways perform numerous rituals in their nightly lives and always strive to listen to the elders and the wisest among them.

The majority are not evil or actively attempting to serve the Crooked Queen. Only the most devout and enlightened have formed a secretive cult of the Old Ways that practices malign and forbidden magic to serve Kehlenn, the Crooked Man, and the Vermintoll Coven.

This sect manipulates the unaware and more benevolent adherents of the Green Queen to bring about the ascension of the Crooked Queen and the eventual disintegration of all sapient life. These cultists know that they too will die but are seeking a glorious rebirth in the new crooked order of things. As soon as Phillip and Adela Druskenvald arrive in Wickermoor Hollow, they begin to advance their plans toward this end.

On the surface, the benevolent symbol utilized by the general members of the Followers of the Old Ways is a feminine face made from green leaves. However, the more malign cultists who seek to unleash the Crooked Queen recognize each other by wearing or displaying the symbol of an antlered hare. This might be a tattoo, a piece of jewelry, or an actual hare foot kept somewhere on them for "good luck."

THE FOLD OF THE PATIENT LADY

The members of the Fold of the Patient Lady believe in harmony between sapient life and the forces of nature. They reject that nature is brutal, destructive, and uncaring and instead believe that it provides everything that sapient life needs to thrive without need for archaic and barbaric sacrifice and appeasement.



Followers of the Old Ways & Cultists of the Crooked Queen



Fold of the Patient Lady

This newer reinterpretation of the Old Ways is a more palatable and perhaps naïve view of nature that has been quite appealing to the folk of the valley, and it has gained in popularity outside of Wickermoor Village. There are adherents in many of the larger communities, but most of the practitioners live in remote communes in the wilds.

The faithful of this sect are genuinely grateful to survive in such a dour and dangerous world and believe that the goddess known as the Patient Lady is to thank, giving her the credit for the ability to survive and grow food in a realm with no daytime and no seasonal cycle. They also eschew any dabbling in the spirit world or supernatural realms, considering such a thing a foolish and dangerous invitation for malevolent forces to corrupt the wilds.

Its adherents still perform rituals and rites in honor of the Patient Lady, but they keep them incredibly simple and tied to the natural world around them. This can even take the form of basic meditation outdoors, a walk through the woods and fields with fellow faithful, or the utterance of a song or prayer at harvest time.

The members of the Fold of the Patient Lady wear symbols that represent the beauty and bounty of nature. Flowers such as daisies and primroses and fruit such as apples and pumpkins are frequent symbols of these folk.

THE BRIGHTSINGERS

Only a small handful of people in Wickermoor Hollow are among the faithful that call themselves the Brightsingers. This new monotheistic sect believes in one true divine power that brings light to the land of darkness. They hold that their omnipresent and omniscient god, the Brightsinger, is the only path to goodness and prosperity, holding that the realms of nature and spirit in Druskenvald are inherently wicked and corrupted.

They attempt to spread their belief through pilgrimage and missionary work, advocating for their beliefs through relentless kindness and benevolence, never scolding or criticizing members of other faiths. However, there is a supreme pride among them because they believe they themselves to be as godly as their deity. The Brightsinger is all, so each member of the faithful is a Brightsinger themselves.

They see his presence in the songbirds that still sing brightly in the land of eternal night. They alone preach unconditional love and light in the hollow, but it is often a self-righteous and self-aggrandizing love that holds little sway over the population who have seen too much suffering to believe in a love on that scale.

The Brightsingers wear brightly colored clothes and jewelry, particularly fashioned from valuable materials and displaying fine craftsmanship. This attire often depicts images of suns, torches, lanterns, or brilliantly colored songbirds.

THE NEWCOMERS

The group known as the Newcomers embraces reason, modernity, progress, and civilization. Often having traveled to Wickermoor Hollow from other provinces of Druskenvald or even from cities in the material world, they reject the beliefs and practices of the superstitious ideologies prominent in the valley.

Instead, they focus on what can be achieved and explained through knowledge, science, and technology. Phillip Druskenvald shares similar tenets with the Newcomers and easily makes friends with members of this scarce group throughout Wickermoor Hollow.

These folks are not an organized group, and they share no symbols or rites. They are identified as Newcomers by the other folk in the area rather than self-identifying as a cohesive group.



Brightsingers



Newcomers



Chapter 9: RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Now you are about to weave your own dreadful tale that will terrify and delight your friends. This adventure, *The Crooked Moon*, is a folk horror story applied to 5E, a game of heroic fantasy. Interweaving these themes is no small challenge, but this chapter and the stories ahead are written to provide you with the tools you need to achieve a thrilling and haunting campaign.

As the Game Master (GM), it is your role to play as the world of Druskenvald itself and everything else within it. You are the deep woods, the shadows between the trees, and the monsters that stalk the eternal night. You are the folk, both sinister and sincere, that inhabit the sleepy villages and remote homesteads on the fringes of civilization.

You are also guiding your friends, who take the role of Player Characters (referred to as "characters" in this adventure). They are the protagonists of this horror story, and you are responsible for being their senses; they cannot fully experience the terror of Druskenvald without knowing what they see, hear, smell, and touch—and sometimes taste. To refresh yourself on how to run folk horror and instill dread and tension, refer to the Introduction of this book.

While the previous chapter overviewed the story of *The Crooked Moon*, this chapter highlights the relevant features and mechanical details of the campaign, as well as tips and tricks for reading the book. Most of the features and systems below are entirely optional, and the adventure is written so that none are required. It is up to you to determine what to implement to run a game that is best suited for your table.

ADVENTURE FEATURES

Each chapter in the adventure includes background information, general guidance, and location features, as well as how encounters, NPCs, and monsters should be presented and where their treasure might be found.

Pay close attention to the formatting and cross-references throughout each chapter. When a creature's name is bolded and marked with a symbol (for example, the **Hypnovulfen**), the creature's stat block can be found in Appendix A: Bestiary. When a magic item's name is italicized and marked with a symbol (for example, the *Scythe of the Harvest Terror*), the magic item's details can be found in Appendix B: Treasury. Backgrounds, spells, and other options from within this book are also marked in this way.

> Boxed text that appears like this is meant to be read or paraphrased aloud.

> **GM SIDEBAR**
>
> Text that looks like this is for advice or other helpful information that will help you run the adventure.

LOST IN ISOLATION

The Crooked Moon assumes that the only means of traveling in and out of Druskenvald is through the Shroud with the guidance of entities like The Vagrant—soul shepherds called "Strangers" (see chapter 1). Additionally, once the characters arrive in Wickermoor Hollow with Phillip and Adela Druskenvald, the ancient power of Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen, ensnares them and prevents them from leaving the province. Wickermoor Hollow has the following features if you wish to keep the characters trapped and alone:

In the Mist. No magic, such as *Plane Shift* or *Teleport*, can transport a creature beyond the borders of Druskenvald without being shepherded by a Stranger.

Crooked Grasp. Physical and magical travel out of Wickermoor Hollow is made impossible by ancient wards. When a creature tries to exit, it gets lost and ends up being teleported to a forest within the valley.

Cut Off. Any attempts to communicate magically with creatures outside of Wickermoor Hollow automatically fail.

FEAR OF THE DARK

In a horror campaign, requiring all characters to deal with the aspects of night that instill fear in humanity can increase the tension and dread. You can use the following optional rules to limit certain characters' features to make the sleeping hours more horrifying. If you wish to implement them, be sure to discuss the details with your players ahead of the campaign to ensure it enhances the fun for your table.

All Must Sleep. While in Druskenvald, characters who don't need to sleep during Long Rests in other realms must sleep to stave off Exhaustion, though they can still resist magic that might put them to sleep, if able.

Creeping Dark. Characters who benefit from Darkvision find this trait suppressed, though magic that grants Darkvision such as from a spell or magic item still functions. This does not affect monsters or NPCs.

TIME IN DRUSKENVALD

As a realm of eternal night, Druskenvald's unusual time cycle (see chapter 1) is an essential part of the setting's atmosphere. While a sun never rises above the horizon, the amount of light and the color of the sky change throughout each night, from the purple of Twilight Hour, through the orange glow Dusk Hour, to the blues of Nightfall Hour and Evening Hour, and finally the pitch black of Midnight Hour and Witching Hour.

Note the time when describing the land's natural light and weather, and reflect it through the dialogue of NPCs who have an intuitive sense of Druskenvald's unique night cycle. While it can be tricky to enforce this language throughout the game, and it's fine to refer to real-world time periods for clarity, using cues like "We leave at the Twilight Hour" or "Let's settle in before the Witching Hour" makes for a more immersive experience.

Time in Druskenvald

Period Name	Equivalent Time Range
Twilight Hour	Morning (7 to 11 a.m.)
Dusk Hour	Midday (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.)
Nightfall Hour	Afternoon (3 to 7 p.m.)
Evening Hour	Evening (7 to 11 p.m.)
Midnight Hour	Late Night (11 p.m. to 3 a.m.)
Witching Hour	Early Morning (3 to 7 a.m.)

OVERLAND TRAVEL

Wickermoor Village serves as the hub of the adventure, and most chapters involve the characters traveling from what little safety is offered there to another remote location within Wickermoor Hollow. Though travel in the valley is rarely straightforward, you may pick up each chapter where it begins and convey the characters back to town after each chapter by briefly narrating the travel in between.

If you choose to simulate overland travel between each location, the following options can help your players get a better sense of Wickermoor Hollow's size:

- Use the map of Wickermoor Hollow to estimate travel distances. The map of this province is deliberately not to scale, and the details on it are not precise, which allows for flexibility in this folktale adventure. However, an easy shorthand in determining travel distances is that most of the areas throughout the valley are a three-to-five night trek from Wickermoor Village, depending on how treacherous and overgrown the terrain is. Exceptions to this include Foxwillow and Maidenmist Cemetery, which are a one-to-two night walk on foot.
- No journey is a direct route, and there are few well-traveled roads in the valley. It is up to your discretion how many nights it takes to follow the valley's winding paths to the characters' destinations.
- Change the weather and vary terrain to create a feeling of distance. Successful Nature, Perception, and Survival checks can aid travel and avoid dangers.
- You can add combat encounters with creatures featured in Appendix A or other sources to reinforce the coming chapter's themes and make the valley feel dangerous. These encounters should serve the narrative and not feel random.

Overland travel can give characters time to reflect, interact, and plan. Strategically allot moments for travel when the story has an opportunity to slow down; it can make the valley feel alive and hint at the horrors that await. But, do not dally when precious game time is limited—jump to the next step with a brief description.

MORTALITY

Death is never far in Druskenvald. When a character dies, their spirit lingers in Druskenvald until the Crooked Queen is defeated. At your discretion, if there is little chance for resurrection, you may offer players a chance to deny their character's death by accepting a Dark Bargain of your choice (see chapter 6), which restores the character to life with all of their Hit Points. This is a great narrative opportunity to add additional consequences aside from what is included in the features of the Dark Bargain.

Deaths of the Druskenvalds. Phillip and Adela Druskenvald are two key NPCs whose fates play a pivotal role in the climax of the adventure. Their deaths are fated to occur in chapters 24 and 23, respectively. Any attempts by the characters to kill Phillip and Adela fail, and the ancient power of Kehlenn teleports them to safety so they can be sacrificed at the right moment.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

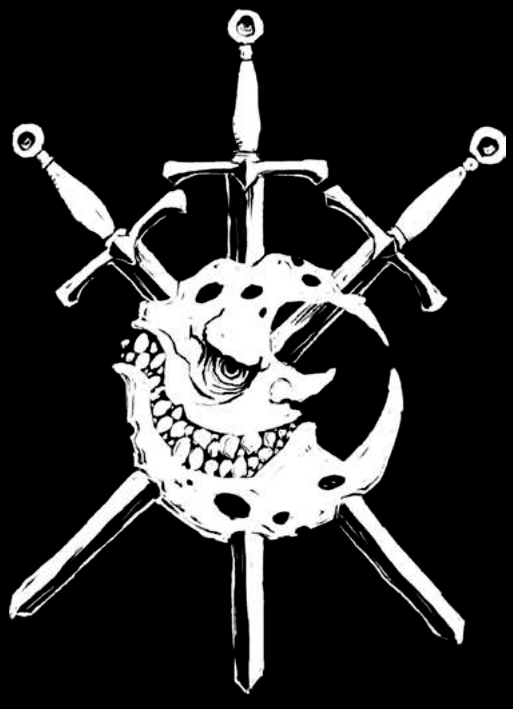
The Crooked Moon takes characters from level 1 to level 14. The campaign is designed with specific story moments for character advancement instead of awarding XP. Nearly every chapter advances the characters' level at its conclusion. Use the table below to guide level advancement throughout the adventure.

If you and your players wish to continue the dreadful folktale past the primary storyline of *The Crooked Moon*, refer to the rules and guidance in Chapter 26: Moonfall.



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Level	Chapter	Villain	*Content Warnings*
1	**The Ghostlight Express**	The Ghostlight Locomotive	*Corruption, train accidents*
3	**Wickermoor Village**	—	*Community conflict, harm to animals, medical trauma, religious conflict*
3	**The Crooked House**	The Weasel Hag	*Body horror, family trauma, harm to children, suicide*
4	**Fields of the Crow**	The Harvest Terror	*Adultery, demonic possession, family trauma, harm to animals*
5	**The Crimson Monastery**	The Crimson Abbot	*Burning alive, devil worship, execution, kidnapping, religious conflict*
6	**The Drowned Crossroads**	The Grinning Sinner	*Curses, firearms, hedonism, gambling*
7	**Skitterdeep Mine**	The Centipede Hag	*Body horror, claustrophobia, disease, insects*
7	**Memory's Rest**	The Weeping Widow	*Body horror, hospitals, illness, kidnapping, mutation, needles, surgery*
8	**Hartsblight Forest**	The Beast of Blight	*Disease, hallucinations, harm against animals, rot, wilderness*
9	**Maidenmist Cemetery**	The Chained Reaper	*Claustrophobia, corruption, graves, harm against animals*
10	**The Roving Rookery**	The Pigeon Hag	*Body horror, community conflict, corruption, mass hysteria*
10	**Fool's Day**	The Lord of Fools	*Clowns, hallucinations, hedonism, subjugation*
11	**The Crooked Nightmare**	The Vermintoll Abomination	*Burning alive, child endangerment, family trauma, kidnapping, self-harm*
12	**Wicker's Vigil**	The Wicker Man	*Burning alive, community violence, religious conflict, ritual sacrifice*
13	**The Crooked Tree**	The Horned King	*Apocalypse, corruption, devil imagery, harm against animals, wilderness*



FATED TAROT READING

When the characters first meet Phillip and Adela Druskenvald aboard the *Ghostlight Express* in chapter 10, Adela offers to give the characters a tarot reading. Simplified guidance for performing this reading is provided in the chapter, but below are rules to enhance the experience in a way that affects the adventure and foreshadows what's to come.

FABLED REWARDS

Many Fabled Heirlooms—magic items that level up with the characters—are presented in this book and can be found throughout the adventure of *The Crooked Moon*. However, provisioning the characters with a veritable treasure trove of powerful items could quickly trivialize the threats that await them.

Therefore, the Fated Tarot Reading provides a method to determine which of the Fabled Heirlooms the characters can acquire. When Adela performs the reading aboard the *Ghostlight Express*, she uses only a portion of a full 78-card tarot deck. Instead, she shuffles the 22 most important cards, known as the Major Arcana, and pulls one for each character. Each card corresponds to a Fabled Heirloom or a powerful boon that can be found at specific points throughout the adventure (see "Major Arcana" below).

When the reading is complete, make note of which cards were pulled. Then, as you run the adventure, keep an eye out for sections titled "Fated Tarot Reading," each of which features a Major Arcana card, its corresponding item or boon, and the location it can be found or the circumstance needed to achieve it. Only implement the features of these sections that include the cards that were drawn during the reading. Ignore all other instances of these chapter sections.

To determine these randomly, you can use your own tarot deck, shuffling the 22 Major Arcana cards and pulling them at the table. Alternatively, you can roll on the Fated Tarot table below. If you wish to equip the characters with items that are fitting for their abilities or story, you can simply choose a card for each character instead of drawing randomly. If you want to provide the characters with additional power throughout the adventure, you can have each character receive a two-card reading.

Fated Tarot

1d20	Card	1d20	Card
1	The Magician	11	Justice
2	The High Priestess	12	The Hanged Man
3	The Empress	13	Death
4	The Emperor	14	Temperance
5	The Hierophant	15	The Devil
6	The Lovers	16	The Tower
7	The Chariot	17	The Fool
8	Strength	18	The Moon
9	The Hermit	19	The Sun
10	Wheel of Fortune	20	Judgement



MAJOR ARCANA

Below are all 22 Major Arcana cards that can be pulled in the Fated Tarot Reading, along with Adela Druskenvald's interpretation of the cards, who always pulls the cards in the upright position. You'll also find the Fabled Heirloom or boon that each card corresponds to, as well as where it can be found in *The Crooked Moon* adventure. For all Fabled Heirlooms, see appendix B.

0 - THE FOOL

> "Ooooo! The Fool! I love this card! New adventures, new beginnings, new opportunities; who could say no to that? It's almost like it's telling you that a new journey awaits you the moment you step off this train, don't you think?"

If *The Fool* is pulled, the *Whistle of the Vagrant* is left in the grass after the defeat of the Ghostlight Locomotive (see chapter 10).

I - THE MAGICIAN

> "The Magician is a powerful card! You already have everything you need to succeed. All you gotta do is harness your own power, and you can create the future of your dreams. You're no marionette letting someone else pull your strings. It's your turn to be the puppet master!"

If *The Magician* is pulled, the *Marotte of the Lord of Fools* is held by a lifeless marionette after the defeat of the Lord of Fools (see chapter 21).

II - THE HIGH PRIESTESS

> "The High Priestess! Well, ain't that swell! You gotta listen to your heart and use your intuition. Look into that place where your memories rest, and you'll find you've got all the experience you need to make the tough choices ahead."

If *The High Priestess* is pulled, the *Mask of Lethica Nightborne* is found among the mementos on the shrine in Lethica's Quarters in Memory's Rest Sanatorium (see chapter 17).

III - THE EMPRESS

> "When times get tough, there is nothin' quite like a mother's love! And that's really the Empress in a nutshell. This card appears when you need it the most. I see a house on a hill and a mama tucking you in tight after a terrible nightmare. That's the Empress."

If *The Empress* is pulled, the *Cauldron of the Vermintoll Coven* remains in the ruins of the Crooked House after the defeat of the Vermintoll Abomination (see chapter 22).

IV - THE EMPEROR

> "You ever wanted complete control over your life? You're in luck! The Emperor promises that in spades! Sure, you gotta do a bit of work first—break some habits, change a belief or two—but if you do that, you'll be the one dealing the cards, not losing the game!"

If *The Emperor* is pulled, the *Blunderbuss of the Grinning Sinner* is clutched in Mister Crossroads's dead hands after the defeat of the Grinning Sinner (see chapter 15).

V - THE HIEROPHANT

> "Learnin' is next to godliness. I'm pretty sure that's how the saying goes! Anyway, the Hierophant is telling you just that. There is someone in your future that can lead you down the right path. You just gotta seek em' out and be practically bloodthirsty in your quest for knowledge."

If *The Hierophant* is pulled, the *Sword of the Crimson Abbot* is embedded in the altar of the Sanguine Cathedral after the defeat of the Crimson Abbot (see chapter 14).

VI - THE LOVERS

> "Awww, the Lovers! There sure ain't nothin' better than love. Someone has recently come into your life who's gonna flip your world on its axis. Don't get me wrong, I'd love for you to have your own Phil, but this person could be anyone! Even if they're the cat's pajamas, don't let love overtake logic."

If *The Lovers* is pulled, the *Planchette of Adela Druskenvald* is found on the charred corpse of Adela Druskenvald in the Green Queen Inn (see chapter 24).

VII - THE CHARIOT

> "The Chariot is all about freedom and breaking free from the cage of self-doubt. I know it can be hard, but don't let the wicked voices inside your head tell ya that you can't escape. Banish your inner demons, trust in yourself, and let the chariot guide you."

If *The Chariot* is pulled, the *Scythe of the Harvest Terror* remains in the Fields of the Crow after the defeat of the Harvest Terror (see chapter 13).

VIII - STRENGTH

> "Strength is one of my favorites! A girl like me ain't got a lotta muscle, but I do gotta lotta heart, and that's really what this card is all about. Don't bury yourself beneath the weight of your past. Find your inner strength and you can face whatever challenges await!"

If *Strength* is pulled, the *Shovel of Yorgrim* is found in the chamber of rest in Shadestone Sanctuary in Maidenmist Cemetery (see chapter 19).

IX - THE HERMIT

> "The Hermit isn't as lonely as it seems. You don't need to run off into the forest or anything. You just need to break up your routine a little. It's time to walk a new path. While it's easy to rely on a guide, you gotta start relying on yourself!"

If *The Hermit* is pulled, the *Staff of Farryn of the Greenwood* is found embedded in the ground beside the Befouled Wellspring in Hartsblight Forest (see chapter 18).

X - WHEEL OF FORTUNE

> "Everything is about to change! Fate can be a bit scary when you have no control, but don't fret. What is to come is the direct result of choices you've already made. Since the Wheel of Fortune never stops spinnin', you can always make new choices to correct the path."

If *Wheel of Fortune* is pulled, the *Cutlass of Briggsy Kratch* is found in the swamp water of the Drowned Crossroads (see chapter 15).

XI - JUSTICE

> "Oh, Justice! You may find yourself in a position to cast judgment, but don't let that kind of power go to your head! Everything isn't always what it seems, so always consider both sides to any story. You might have the power now, but eventually karma will rebalance the scales."

If *Justice* is pulled, the *Shield of Marius Renathyr* is found hanging in the stables of the Crimson Monastery (see chapter 14).

XII - THE HANGED MAN

> "Oh honey! You might be feelin' like the world has been flipped upside down. Heck, you might even be feelin' powerless or trapped. But the Hanged Man encourages you to live in the moment, have a little patience, and let the solution come to you!"

If *The Hanged Man* is pulled, the *Banjo of Ol' Jericho Sticks* is found in the basement of the windmill in Foxwillow (see chapter 13).

XIII - DEATH

> "DEATH!! How spooky! Oh, don't worry! It ain't as scary as all that! Look around ya. You're on a train traveling through death itself and it's still a party. This card simply means that one chapter of your life is ending so that a new one can begin."

If *Death* is pulled, the *Idol of the Beast of Blight* is found hanging in Gorthos's den after the defeat of the Beast of Blight (see chapter 18).

XIV - TEMPERANCE

> "Temperance is about change and endurance. Life, and even death, can be chaos. But even in turmoil, you can find harmony. Simply look for the good in the bad, and temper yourself so you can embrace the change that is to come."

If *Temperance* is pulled, the *Veil of the Weeping Widow* remains over Matron Lethica's face after the defeat of the Weeping Widow (see chapter 17).

XV - THE DEVIL

> "Oh Gosh! I don't want to spook ya, but it looks like you might be easily manipulated! Whatever you do, don't give into temptation. The Devil whispers of dark entities that would use your desires to corrupt you for their nefarious ends. Beware!"

If *The Devil* is pulled, the *Cane of Phillip Druskenvald* can be found in Kehlenn's barrow before the battle with the Horned King (see chapter 24).

XVI - THE TOWER

> "The Tower crumbles all around you. Truths are laid bare, and something in your life is soon to be destroyed. That may sound scary, and that's because it is! But remember, if the forest burns, from the ashes another forest will grow anew."

If *The Tower* is pulled, the *Visage of the Old Ways* is found on a slain cultist after the defeat of the Wicker Man (see chapter 23).

XVII - THE STAR

> "Aren't you the lucky one getting the Star card?! When all around you is nothing but darkness, the star is a shining beacon of hope within it. Use the light inside yourself to take control of your destiny."

If *The Star* is pulled, the character this card was pulled for gains a feat of their choice for which they qualify after defeating Stonoga Blackstinger in Skitterdeep Mine (see chapter 16).



XVIII - THE MOON

> "You wouldn't think the Moon was eerie by the name alone, but I'm tellin' ya, it is! You are surrounded by illusions and trickery, and nothing is what it seems to be. You must seek truth amidst the madness, even when you aren't sure if you can trust yourself."

If *The Moon* is pulled, the character this card was pulled for receives three Twists of Fate that last until they are expended after defeating Vessla Browntooth in the Crooked House (see chapter 12). Once per turn, when a creature the character can see makes a D20 Test, the character can expend one Twist of Fate to replace the d20 roll with a 1 or a 20.

XIX - THE SUN

> "Nothin' is quite as fun as the Sun! This card is positutely positive! The Sun illuminates the shadows and chases away the darkness. Good things lie ahead! Just don't forget that for every ray of light that is cast, there is always a shadow along with it."

If *The Sun* is pulled, the character this card was pulled for increases one ability score of their choice by 2 after defeating Golub Graygullet in the Roving Rookery (see chapter 20). This increase can't raise a score above 24.

XX - JUDGEMENT

> "Oh no! It looks like your past has come back to haunt you! It's time for you to confront your past and atone for anything that needs atoning! Judgement comes for everyone!"

If *Judgement* is pulled, the *Lantern of the Chained Reaper* remains on the floor of the Tomb of the Shrouded after the defeat of the Chained Reaper (see chapter 19).

XXI - THE WORLD

> "Now this card is just the berries! The World is ever changing and constantly throwing obstacles in your way, but pulling this card is a sign that you are about to overcome something monumental. Everything you must sacrifice will be worth it! Victory awaits!"

If *The World* is pulled, the character this card was pulled for is granted the ability to cast the *Wish* spell one time after defeating the Horned King (see chapter 24).





THE FOOL



THE MAGICIAN



HIGH PRIESTESS


THE EMPRESS



THE EMPEROR



THE HIEROPHANT



THE LOVERS



THE CHARIOT



STRENGTH



THE HERMIT



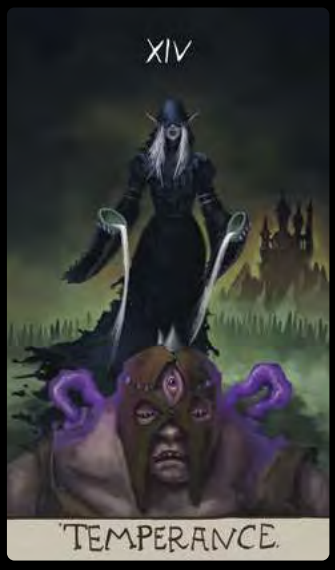
WHEEL of FORTUNE




XI
JUSTICE


XII
THE HANGED MAN


XIII
DEATH


XIV
TEMPERANCE


XV
THE DEVIL


XVI
THE TOWER


XVII
THE STAR


XVIII
THE MOON


XIX
THE SUN


XX
JUDGEMENT


XXI
THE WORLD

FATEWEAVING

Fateweaving provides an optional framework to intertwine the characters' individual stories throughout the adventure of *The Crooked Moon*, allowing for a more personalized experience that does not require heavy alterations to the broader narrative. You can implement this system to provide each character with a call to action, rewards tied to narrative progression, and the opportunity to experience a full personal arc.

These character arcs all end with the climax and conclusion of the main adventure of *The Crooked Moon*, and the narrative results that the characters achieve are often immense and intended to come with the end of a protagonist's story as a player character. Fateweaving is written with the intention that your campaign concludes in the Epilogue and does not proceed into the events of Moonfall (see chapter 26), though you can adjust to allow for play beyond the scope of the adventure.

HOW TO USE FATEWEAVING

You can incorporate Fateweaving into your adventure by taking the following steps, each of which is expanded upon later in this section:

SELECT A GOAL. Have each player pick a Thread of Fate from the list of thirteen presented below, which provides a specific goal for their character. Each character should follow a different Thread so they can experience their own unique story.

PERSONALIZE. Work with each player to incorporate the Thread of Fate into their character's backstory and motivation. They (or you) will need to make one major choice to customize the Thread to the specific character.

REVIEW TOUCHPOINTS. Once the Threads of Fate are selected and personalized, review the six major Narrative Touchpoints for each Thread that you will weave into your adventure. These are the key story moments that provide each character with a complete arc.

FOLLOW SYMBOLS. Each Thread of Fate has a unique symbol associated with it. As you read through the adventure, keep an eye out for the symbols connected to the characters' Threads, each instance of which marks a location or moment when and where a Narrative Touchpoint occurs.

IMPLEMENT TOUCHPOINTS. As you run the adventure, incorporate each character's Narrative Touchpoint at the appropriate place, and make it clear that the relevant character has the spotlight when this occurs.

DISTRIBUTE REWARDS. Each time a character completes a Narrative Touchpoint, reward them with its respective boon listed in the following section.

FINISH THE STORY. Continue this process until the adventure concludes, where you can deliver the final emotional Catharsis of each character's arc.

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

Fateweaving provides a full narrative arc for each character's personal journey that unfolds in six major moments throughout the adventure called Narrative Touchpoints. These take each character from the Incitement of their quest all the way through the Catharsis at the end of their story. The location of each Narrative Touchpoint within the adventure differs depending on a character's Thread of Fate.

Each of the Narrative Touchpoints are written to be open ended and not prescriptive so that they are easily customizable for a wide variety of backstories. It is up to you how to tailor each one to the specific character. Each Touchpoint should be accessible without ability checks and should not be easily missed.

Familiarizing yourself with the six types of Narrative Touchpoints and their associated rewards will help you interweave each progressive step along every character's journey.

INCITEMENT

The first Narrative Touchpoint connects a character's Thread of Fate with the story of *The Crooked Moon* and affirms that the goal of their personal quest lies ahead in Druskenvald.

Chapter Placement. This inciting moment can occur either aboard the *Ghostlight Express* (chapter 10) or in the Crooked House (chapter 12).

Reward. A character who encounters their Incitement receives Heroic Inspiration.

CONNECTION

The second Narrative Touchpoint takes the form of meeting a villager from Wickermoor Village who bears a particular connection with a character's Thread of Fate and offers clues, aid, and guidance. Make note of how this Connection NPC's partnership with the character might affect their allegiances and potential involvement in future plot developments, particularly during the events of Wicker's Vigil (see chapter 23).

Chapter Placement. This NPC can be found in Wickermoor Village (chapter 11) and should only be encountered after the character has completed their Incitement Touchpoint but before they follow a quest hook that leads to their Discovery Touchpoint.

Reward. In addition to gaining an ally whose attitude becomes Friendly, a character who meets their Connection gains the effects of the *Bless* spell for 24 hours.

DISCOVERY

The third Narrative Touchpoint involves the character achieving the first key victory of their quest and learning a shocking truth or obtaining hidden knowledge about their Thread of Fate that points them toward the major Confrontation of their arc.

Chapter Placement. This moment of Discovery occurs while the characters explore one of the following locations during chapters 13–17: the Fields of the Crow, the Crimson Monastery, the Drowned Crossroads, Skitterdeep Mine, or Memory's Rest Sanatorium.

Reward. A character who uncovers their Discovery gains a Twist of Fate that lasts until it is expended. Once per turn, when a creature the character can see makes a D20 Test, the character can expend one Twist of Fate to replace the d20 roll with a 1 or a 20.

CONFRONTATION

The fourth Narrative Touchpoint involves confronting a major challenge, threat, or dilemma that was pointed to in the knowledge gained from the Discovery Touchpoint. This allows the character to achieve a victory crucial to their Thread of Fate and to learn of one final objective they must complete in order to finish their personal quest.

Chapter Placement. This momentous Confrontation can occur during chapters 18–22 when the characters face the horrors of Hartsblight Forest, Maidenmist Cemetery, the Roving Rookery, Fool's Day, or the Crooked Nightmare.

Reward. A character who prevails after their Confrontation increases one ability score of their choice by 2. This increase can't raise a score above 24.

CLIMAX

The fifth Narrative Touchpoint is the grand finale of the character's story arc, where they complete the final objective of their Thread of Fate and fully realize the goal they sought to achieve in Druskenvald.

Chapter Placement. This epic Climax occurs during chapter 24, with the character's ultimate objective intertwined with the defeat of the Horned King and the Crooked Queen.

Reward. In addition to finally accomplishing the goal of their personal quest, a character who resolves their Climax gains a feat of their choice.

CATHARSIS

The sixth and final Narrative Touchpoint is the conclusion of the character's personal story arc, resolving their Thread of Fate and providing the outcome that results from achieving their goal.

Chapter Placement. This final Catharsis occurs at the end of the adventure during the Epilogue.

Reward. The emotional Catharsis achieved through the resolution of a character's story arc is its own reward.



THREADS OF FATE

Threads of Fate are thirteen possible personal story arcs that can be woven into the adventure of *The Crooked Moon*. Each Thread provides a goal for a character to pursue, plot elements to incorporate into their backstory, player choices that personalize the experience, the call of adventure that sets the character on the path to Druskenvald, and six Narrative Touchpoints throughout the adventure that provide a full character arc and rewards for resolving each step.

For ease of use, each Thread of Fate has thematic and narrative connections to one of the thirteen new backgrounds included in this book (see chapter 4). However, any character can select any Thread regardless of their background. Share these Thread options, their initial story elements, and any starting questions with your players, but keep the details of the Threads' Narrative Touchpoints (presented in the following pages) a secret. You can also use these as inspiration to create your own Threads of Fate.

THREAD OF APOCALYPSE



A character bound by the Thread of Apocalypse has lost their memories and forgotten a large portion of their past. Stranger still, the tune of an unknown yet familiar song triggers terrible visions of an impending apocalypse that only the character can prevent.

Goal. The character must discover who they are and the meaning of their apocalyptic visions to stop the doom coming to Druskenvald.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the song that heralds the visions of doom. Which genre of music is it? What are the lyrics about? How does the song relate narratively or thematically to the character? What hints about a past life are in the song?

Call to Adventure. The character inadvertently hears the triggering song, which is unknown to them but sounds strangely familiar. They are stricken with a vision of an entire world and the countless souls within being disintegrated and reformed into twisted abominations, followed by the premonition of a ghost train emerging from the fog wherever the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Amnesiac

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 177). While in the Sleeper Car aboard the *Ghostlight Express* (area G2), the phonograph suddenly plays a new yet eerily familiar rendition of the prophetic song. This initiates another apocalyptic vision that ends with a scene of a porch with a group of masked nurses surrounding a stranger in a rocking chair, muttering the character's name.

CONNECTION (PAGE 199). While visiting the Apothecary Shop (area V6), Morgan is quick to share that they have also lost their memories, finding kinship with the character. They mention that they had received a pamphlet for Memory's Rest Sanatorium, which claimed that the hospital could help with finding one's identity, but Morgan never made the trip.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 326). On the Moon Porch of Memory's Rest Sanatorium (area L3), a patient sways in a rocking chair with wild eyes, muttering the character's name. When they see the character, they recognize them and repeatedly say, "The calliope! The hidden moon! The last mistake!" but cannot be shaken from their stupor.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 408). While in the Festival Square of the Festival of Fools (area C2), the character is drawn to a strange calliope. They discover a moon-shaped button hidden behind a panel and words etched in their own handwriting: "The Goat Lies." When pressed, a discordant but familiar version of the song plays, provoking a vision that ends with a large goat's skull and someone screaming "Sacrifice it!"

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). Following the triumph over the Horned King and the sacrifice to burn the Crooked Tree, the character's original memories return. Remembering endless variations of the Crooked Queen's victory, the character realizes that in their past, they unlocked the ability to manipulate time. Through time travel, they worked through several timelines to guide this version of the character to succeed. With this newly remembered power, they have the opportunity to create a new timeline that avoids all the previous deaths.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character decides to attempt an even greater victory with less bloodshed, they disappear in a flash of light, and their companions never see them again in the current timeline as they travel through time to prevent as many deaths as possible. If they decide to remain in this timeline, they believe they can use their temporal powers to help those beyond Wickermoor Hollow.



THREAD OF ASCENDANCY

A character bound by the Thread of Ascendancy strives to rise to greatness and become an otherworldly monarch. They are guided by the inane ramblings of the spectral head of a fool, imperceivable to anyone else, whose cryptic rhymes contain surprising wisdom and even a prophecy of an ascendant rebirth.

Goal. The character must decipher the ramblings of their fool and discover what must be done to ascend beyond mortality and be reborn into a powerful supernatural entity.

Personalization. Determine the otherworldly nature of the desired ascension. Does the character wish to become a lord of the heavens, the hells, the Fey lands, or the deathly realms? Did they seek this type of ascension before encountering their fool or was it instigated by the spirit? Why does the character pursue such a transformational rebirth?

Call to Adventure. The character is present during or even accidentally causes the beheading of a fool, whose bodiless spirit haunts them. They soon realize there is truth and prescience woven through the specter's often incoherent ramblings, and a single strange rhyme of fools, monarchs, rebirth, and ascension points to a particular gloomy time and place where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Reveler

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 183). In the Circus Car of the *Ghostlight Express* (area G7), a large poster showcasing the Festival of Fools draws the character's attention. Their spectral fool looks at it wildly and babbles: "In paradise, the angels hang upside down and the fire shoots right side up, but the bells still ring in silver!"

CONNECTION (PAGE 196). While in the Green Queen Inn (area V1), Innkeeper Alda Farnum can sense the haunting fool and is drawn to the character. She herself seeks to ascend to a great green Fey queen to ensure immense wealth and power for eternity. Throughout the adventure, she can point out sources of interplanar meddling, hoping to hear secrets she can use.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 275). While in the Watchful Belfry of the Crimson Monastery (area M14), the character's spectral fool's head dives into a hellfire brazier and gains a ghostly body before proclaiming: "In paradise, the fools are lords and the lords are fools, but all must die for a dream of kings and queens!"

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 415). After the death of Chuckles during the Festival of Fools, the character's fool claims the remnants of the wooden puppet and is reborn into a new otherworldly body. Its new form takes on the visage of the same type of entity that the character seeks to ascend to. It bows before them and exclaims: "In paradise, a herald needs some good shoulders under their head to usher in the monarch, but there can only be one, and goats are for supper!"

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). Following the death of the Horned King and the burning of the Crooked Tree, the character's fool appears and presents a crown-like jester's cap made of ash and horn. The fool bellows: "In paradise, a fool for a day is a monarch for all time, but who shall wear the bells and leave their friends behind?" The character must choose to ascend to transcendent power or remain mortal and crown the fool instead.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character is crowned, they undergo a transformation into a powerful, otherworldly monarch exactly how they envisioned. As the character ascends to their desired "paradise," they leave behind their former companions and the fool. If they reject the crown, the fool undergoes this ascension instead, and the character can bring the wisdom from their strange journey to lands beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF DELIVERANCE

A character bound by the Thread of Deliverance seeks an inherited family heirloom of great importance and power that was broken apart and lost during a previous trip they took aboard the *Ghostlight Express*. They follow a soul-powered compass that they hope will lead to the artifact's pieces and the truth behind its fateful purpose once made whole.

Goal. The character must find all three of the pieces of the fractured artifact and restore it to discover its origin, true power, and how to harness it for themselves.

Personalization. Determine what type of item the family heirloom is and why it's special to the character. Who was the family member they inherited it from, and what was their relationship like? Which Druskenvald province was it retrieved from and how did they first find it?

Call to Adventure. After the character retrieved the inherited heirloom from Druskenvald, their return trip aboard the *Ghostlight Express* was interrupted by a hooded, lantern-bearing figure that stole the artifact, split it into three pieces, and ejected the character from the train into the Shroud. The character miraculously survived and emerged somewhere in the mortal realms with a strange, broken compass in their possession. Time has since passed, but one night, the compass glows with ghastly energy, its needle pointing toward wherever the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Ghostlight Passenger

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 175). While in the Passenger Car of the *Ghostlight Express* (area G1) after the attack of the Phantom Trainhopper, the wisps of the Shroud cause the compass to whirr to life. Its needle points toward the spectral firebox in the Tender (area G8), directly at the name stamped in the metal: Stranger Ferryworks.

CONNECTION (PAGE 198). While visiting Tolliver's Trading Post (area V5), Baltus Tolliver shows a keen interest in strange artifacts from across Druskenvald and beyond the Shroud. He knows of another engine in the valley from Stranger Ferryworks, aboard the *Dead Man's Hand* riverboat. Throughout the adventure, he suggests where strange items might be found.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 298). In the Boiler Room of the Dead Man's Hand riverboat (area B4), the first piece of the character's family heirloom can be found tucked behind or beneath the boiler. Retrieving it causes the compass to pulse with soulfire and point toward Maidenmist Cemetery.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 382). While in the Shadestone Sanctuary of Maidenmist Cemetery (area Y9), the compass points toward a statue of a hooded figure with a lantern, exactly like the one who attacked the character. The second piece of the artifact is held in its stone grasp. When the character takes the piece, their name suddenly etches itself in the base of the statue, and the compass spins wildly.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). If the characters are victorious over the Crooked Queen in the Wytchwood, the compass vibrates and points into the barrow. Within, entangled in roots, is the final piece of the character's artifact. When all three pieces are assembled, a fog rolls in and the hooded figure emerges, revealing themselves as the relative who left them the artifact. They have become a Stranger (see chapter 1) and offer the character the same opportunity.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character accepts the offer, they become a ferryman of dead souls, and the artifact becomes the primary instrument of calling their vehicle or warding against the Shroud. They leave into the mist with their family member to continue their duty. If they do not accept, the character can use their artifact to help lost souls outside of Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF DUALITY



A character bound by the Thread of Duality has a soul that they severed in two in the hopes of expunging their mortal sins, vices, and flaws. A near-exact duplicate born of sin itself commits increasingly wicked acts under the guise of the character, working toward a nefarious goal that only the character can stop as they communicate with their doppelganger through mirrors and other reflections.

Goal. The character must track down their sinful duplicate, uncover the nature of the copy's wicked plot, and find a way to mend their severed soul to bring an end to their counterpart's vile and catastrophic machinations.

Personalization. Determine how the duplicate both mirrors and differs from the character in appearance and behavior. What sin most defines the doppelganger, what is their greatest moral flaw, and why did the character so drastically act to purge them? What did the soul severing process require? How does the character now behave differently?

Call to Adventure. The character receives news of or discovers heinous acts allegedly committed by them. Following the trail of sin, they eventually see a reflection of themselves, but something is off, and the eyes are full of menace. The doppelganger speaks to the character with taunts and threats, mentioning catching a train and leaving clues that point toward where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Reflected Wanderer

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 225). While in the Music Room of the Crooked House (area H5), the character's reflection in the oval mirror flashes a wicked grin and hefts a bloody axe. Behind them lies a field of butchered corpses. The doppelganger states that, as a being born of sin, they can consume sin itself to grow stronger, and Druskenvald is filled with it. They claim murder alone is insufficient; sin must also include vices and base pleasures. The reflection then returns to normal.

CONNECTION (PAGE 200). Near Wickermoor Schoolhouse (area V8), Finneas Trout approaches the character, noting their resemblance to a stranger who passed through weeks before a string of grisly murders, after which they headed northeast. Fascinated by the character and their double, Finneas, who studied "The Grey" curse of his home province of Edwardia (see chapter 1), offers insights on instances of duality throughout the adventure.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 296). In the Gambling Hall of the *Dead Man's Hand* (area B3), the riverboat's tall windows reflect the character's doppelganger, who is surrounded by mountains of gold, food, drink, game pieces, and other tokens of indulgence. The copy claims to be nearly ready to become a god of sin and mocks the character's ignorance of souls. They flash a grin of razor-sharp teeth before vanishing.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 375). After arriving at the Great Sepulcher in Maidenmist Cemetery (area Y2), Yorgrim sees the severed soul and explains that the character must reunite both souls to stop the doppelganger's actions. He shares that, just like his Fallen friends, every soul must be accepted with both the good and bad. The process of reigniting the Balefire Beacons grants the character a sufficient understanding of soul magic to defy their copy and rejoin the souls.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). After destroying the Horned King and burning the Crooked Tree, the duplicate emerges from the tree line, visible to all for the first time, with a maw of crooked sharp teeth. The copy sucks in the black ash from the Horned King's remains, turns into smoke, and declares that sin never ends and that the Horned King will return one day more devastating than before. This presents an opportunity for the character to fuse the souls together or let the duplicate go.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character fuses the souls, all the wickedness and sin that was purged returns through tendrils of smoke. While the character retains control, they are never the same. If the character rejects the use of soul magic, the doppelganger laughs and dissipates. In twenty years, a new Horned King will return to Druskenvald. Until then, the character can bring their virtue and positive traits to help the lands beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF EVOLUTION



A character bound by the Thread of Evolution believes themself to be the next stage of evolution for mortal species, having undergone a transformational experiment to become closer to "perfection." However, they are still not satisfied and follow the notes of a renowned researcher to transcend the limitations of natural biology.

Goal. The character must unlock the potential of the experiments conducted on them, discover how to blend science and magic to achieve the final stage of evolution, and become the ultimate lifeform.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the experiments conducted on the character. Did they experiment on themselves, or did an external figure do it? What sort of physical limitations were they seeking to transcend? Who is the researcher they idolize, and what were they seeking?

Call to Adventure. The character has hit a dead end in unlocking the next stage of their personal evolution and has sought out the researcher who inspired their pursuit. When they finally discover the laboratory or place of study, it is mostly destroyed. Piecing together a fragmented collection of notes that still remain, the character determines that the researcher sought out the location where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Experiment

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 182). In the Baggage Car of the *Ghostlight Express* (area G6), a discarded medical bag that once belonged to the researcher can be found. Among several empty medicine vials, a few crumpled notes reveal they were losing a battle with an ailment after the "enemies of progress" destroyed their lab. The only option left was to seek experimental medicine at an "unorthodox hospital."

CONNECTION (PAGE 204). While visiting A Stitch in Time (area V18), Thomasin Ardor is drawn to the character, recognizing the results of the experiments done to them. Having gained similar results from the procedure that saved her life as a child, her curiosity of how new and advanced techniques and materials can be used to improve quality of life is unbound. Throughout the adventure, she never misses an opportunity to point out any such developments.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 334). In the Crematorium of Memory's Rest Sanatorium (area L18), the character finds the ashes and last effects of the researcher. Their notes reveal that combining magic and science showed great promise, but the critical missing ingredient is a powerful inorganic material to replace the "weakness of flesh." Although they knew death was imminent, they were overjoyed to have deduced this missing material: stardust from a fallen star.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 423). At the Smoking Crater in the Crooked Nightmare (area N4), the character realizes their medically altered nature allows them to deconstruct the meteor with the union of magic and science. They can replace biological parts with this stardust, which can be greatly duplicated. However, to grant this evolution to others, the lingering crooked corruption over Wickermoor Hollow must be eliminated.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). After Kehlenn's banishment following the burning of the Crooked Tree, the haze of corruption is removed, and the character gains full control of their discovered evolution. They can replace the organic bodies of anyone who wishes to escape the weakness of flesh by fully evolving themselves and becoming entirely made of stardust. To retain any original biology would be to not claim full mastery of the stardust and interrupt their personal evolution.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character fully evolves into a being of inorganic matter, the stardust spreads across Wickermoor Hollow, enabling the sick and dissatisfied to abandon their humanity to join the character's evolution. If the character rejects the final stage of evolution, they can make a difference on a smaller, targeted scale in places beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF IMMORTALITY



A character bound by the Thread of Immortality seeks a remedy for an incurable, magical disease through the lost arts of blood, vital energy, and the soul-stuff of anima. Aided by an enigmatic, alchemical being in a flask, they seek the truth, and with each new discovery of strange alchemy, they come closer to perfecting a grand elixir and unlocking the secrets of immortality, eternal youth, and invulnerability.

Goal. The character must master the alchemical arts of life essence, discover the recipe for a grand remedy of immense power, concoct a cure for their magical malady, and unlock the secrets of immortality.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the incurable disease. What are its symptoms and how was it caused? Does the character have the affliction themselves or does one of their loved ones? Does the researched remedy take the form of a potion, a stone, or something else entirely? What is the appearance and personality of the oddity in the flask?

Call to Adventure. The effects of the magical disease that the character contends with continue to worsen, and all attempts at remedying it have failed. Their study of alchemical practices leads them to the ruins of an ancient city said to have once conquered death. There,

they uncover a strange entity in a flask that claims to know the truth of immortality. The being is not openly forthcoming with many details but speaks of the time and place where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Crimson Aspirant

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 235). In the Cauldron Room of the Crooked House (area H17), the character is drawn to symbols etched by Vessla that the entity in the flask recognizes as soul magic. The thing guides the character to etch the glyphs on the entity's vessel to prepare it for the grand remedy's alchemical purpose, whispering that the next step is infusing it with blood magic.

CONNECTION (PAGE 204). While visiting the Smithy (area V16), the thing in the flask is drawn to Jean Myriel, who reveals that, during his time in Dawn's Gate, he had witnessed acts of blood magic from the faithful of the Crimson Monastery. There, he learned techniques to infuse his metallurgy with blood before he fled, cautioning much worse uses are conducted within the monastery.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 270). In Jaeger's Cabin at the Crimson Monastery (area M3), the character is drawn to a plethora of notes on blood magic rituals. The oddity in the flask finds hidden discoveries and secrets, guiding the character to infuse the vessel with the power of blood, anima, and vitality, stating the next step is the implementation of extremely rare alchemical reagents.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 376). While at the Highborn Crypts in Maidenmist Cemetery (area Y4), the thing in the flask reveals that it was once a mortal alchemist millennia prior. It guides the character to a crypt that holds its former apprentice, who had prepared for the creation of the grand remedy by being buried alongside pure gold, celestial water, quicksilver, rare herbs, and other reagents to be infused into it. The final step requires a massive transmutation circle at a place of power.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). Once the Crooked Queen is defeated, the oddity emerges from the flask and creates a transmutation circle where Kehlenn's primal magic ring had been. The entity then bursts into a swarm of souls, stating that it has sacrificed thousands of lives for this purpose. It urges the character to use the circle to finish the remedy and achieve true immortality. Otherwise, it will only serve as a single-use cure for the disease the character sought to alleviate.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character sacrifices the thousands of souls, including the thing in the flask, the grand remedy is completed, which grants immortality, eternal youth, and invulnerability. If they reject such a weighty sacrifice, the souls destroy the entity before flying off to find peace. The character has a cure for the disease and knows they can use the alchemy they've learned to help people beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF KINDRED



A character bound by the Thread of Kindred searches for a family member who went missing in Druskenvald after experiencing a series of worsening nightmares. Following clues in a dream journal left behind by their loved one, the character knows that a terrible, crooked fate awaits their kin and only they can bring salvation.

Goal. The character must track down their loved one's location, uncover the malign forces they've been mixed up with, and rescue them before they suffer a terrible fate.

Personalization. Determine which family member the character seeks. Are they from one of the thirteen primary provinces of Druskenvald or from the mortal realms? How was the relationship between them, and how did the worsening nightmares affect their bond?

Call to Adventure. The character's family member had confided in them about terrifying nightmares of a man with a crooked grin that continued to get worse, causing loss of sleep and fraying sanity. One night, the character arrives at their loved one's home and finds them gone. There are clear signs of a struggle. Left behind is a dream journal, which paints a terrifying picture of the nightmares and clearly depicts where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Druskenvald Dweller

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 230). In the Master Bedroom of the Crooked House (area H12), the character is drawn to the bed and finds some personal effects of their family member. There are also etchings on the wall that imply they had been kept prisoner in the room before the Druskenvalds arrived and forced to experience horrific nightmares seemingly focused on the Crooked Man. The final etching references being covered by centipedes in the deep.

CONNECTION (PAGE 201). While visiting Roderick Masonry (area V12), the character is drawn to strange statues behind the counter that match descriptions in the dream journal. Solomon Roderick reveals he's had nightmares of a Crooked Man since childhood, and his account is similar to what the character's family member experienced. Throughout the adventure, he can help guide the character toward the operations of the servants of the Crooked Man and the Vermintoll Coven.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 314). While in Stonoga's Laboratory within Skitterdeep Mine (area S7) after the death of Stonoga Blackstinger, the character finds a cage with more effects belonging to their family member. Among them is a log revealing the relative

was kept there and experimented on, with notes stating they are an "ideal vessel" and are "prime for crookedness." It mentions preparations are underway for the "final nightmare."

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 421). While in the Dark Wood of the Crooked Nightmare (area N2), the character hears their family member crying out in the darkness. Drawn to the voice, the character finds them wandering the woods with a crooked neck and crooked gait. Terrified, the family member says they are being prepared for something at a crooked tree. Suddenly, they shriek and are dragged off into the darkness.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). After the Crooked Queen is vanquished, the character's family member screams from the barrow below, trapped where Kehlenn's bones once were. The family member sobs that their blood has marked them as a replacement for the Crooked Man and that they must work to restore Kehlenn. The character can only save them by taking their place as the successor of the Crooked Man themselves. However, because they were not warped by the coven, they retain their morality and free will.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character offers to take their family member's place, they change places in the roots, are fully consumed, and transform into a powerful crooked spirit bound to Druskenvald. The family member returns home with any other surviving characters. If the character allows their family member to be consumed, they witness the transformation and they know they must work against this new spirit outside of Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF LIBERATION



A character bound by the Thread of Liberation has made a deal with a powerful entity that now owns their soul, and what awaits them in death is not pretty. Their only hope to escape their fate seems to be in the hands of their shadow, which seemingly has a mind of its own but can be persuaded to help through games of chance.

Goal. The character must seek help in outwitting the entity they made a deal with, find a way to break the supernatural chains that bind them, and reclaim the mastery of their own fate once more.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the entity that has claimed the character's soul. Are they fiendish, fey, deathly, or something else? What is their personality, and what relationship do they have with the character? How does their influence affect the appearance and behavior of the character's shadow? What deal was made, and what did the character receive in exchange for their soul?

Call to Adventure. The character's luck is running out as the deal they've made with the entity has gone bad, and they've been reminded of the terrible fate that awaits them. Seeking a way to get out of the bargain, they return to the place where the deal was made, and the character's shadow suddenly springs to life and wordlessly challenges them to a game of chance. The character is victorious, and the shadow guides them to where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Crossroads Gambler

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 181). In the Mail Car of the *Ghostlight Express* (area G5), the character's shadow finds a letter from a famous gambler addressed to a relative of the character who also doesn't own their soul. The gambler explains that to gamble with a higher power and win, one needs a magically suited deck of cards, an infallible lucky charm, and a wager grand enough to entice a being that might have it all.

CONNECTION (PAGE 202). While visiting Bread by Holly (area V14), Holly Aster is drawn to the character and recognizes from the look in their eye that their soul is not their own. She confides that her soul is owned by a higher power but refuses to say which. Holly mentions that some seek salvation in the Drowned Crossroads, and she even heard stories of gambling for souls there. Her commitment to her children has prevented her own trip there.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 296). In the Gambling Hall of the *Dead Man's Hand* (area B3), the character is drawn to a special table that offers a prize of a uniquely hexed set of cards that can be played with otherworldly beings. When they play, their shadow may cheat in the game so that the character wins. The dealer tells them the best lucky charm is to find a "Wild Joker" and add it to the deck.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 411). While at the Prize Counter during the Festival of Fools (area C3), the character sees a gleaming joker card that costs "infinity tickets." Their shadow may steal the card, and when it is placed in the deck, the Wild Joker speaks. It exclaims how the deck is now lucky and the character cannot lose, but the wager better be a huge one, like the rulership of an entire realm of death.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). After the encounter with the Horned King, the death of Phillip has left a vacancy for lordship of Druskenvald. The shadow draws the Wild Joker from the lucky deck and gestures that it can be used to kill the owner of the character's soul. When the character announces a challenge and wagers the lordship of Druskenvald, the entity appears for a card game. The character can win their freedom using the rigged deck or take revenge by destroying the being.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character pierces the entity with the Wild Joker, whether thrown or stabbed, the being is destroyed and the character's soul is free. If they play and win the game, the entity honors the deal, dissolves the bargain, and frees their soul, allowing them to pursue other gambles outside Wickermoor Hollow. Either way, the shadow transforms into a person. Now freed, they reveal that they were cursed to spy on the character after a deal with the same entity.

THREAD OF MALEDICTION



A character bound by the Thread of Malediction is truly cursed, as is their entire family line. The curse that hangs over their bloodline spells doom and a fate worse than death for all whom they hold dear. Only through delving into ancient secrets and forbidden, profane knowledge of strange origin can they hope to break the curse that afflicts them.

Goal. The character must seek the forgotten secrets that whisper of their curse, obtain the occult knowledge of how to break it, and take the necessary steps to free themselves from the malediction that afflicts them and their line.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the curse that afflicts the character. Were they cursed themselves, or was it inherited from an ancestor? What sort of otherworldly force originated the curse, whether it be fiendish, cosmic, fey, or other eldritch forces? To which fate is the character and their line doomed by this curse?

Call to Adventure. The looming threat of the curse has driven the character to constant research, seeking any knowledge that might lead toward a solution. After numerous dead ends, the character discovers a secret society with access to an esoteric library. After gaining access, the character steals a mysterious page before escaping and follows it to wherever the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Scholar of the Forbidden

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 233). In the Library of the Crooked House (area H14), the character finds an ancient tome that has writings similar to their stolen page. It tells of a curse that matches theirs and illustrates parts of an incantation, though there are many blank pages. A note is scribbled in the margin that mentions secrets collected by demons and includes symbols of eyes and wings.

CONNECTION (PAGE 207). While visiting the Antique Bookstore (area V23), Eleanor Heyling senses the character's inquisitive nature and confides her interest in strange, occult, and forbidden knowledge, especially in the eyes of the Old Ways. She offers to help research for the character, and throughout the adventure, she can offer locations where hidden knowledge might be found.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 253). While navigating the Fields of the Crow (see chapter 13), the eyes between the stalks watch the character intently and whispers call them over, telling them that the knowledge they seek exists only beyond the stars. Some of the tome's empty pages fill with demonic script, continuing the incantation. The symbol of a shooting star appears.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 423). At the Smoking Crater in the Crooked Nightmare (area N4), the gibbering voices call to the character. When they look up, their consciousness is transported beyond space and time, and they gain the missing knowledge of how to break the curse. Their tome fills with the remaining incantation, detailing how the final step requires that character to breathe the "Ashes of a God" before reciting it.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). Once the Crooked Queen is defeated and the Crooked Tree is burned, the character inhales the ashes and surges with eldritch power. By reciting the full incantation from the tome, their curse is broken, and unlocked cosmic power allows them the chance to seek more knowledge beyond this reality. They have a moment to decide if they will leave this dimension behind.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character decides to travel beyond the stars, they blink away in a burst of stardust and spend millennia navigating strange new cosmic worlds, gaining knowledge unthinkable to mortal minds. If they decide to stay, they know that more knowledge of strange curses and forbidden magic awaits beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF PILGRIMAGE



A character bound by the Thread of Pilgrimage holds a strong, mystical connection to the spirits of the dead and can feel their emotions innately. Guided by augury, which grants divination, the character is drawn to places of great spiritual unrest, where they erect sacred monuments to bring a final peace to the tormented dead.

Goal. The character must make a pilgrimage to locations of great spiritual significance, erect cleansing monuments at each one, and complete the sacred formation to soothe and put to rest the countless tortured spirits of the realm.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the character's duty to the spirits. Is it motivated by religious, primal, occult, or other ends? What is the character's relationship with the dead, and how has the emotional connection shaped them? How does the character practice augury, whether it be through stone, bone, antler, or other methods? What do their sacred monuments look like?

Call to Adventure. While performing sacred rites to honor the dead, the character is overwhelmed by the tortured agony of countless souls somewhere beyond the mortal realms. Believing that such a profane affront to the departed cannot stand, they perform their spiritual augury, which points to the time and place where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Rest Warden

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 224). While in the Parlor of the Crooked House (area H3), a crystal ball on a shelf fills with spectral light, independent of Patrini's influence. The character is invited to use their augury to commune with the spirits of the house, who tell them there are places of great soul corruption throughout the valley. The loci of corruption must be cleansed to allow for the countless crooked souls to find rest.

CONNECTION (PAGE 206). After the events of the Crooked House, but before Fields of the Crow (chapter 13), Mori Shade approaches them, sensing their connection to spirits. She shares her sacred charge of the dead bodies and spirits, and she is curious about the character's practices for performing rites. Throughout the adventure, she brings attention to areas of corrupted and tormented souls.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 259). Following the defeat of Raum and the banishing of the Fields of the Crow from the farmland around Foxwillow (see chapter 13), the souls corrupted by the demonic influence still linger in the fields. The character must erect their first monument to cleanse the demonic spirits. The following augury shows signs of a tide of shrieking souls erupting from a crumbling ruin.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 431). After defeating the Vermintoll Abomination in the Crooked Nightmare, the surge of shrieking souls that erupts from the ruins of the Crooked House beg for peace from the character. To cleanse the spirits, they must erect the second spiritual monument on the site of the Crooked House. The subsequent augury shows the true source of that site's corruption: a gnarled and twisted tree in the darkest forest.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). Once the Crooked Queen is bested, the character can feel the torment of countless souls across Wickermoor Hollow that have been twisted by Kehlenn. The third monument must be erected to initiate the final cleansing. The connection of the three monuments is so strong that the character gains the option to rebirth every soul and give them another chance at life.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character decides to initiate this rebirth, countless once-human souls across Wickermoor Hollow are born again into a variety of the thirteen reborn species of Druskenvald. All manner of people emerge from the haunted places of the valley, settling there or deciding to move to other provinces. If the character chooses not to offer the rebirth, the souls are cleansed and fade peacefully. The character knows they can help put spirits to rest outside Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF RAPTURE



A character bound by the Thread of Rapture zealously serves a deity or other greater power as their chosen prophet. They hear the voice of their god, who wishes to gain a foothold in a godless realm by enacting a great feat of divine intervention in the hopes of leaving their mark upon the land and its people, who must be converted into the fold.

Goal. The character must spread the word of their deity throughout the land, convert a following of devotees, break the barriers to the divine's influence, and bring about an act of their godly intervention.



Personalization. Determine the nature of the character's deity. What is their godly domain, and what are their tenets? What do they demand of their followers, and how does the character showcase their commitment to them? What divine intervention do they seek to enact in Druskenvald and why?

Call to Adventure. While the character is spreading the word of their god, they have a near-death experience but are brought back from the brink by their deity. The character hears their god speak directly to them, telling them of the holy quest they must undertake to gather the faithful in the land of death and establish a foothold for their divine will. The deity guides the character to where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Cultist

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 225). In the Gallery of the Crooked House (area H4), the character is drawn to a bust of a religious figure. A plaque beneath it describes how the individual brought a deity's influence to Wickermoor Hollow many years prior by first amassing a large gathering of followers, whose worship allowed for the god's power to grow in the province. The character's deity confirms this is the next step.

CONNECTION (PAGE 205). While traveling near the Abandoned Church in Wickermoor Village (area V19), Weston Murdoch approaches the character, recognizing them as a missionary. While he encourages them to worship the Brightsinger, he simply appreciates "new godliness" coming to Wickermoor Hollow. Throughout the adventure, he can direct the character to worshipers of a variety of faiths.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 281). After the defeat of the Crimson Abbot at the Crimson Monastery (see chapter 14), many followers of the Crimson Faith become disenfranchised or emboldened to escape the faith. Many approach the character and quickly convert to their deity. They agree to spread word of the new faith throughout the valley. This grants more power to the character's deity, who tells them that the Shroud repels the divine, and this barrier must be addressed.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 389). Following the defeat on the Chained Reaper in the Tomb of the Shrouded of Maidenmist Cemetery (area Y15), the character feels a connection to their deity, who commands them to sanctify this original source of the Shroud in the valley to allow their god to pierce through. Following a blessing by the character, their god tells them that a complete antithesis to godliness stalks the realm and must be destroyed.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). Following the destruction of the Horned King and the burning of the Crooked Tree, their deity confirms that the primary enemy of the gods has been destroyed and, with the character's invocation, the divine intervention will begin. Additionally, the god offers to shepherd anyone in the valley to the afterlife of the deity. This rapture must be initiated and led by the character.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character invokes the salvation to whisk away souls in a rapture, they and many willing people throughout Wickermoor Hollow rise into the air and fade in divine light. The intervention of the deity's choice occurs in the valley. If the character does not initiate the rapture, only the intervention occurs, and they are called to spread the word of their god beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF REJUVENATION



A character bound by the Thread of Rejuvenation upholds the sanctity of the natural world and the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Through communion with the green world and following the wisdom of the trees, they seek to purge the land of rot and corruption to usher in a new age of flourishing.

Goal. The character must find the areas of the natural world that are suffering, discover the extent of the corruption that afflicts the land, learn how to bring about the necessary healing, and fully purge the corruption to initiate a great regrowth.

Personalization. Determine the nature of the character's guardianship of the wilds. How did they first favor the natural world over civilization? What relationship do they have with the trees and the green places? Do they serve the cycle individually or as part of a group? Which season do they favor and uphold as their ultimate charge?

Call to Adventure. While walking through the woods during their favored season, the character stumbles upon an ancient hollow, and the trees of the deepest wood communicate with them. They learn of a landscape corrupted, rotten, and crooked in a realm devoid of the cycle of the seasons, pleading for the salvation of these wilds. After the character accepts the mantle of warden, they hear the wisdom of the trees and are guided to where the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Wicker Weaver

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 228). In the Conservatory of the Crooked House (area H8), the bergamot tree communes with the character, giving a vision of its own rotten core before showing the corrupted landscapes and the perversion of nature throughout Wickermoor Hollow. It ends with a vision of a diseased hilltop crawling with thousands of centipedes.

CONNECTION (PAGE 208). Sister Rain approaches the character, sensing they share the same gift of "Tree Seeing," which allows the land to communicate with

people through the trees. She feels nature's pain but rejects supernatural means to cleanse corruption, refusing to "fight fire with fire." Throughout the adventure, she can sense where corrupted landscapes are in the valley.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 315). After the death of Stonoga Blackstinger in Skitterdeep Mine, notes found in Stonoga's Laboratory (area S7) tell that her corruptive magic was created after studying a virulent disease known as Hartsblight. When the character leaves the mine, a nearby tree now cleansed of Skitter Plague sends a vision of a fungus-choked forest, and within it lies the rotting corpse of a deer.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 365). When exiting the Den of the Blighted One (area F11) after the destruction of Gorthos, the character is communed with by countless trees that have been cleansed of Hartsblight. A vision of the beautiful Green Queen twists into a crooked tree that serves as the heart of corruption throughout Wickermoor Hollow and must be purged.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). After the burning of the Crooked Tree, the character's full connection to the green magic of Druskenvald is achieved. The Wytchwood communes with them, showing a vision of a burning forest, and from it, the source of a brilliant new age of rejuvenation for Druskenvald—perhaps one day returning the cycle of the seasons. They must simply spread the embers to ignite a single tree.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character spreads the embers of the Crooked Tree, the wildfire spreads throughout the Wytchwood, quickly burning the forest to ash. From it, new life will grow how the character decides and spreads throughout the valley, showing signs of the character's favored season. If they refuse, the character receives a vision of corrupted landscapes beyond Wickermoor Hollow.

THREAD OF SLAUGHTER



A character bound by the Thread of Slaughter is a consummate hunter and holds a reverence for the art of killing. Called forward by the appearances of a great spiritual beast, they leave the hunting grounds of the mortal realms to seek the deadliest prey, seeking to become the ultimate predator.

Goal. The character must hunt and kill the foulest creatures of the eternal night, discover what it means to be an apex predator, and undergo the transformation to become the most feared beast that stalks the dark wood.

Personalization. Determine which great beast the character embodies and follows. Are they a predator of land, sky, or water, and how does its spiritual form appear to the character? What about this beast does the character find kinship with, and which of its traits do they strive for? What set the character on their path of bloodshed?

Call to Adventure. Following the success of the greatest hunt the character had experienced, they are still left unsatisfied by the kill. In that moment, the spectral form of the spiritual beast they have kinship with appears before them, and with a look, the character understands that they must seek deadlier hunting grounds. The character instinctively knows where and when the adventure begins.

Associated Background. Night Stalker

NARRATIVE TOUCHPOINTS

INCITEMENT (PAGE 234). In the Trophy Room of the Crooked House (area H15), one of the stuffed trophies perfectly resembles the spiritual beast the character follows. When the character locks eyes with it, the beast comes to life and gestures to another slain trophy: a monstrous crow with demonic eyes.

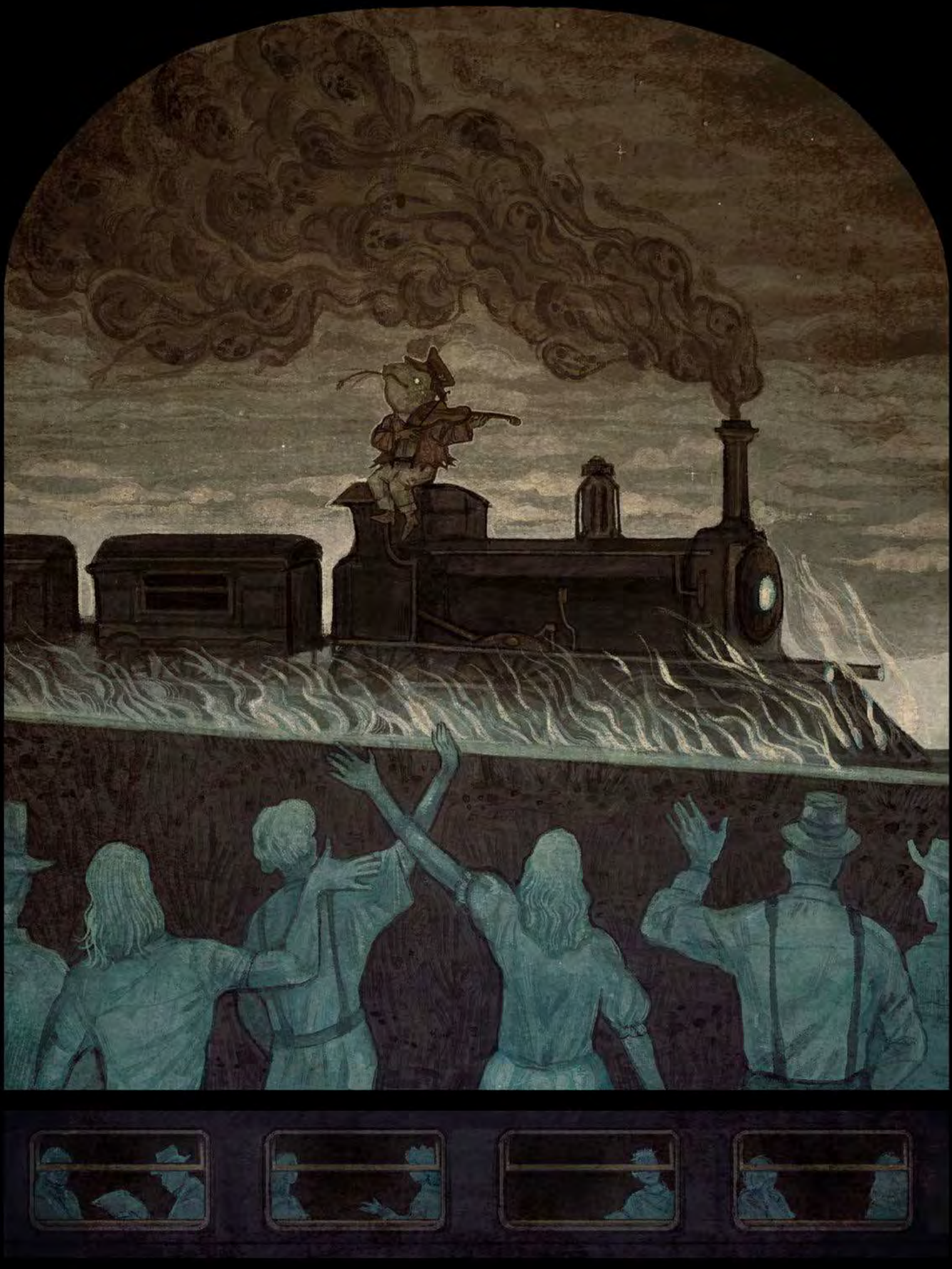
CONNECTION (PAGE 209). Hilda Brom approaches the character, sensing their connection to the spiritual beast. She also wants to become an ultimate hunter, following a great spirit bear, but fears the change and sacrifice it may require, given her attachment to the comforts of civilization in Wickermoor Hollow. Throughout the adventure, she updates the character on attacks she hears of by a monster that matches the description of the character's next quarry.

DISCOVERY (PAGE 257). After Raum is slain in the Fields of the Crow (see chapter 13), the spiritual beast appears and feasts upon the demon's flesh, growing in size, power, and ferocity. It locks eyes with the character and gestures to a murder of crows in the sky above that temporarily takes the form of a rotting stag.

CONFRONTATION (PAGE 365). Once Gorthos is slain in the Den of the Blighted One (area F11), the spiritual beast appears and devours its remains, growing with strength and fury. The cave's fungus shifts to depict a three-eyed goat with features of a dragon, lion, and serpent. When the beast raises its head from the meal, its head displays the character's face. It then disappears.

CLIMAX (PAGE 463). After the death of the Horned King and the burning of the Crooked Tree, the spiritual beast appears, expanding to colossal proportions after consuming the essence of this king of monsters. It bows before the character, who has proven themselves to be the consummate hunter, offering them the opportunity to become the ultimate predator by transforming into what the spirit beast has become.

CATHARSIS (PAGE 465). If the character accepts their spirit guide's final offer, they and their spiritual beast become one and transform into an apex predator to stalk the wilds of Druskenvald and be the monster that even monsters fear. If they reject it, the spiritual beast calls for them to find new, even more fearsome prey in hunting grounds beyond Wickermoor Hollow.



Chapter 10: THE GHOSTLIGHT EXPRESS

"The Ghostlight don't care where you think you're headed. It only takes you where you need to go. Once you board, there's no turning back, no stepping off until you've reached your destination."

- The Vagrant -

Hear that? The solemn notes of a lone fiddle followed by the bellowing sound of a train whistle means you possess a one-way ticket into the unknown. Those sounds herald the arrival of the *Ghostlight Express*. It only stills and quiets for a transient moment before it lurches forward once more into its eternal voyage between life and death, so hop aboard.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

The *Ghostlight Express* is more than a mere vessel. It is a living, breathing entity offering its departed passengers their final journey to life after death. For many, this trip is their last fleeting taste of civilization before being plunged into the terror of what waits beyond the reach of both the hallowed and profane.

This chapter is the introductory adventure to *The Crooked Moon* campaign, but it can also be played as a standalone one-shot. The *Ghostlight Express* can materialize anywhere it is required, always at night, and most frequently near graveyards or standing stones. The chapter's thrilling conclusion can occur in any forest where the train crashes and transforms, leaving the characters stranded in isolation.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The *Ghostlight Express* thunders her call, ferrying wayward souls through the Shroud of death to the life that waits beyond. But among the spectral passengers bound for Druskenvald and restless spirits trapped aboard the ghost train is a crooked shade that plots to derail this fateful journey.

Characters who find themselves aboard the ghost train through the Quest Hooks might initially only want to reach their destination, but they may soon have additional goals:

- Free the haints—lost souls trapped on the train—by resolving their unfinished business, trapping them in a Soul Can, or destroying them.
- Meet Phillip and Adela Druskenvald and possibly have their fortunes told.
- Pursue the Phantom Trainhopper to the Tender.
- Survive the battle with the corrupted Ghostlight Locomotive.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with the key NPCs, locations, and concepts featured in this chapter and chapters 1 and 8 so you can deliver strong story moments and establish critical worldbuilding. A casual readthrough of each area of the *Ghostlight Express* will help you improvise interactions. Lastly, reviewing the climactic battle, "When It's Time," ensures a terrifying and tone-setting final encounter.

This chapter is designed for four level 1 characters. By the end of the chapter, the characters will have advanced to level 3. At your discretion, characters may also begin the adventure at level 2 or 3. If the characters begin this adventure at a higher level (see "Quest Hooks" below), a few modifications are included in certain areas of this chapter.

THE GHOSTLIGHT LOCOMOTIVE

The Ghostlight Locomotive is an old black train engine that rides rails made of mist and pulls the *Ghostlight Express*. This ghost train has but one primary purpose: to ferry the souls of the dead to Druskenvald so that they might be reborn for a second chance at life. On rare occasions, it grants passage to living beings who wish to pass between the realms of life and death.

To make this run, the train must travel through the Shroud, a shrieking eldritch fog that envelops numerous afterlives and realms of death. The passage is always dangerous due to the devouring nature of the ghastly mist that can obliterate any soul, living or dead.

GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

To keep itself running, the train burns souls for fuel. Though this may seem a terrible truth, a balance is struck between the spirits that are ferried and those that are consumed. Souls unfortunate enough to become fodder in the ghost train's firebox were once Wayward Haints—restless spirits that cannot rest or pass on due to unresolved affairs in life—but have deteriorated into soul coal (see "Haints" below) after spending years trapped on the train. This heavy toll ensures the *Ghostlight Express* can continue to serve its purpose as ferry for the dead, granting them safe passage from the enveloping annihilation of the Shroud.

GM TIP

As you progress through this chapter, let the tension build slowly. Characters may be meeting each other for the first time. The modular encounters in each train car should not only challenge characters but also gradually build unease before the conclusion in the woods.

If you are running the full *Crooked Moon* adventure, read through each adventure chapter at least once so you feel comfortable with any potential outcomes before you begin. Phillip and Adela Druskenvald are involved in multiple chapters; this is the characters' first opportunity to learn about them and make their own first impressions. Their interactions will shape the characters' relationships and decisions in future events.

If you are running this chapter as a standalone one-shot, then you might allow the characters to rejoin the Vagrant on the train to head toward their next adventure, wherever that may be. You can also ignore the Fateweaving guidance that ties characters to the overarching campaign of *The Crooked Moon*.

NPCS OF THE GHOSTLIGHT EXPRESS

In addition to the NPCs listed below, the train teems with the insubstantial souls of the departed. Some are on a path to rebirth in Druskenvald, while others are Wayward Haints (see "Haints" below) trapped aboard by their unresolved past lives.

PHILLIP AND ADELA DRUSKENVALD

Phillip and Adela Druskenvald are going home. They ride the *Ghostlight Express* back to Druskenvald, the domain of death they rule together as husband and wife. Even at first glance, it is plain to see the loving bond between the pair.

Phillip is a man of vision who believes that keeping a forward-thinking attitude will solve any problem, championing "modern" ideals and striving for "progress." Dapper, charming, and overconfident, the lord of Druskenvald is well-liked by the land's people despite his general aloofness to their present struggles. He is a tall, thin man with dark, slicked-back hair and a pencil-thin mustache. He carries an ornate black cane topped with a silver goat skull.

Adela is outgoing, enthusiastic, and caring, always looking at the spiritual side of every situation. She does not need to look far, however, for even in a world filled with magic, she possesses a tether to the spirit world

and formidable powers of divination that let her peer into the future with second sight. She is supremely supportive of her husband and believes her positivity helps him appreciate the amazing world he has fashioned for them. She is short and petite with wavy brown hair, almost always wearing a glamorous dress accented by a glittering necklace with a planchette hanging from its chain.

When the characters first encounter Phillip and Adela (see area G3), they greet the newcomers with warmth and curiosity. They may be willing to share details about the realm of Druskenvald and themselves (see chapter 1), but they frequently turn the questions back on the characters in genuine interest.

The Druskenvalds have one overarching goal: make both life and death a grand old time. Life here in the afterlife is sweet, and they do what they can to make sure it stays that way. While many afterlives strip away much of what it means to be mortal, Druskenvald does the opposite. Phillip especially finds beauty in the messy, imperfect, and oftentimes sinful nature of mortal folk and strives to maintain that in the realm he rules.

It is left to your discretion what business Phillip and Adela were attending to in the mortal realms—and if they are even willing to share. Regardless, by the time they appear in this story, the experience is happily behind them. With nothing but time to kill on the train, their recent past has melted away, and they welcome any distraction that might cheer the final stretch toward their destination: their sprawling manor home called Chateau Clair de Lune.

Use this opportunity to create a connection with Phillip and Adela, since these two NPCs will interact with the characters throughout *The Crooked Moon* campaign.

THE VAGRANT

The Vagrant, an amiable frogman with mottled green skin, serves as a "Stranger" (see chapter 1) who ferries the souls of the dead to the "other side." The *Ghostlight Express* is his chosen vessel for this sacred responsibility, and he serves as the ghost train's conductor and engineer. He wears the tattered garb of a vagabond, complete with a wide-brimmed hat where he always keeps three railroad spikes.

Bound by his eternal duty, the Vagrant offers safe passage to the souls of the dead who will be reborn in the realm of Druskenvald. A consummate storyteller, he believes each passenger that boards the ghost train has a tale to tell, which he is happy to do in the form of a song aided by his well-worn fiddle.

The Vagrant has a strange kinship with the *Ghostlight Express* as its sole caretaker. Through the eons, the few who have come to know this ferryman have wondered if the Vagrant himself is bound to the train just as much as the haints who cannot disembark. But none ever learned the truth of the frogman's origins, and his story remains a mystery.

STORY AND A SONG

Meeting the Vagrant is an otherworldly experience, heralded by the sound of his fiddle preceding the arrival of the train. The Vagrant has a fondness for all the souls he guides, so when the shock of his sudden appearance subsides, the dead and the living alike find themselves facing a cordial, smiling frogman ready with a story, a song, and a wink.

Though he may seem lighthearted and carefree, he holds his role as ferryman with immense gravity. The locomotive that pulls the cars of the ghost train cannot speak for itself, so the Vagrant speaks on its behalf. When conversing with the characters, he always maintains his friendly disposition, no matter the question or topic. Some things he might say include:



The Vagrant

WHO ARE YOU? "Well now, you can call me the Vagrant. Just a humble ferryman, guidin' souls to the other side."

WHAT IS THE GHOSTLIGHT LOCOMOTIVE? "Ah, the heart of the train, it is. It's no mere engine—no, it's got a will of its own, you see. And only it can get us where we're headed."

WHERE ARE WE GOING? "Druskenvald, o'course! Or the lord and lady's chateau to be specific. That's where this line ends, for now. But the tracks . . . they ain't always the same."

WHAT ARE THESE SPIRITS? "Passengers just like you, plain and simple."

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE STOP THE TRAIN? "Heh, stoppin' it? Well, that'd be stoppin' fate itself. No more ticket holders from here 'til the chateau. Ain't no peace in derailing destiny—best you stay aboard."

HAINTS

Haints are tethered apparitions, their lanky, ethereal forms shimmering a ghastly blue-green and floating slightly off the surface of the train car floors. Their clothes are worn and tattered, billowing as if caught in a perpetual breeze. Some haints repeat actions and phrases from their past lives, trapped in a loop of obsessive memories, while others might repeatedly relive moments of joy, sorrow, or fear.

A **Wayward Haint** is a spirit trapped between the worlds of the living and the dead. They are not free souls, usually due to some lingering guilt or an unresolved connection to the mortal world. Not all haints are inherently wicked, but their lack of freedom to cross over into their next form of existence takes a toll on their psyche and disposition. As haints, they are tethered to the train forever until their burden is lifted or they deteriorate into soul coal and become fuel for the train.

BOUND SPIRITS

Haints that remain bound to the train become its minions if they have not been freed prior to its transformation into the corrupted Ghostlight Locomotive.

VACANT VESSELS

Haints fear empty bottles and jars, which can be found in the Passenger Car (area G1) or Lounge Car (area G3), because they can be trapped inside of them with the proper technique. As a Study action, a character who contemplates the haints and succeeds on DC 16 Intelligence (History or Religion) check recalls the Bottle Trap trait in the **Wayward Haint** stat block. Bottles containing a haint count as Soul Cans (see "When It's Time" later in this adventure).

PHANTOM TRAINHOPPER

There is one soul aboard the train who doesn't have a ticket to ride: the Phantom Trainhopper (**Shadow**). In life, they were a member of a secret cult in the living world that worships Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen. Tonight, they were ritually sacrificed so their spirit could sneak aboard the *Ghostlight Express* on this rare evening that Phillip and Adela Druskenvald are passengers.

Granted exceptional power in death by Kehlenn's chief minion, the Crooked Man, this malevolent shade carries a curse aboard to corrupt the spirits that the Ghostlight Locomotive uses for fuel. With help from the devouring Shroud, the Phantom Trainhopper turns the ghost train against the Vagrant and strands the Druskenvalds—and coincidentally, the characters—in Wickermoor Hollow.

Once the shade releases Kehlenn's curse, it's just a matter of time before that curse reaches the Tender (area G8), and, ultimately, the locomotive. Unwittingly, the characters likely play an integral part in bringing about The Crooked Queen's goal by unsealing the final door and letting the curse in.



The Phantom Trainhopper



QUEST HOOKS

Before the arrival of the *Ghostlight Express*, you need to guide the characters to climb aboard. They may be picked up together or individually, but if you are running this chapter as a standalone adventure, the characters should board as a group.

While the ghost train may itself provide enough interest for some to board on sight, others may desire some goal or justification to accept the Vagrant's invitation. For a full-length campaign, talk with your players to establish the circumstances that lead their character to embark when the train arrives, even if begrudgingly.

You may choose whichever Quest Hook you feel will most enthrall the players. Here are a few examples:

FATE. The characters have an exclusive invitation to ride the *Ghostlight Express*, a rare and mysterious opportunity, because it is their destiny. Each character, unbeknownst to them, has a ticket in their pocket, and each has their own rationale for boarding the train.

Adela Druskenvald foresaw the characters' arrival through her tarot cards and believes the travelers are here to aid them on their trip, though she cannot see why. The Vagrant may make knowing cryptic remarks but refuses to elaborate. If asked, circular logic abounds. The Vagrant is here to pick up the travelers because they have tickets, and they have tickets because Druskenvald is their destination.

DEATH. The characters have died. They may have died all together, or they might have died at different times in different places. When the events of the adventure kick off, the Vagrant makes the rare decision to instantly reincarnate the characters into their new living bodies, which likely take the form of the reborn species of Druskenvald (see chapter 2). Alternatively, they can be reborn in their previous body or as a different species not native to Druskenvald. Either way, they find themselves standing together on the platform of a ghostly train station awaiting what comes next.

This unique hook can follow an existing campaign in which all the characters died, but the players want to continue with a new version of their existing characters. If the characters in this scenario are higher than level 3, you should adjust the difficulty of this chapter and the future events of the campaign, or alternatively, you and your players should agree that the experience of dying reduces all characters back to levels 1, 2, or 3.

HOMEWARD BOUND. The characters are originally from Druskenvald, but through strange circumstances they spilled out of the Shroud into the mortal realms. All they want is to get back to where they came from, and have finally found a location they believe the *Ghostlight Express* will be arriving so they can go home at last.

ALL ABOARD

> The haunting tune of a lone fiddle pierces through the fog that surrounds you, heralding the arrival of a spectral locomotive. A dark steel train, bathed in an eerie glow, emerges from the gloom on rails made of mist. Its smokestack belches plumes of ghastly blue-green smoke that wail with the faces and voices of the damned. The locomotive rumbles, squeals, and creaks as it slows to a halt, and a passenger car looms directly before you.

Once the ghost train comes to rest in front of the characters, the Vagrant steps through the sliding doors of the Passenger Car (area G1), fiddle in hand. The frogman greets them amiably, introducing himself and the *Ghostlight Express*.

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check feels the unfamiliar ticket in their pocket or on their person. Otherwise, the Vagrant selects the character he feels is most likely to board the train and points out that they already have the ticket to ride. Once a character has found their ticket, read or paraphrase the following:

> A paper railway ticket trembles faintly in your grasp. The words "One Passenger. Valid For Night of Issue Only," gleam in raised silver lettering. The Vagrant extends his hand and gestures to pass him the ticket.
>
> "Best hurry now," he says with a wink, "train won't wait forever."

THE GHOSTLIGHT EXPRESS FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, the train car areas of the *Ghostlight Express* have the following general features:

CEILINGS. All cars have 9-foot-tall ceilings and are encased by steel support beams.

LIGHTING. Flickering brass lamps illuminate each train car, shedding Bright Light throughout.

DOORS. Each car of the train has two interior vestibule doors, one at the front and one at the back, with two exceptions: the Passenger Car (area G1) has an additional boarding door on its right side, and its rear door is an exterior door that leads out the back of the train. Both are sealed with *Arcane Lock* spells the Vagrant can bypass. The Tender (area G8) has no door at its front.

SPECTRAL PASSENGERS. Ghostly forms of passengers appear and fade away randomly throughout the train cars. They are moving on to the afterlife, avoiding the fate of becoming a haint. While they seem to sometimes watch the characters, they don't respond to any attempted interaction.

WINDOWS. The train's windows don't open and have AC 18, HP 30, and a damage threshold of 15. If a window is broken, the Shroud floods the car and affects spirit passengers as described in "The Shroud Beyond" above.

THE SHROUD BEYOND

In the unlikely scenario where the interior of the train is exposed to the Shroud, roll Initiative! For each round the door, window, or breach remains open, the billowing mist of the Shroud devours a spirit passenger and turns them into a hateful **Specter**. These creatures are bloodthirsty and attack the characters until destroyed.

1d4 rounds after the breach occurs, the Vagrant lets out a shrill whistle on Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties). The breached door or window closes or reforms, and no more passengers are corrupted.

HAINTS ON THE HAUNT

While most of the passengers are here to cross over into Druskenvald and be reborn, some are burdened by unresolved grievances from their past lives and are instead tethered to the train until they can let go of their attachment (see "Haints" above).

UNFETTERING A HAINT

The **Wayward Haints** can't leave the train car they are found within. Each of the bound spirits has a story to tell, though they may only remember vague details. To progress the adventure, the characters must free the haints from the train, which can be accomplished with two general methods.

DESTRUCTION. Destroying a haint breaks its bond to the train, though it leaves an echo of pain behind that comes back to haunt the characters later (see area G8).

RESOLUTION. Alternatively, the characters can help the haints resolve their unprocessed emotions toward their unfinished business. A haint's binding is resolved either by helping it reach an understanding of its emotional bindings (see "Helping a Haint" below) or by bringing it the token that completes the missing piece of that understanding, as described in each haint's entry in the *Ghostlight Express* locations. When a haint moves on and is freed from the train, each character regains 1d6 Hit Points, gaining any excess beyond their Hit Point maximum as Temporary Hit Points.

Helping a Haint. Bringing a haint their lost token is the safest way to achieve resolution, but there is a riskier alternative. As an Influence action, a character

can interact with a haint in some way and make an ability check, trying to help it come to terms with its unfinished business. Each haint has a list of suggested "resolution proficiencies" that have the best chance of helping it reach resolution. Ability checks using these skills are against DC 12. Other checks can work at your discretion, but these checks are against DC 15 unless you feel the justification is especially fitting.

Each time a check using a given skill or tool proficiency is successful, the DC of further uses of that proficiency to help the same haint increases by 2. Characters are better served by applying a variety of approaches.

Each successful ability check helps the haint reach a resolution, and after three successes, the haint is freed. However, with each failure, the haint grows more impatient and agitated. After three failures, it loses itself to rage and despair, becomes Hostile, and attacks the characters. At that point, they have no choice but to destroy it.

SWITCHEROO!

The first time the characters pass through the interior vestibule door at the front of a car, it leads to a random train car they have not yet visited. When this happens, characters who pass through the vestibule doors vanish through a portal of swirling mist and wait in limbo. Once all characters have followed, the door closes behind them and they arrive at a random car, as determined by rolling on the Random Car table.

Once a car has been entered, it is locked into place, and the rest of the train behind it remains consistent until the train crashes (see "Off the Spectral Rails" later in the chapter). Additionally, vestibule doors already passed through can be traveled through as normal, with no need to gather in the swirling mist.

To determine the next car that the characters enter, roll on the Random Car table. Once a car is visited, reroll if its number is rolled when the characters visit subsequent cars.

Random Car

1d6	Destination
1	Sleeper Car
2	Lounge Car
3	Dining Car
4	Mail Car
5	Baggage Car
6	Circus Car

The Random Car table doesn't include the Passenger Car (area G1), which is always at the back, and the Tender (area G8), which is always at the front and can only be accessed once all six of the **Wayward Haints** have been saved or destroyed.

Level Up. The characters reach level 2, if they are still at level 1, after they save or destroy three wayward haints.

GHOSTLIGHT EXPRESS LOCATIONS

The following areas are keyed to map 10.1 through 10.8. When the characters first board the train, they arrive in the Passenger Car (area G1).

G1: PASSENGER CAR

The car is filled with rows of forward-facing cracked leather seats. Velvet curtains, once rich in color, hang faded. The *Ghostlight Express* lurches forward with two short blasts from the train's whistle, followed by a screech of wheels that sounds like the shrill note of a violin, then the percussed chugging of the locomotive. Moments later, the view out the windows on either side of the car obscures. Shifting green smoke swims past the glass, completely veiling the realm beyond.

Ghostly passengers ride peacefully seated on the tattered remains of once-lavish upholstery. They simply look forward or out the window with empty eyes, ready to meet whatever comes next. None seem to have any baggage.

The car holds 14 rows of passenger seats, with 2 seats per side, and 4 private booths at each end of the car.

When the Vagrant first admits them, he welcomes the characters aboard, hoping they enjoy their ride through the Shroud into Druskenvald. He is happy to spare a moment to answer any questions the characters may have (see "The Vagrant" section earlier in this chapter) and offers the following:

- He warns the characters of the presence of haints within some of the train cars, admitting that—while he wishes he could do more to help them on their way—he doesn't mind their presence.
- He tells the characters not to open exterior doors or windows, which keep out dangerous spiritual mist.
- He suggests they might enjoy the company of two more lively travelers on board: Phillip and Adela Druskenvald.

He then excuses himself to his cab in the Ghostlight Locomotive, which is attached to the Tender (area G8). This is a special cab for the engineer of the train that only the Vagrant can access by turning into ghostly mist and traveling through the pipes that run throughout the train.

Passenger Spirits. The rows seem empty at first, but flickering in and out of sight are spectral humanoid shapes—passenger souls on their way to Druskenvald to be reborn. As a Search action, a character who closely examines the spirits and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that one is distinctively shadowy, and their head has a strange tilt to the side. This is the Phantom Trainhopper.

Treasure. Characters who examine the Passenger Car make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check for every 1 minute they search, finding a small jar of 12 glass marbles tucked under a seat on a success. The jar can be used to trap a haint (see the Bottle Trap trait in the **Wayward Haint** stat block). Trapped haints in bottles count as Soul Cans (see "When It's Time" later in the chapter).

The Phantom Strikes. The characters are free to discuss their strange new journey aboard a ghost train. If any character tries to leave the Passenger Car or attempts to closely inspect or attack the Phantom Trainhopper, or if the conversation dies down, read or paraphrase the following:

> One passenger among the blankly staring spirits stirs. It darkens to an inky shadow as it darts into the aisle, its humanoid silhouette tall and gaunt with a head tilted to one side at an unnatural angle.
>
> Crooked tendrils shoot out from it like gnarled tree branches and shatter the windows of the car. Ghastly mist spills in around you. One of the passenger spirits lets out a pained wail, then takes on a malevolent form with a huge maw of blocky teeth, a single eye in its head, and two smaller eyes in the palms of spindly hands.
>
> A shrill train whistle reverberates around you as the windows suddenly repair themselves. The voice of the Vagrant emanates from the ceiling, muffled and crackling. "Could y'all take care of that? This ain't happened before, and I'm a fiddler, not a fighter!"

The hapless passenger is corrupted by the Shroud into a Hostile **Specter** that attacks the characters until destroyed. The Phantom Trainhopper (**Shadow**) joins the battle, content knowing that even if destroyed, its work is done and the Crooked Queen's design is already set in motion.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER: THE PHANTOM STRIKES

You can increase the challenge of this encounter if the characters are higher than level 1; additional passengers are corrupted and transformed by the Shroud intruding into the train car.

Add one extra **Specter** to the battle if the characters are level 2, and two extra specters if they are level 3.

When the Undead are destroyed, The Vagrant's voice echoes through the car and informs them of the gravity of what's just happened.

What the Vagrant Knows. The Vagrant understands the danger that the characters are in but plays it cool so as not to alarm them. He simply and calmly explains the situation and asks for their assistance. Despite his voice coming from the train car itself, he converses with characters from his cab in the locomotive. Use the information below to guide the conversation with the Vagrant:

- The shadowy stowaway they just fought let the misty Shroud into the train, which corrupts spirits.
- There are six haints aboard who are more prone to corruption, which is dangerous, as they are the base source of the ghost train's fuel.
- The haints must be released from the train before they can be corrupted, either by resolving the unfinished business from life that fetters them or by destroying them if necessary (see "Unfettering a Haint" above).
- Once the haints are released one way or the other, the characters should check the Tender (area G8) for any corruption, as it contains the train's fuel stores.
- The Vagrant must stay in his cab to keep any lingering Shroud mist from the locomotive.
- The Vagrant asks the characters not to alarm Phillip and Adela Druskenvald if they run into them. "Ain't no call to rile up the Lord and Lady over a scuffle."

With one final crackle, the Vagrant's voice fades from the Passenger Car, and the characters can't interact with him again until later (see "Off the Spectral Rails" later in the chapter). The characters can begin their journey through the *Ghostlight Express*.



10.1 Passenger Car

Lingering Curse. After the battle, characters who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notice wisps of ghastly blue-green mist shot through with black root-like veins lingering in the air—remnants of the clouds that billowed in. The mist slowly snakes forward and slinks under the forward vestibule door. It can't be dispersed or affected in any way, and they lose sight of it once it slips away. This is the lingering curse of the Phantom Trainhopper that aims to reach the Tender (see area G8) to corrupt the fuel of the Ghostlight Locomotive.

G2: SLEEPER CAR

This car is eerily quiet, save for a soft creaking each time the train gently rocks. A long corridor stretches down the car's length. Three sliding doors along the way suggest luxurious private cabins for the train's first-class passengers.

The Sleeper Car contains a long, narrow hallway that grants access to three sleeping cabins. Phillip and Adela have private quarters here.

Private Cabins. Each cabin features neatly made full beds beside polished mahogany furnishings, set against plush velvet curtains veiling the Shroud beyond the window.

CABIN ONE. The cabin closest to the rear of the train car is where Phillip and Adela have been sleeping, and six sets of assorted clothing and sleepwear (Fine Clothes) can be found within.

CABIN TWO. The only thing of note in this cabin is a brass and wooden phonograph that sits on an end table. When it is turned on, slow romantic jazz music plays through. This phonograph can be used to free the Songstress haint in the Lounge Car (area G3).

CABIN THREE. Faint weeping emanates within 15 feet of the sliding door to this cabin.

The Sweetheart. Within the third cabin is a **Wayward Haint** of a weeping young woman, looking wistful as she longingly stares at a locket of a handsome mustachioed man with the initials J.B. underneath the portrait. She only knows herself as his sweetheart.



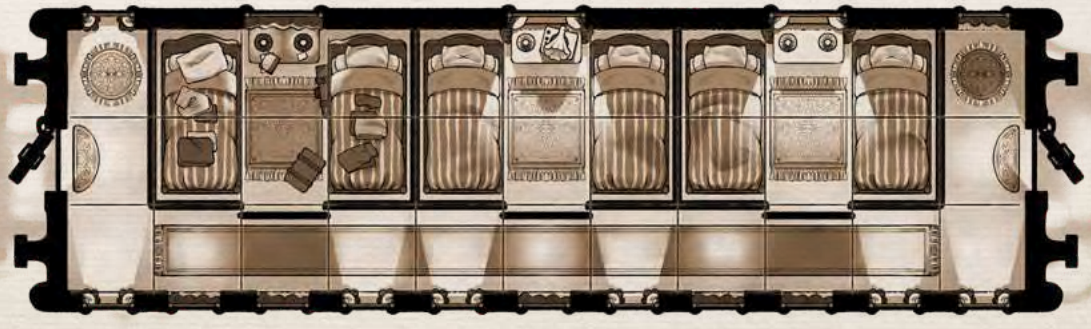
The Sweetheart

She is lovesick and lonely, only barely registering the characters and bemoaning having to travel to the afterlife alone. She isn't complete without her dear love, and she doesn't want to spend an eternity without him.

Giving her the love letter from Jakob Braun found in the Mail Car (area G5) makes her realize that her love is already on the other side and is waiting for her in the afterlife. She weeps with joy, hugging the tear-stained letter and her locket as she is freed and fades from view.

Alternative resolution proficiencies are:

- **Calligrapher's Supplies or Performance:** Help her compose a poem or song about her love so she has something to soothe her longing for him.
- **History or Persuasion:** Commiserate with her with personal tales of lost and regained love or recite legends or tales of the same.
- **Investigation or Religion:** Steer her to remember details of her love's qualities in a real and practical way, suggesting they will be reunited when she reaches her destination.



10.2 Sleeper Car

G3: LOUNGE CAR

> This lounge is one of understated luxury. Ebony walls are inlaid with gold geometric patterns. Plush, burgundy velvet chairs are arranged for quiet conversation. Soft light filters through frosted sconces, casting a gentle glow on the various haunting landscape paintings that hang on the walls.

The Lounge Car serves as a communal sitting room for passengers to socialize outside the Passenger Car or Dining Car and is where the characters meet Phillip and Adela.

Phillip and Adela Druskenvald. The lord and lady of the land of Druskenvald (both Lawful Neutral, human **Nobles**) are on their way home from business elsewhere. They are pleasantly surprised to find other lively passengers and are eager to make friends with and learn more about the characters. When the characters first encounter them, read or paraphrase the following:

> A tall, thin man leans against the bar, a whiskey glass in hand. His dark, slicked-back hair gleams with precision, framing his face with sharp lines, and is accentuated by a pencil-thin mustache. He wears a tailored striped suit and grips an ornate cane topped with a silver goat skull.
>
> Sitting beside him is a shorter woman with curly brown hair who is wearing a shimmering flapper dress. Champagne flute in hand, she laughs lightly.

Phillip and Adela make their introductions and chat with the characters, excited to mingle with other living beings.

Adela is gregarious and does most of the talking. She is welcoming to the group and eager to trade stories and talents. The love between Phillip and Adela is evident from the start, as they frequently turn to one another to share observations, mostly positive, about the characters' comments and questions.

When asked where they're headed, they tell the characters about their fabulous manor home called Chateau Clair de Lune (see chapter 1). It's clear that they prefer more "civilized" living and tend to visit cities and other more metropolitan areas.

Phillip is slightly less sociable than Adela, but this says very little, and he is quite pleasant with the characters. He'll offer to get characters any beverage they enjoy and is initially forthcoming with details about himself. If he senses that the characters are prying, rude, or deceptive, he buttons up and stops sharing.

If the characters mention the Phantom Trainhopper, Phillip and Adela are unconcerned and have full trust in the Vagrant to handle any complications that may have arisen.

Tarot Reading. Adela Druskenvald is a clairvoyant with a passion for the occult. She sees the chance meeting as an opportunity to help her new friends see their future with a tarot reading. She is eager to show off her talents with any willing soul. It is challenging to dissuade her, even if it means only doing a single reading. Adela's preferred reading consists of pulling a single card from the Major Arcana for each character.

To perform a full reading that determines the powerful artifacts and boons to be discovered in *The Crooked Moon* adventure, see "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9. Otherwise, roll on the Tarot Reading table below for each character who Adela performs a reading for to determine which card is pulled for them (each in the upright position), rerolling any number already rolled. Every character who participates gains the benefit of the *Bless* spell for 1 hour.

Paintings. Many paintings hang on the walls, depicting various landscape scenes, from foggy valleys to tropical mountains. As a Search action, a character who examines the paintings and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a painting of a rocky coastline with a roiling sea stretching to the horizon at sunset. The painting is vividly lifelike, to the point that the waves seem to roll when one isn't looking directly at the work. This painting is easily removed from the wall and can be used to free the Mariner haint in the Mail Car (area G5).

Treasure. Characters who examine the Lounge Car make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check for every 1 minute they search, finding an empty whiskey bottle behind the bar on a success. The bottle can be used to trap a haint (see the Bottle Trap trait in the **Wayward Haint** stat block). The first character who succeeds on the check by 5 or more finds the bottle of *Haint Hooch* behind the bar.



10.3 Lounge Car



TAROT READING

1d12	Card	Description
1	**The Fool**	New beginnings, freedom, and the start of an adventure
2	**The Magician**	Pure willpower, the strength of desire, and resourcefulness
3	**The Lovers**	Harmonious love, balance, and perfection in relationships
4	**The Chariot**	The achievement of goals, victory through control, and success
5	**The Wheel of Fortune**	Endless cycles, the inevitability of change, and luck
6	**The Hanged Man**	The necessity of sacrifice, the spiritual path, and indecision
7	**Death**	Endings of life stages, transitions, and letting go of the past
8	**The Devil**	Emptiness, lack of fulfillment, and the trap of materialism
9	**The Tower**	Radical upheaval, rejecting once-held truths, and chaos
10	**The Moon**	Clarity in intuition, uncertain paths forward, and secrets
11	**Judgment**	Reflecting on the self, imminent awakening, and purpose
12	**The World**	Unity of outer and inner, wholeness, and sense of belonging

The Songstress. Sitting in one of the velvet chairs is a **Wayward Haint** of a beautiful woman in a long, silky dress, smoking a cigarette while glumly looking out the window. Her whole being seems hollow. She only knows herself as a songstress who wished to be a famous singer in life.

When encountered, she feels empty, having never been able to find the perfect song that inspired her to give the performance of a lifetime for an audience that truly appreciated her talent. Her tastes are jazzy and romantic, and she wishes she could give one last soulful performance.

Bringing her the phonograph found in the Sleeper Car (area G2) and turning it on inspires her to sing the perfect final song. She stands at the center of the lounge and croons a love song that spurs Phillip and Adela to embrace and slowly dance to the performance. When the song concludes, she is freed, closing her eyes contentedly and fading away in peace. The lyrics are as follows:

Impossible to think at all, without the thought of you and me.
It all would fall, nothing left to hold the stars and seas apart.
Ridiculous, there ever was a world without a 'you and me.'
To not recall a 'you' at all would send it all crashing down.
Floating over the storm, love as soft as a cloud.
Incredible that through it all, the dashed and broken stardust fell,
And settled into 'you and me,' and all the time we need.

Alternatively, below are suggested resolution proficiencies:

- **Musical Instrument or Performance:** Join the Songstress in a duet for an emotional swan song.
- **Arcana or Insight:** Consider cosmic or philosophical topics that speak to inspiration and creativity.
- **History or Investigation:** Explore examples of artistic work that help inspire the Songstress.



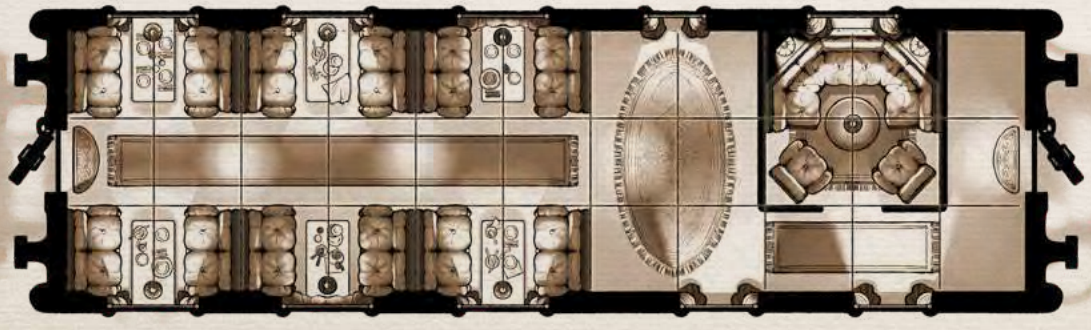
The Songstress

G4: DINING CAR

This dining car is decorated with an eerie elegance, with plush velvet booths, ornate brass fixtures, and wax candles casting a dim, mystical glow. The air carries the scent of gourmet food, though the booths are mostly empty, haunted only by the faint traces of deceased diners.

The Dining Car has six small, square booths that each seat four people along each side of the dining car, as well as a larger half-booth and chairs that seats eight people toward the end of the car. While mostly empty, occasionally the spirits of souls riding the train appear sitting in front of empty plates, gazing out the windows into the mists. The large booth is always empty.

Phantasmal Food. If a creature sits in a booth and says the name of a food or drink item, it instantly appears in front of them, fresh and ready to eat or drink. Every order is perfectly delicious. A character who asks for steak and eggs can take the plate of food with them and use it to help free the Jailbird haint in the Baggage Car (area G6).



10.4 Dining Car



The Daydreamer

The Daydreamer. Sitting in a booth in one of the corners of the Dining Car is a **Wayward Haint** of a youthful boy in overalls, hungrily eating all manner of food that he repeatedly conjures forth, from long links of sausages to whole turkeys. All the while, his face is wracked with guilt as he tries to eat the feeling away.

When encountered, he is a silly daydreamer, oftentimes speaking childlike nonsense and not responding to questions with direct answers. The one thing he does share openly is the immense guilt that he feels for stealing a stone painted to look like a toad from his neighbor's garden before passing on. Because he lost the rock on the train, he will never be able to return it to her.

Bringing him the stone, which can be found in the Circus Car (area G7), fills him with determination to right the wrong he committed. Now onto his next mission, he holds up the rock and announces he's ready to face the "stone-cold truth," then disappears.

Alternatively, below are suggested resolution proficiencies:

- **Painter's Supplies or Forgery Kit:** Give pointers and techniques to make a replacement bauble.
- **Insight or Persuasion:** Coax out happy memories of the neighbor and suggest that she won't even remember the stone while reminiscing.
- **History or Investigation:** Speak about the capriciousness of youth and how forgivable simple transgressions are.

G5: MAIL CAR

The car is filled with two rows of shelves containing heavy mail satchels and bins filled to the brim with parcels and envelopes.

The Mail Car holds mail manifested from the thoughts of loved ones on either side of life and death.

Letters Through the Veil. The mail on the right side of the car contains the thoughts, prayers, poems, and other remembrances of the dead by their living loved ones in hopes they might somehow be able to receive them. The mail on the left side of the car contains attempted communications from departed souls to their loved ones still living.

Most of the envelopes here are a weathered yellow color. As a Search action, a character who scans the mail and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a bright pink envelope among the letters from the dead addressed to "My Sweetheart" from Jakob Braun. This love letter can be used to free the Sweetheart haint in the Sleeper Car (area G2).

The Mariner. Shuffling through the car is a **Wayward Haint** of an old man in a sailor's coat with a clay pipe. Grumbling, he purposelessly heaves sacks of mail from one end of the car to the other as if he was loading cargo on a ship. There is a distant regretful look in his eyes as he goes about his labor.

When encountered, he only cares to talk about the sea and his long career as a sailor, captain, and lighthouse keeper, bemoaning that he died inland. He regularly mentions that he wishes he could see the sea one last time with glum wistfulness.



10.5 Mail Car



The Mariner

Bringing the Mariner the landscape painting of the coastline, which can be found in the Lounge Car (area G3), fills him with a sense of awe and reverence. He sheds a tear and remarks on the beauty of the sea before breathing an unfettered sigh and fading away.

Alternatively, below are suggested resolution proficiencies:

- **Navigator's Tools or Survival:** Reminisce with the Mariner about times navigating dangerous waters.
- **Performance or Musical Instrument:** Sing or play a lively shanty to lift his spirits.
- **Deception or Medicine:** Opine about all the worst parts of sailing, including scurvy, drowning, and other miserable conditions, to help him let go.

G6: BAGGAGE CAR

The baggage car's musty scent lingers in the air, a strange contrast to its faded elegance. Polished wood paneling and brass fixtures, worn and tarnished by time, line the walls. Heaps of dusty old canvas bags and wooden chests clutter the space, but among them stands a fresh cluster of fine leather travel trunks embossed with the letter "D."

Packed with trunks, bags, and personal belongings, the Baggage Car is a compartment on the train designated for storing passengers' luggage and personal items, ensuring that the main passenger areas remain uncluttered. Most of the luggage here is abandoned, either by the once living who died while on the train or those who escaped the train in fear. Despite being covered in dust, they are all still generally intact.

The Druskenvalds' Luggage. The newest leather luggage here belongs to Phillip and Adela Druskenvald. A steamer trunk is filled with Adela's wardrobe and a few pieces of art. Smaller gilded trunks contain Phillip's collection of suits, magic items, and other personal effects (see "Conclusion: The Last Stop" later in this chapter). These cases are protected with *Arcane Lock*. Phillip instinctively knows where his cases are at all times and comes to investigate if they are tampered with or moved.

Sleeping Tiger. A **Wildpyre** in the form of a tiger made of ghostly green flame slumbers behind a stack of baggage, filling the car with grumbling, bestial snoring. The ghostly tiger's tail is adorned with a hot iron ring that can be used to free the Harlequin haint in the Circus Car (area G7). As a Utilize action, a character can slip the ring free with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a failed check, the wildpyre stirs and lashes out. The character takes 7 (2d6) Fire damage. Dealing damage to the wildpyre wakes it, and it attacks until the characters leave the car, or until the creature that damaged the tiger is reduced to 0 Hit Points, whereupon it returns to its makeshift den and goes back to sleep.

Upon removing the ring, or if the wildpyre is reduced to 0 Hit Points, the wildpyre vanishes in a swirl of embers that pour into the ring. The inhabited ring remains uncomfortably hot to the touch.



10.6 Baggage Car

The Jailbird. Slumped up against a tattered suitcase is a **Wayward Haint** of a grizzled man in striped clothing with a ball and chain around his left ankle. His stomach grumbles with a loud, rumbling gurgle as he lets out weary groans, his face scrunched with hunger pangs.

When encountered, he is distracted by his hunger and dreamily lists off food that would be so delicious to eat. When pressed, he says that he was executed before getting the last meal of steak and eggs he was promised, and it's all he's been able to think about since.

Bringing him a plate of steak and eggs that can be conjured in the Dining Cart (area G4) perks him up, and he immediately devours the food. Contented, he wipes his mouth and pats his belly with a gratified sigh as he vanishes.

Alternatively, below are suggested resolution proficiencies:

- **Cook's Utensils or History:** Wax poetic about many varied and wonderful dishes to help him realize how much wonderful food he experienced.
- **Deception or Survival:** Spin a yarn about the blandness of some foods to dampen the disappointment.
- **Investigation or Persuasion:** Redirect the Jailbird to other happy memories that help him see what more there was in life.

Treasure. Much of the luggage is dusty, water damaged, rotten, or moth-eaten. As a Search action, a character who rifles through the baggage and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check finds one of the following (each can be found only once):

- 75 SP
- A delicate silver ring set with a ruby, worth 20 GP
- 10 sets of varying Traveler's Clothes
- A pair of *Goggles of Night*

A character who spends 10 minutes searching finds all the treasure with no ability checks required.



The Jailbird

G7: CIRCUS CAR

The scent of decayed hay, musty water, and old blood fills the air of what looks like a circus car. Rusting cages line the walls amidst the wooden crates painted in garish red and white stripes. The décor inside is a macabre spectacle of twisted whimsy, with faded, tattered banners advertising various carnivals. Each one depicts unsettling clowns and terrifying animals, creating an atmosphere of horrific revelry that leaves an uneasy chill in your bones.

The Circus Car is loaded with cargo that seems to have once belonged to a traveling carnival.

Cages. The cages here are empty, each secured with a Lock, for which a ring of keys hangs on a hook on the wall.

Marionettes. A collection of creepy marionettes is stuffed into an open chest in the corner of the car. As a Study action, a character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds that the head of one of the marionettes is a rock painted with a toad's face. It can easily be pulled off the puppet and can be used to free the Daydreamer haint in the Dining Car (area G4).



10.7 Circus Car



The Harlequin

The Harlequin. Hanging upside down from a dangling trapeze bar fastened to the ceiling is a **Wayward Haint** of a woman dressed as a jester with a harlequin cap covered in jingling bells. Her face is wracked with shame as she dramatically tugs on her hat and performs acrobatic but painful-looking tumbles and pratfalls.

When encountered, she mostly bemoans her own foolishness and wishes she hadn't made such a terrible mistake that hurt so many people. When pressed, she explains that she accidentally opened the cage of a vicious tiger that went on a rampage and killed dozens throughout the carnival, including herself. She wishes she could be certain it could never harm anyone again.

Giving her the iron ring that had been around the tail of the wildpyre found in the Baggage Car (area G6) fills her with immeasurable relief. The shame leaves her face, and she leaps across the room to do a cartwheel as she is freed and fades away.

Alternatively, below are suggested resolution proficiencies:

- **Animal Handling or Survival:** Muse on the essence of the wild animal's danger and the insufficient security measures used to contain it.
- **Deception or Nature:** Suggest the tiger must have lived its life and died of natural causes by now, so no harm can come from it ever again.
- **Investigation or Persuasion:** Help her come to terms with the accident and recognize other factors out of her control.

G8: TENDER

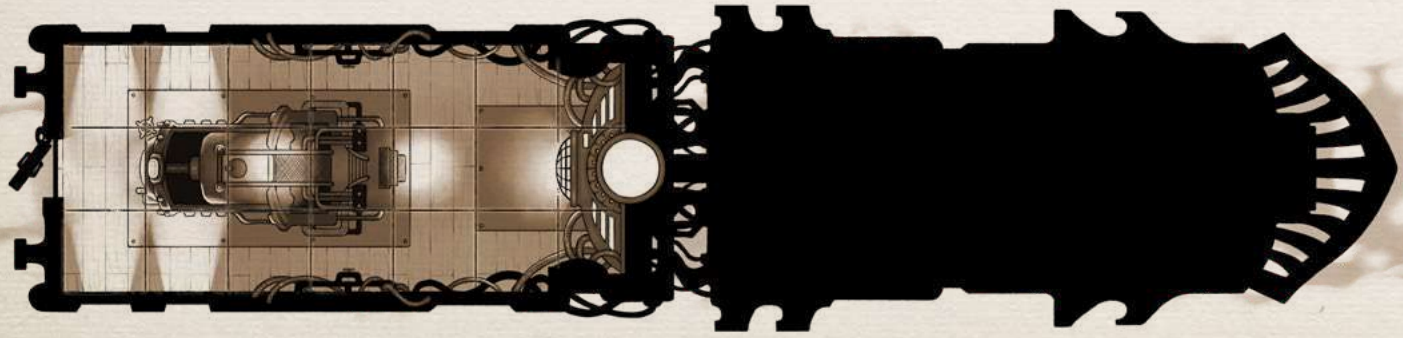
The door into the Tender is magically sealed and can't be opened until all six **Wayward Haints** aboard the train are either freed, destroyed, or trapped in a Soul Can. Incorporeal or ethereal creatures can't pass through the Tender's structure while the door is sealed. When there are no more haints aboard the *Ghostlight Express*, the door unseals and is unlocked.

> This car is an ironclad carriage bathed in hot, wavering light. A large, blackened fuel tank stands at its center, with a small, reinforced glass window revealing a sickly blue-green glow within. The air vibrates with unnatural energy, and from deep within the tank, faint whispers rise—haunting, disembodied voices. Iron pipes twist overhead, snaking their way from the tank to a ghastly furnace at the far end of the car.

The custom-built Tender stretches 30 feet, collecting and hauling the essential fuel for the ghost train. It also contains the firebox that powers the locomotive.

Fuel Tank. The tank is made of cast iron, secured with brass fittings, and features a reinforced glass window. There are dozens of soul coals floating inside the tank, drifting about. Characters who examine the tank's contents recall the Vagrant's explanation that that the soul coal is the final fate of the train's haints that are unable to move on.

The souls are slowly fed to the firebox by pipes that run along the walls and ceiling. The ghostly fuel is burned up within the firebox, providing the spectral power needed to run the locomotive. The haints aboard are unaware of this fact, and informing them turns them Hostile as if they had three failures on attempts to resolve the haints' unfinished business. When a haint degrades enough to be turned into fuel, it is pulled



10.8 Tender

from its train car and sucked into the storage tank as a soul coal.

Firebox. An iron furnace sits at the far end of the car. It is heated by a **Soulfire Stoker**. The heavy iron door to the furnace can't be opened without a special key possessed only by the Vagrant.

Creeping Curse. The curse unleashed by the Phantom Trainhopper creeps into the tender now that the characters have opened the door. After the characters have a chance to poke around the car, read or paraphrase the following:

> Branch-like tendrils of shadow whip out from the twisting pipes running along the ceiling, shattering the circular window on the storage tank and pouring into the iron capsule!
>
> The glowing soul coals darken to a ghastly near-black green before violently shooting through the pipes into the firebox as the fuel storage tank completely empties. The flame within the firebox rages with the same corruption, and the Ghostlight Locomotive groans mechanically just beyond the tender. Then, the heavy iron door to the firebox bends and flies off its hinges.

Blazing Battle. The soulfire stoker emerges from the inferno within the firebox, corrupted by the Phantom Trainhopper's curse, and attacks as the Ghostlight Locomotive lets out concerning strained bellows that echo through the entire train. The stoker has 30 HP and only makes one Sear attack when using its Multiattack action. It follows the characters relentlessly, even if they lead it back into a different car to avoid the now deadly conditions in the Tender.

> SCALING THE ENCOUNTER: BLAZING BATTLE
>
> You can increase the challenge of this encounter if the characters are higher than level 2; the Phantom Trainhopper reconstitutes back from the creeping corruption and strikes once more! Add one **Shadow** to the battle.

Corrupted Fuel. The raging ghastly flame within the corrupted firebox is made more oppressive for each haint that was destroyed instead of saved. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), characters without Resistance or Immunity to Fire damage must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. The DC is 5 plus 2 for each haint that was destroyed on the train.

Crash! When the corrupted soulfire stoker is destroyed, the *Ghostlight Express* exits the Shroud unexpectedly and crashes in Wickermoor Hollow.

OFF THE SPECTRAL RAILS

When the *Ghostlight Express* reaches Wickermoor Hollow, it crashes into a forest. As a spectral locomotive able to safely pass through planes of existence and the Shroud, this is a highly unusual happening.

When the train crashes, read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly, the train shakes with turbulence, and an earsplitting blare rings out. An instant later, there is a vicious jolt as the train comes to an abrupt and violent stop. The sound of splintered wood and groaning steel fills the cab as the far wall rips free, and you are ejected from the tender into the dark of night. The *Ghostlight Express* has crashed!

Upon collision, every living creature aboard the train must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) Bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. The Druskenvalds and the Vagrant succeed automatically.

When the characters look up at the night sky and finally witness the Crooked Moon, read or paraphrase the following:

> The crescent moon that hangs above you is gargantuan, shedding a sickly milk light upon the surrounding forest. But aside from the size, it's the shape that fills you with unease. The haggard visage of a crone leers down at you with mad eyes past a long, bent nose and an ever-present grin filled with crooked teeth. The Crooked Moon is watching.

Level Up. The characters reach level 3, if they are still at level 2, when they crash into the wilds of Wickermoor Hollow.

THE END OF THE LINE

The characters find themselves in the middle of a forest. The woods are a dark and gloomy environment, with the following features:

WOODS. Old and gnarled oak trees rise from the forest floor, standing 60 to 80 feet from the ground.

LIGHTING. In the clear sky above, shining down through the canopy, an unmoving crescent moon glares down with a wicked grin, a shock for characters first visiting Druskenvald. The Crooked Moon (see "Night of the Crooked Moon" in chapter 1) sheds Dim Light throughout the area.

THE WRECKAGE

The wreckage is immediately apparent, and the train cars are in disarray, scattered like dropped playing cards all throughout the trees. Deep parallel grooves can be plainly seen cutting through the soft earth, suggesting the turbulent path through the trees taken by the Ghostlight Locomotive.

The engine itself finally came to rest at the edge of a small clearing within the forest. Upon approach, it becomes obvious that after the crash, twisted roots have perplexingly snaked and snarled their way through its train wheels, locking them into place.

BACK ON TRACK

The calm, genial demeanor of the Vagrant has been replaced with rising panic. Though he is clearly doing his best to keep his wits about him on behalf of those he is charged to guide safely, this is clearly not a situation the Vagrant has had to deal with often. He knows that only a powerful malevolent force could interfere with the Ghostlight Locomotive's transit.

When everyone is outside and the Vagrant has had a moment to survey the damage, he beseeches the characters for their assistance. He does not engage Phillip immediately out of respect. The Vagrant explains his three goals:

- If the locomotive can be freed from the roots that are entangling its wheels, it would be able to reassemble the full *Ghostlight Express*, train cars and all.
- The furnace is no longer burning. To revive the train, it needs fuel, and only the souls of the dead will suffice.
- Find any trace of the Phantom Trainhopper's sabotage, which has gone farther than originally anticipated.

Soul Cans. The Vagrant carries three Soul Cans that had scattered nearby. These had been stored in his engineer's cab in case of emergencies, each one containing a single soul. However, three more Soul Cans are missing and flew much farther. He surmises he will need all six to get the Ghostlight Locomotive up and running again and asks the characters to help find them while he tinkers on the control panel. If the characters have any bottles that contain a haint (see "Haints" above), they can be used as Soul Cans.

> #### WHAT IF THE CHARACTERS REFUSE TO HELP OR LEAVE?
>
> If the characters refuse to even attempt to find the spectral fuel, Phillip and Adela will seek them out instead. If the characters decide to abandon the train, Phillip, Adela, and the Vagrant opt to stay behind. The characters will then be confronted by the freed Ghostlight Locomotive after 15 minutes of overland travel, forcing them to confront the monstrous Construct. Should they survive, the Vagrant and the Druskenvalds soon find them, confused and displeased.

A CHANCE FOR VALOR!

Phillip and Adela were unscathed by the crash and join the characters. Once Phillip understands the nature of the problem, he springs into action. Raising his elegant cane, he first attempts to magically free the Ghostlight Locomotive from the ensnaring roots. He fails, exclaiming "Maybe that little tumble temporarily knocked out my lordly powers! No worries, I'll roll up my sleeves and help however I can!" A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that he is telling the truth. All attempts by Phillip, the Vagrant, or the characters to unloose the train from these roots also fail.



WHEN IT'S TIME

If the characters search for the Soul Cans, they will not have much difficulty finding them; the containers were not tossed very far, and their ethereal glow makes them easy to spot in the shadowy woodland. Characters who search the nearby area make a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check for every 10 minutes of exploration, finding an ejected Soul Can on a success. No matter what the characters do, they find no trace of the Phantom Trainhopper. This brief calm before the storm is an ideal opportunity for the characters to take a Short Rest.

THE GHOSTLIGHT WRECKAGE

If the characters spend time searching for fuel, when they return, they find the Vagrant inspecting the dulled firebox and preparing to get it roaring ablaze once more. The locomotive's wheels are motionless, and its ghostly lamps flicker with a dim blue-green glow. Huge, gnarled roots are still taut around its black metal frame.

LIGHTING. The clearing is illuminated by the waning Crooked Moon in the sky, which somehow seems closer and now sheds Bright Light.

TERRAIN. The ground is soft and mossy. Oak trees and boulders surround the wide clearing, providing cover if the characters hide there.

Once the collected Soul Cans are given to the Vagrant, he attempts to feed the firebox with the souls it needs to get the locomotive running again. However, a complication arises. Once the Vagrant empties three Soul Cans into the firebox, the Ghostlight Locomotive suddenly roars with ghastly power and breaks free, sending the remaining three Soul Cans flying. Roll Initiative! Use map 10.9 for this combat.

PHASE 1: THUNDERING CALL

When the roots finally snap and the corrupted Ghostlight Locomotive rolls free, read or paraphrase the following:

> A thunderous roar shatters the stillness, and the ground trembles as the Ghostlight Locomotive tears through the foliage. You notice too late the final branch-like tendrils of the Phantom Trainhopper's lingering remnants slithering into the ghastly smokestack of the enormous engine.
>
> With a cacophonous groaning and creaking, the locomotive changes before your eyes, sprouting a malevolent face with burning ghastly eyes filled with wickedness. Now a truly monstrous and haunted construct, it spins around and thunders toward you.

The Ghostlight Locomotive takes on a cursed form and attacks!

Run for Cover! Phillip, Adela, and the Vagrant immediately run for the tree line once they see the Ghostlight Locomotive attack and don't participate in the fight.

Soul Cans. Three glowing cannisters filled with soul coal scatter across the glen to the spaces marked by an X on map 10.9. When the locomotive starts its turn within 10 feet of a Soul Can, it consumes the soul coal in that can, which causes it to regain 20 Hit Points and grants it Advantage on attack rolls until the start of its next turn.

Characters can attempt to stop this by destroying the Soul Cans, which are Tiny objects with AC 11, HP 1, and Immunity to Lightning, Poison, and Psychic damage. Doing so prevents the locomotive from consuming the fuel.

For each Soul Can destroyed or consumed, the corruption of the Ghostlight Locomotive reconstitutes the released soul coal into a weakened **Wayward Haint**. These haint echoes have half their normal Hit Point maximum and join the locomotive in attacking the characters. When a haint echo is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it vanishes with a shriek. All remaining echoes similarly vanish when the Ghostlight Locomotive is reduced to 0 Hit Points.

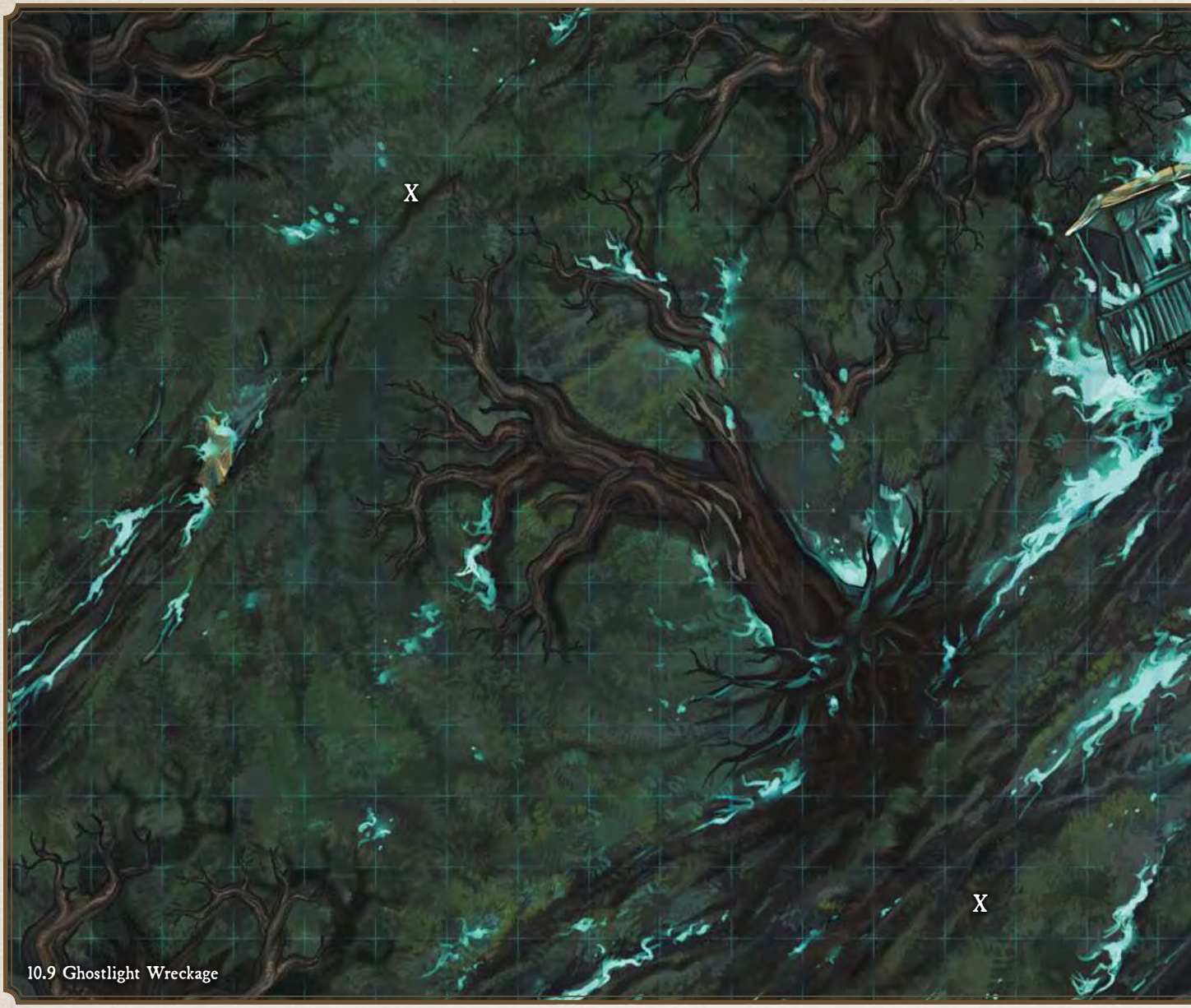
PHASE 2: PHANTOM IN THE MACHINE

Once the Ghostlight Locomotive is Bloodied, the crooked corruption takes a stronger hold of the locomotive, and its Crooked Switch trait activates. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The Ghostlight Locomotive grumbles and shudders with a burst of otherworldly light. Its face becomes a nightmare exaggeration with a crooked iron grin, and huge black plumes of billowing souls erupt from its smokestack, each one twisted into writhing shadows that look like gnarled branches.

Once defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Ghostlight Locomotive's malicious face disappears and its true form returns, belching out the crooked corruption in an acrid black cloud. What remains of the Phantom Trainhopper writhes and rages against its final destruction, but it is quickly annihilated by the billowing fog of the Shroud before the mist dissipates from Wickermoor Hollow.



10.9 Ghostlight Wreckage

CONCLUSION: THE LAST STOP

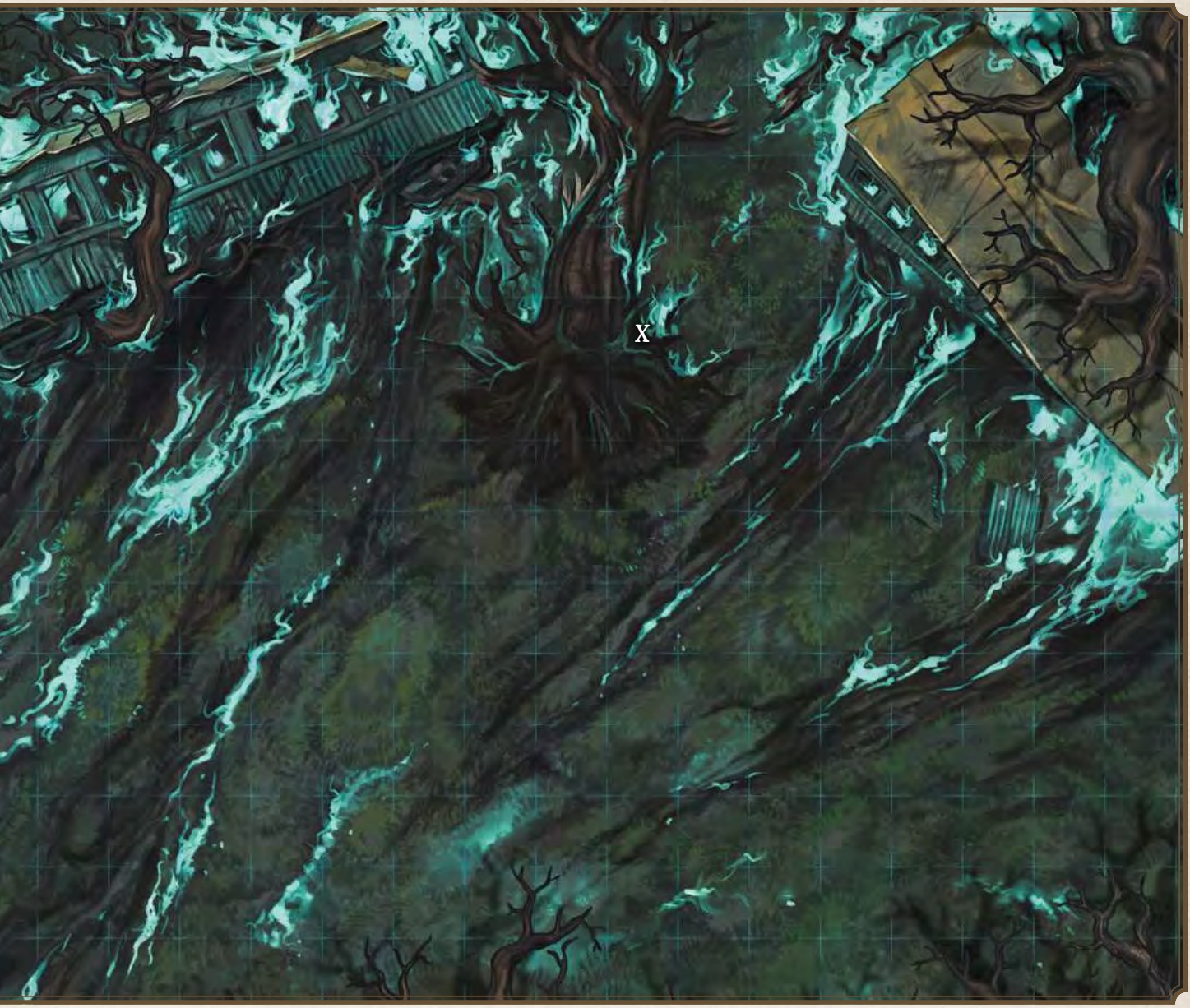
Once a few minutes pass after the Ghostlight Locomotive returns to its normal form, Phillip, Adela, and the Vagrant emerge from the tree line with fascinated and thankful expressions.

Then, a miraculous thing happens: After the heavy damage incurred from the battle, the iron exterior of the locomotive lifts off the ground. The destruction begins to repair and right itself, and the scattered cars fly forward to recouple behind the locomotive once again. The reconstituted wheels begin to turn, and the straightened smokestack begins chugging slowly as the train starts moving.

Without hesitation, the Vagrant hops forward and into his cab, trying to discern what has happened.

> "Sorry, friends!" the Vagrant cries out. "Looks like the *Ghostlight Express* is movin' on. In its current state, it can't take any livin' passengers, I'm afraid. Soon as I get it all fixed up, I'll be sure to return and pick ya back up, but for now, it looks like this is the end of the line! See ya' in a few weeks... I think!"

The Vagrant offers a rueful smile and a wave of his hat before being swept away into the sky by the *Ghostlight*



Express. The sound of a final bellowing whistle echoes amongst the forest, until only the soft soughing of the trees can be heard.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Fool* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Whistle of the Vagrant* remains behind, lying in the muddied grass.

A MOST SINCERE THANKS

Phillip and Adela are supremely grateful to the characters for saving their lives from the monster train and reward them from the luggage that miraculously survived the crash. Adela gifts each character 25 GP in coin or pieces of jewelry as they prefer, and Phillip offers each of them a gift from his personal collection of treasures. Each character can choose an item from the following list:

- *+1 Weapon* (work with the player to determine the weapon)
- *+1 Shield*
- *Bag of Tricks* (Gray)
- A snuff box with *Dust of Disappearance*
- *Immovable Rod* with goat heads on each end
- *Medallion of Thoughts*

WHAT NOW?

The real terror lies beyond—with the train gone, the characters now find themselves stranded somewhere within Wickermoor Hollow, alongside the Druskenvalds. Wickermoor Village looms within reach, but the foreboding silence and encroaching gloom make every step toward it feel like an entry into something... crooked.



Chapter 11: WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

"We humble folk survive in this land of darkness by walking alongside the Green Queen, hand in hand. We share the songs and rituals of the Old Ways. We love nature. We fear it. We rely upon it. We appease it."

- Mayor Wendel Somerton -

An isolated and superstitious folk live in the village called Wickermoor. Having survived for centuries by heeding nature in its bounty and wrath, these simple folk have a certainty in their beliefs and an assurance that all will be well, despite the strange, supernatural, and often violent happenings around them. It is here where the characters must learn to live and find their place.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

Wickermoor Village is the oldest settlement in Wickermoor Hollow, the valley for which it's named. The circumstances of its founding are as forgotten as its founder, but the people that live there take comfort in the Old Ways they adhere to, which haven't changed in many generations. While the village is simple and rustic, many comforts and services offered in other small towns can be found here, and things have been relatively prosperous for the community even in the face of the occasional death or terror.

Despite being so isolated from the rest of Druskenvald, the people of Wickermoor Village are welcoming to outsiders, though they secretly try to persuade newcomers to join the community and worship the Old Ways.

To the unwary visitor, the town seems uneventful. However, it harbors a secret. A wicked cult operates in the shadows, communing with the malevolent specter known as the Crooked Man and the trio of revolting hags called the Vermintoll Coven. They seek to unleash Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen, and bring about the incarnation of her consort, the Horned King. If not stopped, their scheming will lead to the disintegration of all Druskenvald.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Wickermoor Village will serve as the central hub for *The Crooked Moon* campaign, from which frequent excursions will take the characters to various settlements throughout Wickermoor Hollow. Phillip and Adela Druskenvald will reside here for much of the adventure.

The village contains several NPCs and locations central to the events of the adventure's main plot, as well as suggestions for various side quests. Many other NPCs have little direct bearing on the narrative of the adventure, but you can use them to expand upon your own subplots and encounters. Most NPCs can interweave with characters' stories and goals through Fateweaving (see chapter 9).

GOING TO TOWN

Once the characters have dealt with the aftermath of their violent encounter with the Ghostlight Locomotive and subsequent stranding in the wilds of Wickermoor Hollow with Phillip and Adela Druskenvald, read or paraphrase the following:

> Phillip shakes his head and glances east, a grin playing on his lips. "Well now, let's leave this dreary place behind! Wickermoor Village isn't far—I think we even have an estate waiting for us. The mayor sent a letter ages ago saying it was a gift. Never got around to responding, but hey, maybe it's still there!"
>
> Adela gently touches his arm, beaming. "Oh Philly, isn't this just serendipity? I bet the villagers will be jazzed to see you!"
>
> Phillip nods, giving her hand a playful squeeze. "That's right, darling! Let's treat this little hiccup as a stroke of luck—a chance to see new sights!" With a flourish, he twirls his cane and turns to you with a wink. "Since you handled that train so well, how about escorting us to Wickermoor Village?"

The trek to the village takes four hours through dark woodland and gloomy moors until the characters finally see the lights of the town flickering in the distance.

When they arrive at the town, the streets seem suspiciously empty. A ritual sacrifice, intended to save the town from danger, is playing out.

THE FIRST SACRIFICE

When the characters arrive at Wickermoor Village, read or paraphrase the following:

> You finally arrive at Wickermoor Village and find a quaint town comprised of humble, timber-framed buildings with shingled roofs. You walk through empty streets and hear the tolling of bells from the clocktower that rises up from a large building at the center of town. You enter the circular town square, where a weathered statue of a featureless man stands across from a huge, gnarled oak covered in hundreds of carved faces.
>
> Suddenly, a shrill shriek shatters the quiet, and you notice a struggling human shape at the base of the tree, bound and staked to the ground. Then, you hear deep, guttural growling from across the square. A pack of wolves led by a huge, shaggy pack leader approaches the squirming figure, their jaws slavering and eyes filled with bloodthirst.

The pack of animals entering town from the east contains six **Wolves** led by a **Dire Wolf**. They've been attracted by the shrieks of the bound sacrifice. Filled with the hate of the Crooked Queen, they are supernaturally aggressive and can't be calmed or tamed by nonmagical methods.

The characters begin the encounter 120 feet from the tree to the west, and the pack is 120 feet east of the tree. The sacrifice is pinned by ropes to the ground to the north of the base of the Oak of Many Faces (area V10) and cannot escape without assistance. This encounter uses map 11.1.

GET YOUR GOAT

When a character gets within 30 feet of the bound form, if they succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they realize the form is not a person after all. They automatically succeed if they move to within 5 feet of the form.

A human-sized fabric doll made to look like a person is staked to the ground, and a smaller lump within the doll is struggling to get free.

As a Utilize action, a character can cut, tear, or rip the ropes or the doll itself to free the creature within. When they do, a baby **Goat** (Tiny with no Ram attack) struggles free of the fabric and runs in a random direction to escape the area. A character can catch the baby goat as an action with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, or by grappling the goat with an Unarmed Strike. If the goat escapes while the wolves remain a threat, there is 50 percent chance that the wolves attack the goat or the characters.

If the characters do not interfere, the wolves devour the baby goat from within the fabric doll and then leave. Phillip and Adela look on in horror as this happens but do not pressure the characters to intervene.

A WICKERMOOR WELCOME

Once the wolf attack is dealt with, read or paraphrase the following:

> The door of a large building facing the town square opens, and a short and portly middle-aged man emerges. He wears a finely tailored three-piece suit and a matching bowler hat, the latter of which he removes in deference as he approaches.
>
> "A thousand apologies for the chaos, Lord Phillip! We were not expecting you this evening, and you caught us in the middle of one of our sacred traditions.
>
> Please accept my sincere and heartfelt welcome to Wickermoor Village. I am Mayor Wendel Somerton. I am so pleased you've finally accepted my invitation to our humble community."

Mayor Somerton welcomes the characters and the Druskenvalds with grace and warmth, explaining that the attempted sacrifice they stumbled upon was a yearly ritual to feed the beasts of the woods and the roots of the great oak with an offering of lifeblood. Such a sacrifice in honor of the Green Queen (see "Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen" in chapter 8) ensures bountiful hunts and healthy livestock for the coming year.

SACRIFICED THE GOAT?

If the characters allowed the wolves to devour the baby goat, Mayor Somerton thanks them for not disturbing their customs and assures them that the Green Queen has witnessed their deference to the Old Ways and has granted them her vitality. The characters gain 6 (1d12) Temporary Hit Points.

SAVED THE GOAT?

If the characters intervened and saved the goat, Mayor Somerton brushes off the interruption of the ritual and claims, "the oak still feeds on the blood of the stalking beasts." However, a character who succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell he is disturbed by the disruption but is feigning otherwise due to his desire to ingratiate himself with Phillip and Adela.



11.1 The Founder's Round

WHAT WENDEL KNOWS

Mayor Somerton is pleasant and welcoming but carries himself with reserved poise. Use the details below to guide the conversation with him:

- He assures Phillip and Adela that the Druskenvald Estate (area V24) is in pristine condition and its servants are ready to fulfill their every want and need.
- He shares the town's history and provides a brief insight to the methods of the Old Ways (see chapter 8).
- He suggests establishments the characters should visit (see "Wickermoor Village" later in the chapter) and recommends the Green Queen Inn for lodging.

He presents Wickermoor Village as a prosperous and happy town, but if pressed by a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, he admits that there have been more disappearances, illnesses, and deaths than usual.

TIME TO TRAVERSE TOWN

When the conversation with Mayor Somerton winds down, Phillip bids the characters farewell.

> "We've had some adventures, eh? Adela and I are exhausted, and I need to see whether this mayor is telling the truth about the state of this manor I apparently own. We're going to go settle in now, but do come visit tomorrow for dinner!"

If the characters state they want to stay with the Druskenvalds, Phillip politely declines. He says that he doesn't know the situation at the estate, and the characters have done enough already. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell there is a clear unease about him after the harrowing trip and perhaps more.

Parting Ways. Phillip gives each character 10 GP and tells them to get rooms at the inn for the evening—his treat. Then, he and Adela take the path up the hill toward the Druskenvald Estate.

Watchful Eyes. Many townsfolk watched the attempted sacrifice through shuttered windows and cracked doors. Some devout Followers of the Old Ways (see chapter 8) may be offended and feel Hostile toward the characters if they disrupted the ritual. Others may be more forgiving and see this as an opportunity to persuade them to convert.

Some of the townsfolk recognize Phillip and Adela, but most are unaware of life outside of Wickermoor Hollow. The malevolent cultists in service of the Crooked Queen can see their presence strongly, and the more worldly Newcomers (see chapter 8) know of and admire Phillip's lordship over Druskenvald.



Mayor Wendel Somerton

First Night in Town. If characters arrive in the Evening Hour, most businesses are closed. However, the characters can walk the streets to see what's in town—and they can visit many of the locations and NPCs during the following night before their dinner with the Druskenvalds (see chapter 12).

Getting Rooms. The only place that rents decent rooms in Wickermoor Village is the Green Queen Inn. Alda Farnum, owner and proprietor, offers single rooms for 1 GP per night, or triple rooms for 2 GP per night, which includes a hot bath and a hot breakfast in the Twilight Hour. The first night's sleep for the characters is peaceful and uneventful.

What Now? From this point forward, you are encouraged to play out the story based on your own inclinations and preferences, as well as the actions and goals of the characters. If you incorporate Fateweaving (see chapter 9) into the adventure, find reasons for the characters to run into their Connection NPCs (see "Wickermoor Village" below).

Once the characters are ready to accept the Druskenvalds' dinner invitation, they can travel up the hill on the northwest side of town to the Druskenvald Estate, which is ready to turn crooked (see chapter 12).

11.2 Wickermoor Village





WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

The people, places, and plots of Wickermoor Village can be found below. You can pick and choose which sections to include in the adventure to tailor the experience to your tastes and the interests of the characters.



Alda Farnum

PEOPLE AND PLACES

The locations (keyed to map 11.2) and NPCs at the heart of Wickermoor Village are detailed below. Locations lacking ties to specific NPCs, or NPCs that operate outside of any single location, are detailed at the end of this section.

V1: GREEN QUEEN INN

One of the largest buildings within the village limits, the inn contains rooms for rent, a tavern and restaurant, a small theater, and an attached stable.

The Green Queen Inn is the social center for many of the residents and visitors to the village. The tavern offers a variety of drinks that cater to patrons of different tastes and means—after all, it's better to drown your fears and worries in strong libations than face the horrors of Druskenvald sober. While travelers from beyond Wickermoor Hollow are exceedingly rare, this inn is the main stop for any travelers from the towns and settlements within the valley.

Additional entertainment on offer adds to the bread and circus that the inn's theater provides. It may host a lowbrow act one week and then a more intellectually stimulating performance the next. Acts are not common, but traveling entertainers who find their way here always find an attentive audience.

Alda Farnum, the Innkeeper. Alda (Neutral Evil, human **Noble**) owns and manages the Green Queen Inn. She comes off as friendly, but everything is a transaction to her, whether the currency is coins, gems, art, skills,



Marianna Grey

or favors. Even the most inattentive person doesn't need much time around Alda to see through her polite façade. Her brown hair is worn up under a hat, and her perfectly tailored outfits exude an air of quiet authority.

As a young woman, Alda became disenfranchised with the Old Ways, favoring the prosperity and comfort that modernity provides. However, when she happened upon an ancient tome filled with primeval rituals that harness Kehlenn's essence, she quickly discovered that she could use such power to grow her wealth and station in life. She has since joined the cult of the Crooked Queen as a means to an end in her constant quest for riches and authority.

V2: STABLES

Wooden stalls house the horses and mules belonging to the inn's guests. Additionally, Alda owns two horses and two mules, which she rents to people who need them.

Marianna Grey, the Stablemistress. The Stable is managed by Marianna Grey (Neutral Good, human **Scout**), under the direction of Alda. Marianna lives in a dirty room above the Stables. She is shy around people and not considered sociable, but characters who take the time to speak with her find her kind and friendly. Marianna is one of the few people who the ingratiating Alda Farnum is rude toward, the latter thinking herself superior in every way to the stablemistress she employs.

Marianna's love of four-legged creatures makes her a member of the Fold of the Patient Lady (see chapter 8). Her work with horses and heavy equipment makes her muscular and spry, and she keeps her black hair shorn to just a few inches long.

V3: CONSTABLE'S STATION AND JAIL

The constable Doris Squire and deputy constable Howie Butterman work and live here. The first floor holds the offices and jail, while the second floor contains two apartments where the pair each keep residence.

The three barred cells within the jail are meant to withstand a lot of punishment, and the locks are quite sturdy. At any time, there may be a prisoner or two in the cells, temporarily incarcerated while they sleep off a bender or cool off after a violent altercation.

The mayor acts as judge and jury for more severe crimes, with punishment being harsh and swift. The most severe punishments likely consist of execution for murders or banishment in the cases of grand larcenies, theft, or other crimes considered too egregious to be punished with only a fine.

Doris Squire, the Constable. Constable Doris Squire (Lawful Neutral, human **Knight**) is pragmatic, laconic, and plainly dressed. She's tall and stocky, wearing her graying hair under a cap. Her steely gray eyes are alert and seem capable of peering through one's soul.

She makes a habit of speaking only when necessary, using the fewest words possible to get her point across. She leaves the niceties of community relations to her more affable deputy.

Doris openly enforces the laws of the Old Ways, but in her heart, she is one of the Fold of the Patient Lady, enjoying and maintaining a cordial relationship with the wonders of nature. Despite her stoic guise, she is a sensitive soul and secretly writes poetry to express her feelings.



Doris Squire



Howie Butterman

Howie Butterman, the Deputy. Howie Butterman (Neutral Evil, human **Spy**) is short and wiry, and his brown hair sticks out from his uniform cap. While he doesn't look imposing, he is quick and deadly in a fight.

Deputy Howie presents himself as the more affable of the law-enforcement duo. His friendly demeanor and helpful attitude make him more suitable than the constable at dealing with the public. He plays "good cop" to Constable Doris's "bad cop" when dealing with lawbreakers.

In reality, Deputy Howie is a fervent cult member who works behind the scenes to bring about the return of the Crooked Queen. He uses his position of authority to move events very subtly toward her return. The arrival of Phillip and Adela triggers him and the other servants of the Crooked Queen to put their plans into action (see chapter 8).

V4: MAYOR'S HOME AND OFFICE

The mayor of Wickermoor Village has robust offices attached to a modest manor home. The living quarters are off-limits except to those invited by the mayor, but the offices are open for business from the Twilight Hour through the Nightfall Hour. The home is inhabited by the town's mayor, Wendel Somerton, along with his wife, Myrtle, and their daughter, Rose.

The bulk of the office space in the mayoral offices is set aside for records and other official paperwork. The current mayor, Wendel Somerton, relishes his position and the power that it gives him; therefore, not much happens in town that isn't recorded and catalogued. If there isn't a form for something, Mayor Somerton will create a form to make sure everything is in order and under his auspices.

Wendel Somerton, the Mayor. Mayor Somerton (Lawful Neutral, human **Priest**) is an officious, self-important man of 50 years. His short, wide frame is constantly clad in finely tailored suits that barely hold his ever-growing girth. He wears a matching bowler hat on his bald head, and his bushy gray eyebrows and handlebar mustache are waxed to maintain their shapes. His cravats are decorated with a jeweled pin in the form of an oak leaf. He does not need, but always carries, a mahogany cane with an emerald handle.

While he is tolerant and even welcoming to people of all ideologies, Mayor Somerton strongly believes in the Old Ways along with his family. However, he is completely ignorant of the wicked intentions of the cult of the Crooked Queen and only knows Kehlenn as the Green Queen, whom he deeply reveres. He serves as the leader of the Followers of the Old Ways, leading worship of the Green Queen and heading the rituals and rites to harness her power.

This has made him a useful pawn of the nefarious cult of the Crooked Queen, unknowingly enacting the plans of her servants. The most impactful of these decisions was the gifting of the Lockwood Estate to Phillip Druskenvald and preparing for his potential arrival. While most townsfolk, and even Wendel himself, viewed the move as a political maneuver, the idea was planted in his head by Randall Graham (see area V7), who knows that Phillip is the critical piece of the final ritual to free the Crooked Queen and unleash the Horned King.

V5: TOLLIVER'S TRADING POST

Although Wickermoor Hollow doesn't see a great deal of travel and trade with the other provinces of Druskenvald, anything that might be of value to the good folks of Wickermoor Village can be found at the trading post. From the staples of people's diet to the more exotic goods like simple weapons and trade goods, Baltus Tolliver either has it or knows how to get it.

Goods that might tempt passersby are displayed in a large front area, with extra supplies stored in the back room and in the basement. Baltus lives on the second floor, and he employs two guards, Wilma and Ronald Wainwright (Lawful Neutral, human **Guards**), who have a living area in the basement for when they are not on duty. This married couple devoutly follows the Old Ways but are ignorant of their employer's sinister allegiances.

Wilma and Ronald care for three adopted children, each originally from another community in Wickermoor Hollow—Victoria from Dawn's Gate, Eddie from Murkwater Bend, and most recently, Zachariah from

Foxwillow (Neutral Good, human noncombatant **Commoners**). All three attend school and help with chores around the shop. The birth parents of all three children went missing, and only Wilma and Ronald know that the disappearances were caused by the Fallen that each terrorize their respective home communities.

Baltus Tolliver, the Merchant. Baltus Tolliver (Neutral Evil, human **Cultist Fanatic**) left Wickermoor Village and traveled across Druskenvald as a young man. He returned a decade later with some wealth, a whole lot of lavish goods, and the contacts to find any strange oddity across the domain. Using a blend of charm and intimidation, Baltus established the largest trading post in the hollow. He sells everything from basic goods to rare trinkets.

He is a slender man who wears the same gray suit every night, making sure it is meticulously cleaned every evening. He's clean-shaven, and his thinning black hair betrays his upper middle age. He wears plain silver rings and smokes a decoratively carved mahogany pipe.

Although he spent his youth away from Wickermoor Hollow, Baltus is a Follower of the Old Ways that serves in the cult of the Crooked Queen. He was called home by the ever-growing strength of Kehlenn, and his wealth and trading power help fund and coordinate efforts to unleash her. His guards revere the Old Ways and the Green Queen, but they are unaware of Baltus's allegiance to the wicked cult.



Baltus Tolliver



Morgan

V6: APOTHECARY SHOP

Morgan's Apothecary Shop includes a small area in the front to hold consultations for alchemical services, while the rest of the building contains a large workshop with all the ingredients and equipment needed to carry out their profession.

The reagents, ointments, and salves that Morgan uses in their work don't have any true medicinal value on their own, but the people of Wickermoor Village swear by Morgan's concoctions. They also offer common magical brews like *Potions of Healing*, as well as any of the Paranormal Potions.

There are no living quarters within the apothecary shop building, and it's not unusual to see Morgan cooking a meal using the same equipment they use to mix strange concoctions. Oddly, there is no bed in the private chambers Morgan uses when not at work. Where they sleep, no one knows.

Morgan, the Apothecary. Morgan (Neutral, human **Druid**) does not remember their childhood. They awoke one night in Wickermoor Village as a youngster before being taken in by a goatherd and raised by his family. Morgan found their affinity for alchemy along the way, and they now act as the village's apothecary. They are friendly and kind, but they also suffer from blackouts and occasional lost time.

Morgan has a slight frame, with reddish-blonde hair that hangs over a thin face and green eyes that have a faraway look, even when they are concentrating on a task.

MORGAN'S MYSTERY

Morgan's mysterious past and periods of lost time are left for you to use as needed. Morgan could be a servant of one of the powers of the hollow, a reincarnation of a former powerful NPC or creature, a polymorphed monster who has forgotten their true form, or just a typical apothecary. Use Morgan as a wildcard as befits your story. If you use this advice, the alignment and statistics indicated in Morgan's description are for their apparent guise.

V7: RANDALL'S BARBER SHOP

Randall Graham keeps a clean establishment, as he often needs to perform minor surgeries along with the typical haircuts. In addition to his pair of chairs, Randall has created a place where people can socialize. The moonshine he makes on-site in a homemade still serves equally well as an antiseptic or a social lubricant. He lives above his shop, although he often naps in one of his barber chairs, and he's been known to sleep there all night.

Randall Graham, the Barber-Surgeon. Randall Graham (Neutral Evil, human **Cultist Fanatic**) is one of the most trusted folks in Wickermoor Village. Whether it's a haircut, a bothersome tooth, a quick stitch-up, a timely piece of advice, or just a friendly ear, Randall has what you need. His handsome smile, sandy brown hair and matching beard, and burly build are a fixture around town.

Randall's friendly countenance and charming ways are the perfect disguise for the town's leader of the secretive cult of the Crooked Queen that operates among the Followers of the Old Ways. He downplays his true allegiance in casual company, but he longs for Kehlenn's freedom and vengeance.



Randall Graham



Finneas Trout

The hair, teeth, and blood he takes from his clientele are saved in a secret room in the basement of the shop for later use in rituals and spells to gain dominion over the townspeople who oppose the return of the Crooked Queen. The pigeons, centipedes, and weasels of the Vermintoll Coven often linger about the shop, fetching the pieces of the townsfolk for their hag mistresses.

V8: WICKERMOOR SCHOOLHOUSE

This veritable "one-room schoolhouse" holds desks, tables, books, maps, and the other tools of the trade for a teacher. In the side yard sit some rudimentary pieces of playground equipment, including a swing, climbing structures, a seesaw, and crawling tunnels. The strange and rickety play structures seem too dangerous to bring much joy.

Finneas Trout, the Schoolteacher. Finneas Trout (Lawful Good, human **Commoner**) enthusiastically teaches the children of the area their letters and numbers, or other more esoteric subjects for the children whose parents value such things. A bookish young man, he wears spectacles under a mop of unkempt brown hair, and his physical features are unimposing. Finneas has a reverence of "book learning" that is seen as admirable to some and silly to others.

He came to Wickermoor Village recently from the city of Baskerton (see chapter 1), and he keeps a room at the Green Queen Inn, paid for by the town and the parents of his more affluent students, who receive additional tutoring.

Finneas falls into the camp of the Newcomers, hoping that the pure light of reason can drive away the darkness of superstition. He has also found a source of brightness in his romantic affection for the chandler, Oswick Frey (see area V17).

V9: THE FOUNDER'S ROUND

A park at the village center acts as the hub of the settlement's activity, serving as the town "square" despite its circular shape. Its most prominent features, apart from the flower beds, are the Oak of Many Faces (area V10) and the Founder's Statue (area V11).

Old Rusty, the Groundskeeper. Old Rusty (Neutral, human **Berserker**, doesn't wear armor or carry weapons) is an elderly man, with a mop of reddish-gray hair and a wild beard. He's been around as long as anyone can remember, and the village gives him room and board in exchange for taking care of the Founder's Round and other public areas of town. Old Rusty rarely speaks, and when he does, he uses cryptic phrases that are difficult to decipher.

Old Rusty is, unknown to even himself, Francis Patrini, the only survivor of Eustace Lockwood's homicidal rampage years ago at the Crooked House (see chapter 12). Due to his deep connection to the supernatural happenings of the Crooked House, his motivations, goals, and allegiances can shift wildly to serve your purposes, depending on the actions of the characters.



Old Rusty

V10: OAK OF MANY FACES

The Oak of Many Faces has stood at the center of Wickermoor Village for as long as the town has existed, and most of the inhabitants believe it to be a sacred site precious to the Green Queen. When the ultimate punishment must be carried out for a terrible crime, beheadings are conducted in front of the oak so that its roots may drink the lifeblood of the executed.

With each death, the Followers of the Old Ways carve the face of the slain into its bark. It has collected many faces over the years, making it a fascinating and grisly landmark. In truth, the tree not only consumes the blood but also the souls of those slaughtered before it, and it has gained a will of its own through the power of the Crooked Queen.

If any character is out at night alone in the Founder's Round, the Oak of Many Faces might attack as a Chaotic Evil **Treant** with a Speed of 0 feet, hoping to consume another soul and add a new face to its trunk. Any creature beheaded before the Oak of Many Faces or killed by it can't be resurrected by any means short of a *Wish* spell until the tree is destroyed.

V11: FOUNDER'S STATUE

In the center of the Founder's Round (area V9) stands a 10-foot-tall granite statue that gives the town square its name. A plaque on the plinth of the statue says, "Our Village Founder." There is no name, however. The statue is featureless, as if all the details of the statue's face and body have been weathered away. None in town know who the founder was or the circumstances of Wickermoor Village's founding.

V12: RODERICK MASONRY

This rough-built wood and stone building houses the masonry workshop and business of Solomon Roderick. The space is strewn with stone-working tools and pieces of granite, marble, and other stone.

Solomon Roderick, the Stonemason. Solomon Roderick (Lawful Neutral, human **Guard**) is a heavyset, heavily scarred man of 40 years. His skin is as hairless and rough as the stone he works with, and his brown eyes are equally cold when dealing with strangers or customers.

Roderick lives above his workshop with his eight-year-old daughter, Sofia. Her mother left the village not long after she was born, leaving Solomon to raise the girl alone. She assists him in the shop when she's not attending Finneas Trout's lessons.

The most skilled mason in the hollow, Solomon understands his craft and the leverage that gives him. He works with subordinates who spend their time overseeing the removal of stone from the area's quarries, leaving Solomon to manage the building and maintenance of stone structures throughout Wickermoor Village.



Solomon Roderick

While he comes across as cold, calculating, and strict, Solomon is as soft-hearted as they come while in private with the people he cares for. He dotes on his daughter, whose happiness and wellness are his chief goal. Solomon is a recent convert to the Brightsinger, and his newfound faith is strong, making large donations to the church and those in need.

V13: CARPENTRY WORKSHOP

Beatrice Wells performs her carpentry here, building or repairing structures throughout Wickermoor Village as needed. She also takes on smaller projects, such as furniture, cabinets, and farming implements. Lumber, boards, and other building supplies are carefully maintained within the workshop, while more is stored outside the building, leaning against the sides of the structure.

Beatrice Wells, the Carpenter. Beatrice Wells (Neutral, human **Commoner**) is a master carpenter and invaluable asset to Wickermoor Village. From wagons to furniture to structures, Beatrice is an expert with wood, known equally for her artistry and the sturdiness of her creations. She has a visionary quality that allows for unique and breathtaking work. She is fascinated beyond reason by the twisted architecture of the Crooked House (see chapter 12).

Beatrice, along with her husband Branden (Chaotic Good, human **Commoner**) and their four young children, Robin, Lark, Jay, and Wren (Neutral Good, human noncombatant **Commoners**), live in their second-floor living quarters.

The Wells family dutifully follow the teachings of the Brightsinger (see chapter 8). As she finds free time, Beatrice started building a chapel for Weston Murdoch on the Abandoned Church site (area V19). The Wells family dresses in bright clothes and sing songs to each other, even as they work.



Beatrice Wells

V14: BREAD BY HOLLY

The inviting scent of baking bread—as well as various sweet treats—wafts from this building from early in the Twilight Hour until the start of the Nightfall Hour. A small shop at the east end of the building displays a variety of baked goods for sale.

The rear of the shop is dominated by tables, shelves, and four wood-burning ovens that are in constant use. Holly's two daughters, Violet and Lavender, help their mother at the shop when they are not at school. No one (apart from Holly) knows who the fathers were, and the rumor mill has given up on finding out. The building contains no living quarters, as Holly and her children live with the butcher Siv Harga, with whom the baker has a relationship.



Holly Aster

Holly Aster, the Baker. Holly Aster (Neutral Good, human **Commoner**) spends most of her time in the kitchen, either preparing the ingredients for the night's baking or fussing by the ovens. Her ruddy complexion is exacerbated by the heat of the ovens, and her straight pale hair is held back with pins while she works.

Holly comes from a long line of bakers living in Wickermoor Hollow, with her mother and her grandmother both filling the role of the bread-maker for the town. Both her mother and her grandmother died on their 35th birthdays of unknown causes, and Holly is just weeks away from hitting that milestone.

Holly is a dedicated Follower of the Old Ways, and she shares a curse with her mother and grandmother: she and her progeny are doomed to die on their 35th birthdays until the Crooked Queen returns. Holly knows this, and she has a terrible dilemma: join the cult of the Crooked Queen and help usher in the return of Kehlenn or die. How she chooses to act on that is left up to you.

V15: HARGA'S MEATS

The butchery here is run by Siv Harga, a strapping woman who has become an expert in selecting and preparing meats of many kinds. The ground floor of her shop is divided evenly between the work area and the display area. Behind the shop are pens where animals that Siv has purchased from farmers for slaughter await their fate.

Siv employs a strange woman called Mrs. Oakum to help her in all aspects of the work. Mrs. Oakum leaves town each Evening and returns to town at Twilight the next night, but no one knows where she goes or what she does at night for food and shelter. The truth is Mrs. Oakum is a Chaotic Good **Werewolf**. She struggles against her curse and keeps the bloodlust in check by skimming scraps from the butcher shop and spending her nights far away from innocent people.

Siv Harga, the Butcher. Siv Harga (Chaotic Good, human **Scout**) is a tall, solidly built woman with blonde hair that she keeps braided. Growing up, her family moved around Wickermoor Hollow as animal herders. Siv finally settled down in Wickermoor Village as an apprentice to the town's butcher. When he passed, she took over the business and proved to be more than adequate. Siv shares a nearby house with her partner Holly Aster, Holly's two daughters, and her younger brother Ulf (Neutral Good, human **Commoner**), who assists her at the shop while not in school.

Her knowledge of animals is a boon not just to her profession, but to the local farmers as well. Some think her connection with the animals she butchers is supernatural, and Siv does nothing to dissuade that attitude.

Her bond with the natural world led Siv to join the Fold of the Patient Lady. She believes that nature provides if believers are respectful and thoughtful about how to give back to nature in return. Even as she slaughters animals for her customers, she says a prayer of thanks to the Patient Lady and never allows cruelty to the animals in her care.



Siv Harga



Jean Myriel

V16: THE SMITHY

Jean Myriel runs the smithy, where he works with a variety of metals to meet the needs of the village and the surrounding population as best he can. He is equally adept at making horseshoes, farming implements, and Simple weapons as he is working delicate gold jewelry and silver candlesticks. The second floor of the smithy contains storage and living quarters for Jean.

Jean Myriel, the Smith. Jean Myriel (Lawful Good, human **Berserker**) emigrated to Wickermoor Village from Dawn's Gate several years ago. The unique methods with metalwork and strange designs he developed in his apprenticeship were seen as too bizarre and unorthodox for the conservative community. Stealing away in the dead of night and heading east, he found a home in Wickermoor Village.

While he once kept his beard wild and untamed, he's recently made the decision to trim his facial hair to make himself more "presentable." His shorter frame belies a mass of muscles beneath.

He is sure of himself and his skills, but he also knows when to accept the advice of others. After leaving the faith of the Crimson Rose behind in Dawn's Gate (see chapter 14), he has remained non-religious and upholds the ideals of the Newcomers.

V17: THE WICKERY

This chandlery is run by Oswick Frey. The building acts as a workshop, storage area, and living quarters. Its proximity to the butcher shop makes access to the fat used in candle-making quite convenient.

The two-story building is designed with ramps rather than stairs to accommodate Wick's wheeled chair. A rooftop lookout gives one of the best vantages of the village and surrounding area, except for the clock tower (area V25).

Oswick Frey, the Chandler. Most of the candles in town are made by Oswick (Chaotic Good, human **Commoner**), a young man who loves his job. Having lost the use of his legs as a child, Oswick moves with the aid of a special chair designed and perfected by himself and other tradespeople of the town. Wick's bright red hair and pale complexion helped earn him his nickname as much as his job.

Oswick is madly in love with Finneas Trout (see area V8), the schoolteacher, but he has kept the feelings to himself. Oswick's gregarious personality and fondness for sharing stories turns into awkward stammering in Finneas's presence.

Oswick is a member of the Followers of the Old Ways and provides free candles to the faithful around town so they may use them to conduct numerous rituals in honor of the Green Queen.

V18: A STITCH IN TIME

A large window display shows colorful and imaginative pieces of apparel, denoting that this shop houses a clothier and tailor. The sign hanging outside the shop, reading "A Stitch in Time," confirms this.

The owner and proprietor, Thomasin Ardor, designs fanciful and beautiful outfits. Unfortunately, the clientele available to her are generally only interested in plain and functional clothing. Thomasin also dabbles in shoe repair.

The shop's main floor is a showroom and work area. Upstairs are living quarters and a storage area, the latter containing bolts of cloth among other tailoring supplies.



Oswick Frey



Thomasin Ardor

Thomasin Ardor, the Tailor. Thomasin Ardor (Neutral, human **Commoner**) is the village's most proficient tailor. As a child, she fell through a large pane of glass, but her life was saved with a critical medical procedure. This trauma, in conjunction with her quiet and cool disposition, leaves her the brunt of unfounded rumors and gossip.

She often keeps folks at a distance, and the only person in town she is close with is Randall Graham (see area V7), who stitched her up following her childhood accident.

While Thomasin is a benevolent member of the Followers of the Old Ways and reveres the Green Queen, Randall Graham is attempting to leverage their relationship to subtly guide her into joining the cult of the Crooked Queen. Whether she falls to wickedness or discovers Randall's plot and rebuffs him is up to you.

V19: ABANDONED CHURCH

This area contains the foundation and partial walls of a church originally built from marble and granite. The building is still somewhat intact, but all the furnishings are gone, the wooden windows and doors are newly refitted, and cloth tarps cover holes where there were once glass windows. New wooden construction shows that the place is in the first stages of reclamation.

Watching over the altar is an 8-foot-tall statue of a praying knight with a sour grimace on his face. The villagers call him the Man in Marble and describe him as a mythical protector of Wickermoor Village from a better age, attributing the sneer on his face to his distaste for how times have changed.

No one in town knows to what or whom the church was originally dedicated, but recently a pilgrim named Weston Murdoch came to town with his wife, Joan, and his children, Peter and Charlotte. Following his arrival, he repurposed the Abandoned Church as a place of worship to the Brightsinger after attributing the presence of songbirds roosting in the ruined rafters as a sign of his deity's blessing.

Weston Murdoch, the Pilgrim. Weston Murdoch (Lawful Good, human **Priest**) had his eyes opened to the power of goodness and forgiveness as a young child. His parents were both criminals who died for their crimes, and Weston was taken in by a loving family who taught him the path of light. He now strives to bring that same hope and redemption to others.

He is a charismatic man in his late twenties with sandy hair, blue eyes, and a personality that lights up a room the moment he enters. His wife and children, equally beaming and exuberant, make a powerful team of missionaries.

Weston is the leader of the Brightsingers in Wickermoor Village. The flocks of beautiful songbirds that congregate around his home are constantly at odds with the pigeons who occupy the Dovecote (area V21).



Weston Murdoch



Theodora Mayville

V20: POST OFFICE

The Post Office is maintained by Theodora Mayville, who uses a bevy of carefully trained carrier pigeons to maintain a message service between Wickermoor Village and other towns in the valley, as well as larger towns from other regions.

The Post Office contains a mess of letters, messages, tiny scrolls, and small packages. Some of the parcels and packages are delivered via wagon, but many of the messages and missives are small enough to send via pigeon. Her assistant, Geneva Fairchild, handles these deliveries and is rarely seen within Wickermoor Village. When Theodora is not present, Geneva handles the business whenever she isn't traveling.

Theodora maintains a separate residence on the outskirts of town, and she spends much of her free time in the company of the pigeons in the Dovecote (area V21).

Theodora Mayville, the Postmaster. Theodora Mayville is a woman in her early 30s with a tall, slender build. She has white-blonde hair that's always set in a single ponytail, but it often falls into disarray under a brown leather hat. Her violet eyes are sharp and kind. She wears plain brown clothes and gold earrings in the shape of pigeons. She cherishes her beloved carrier pigeons as her children, and one of her birds is often roosting on her shoulder.

Theodora is really Golub Graygullet, the **Pigeon Hag** and leader of the Vermintoll Coven. She alters or doctors every single letter that comes and goes from Wickermoor Village, ensuring the information in the town is controlled as much as its people's minds. When the characters discover her true identity, it triggers the events in chapter 20. She won't hesitate to discreetly aid the characters in seeking out and killing her sisters Vessla (see chapter 12) and Stonoga (see chapter 16) in the name of furthering the Crooked Queen's machinations.

V21: DOVECOTE

This surprisingly large Dovecote is a haven for the pigeons used to deliver messages for the post. The cooing and fluttering isn't as loud as one might expect. In addition to the coops and cages that hold the birds, additional storage space for the Post Office (area V20) is found here.

The peaceful visage of the Dovecote is a mere illusion; it is actually the horrific lair of Golub Graygullet, the pigeon hag of the Vermintoll Coven. The Dovecote is bewitched to sprout enormous pigeon legs that allow it to rise from the ground and walk across Wickermoor Hollow. This only occurs in chapter 20 after Theodora Mayville's true identity is revealed.

Peeping Albert, the Pigeon Familiar. Peeping Albert (**Vermin Familiar** (Pigeon)) is a grotesque pigeon with human-like ears and human hands for talons serving as the familiar of the hag Golub Graygullet. Albert acts as the hag's eyes and ears both in town and over the length and breadth of Wickermoor Hollow. The presence of the songbirds, which arrived shortly after Weston Murdoch and the rest of the Brightsinger worshipers, has made Peeping Albert particularly cross.

V22: SHADE FUNERAL HOME

One of the most striking buildings in Wickermoor Village, this black marble structure is home to the undertaker Mori Shade. The basement of the building contains the workshop used to prepare bodies for their final rest in Maidenmist Cemetery (see chapter 19)



Mori Shade

to the southeast of town, as well as a chilled vault for storing the recently deceased. The main floor contains meeting areas and places for ceremonies to be held. The second floor contains storage areas for equipment and coffins, as well as Mori's living quarters.

Mori Shade, the Undertaker. Mori Shade (Neutral, human **Scout**) deals in death. Rather than making her an outcast in the town, she's earned the respect of the people. They trust her to handle their remains with dignity and respect. She takes an interest in the various beliefs of the people, making her a good source of folklore.

A slight woman of indeterminate age, Mori has a stately, if grim, bearing. Her striking white hair is contrasted by an all-black wardrobe.

Mori does not follow the faiths of Wickermoor Hollow. Instead, she adheres to the spiritual beliefs of the Strangers (see "The Shroud" in chapter 1) who serve as ferrymen of the dead. She learned much of these beliefs from Yorgrim, the gravedigger (see chapter 19), with whom she works closely in giving the dead their proper burial.



Eleanor Heyling

V23: ANTIQUE BOOKSTORE

The main areas of this building contain Books of all shapes, subjects, genres, and varieties. The shop also sells Paper, Parchment, Ink, Ink Pens, and other supplies used in writing.

The second story contains the tools for bookbinding, ink-making, and the creation of paper and parchment. It also contains the living quarters for its owner, Eleanor Heyling.

Eleanor Heyling, the Antiquarian. Eleanor Heyling's (Lawful Neutral, human **Noble**) love of rare books is readily apparent to anyone who enters her shop and spots her nose-deep in her newest acquisition. She will not sell a book until she's read it. Some claim that she has been cursed by her reading, while others claim she's gained magical powers from the pursuit of rigorous study.

Although she is only in her early 40s, Eleanor has the look of an older woman. A life of little sleep and eye strain has left her far-sighted and sickly. She adopted her younger sister's three children: Margery, Algernon, and Sheridan (Neutral Good, human noncombatant **Commoners**). They go to school on most nights but are otherwise left to their own devices by their eccentric aunt. In fact, they often end up caring for her more than she cares for them.

Although Eleanor has lived in Wickermoor Village all her life, she is staunchly in the camp of the Newcomers. She values all knowledge and the wisdom her collection has imparted upon her, remaining skeptical of the strange rituals and beliefs of the other factions in town.

V24: DRUSKENVALD ESTATE

Resting on a hill overlooking Wickermoor Village, the recently named Druskenvald Estate sits like an overgrown weed waiting to be plucked. The highlight of the grounds is the manor itself, which is called "the Crooked House" by the townsfolk due to its strangely askew construction.

Once called the Lockwood Estate, the manor had been long abandoned until recently. Mayor Somerton decided to gift the estate to Phillip Druskenvald in the unlikely hope that the lord of the land might finally visit his humble village. He even used public funds to keep it maintained and tasked the Jenkin family to move in and be ready to serve as the Druskenvalds' servants. More about the Crooked House and the Jenkins can be found in chapter 12.

V25: HAUNTED CLOCKTOWER

The tall tower attached to the mayor's home and office contains the town's clock. It has always kept perfect time, but its bell occasionally strikes at random times, which always brings strange happenings.

If you wish to randomly determine when the clock will experience a haunted strike, roll a d12 when the characters finish a Long Rest. That night, from the Evening Hour through the Witching Hour, the random strike will occur during the hour that was rolled. As soon as the strike occurs, a restless spirit will make itself known to the characters, whether through strange noises, moving objects, appearing before them, or fully manifesting and attacking as a **Ghost.**



Sister Rain



Jeremiah Stover

V26: THE OLD PYETHYMER PLACE

In the oldest part of the residential rows of Wickermoor Village is a narrow lane with many abandoned houses. At the end of this lane stands the Old Pyethymer *(PYE-tye-mur)* Place, which is the most decrepit of the bunch.

The town's children proclaim that it's haunted by the ghost of its former inhabitant and sometimes dare each other to explore it for themselves. These children never return, as the Old Pyethymer Place is not a real house at all, but is a **House of Horror**.

V27: HOMES

A smattering of personal homes fills out the remainder of Wickermoor Village. Some of these homes are occupied by workers in the environs of the village: farmhands, herding folk, miners, quarry workers, hunters, artisans, or tradesmen.

V28: PAVILION

This open-air Pavilion offers a place for villagers to sit for a spell, have an outdoor meal, hold meetings, sell goods, or otherwise perform public works.

OTHER NPCS

These NPCs are not connected to any single location in Wickermoor Village.

Sister Rain, the Preacher. Sister Rain (Neutral Good, human **Priest**) travels throughout the hollow espousing the bountiful blessings of the Patient Lady. She has no official residence in the village and instead lives in the natural environments outside of town. She also sometimes stays with her congregants and preaches in the Founder's Round (area V9). Sister Rain's moods and demeanor are as fickle as the weather and nature that she reveres, often living a nomadic lifestyle travelling between the various communes dedicated to the Patient Lady that dot Wickermoor Hollow.

Sister Rain is a slight woman in her mid-thirties. She wears a green floral print dress that sets off her long, flowing, flaming-red hair. Her green eyes are bright with the fervor of her faith, and her features can flash between joy and anger in a moment. She wears a plain silver necklace with a pendant in the shape of a blossoming sunflower.

Sister Rain is the leader of the Fold of the Patient Lady, and she espouses the need to accept and protect the bounties of nature. Her presence is anathema to the most zealous and evil followers of the Crooked Queen.

Jeremiah Stover, the Farmer Spokesman. The farmers living around Wickermoor Village work long hours and perform hard labor to keep the population fed. They have established a rudimentary union to ensure that they receive fair compensation for their work. The representative they've chosen is Jeremiah Stover (Lawful Neutral, human **Tough**), a tuber farmer whose dedication to the Old Ways, the land, and its workers makes him the perfect candidate. He works equally hard in his fields as he does in advocating for his peers.

Gaston Doray, the Artist. Gaston Doray (Neutral Evil, human **Cultist Fanatic**) is a painter whose works all contain an ethereal quality. He came into town on a fog-shrouded night a few years ago, and no one has been able to determine his history. He's quite young, with just the beginnings of a beard sprouting on his chin and cheeks.

Adela Druskenvald becomes quite taken with Gaston and his dream-like paintings, becoming his patron. He has a particular candor with friends and strangers alike that some find refreshing, while others find uncomfortable. In all pursuits, he is deeply philosophical and sometimes even nonsensical to the simple folk of Wickermoor Village.

Gaston is a conduit through which Kehlenn expresses visions, which have driven him to very recently begin the initiation into the cult of the Crooked Queen. As the adventure progresses, Gaston's paintings become more and more bizarre and unsettling. By the end of the adventure, Gaston is completely unhinged and does the bidding of the worst of the Crooked Queen's followers.



Gaston Doray

Hilda Brom, the Huntress. While farms throughout the hollow feed the people, hunting for wild game is invaluable—and profitable—for times when crops fail. Hilda Brom (Neutral Good, human **Scout**) is renowned as one of the most skilled hunters and trappers. She seems wild and unsocial to people she first meets, but her personality shines for those she knows and trusts. If a criminal escapes justice, the mayor and constable call upon her to hunt a different caliber of prey.

Hilda is a Follower of the Old Ways, finding special kinship with and reverence for the Green Queen. She has seen too much in the grim and sometimes haunted wilds to ignore the grasp of the spirit world on the land. If the characters ever get into trouble elsewhere in Wickermoor Hollow, Hilda might show up to lend a hand.



Hilda Brom

CREATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES

The overarching narrative of *The Crooked Moon* campaign focuses on the secret plot of the minions of the Crooked Queen to release Kehlenn from the Crooked Tree and give flesh to the Horned King, ushering in an age of disintegration, annihilation, and crooked rebirth (see chapter 8). This plot is woven throughout the chapters of this adventure, with each new foe defeated bringing their plan closer to fruition. Refer to the "Back in Wickermoor Village" section of subsequent chapters to see how the town will be affected by the story's development.

However, the information earlier in this chapter includes just a handful of the people, places, and plots that are possible in Wickermoor Village. This town should provide the framework to create your own adventures that you can interweave throughout the events of *The Crooked Moon*. Use the details below as inspiration for fleshing out the adventure and making it truly your own.

SUBPLOTS

If you wish to give the characters some downtime from the main plot and steer them toward some lower stakes side quests, you can use the subplots below. You will need to create hooks to draw the characters' attention to these plots and decide on the details to fit them best in your story. They can be used in between any adventure chapters when the characters return to Wickermoor Village.

THE RETURN OF GORY GUS

A year ago, the cold, calculating killer Gus Strong—called "Gory Gus" by the population—was tried and then beheaded before the Oak of Many Faces (area V10) as punishment for his crimes. On the anniversary of his beheading, one of the townsfolk is murdered in the same way that Gus killed his victims. Evidence points to one of the characters being the killer. Clues can be found and followed to exonerate the character, showing that Gory Gus's apprentice has picked up her master's gory trade.

A BAD SEED

Villagers begin falling ill under mysterious circumstances during a special picnic celebrating a recent rich bounty of fruit, honey, and dairy. Clues at the picnic point to cursed apples being the culprit. The characters can investigate the apple orchard, where one of the townsfolk has entered a pact with Fiends in return for riches and power. The diabolist and the Fiends must be killed to break the withering curse that is affecting the picnic attendees.

THE BLOODY CUP

The village hosts an annual sporting and gaming event where teams from different parts of Wickermoor Hollow come together to compete. This year, the events of the competition turn bloody—or bloodier than normal—as "accidents" begin to plague the competition. The characters can compete on behalf of Wickermoor Village or watch, but without their intervention, the competition turns into a bloodbath.

THE PLAY'S THE DEADLY THING

Hickock and Company, a traveling troupe of actors led by the flamboyant George Hickock, comes to town to perform a play in the Green Queen Inn theater at the request of Alda Farnum. A cast member dies under mysterious circumstances. Can the characters solve the murder? More importantly, can they finish the play titled *The Prince in Gold?*

THE LOTTERY

A stranger comes to town, promising a great prize for people who willingly take part in a lottery. The stranger fails to reveal that, while the winner does receive a grand prize, someone—or several folks—lose the lottery and must pay a terrible price. The characters can intervene at risk of paying the price themselves.

TOWN WITH A SECRET CULT

A secret cult operates within the shadows of Wickermoor Village, and behind every kind, smiling face could lurk one of its members. You can use the NPCs showcased earlier in this chapter as written, but are encouraged to adjust their alignments, allegiances, and goals in ways that best enhance your unique adventure of *The Crooked Moon*.

Because of the secretive and deceptive nature of the cult that serves the Crooked Queen and its direct connection to the prominent faith of the Old Ways, any NPC can secretly be a villain for the characters to uncover in a shocking twist. Alternatively, conniving NPCs that the characters believe to be sinister can be revealed to have been subtly working against Kehlenn's minions all along.

For ease of reference, below are the various groups of people in Wickermoor Village as written for the baseline adventure. Feel free to rearrange these lists as best suits your needs, keeping in mind the impact on Fateweaving Threads (see chapter 9) and future quest hooks. You are encouraged to prepare for the climactic confrontation with the cult of the Crooked Queen atop Rowan's Rise (see chapter 23), making sure to foreshadow and consider the connections that the characters make with NPCs throughout the adventure.











CULTISTS OF THE CROOKED QUEEN

- **Howie Butterman,** the Deputy
- **Gaston Doray,** the Artist
- **Alda Farnum,** the Innkeeper
- **Randall Graham,** the Barber-Surgeon
- **Theodora Mayville,** the Postmaster
- **Baltus Tolliver,** the Merchant

FOLLOWERS OF THE OLD WAYS

- **Thomasin Ardor,** the Tailor
- **Holly Aster,** the Baker
- **Hilda Brom,** the Huntress
- **Oswick Frey,** the Chandler
- **Gilly Jenkin,** the Caretaker
- **Walter Jenkin,** the Butler
- **Myrtle Somerton,** the Mayor's Wife
- **Wendel Somerton,** the Mayor
- **Jeremiah Stover,** the Farmer Spokesman
- **Ronald Wainwright,** the Merchant's Guard
- **Wilma Wainwright,** the Merchant's Guard

FOLD OF THE PATIENT LADY

- **Marianna Grey,** the Stablemistress
- **Siv Harga,** the Butcher
- **Sister Rain,** the Preacher
- **Doris Squire,** the Constable

BRIGHTSINGERS

- **Joan Murdoch,** the Pilgrim's Wife
- **Weston Murdoch,** the Pilgrim
- **Solomon Roderick,** the Stonemason
- **Beatrice Wells,** the Carpenter
- **Branden Wells,** the Carpenter's Husband

NEWCOMERS

- **Adela Druskenvald,** the Lady of Druskenvald
- **Phillip Druskenvald,** the Lord of Druskenvald
- **Eleanor Heyling,** the Antiquarian
- **Jean Myriel,** the Smith
- **Finneas Trout,** the Schoolteacher

UNAFFILIATED

- **Geneva Fairchild,** the Postmaster's Assistant
- **Morgan,** the Apothecary
- **Mrs. Oakum,** the Butcher's Assistant
- **Old Rusty,** the Groundskeeper
- **Mori Shade,** the Undertaker

CHILDREN

- **Algernon,** nephew of Eleanor Heyling
- **Charlotte,** daughter of Weston and Joan Murdoch
- **Dani,** daughter of Gilly and Walter Jenkin
- **Eddie,** son of Wilma and Ronald Wainwright
- **Jay,** son of Beatrice and Branden Wells
- **Lark,** son of Beatrice and Branden Wells
- **Lavender,** daughter of Holly Aster
- **Margery,** niece of Eleanor Heyling
- **Peter,** son of Weston and Joan Murdoch
- **Robin,** daughter of Beatrice and Branden Wells
- **Rose,** daughter of Wendel and Myrtle Somerton
- **Sheridan,** niece of Eleanor Heyling
- **Sofia,** daughter of Solomon Roderick
- **Ulf,** brother of Siv Harga
- **Victoria,** daughter of Wilma and Ronald Wainwright
- **Violet,** daughter of Holly Aster
- **Wren,** daughter of Beatrice and Branden Wells
- **Zachariah,** son of Wilma and Ronald Wainwright

NAMES OF WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

The table below features first and last names to improvise NPCs in Wickermoor Village. These names can also be used for people from other settlements in Wickermoor Hollow, such as in Foxwillow, Dawn's Gate, Murkwater Bend, or elsewhere.

NPC Names

1d20	Female	Male	Neutral	Last Name	1d20	Female	Male	Neutral	Last Name
1	Abigail	Abraham	Addison	Benson	11	Isabelle	Nigel	Leslie	Gower
2	Alice	Caleb	Ashleigh	Chambers	12	Janet	Norbert	Marion	Haggard
3	Alma	Charles	Avery	Cochran	13	Madeleine	Orville	Quinn	Hardy
4	Annabelle	Conrad	Casey	Eggers	14	Matilda	Samuel	Remy	Irving
5	Catherine	Edmund	Courtney	Ellsworth	15	Molly	Seth	River	Pilkington
6	Clara	Grover	Darby	Fallowfield	16	Robin	Simon	Shannon	Reeves
7	Edith	Henry	Frances	Finch	17	Sadie	Stanley	Spencer	Scovell
8	Elizabeth	James	Jesse	Franklin	18	Sarah	Thomas	Taylor	Stevenson
9	Fiona	Leonard	Lauren	Garrett	19	Sophia	Wilbur	Tracy	Stubbs
10	Gertrude	Micah	Lee	Golding	20	Tess	Wyatt	Whitney	Wolcott

RUMORS AND RITUALS

There are plenty of strange happenings and rituals that the characters can stumble upon in Wickermoor Village and its surrounding areas. The tables below feature examples to help you make the town feel real, superstitious, and dangerous.

Rumors

1d20	Rumor	1d20	Rumor
1	A washerwoman has suddenly developed a crick in her neck and has reported hearing demonic voices.	7	A heretical family has been banished from town, and their new homestead is terrorized by a witch.
2	A milkmaid has been accused of putting a wasting curse on the new wife of her ex-husband.	8	A doomsday cult pops up in town, claiming that the moon will crash into Druskenvald in three nights.
3	Local children have been growing patches of shaggy fur and are performing strange rites in the forest.	9	A young woman is regularly visited by a strange man with a black cat who urges her to cross the river to join him.
4	A visiting scholar writing his treatise on the Old Ways is breaking into homes in the name of research.	10	A man was found frightened to death, clutching a marble finger in his hand and pointing directly ahead.
5	A woodsman is seeking help in hunting down a beast of the woods that stole his daughter's soul.	11	An old widow sends out invitations to her wedding, claiming to be marrying a trickster demon prince.
6	A pair of suspected assassins have been spotted in town, believed to be working for a cult of greed.	12	A group of suspiciously intelligent bluebirds roost in the church, and some think they are transformed humans.

1d20	Rumor	1d20	Rumor
13	Every night, fires dot the horizon, and the sound of distant drums and bestial bellowing is heard.	17	A slovenly cook is accused of filling his pies with rats, children, and other terrible ingredients.
14	Youths seeking a strange dragon-like creature return with wide eyes, only able to speak in nonsense rhymes.	18	A fisherman's wife claims her husband was drowned by humanoid fish creatures in the river.
15	A hunter returned from the forest with a totally different personality, walking strangely and only whistling.	19	A farmer accidentally dug up an ancient relic while plowing his fields, and soon his family fell ill.
16	Townsfolk have strange dreams of flying through the stars and visiting alien landscapes and worlds.	20	An inspector seeks a missing teenager who disappeared after being crowned harvest queen at a festival.

Rituals

1d20	Ritual	1d20	Ritual
1	A public battle to the death is fought between two villagers with their children strapped to their backs.	11	Nightly bonfires roar on the outskirts of town, offering bones from the evening's dinner to the flames.
2	Villagers make wicker effigies of exotic animals and race them through the streets of the town.	12	In a mock rebirth ritual, a villager is drowned in the river and resuscitated to claim a new lease on life.
3	Large turnips hang above every doorway in town, painted to look like the people who live or work there.	13	Townsfolk climb dangerously tall trees in the woods to collect rare herbs and burn them in honor of "plant spirits."
4	A child-sized doll is fitted with a chainmail shirt and thrown into the river as an offering to "water spirits."	14	To honor the "bird spirits," the entire town gathers and sings a song that lasts a full twenty-four hours.
5	The pelt and head of an enormous bull are draped over a pole, and the townsfolk dance around it erratically.	15	A criminal is punished by being pressed beneath heavy stones to see if they can survive a full night.
6	A condemned murderer is executed by disembowelment, and his entrails are hung in the branches of trees.	16	After the death of a villager, their qualities and deeds during life are etched in runes upon a stone.
7	To appease the "honey spirits," a volunteer from town is covered in a swarm of bees and stung for hours.	17	The townsfolk consume hallucinogenic mushrooms and experience strange, shared visions.
8	Following a funeral, the deceased is fastened to a horse and sent off into the moors for a "last ride."	18	The corpses of hares decorate the town to appease the "fertility spirits," which are then turned into a great stew.
9	As a rite of passage, a teenager is given a spear and sent into the woods to hunt and kill a bear alone.	19	To not be a burden, an elderly couple jumps from the clocktower to their death and are honored.
10	A young couple is married before a large oak, receiving a blessing from the "ancestor spirits" within.	20	A great feast is held at the center of town, and the only food served are the bloody hearts of farm animals.



Chapter 12: THE CROOKED HOUSE

"There was a crooked man who lived in a crooked house.
He had two crooked children, and he had a crooked spouse.
He bought a crooked axe which brought a crooked smile,
And the bodies are all stacked up in a crooked bloody pile."

- Wickermoor Nursery Rhyme -

Sitting atop a gloomy hill and choked by the gnarled overgrowth of decades of disrepair is a twisted house that has known only evil. With not a single right angle in its bizarre construction, the abandoned manor is an uncanny monument to the Crooked Queen. Her minions infest the place, and the wicked weasel hag, Vessla Browntooth, is its primary corruptor. She twists the souls of the living and dead trapped within the crooked walls. Only with the death of this hag can the horrors of the Crooked House be put to an end.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

The Crooked House stands as a haunted manifestation of Kehlenn's ancient power, twisted and alive with malevolent energy. It warps all who dwell within, unravelling and corrupting their very souls in preparation for sacrifice.

Victims' shattered souls and suffering feed the house, which reconfigures itself after each cycle of torment, shaping anew for the next doomed inhabitants. With each renewal, the gruesome process repeats itself—an eternal vessel for the Crooked Queen's insatiable hunger for sacrifice.

Steeped in the blood of its past, the Crooked House, now called Druskenvald Manor, readies its horrors for the unlucky pair that now call this place home. The Crooked Queen's influence lingers, her vile energy feeding the house, and the tormented spirits within turn their gaze toward new prey.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Crooked House bends and contorts into its true twisted, ruined, and haunted form with the helpless Druskenvalds trapped inside. The Crooked Man, Vessla Browntooth, and the repulsive creatures within await new souls ripe for sacrifice. Characters drawn to the house by the Quest Hooks later in this chapter have these goals:

- Enter the Crooked House in search of Phillip and Adela Druskenvald after first meeting the Crooked Man.
- Conduct a séance to commune with the spirit of Joseph Patrini, who can point the characters to the hag in the attic.
- Investigate the house and face the spirits within to collect all six mementos from the ghosts of the slain Lockwood Household.
- Find the secret door to the attic and use the mementos to gain access to the Cauldron Room (area H17).
- Destroy the weasel hag Vessla Browntooth.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with the history of the Crooked House and the tragedy that befell the Lockwoods to help improvise the spectral encounters, including the séance with Joseph Patrini. Reading through the locations of the Crooked House will prepare you for the characters' investigation, no matter the order they choose.

This chapter is designed for four level 3 characters.

A HAUNTED HISTORY

Seventy years ago, the Lockwoods took their fateful carriage ride to Wickermoor Hollow, leaving behind the crowded streets of Cyril (see chapter 1). Eustace Lockwood believed he was bringing his family to a peaceful valley, free from the city's toils, where nature would cradle them.

Their new manor, perched ominously atop a hill, loomed over a quaint village. Rebuilt by local hands upon the bones of its predecessor, it was grand yet unsettling. The builders didn't question the hidden attic that appeared in the altered architectural plans—an attic soon claimed by Vessla Browntooth, her evil familiar, Filthy Jasper, and her swarm of twisted weasels.

The house was built atop the ruins of an ancient locus of Kehlenn's primeval power, making it the ideal dwelling to corrupt and trap souls, all of which would feed the power of the Crooked Queen. And such an elaborate and crooked construction provided the hag with ample opportunity to torment the numerous inhabitants over the years.

For a short time, the Lockwoods flourished. Eustace, his wife Petunia, children Sally and Arthur, and Petunia's elderly mother Keziah enjoyed the manor's deceptive warmth. Their servants, the Patrinis, shared in their bliss, as did their son Francis, Sally's best friend of the same age.

But the joy was fleeting. Illness and nightmares crept in—the work of Vessla's vile enchantments. No medicine, not even the most skilled healers of Wickermoor Village, could combat the mounting corruption. Eustace, plagued by nightmarish visions, succumbed to madness, slaughtering his family and the Patrinis. The body of Francis was never found.

Families came and went, all drawn to the village's quiet charm. Yet, the tale always ended in tragedy. Eventually, the cursed manor was seemingly abandoned, falling to the village when no one dared return. Yet, no matter whether the manor was occupied or not, the circular window at the highest point of the house always shone with an eerie glow during the Witching Hour.

Mayor Wendel Somerton, blind to the horrors, gifted the estate to the Druskenvalds, a move suggested by Randall Graham, the town's scheming barber and doctor. Graham, knowing the house's sinister nature and eager to see the Druskenvalds consumed, sought to unleash the house's malice on the new residents.

THE WEASEL HAG

Vessla commands numerous twisted weasels that live in the walls. The Crooked House itself is haunted by a plethora of specters and monsters brought to life by the bewitching power of the Crooked Queen.

VESSLA BROWNTOOTH

Vessla Browntooth (**Weasel Hag**) is the youngest of the three hags that form the Vermintoll Coven (see chapter 8). As with her sisters, she is a crooked Fey from the primeval times of Kehlenn's reign, becoming more crooked with every passing year. She delights in the vermin that earned the coven its names, particularly favoring the weasels that scurry and scrape throughout walls of the Crooked House.

Vessla is the shortest and meanest of the trio, with a nose that is as long and pointed as her teeth and many other unsavory features that evoke the weasels she cherishes and commands.

Her witchcraft specializes in the corruption and siphoning of mortal souls, which manifests through horrific nightmares and phantasmal visions. This power is enhanced by the hoard of humanoid teeth, collected by her loyal weasels and her beloved familiar, Filthy Jasper.

Recently, she captured Phillip and Adela Druskenvald after they settled into the manor home, and she began performing an elaborate ritual to prepare their souls for sacrifice. What she doesn't know is that the sacrificial lamb is Vessla herself, as planned by her sisters, Golub and Stonoga, as part of the long-term machinations of the Crooked Queen.

FILTHY JASPER

Filthy Jasper (**Vermin Familiar** (Weasel)) is an abominable Monstrosity, weasel-like but disturbingly human in his features, with unsettling hands that mimic those of a man. Formed from Vessla Browntooth's nightmarish magic, Filthy Jasper obeys her every whim and leads the swarming weasels through the Crooked House and Wickermoor Village.

As wicked as his creator, Filthy Jasper revels in human suffering, particularly that of children. An eager collector of humanoid teeth for Vessla's rituals, he savors the act of tearing them from skulls with his own hands.

NPCS OF THE CROOKED HOUSE

More than weasels and hags live and lurk within the Crooked House. The residents that call it home span generations, and many are among the unliving.

THE CROOKED MAN

The origin of the first **Crooked Man** has faded into seldom-repeated whispers, but his current form is the twisted spirit of Eustace Lockwood, the patriarch who slaughtered his family 70 years ago. After the bloodbath, Eustace hanged himself, urged on by Vessla Browntooth. She crammed his broken corpse into a narrow crawlspace beneath the house, snapping nearly every bone to make him fit.

From that cursed night onward, his soul was bound to the Crooked Queen's will, his spirit as distorted as his crumpled remains. Eustace now stalks the manor as a crooked specter in a tattered suit, twisted beyond recognition. Even when not with the house, his bond to it and the queen remains unbroken. With each soul claimed by the house, the queen's power deepens in Wickermoor Hollow.

The Crooked Man's aim is to free the Crooked Queen from her prison and restore her reign over Druskenvald. As her loyal minion, he roams Wickermoor Hollow like a shadow, aiding the schemes of the Vermintoll Coven and the cult of the Old Ways, drawing ever closer to unleashing the queen's malice.

THE LOCKWOOD HOUSEHOLD

After Eustace Lockwood's bloody rampage, the spirits of his murdered household became trapped in the Crooked House, where they remain to this day. While the house has claimed many souls over the years, the ghosts of the Lockwood Household's six victims manifest more strongly than the others.

PETUNIA LOCKWOOD

The dour but dutiful wife of Eustace Lockwood, Petunia, had been looking forward to moving to a more agrarian community. Her true love was in tending all manner of plants, especially her beloved bergamot trees. She viewed the Lockwood Estate as her chance to finally enjoy her husband's wealth—which was the only reason she married him.

SALLY LOCKWOOD

Sally was Eustace and Petunia's first child, but she never received much attention from her parents. Suffering from regular nightmares, Sally developed phobias and paranoias at a young age. The only time she felt safe was when she was surrounded by her dolls and other toys.



Vessla Browntooth & Filthy Jasper



The Crooked Man

On the night of the murders, Sally managed to escape the Crooked House before succumbing to her wounds on the path down the hill. Her spirit eventually reincarnated into the dog now called Shuck (see "Shuck" below).

ARTHUR LOCKWOOD

Arthur was born in Cyril but spent most of his short life in Wickermoor Village. He was a sickly baby, but no doctors that the Lockwoods hired could discover an underlying illness. His regular wailing led to him being left in the nursery for most hours of the night.

KEZIAH ENDICOTT

Keziah, Petunia's elderly mother, was widowed at a young age, and she moved in with the Lockwoods. Coming from a wealthy and eccentric family, she developed many hobbies over her long life—landscape painting, taxidermy, and raising albino peafowl. Her active social life intrigued many strange folk from the town with a strong reverence for the Old Ways.

JOSEPH PATRINI

Joseph came from a long line of butlers and took the profession very seriously, so he unquestioningly followed his employers to Wickermoor Village. He brought his wife, son, and love of music. While the Lockwoods abandoned Pholsense's faith of the Silver Path (see chapter 1), Joseph never wavered and believed the divine would protect him in his strange new home.

GAIL PATRINI

Gail found less joy in being a housekeeper than her husband, but she relished being a mother. She never trusted her employers and found Keziah's strange hobbies especially unsettling. Her intuition allowed her to save her son on the night of her death, sacrificing herself so that Francis survived.

FRANCIS PATRINI

Francis, a clever and funny child, was the precocious son of Joseph and Gail Patrini. He was best friends with Sally Lockwood and would unsuccessfully try to get the girl to go on small adventures with him despite her inherent fears.

He was saved from the murderous Eustace Lockwood by his mother but was deeply traumatized by the experience. He became unable to speak coherently, and the memories of his former life became fragmented, eventually becoming known to all in Wickermoor Village as Old Rusty (see chapter 11).

THE JENKIN FAMILY

The Jenkin family serves as caretakers for the Druskenvalds during their stay, having long tended the homes of Wickermoor's elite. Three years ago, Mayor Somerton assigned them to the old Lockwood Estate, an honor laced with dread. Like the villagers, they had heard the whispered tales of the cursed house. Nevertheless, they moved in, preparing for the Druskenvalds.



Walter Jenkin



Gilly Jenkin



Dani Jenkin

WALTER JENKIN

A handsome and affable sort, Walter Jenkin (Lawful Neutral, human **Commoner**), lost his voice within weeks of arriving. No healer could explain the sudden silence. Now, he communicates through writing and sign language, which his family also knows and can translate. Entering the manor makes him nervous, sensing its malice, though he never speaks of his fears.

Known for his loyalty and dutifulness, Walter has an almost reverent respect for Mayor Wendel Somerton and his other former employers. And in this new position, he has already become devoted to the Druskenvalds, despite having only just met them.

GILLY JENKIN

Gilly Jenkin (Lawful Neutral, human **Commoner**) has known Walter since they were children, and they have loved each other just as long. She is not as devoted to the Druskenvalds as her husband; her concerns lie more with their daughter. She was pregnant with Dani when they first became employed by Mayor Somerton over a decade ago, and she is overly protective of the girl. Gilly feels the presence of the strange forces in Wickermoor Village, and she fears her daughter Dani has some sort of strong connection to these powers.

DANI JENKIN

Dani (Neutral, human noncombatant **Commoner**) was born to Walter and Gilly within a couple of weeks of their move to the mayoral manor to serve Mayor Somerton's family. Now ten years old, she senses the ghosts and disturbing forces around her, knowing things a child shouldn't. Though she cannot yet control her abilities, her bond with the powers of the Old Ways grows.

SHUCK

A red-furred dog that never leaves Dani's side, Shuck (Neutral Good **Wolf**) was a stray before the Jenkins took him in. Unbeknownst to the family, Shuck is the reincarnated soul of Sally Lockwood, a victim of the Crooked House who escaped just before her death. Shuck guards Dani fiercely. If any of the characters are evil, or if they use supernatural abilities that are in any way associated with the Crooked Queen, Shuck growls at them if they get anywhere near Dani.

WISP

The estate's gray cat has earned Walter's affection but terrifies Dani. The cat is no ordinary feline; it is a shapeshifted **Ketgrinn**, a Fey in service to Vessla Browntooth. Wisp stole Walter's voice and torments Dani by speaking to her when they are alone. Shuck loathes Wisp, sensing his true nature, and stays close to protect Dani from the lurking evil. If the ketgrinn's true form is exposed and slain, Walter's ability to speak is restored.



QUEST HOOKS

Although technically renamed to the Druskenvald Estate by Mayor Wendel Somerton, all of the townsfolk of Wickermoor Village just call it the Crooked House. It is a monument of local lore and suspicion, so there are many reasons to investigate it.

DINNER WITH THE DRUSKENVALDS

If the characters accepted Phillip Druskenvald's invitation to dinner after arriving in Wickermoor Village, the couple will have been awaiting them for a fine meal prepared by the Jenkins. This chapter is written under the assumption that the characters followed this quest hook to visit Druskenvald Estate.

WEASELLY WEASELS

While exploring Wickermoor Village, the characters notice a surprisingly large number of weasels scurrying about the town, eventually seeing Filthy Jasper himself scampering off holding a human tooth. Randall Graham, the barber-surgeon, approaches the characters and tells them he has seen the creatures stealing pulled teeth from his shop and scurrying up the hill to the Crooked House. He urges the characters to help put an end to the infestation.

A TRIP UP THE HILL

When the characters leave the village and head northwest toward the hill that holds the Druskenvald Estate, they are approached by Old Rusty, the village groundskeeper. Read or paraphrase the following:

> An old man with wild red-gray hair and filthy clothes scrambles toward you. His eyes darting wildly, he forces words out through labored breathing.
>
> "Death. Doom. Pain. The Crooked Man. The Crooked House. The Crooked Queen. They feed. They laugh. Every step leads to his return. Its return. Her return. Disintegration. Annihilation."

The characters can try to calm Old Rusty, but even if he's made calm, he has nothing coherent to offer the characters. Rusty, whose true identity is Francis Patrini, was just a child when the Crooked House took his family away 70 years ago, and the traumatic experience left him forever changed.

LEARNING MORE

If the characters attempt to learn more about the Crooked House and its history, either now or at some other point when they're in Wickermoor Village, they don't get far. Most of the superstitious locals are so terrified of bringing evil upon themselves that they will not even speak of it out loud.

Even the Newcomers, who pride themselves on reason, dismiss talk of cursed houses as mere fairy tales, unwilling to believe in the supernatural so close to home.

They claim that while some of the families there have had bad luck, those same families may merely have been treating the place as a temporary vacation home before moving away. They genuinely believe—or hope—that the Crooked House is just a house, no matter how spooky its name and reputation are.

The most sinister members of the Followers of the Old Ways (see chapters 8 and 11) know the true history and encourage the notion that the house is perfectly safe. They need the house to feed on as many spirits as possible to quicken the return of the Crooked Queen.

MEET THE JENKINS

When the characters ascend to the Druskenvald Estate, read or paraphrase the following:

> At the top of the hill is a fence with its gate standing open. Beyond the fence is a well-maintained estate featuring a pond, two barns, and a stately, three-story manor home with a wrap-around porch.
>
> While it is not in perfect condition, it is larger and better maintained than many structures in the village. Three people emerge from the nearest barn and wave in your direction.

These people are the Jenkin family: Walter, Gilly, and Dani. At Dani's side is a red-furred dog called Shuck.



THE CONVERSATION WITH THE JENKINS

The Jenkin family approaches the characters to greet them, knowing that the Druskenvalds invited the characters to dinner. Use the details below to guide the conversation. Remember that Walter Jenkin can't speak, but he uses hand signs to communicate with his wife and daughter, who can translate. When his family is not with him, he communicates by writing in a small, worn notebook he keeps in his pocket.

- The Jenkins are on their way to town to buy some necessities and a book for Dani—a rare outing, as they grow food on the estate.
- The family has met the Druskenvalds, who just moved in last evening, but Phillip and Adela haven't been seen yet tonight.
- They were surprised at the arrival of the Druskenvalds—they weren't sure if Phillip and Adela would ever visit—but are pleased to finally meet them.
- The Jenkins have a positive outlook on the people of Wickermoor Village, especially Mayor Somerton.

When the conversation ends, the Jenkins wish the characters a pleasant visit with the Druskenvalds, and they pass through the gate and head down the hill toward Wickermoor Village.

Immediately after they part, the gray cat Wisp strolls placidly out of the bushes, stares for a second at each of the characters individually, lets out a long and sneering "Mrrrreoww...," and then walks away.

THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN

When the characters approach Druskenvald Manor itself, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you get closer to the large manor house, a wave of nausea slams into you. Before your eyes, the pleasant, albeit uncanny façade of the building shifts. The house's appearance becomes shadowed and patchy, with mold and rot spreading across its walls. The angles and lines of the walls, eaves, windows, and roofs shift into jarring and impossible angles. It is a house out of a nightmare.
>
> The tidy gardens nearest the house are quickly overgrown with weeds and thistles. Petals, bright and flourishing just seconds before, wilt and drop away. The house now shows decades of disrepair.
>
> A twisted form appears from nowhere on the porch and waves to you. It calls out, "Welcome to the Crooked House, friends. We've been expecting you."

As the characters get closer, describe to them the form of the **Crooked Man**: a tall, lanky, contorted version of a person. His limbs jut off at odd angles, and his neck bends to the side in the manner of a hanged corpse. Clad in a tattered suit and a bent-top hat that covers his eyes, he smiles with an impossibly large grin filled with crooked, yellow teeth.



A CROOKED CHAT

If the characters strike up a conversation with the Crooked Man, be careful not to give away too much about the plot of the adventure too soon. Let the hints and the foreshadowing start in vague and unsettling means. Some answers he might give to those asking about him include:

- "Who I am is unimportant. What I am is for you to find out. I am your destiny. You will be crooked too."
- "Phillip and Adela are inside, waiting for you. They are getting to know the house. Or, more accurately, the house is getting to know them."
- "Phillip, Adela, you, and all your kind are a curse upon this once beautiful land. You will return from whence you came in blood and fire."
- "Go on in and enjoy the refreshments I've prepared for you. Phillip and Adela will be with you shortly."

FAREWELL FOR NOW...

If the characters attempt to attack the Crooked Man in any way, he invokes the power of the Crooked House and simply disappears. Otherwise, after the Crooked Man has said everything he has to say, he doffs his hat toward the characters, gives a mocking bow, and vanishes. As if on command, a cacophonous boom of thunder shakes the house, and a violent storm rolls in. The sky opens up with pouring rain and howling winds.

The Crooked Man appears to the characters at least once per floor (see "The First Floor," "The Second Floor," and "The Third Floor" later in this chapter), but no matter what the characters do, he will not attack them throughout their investigation of the Crooked House. Additionally, you can have him appear and disappear at your discretion to maintain tension and dread throughout this chapter.

THE CROOKED HOUSE FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the Crooked House has the following features:

CEILINGS. Ceilings are 10 feet high.

CROOKED TEETH. The Crooked House is filled with human teeth pried from its myriad victims or collected by weasels from under pillows. When a creature fails a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, rather than spotting or finding nothing, they discover a single human tooth no matter what they're searching for.

DOORS. Locked (DC 15) or stuck doors (as noted in area descriptions) can be broken down as a Utilize action with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

HALLWAYS. Hallways within the Crooked House are 5 feet wide.

INDESTRUCTIBLE. The Crooked House's structure and windows have Immunity to all damage.

LIGHTING. The house's interior locations are unlit. Area descriptions assume the characters have a light source or other means of seeing in the dark.

MEMENTOS. Mementos required to gain entry to the Cauldron Room (H17) have Immunity to all damage.

UNEVEN FOOTING. The unnaturally crooked floors make it difficult to move quickly through the house. Creatures other than the house's denizens that take the Dash action must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or treat the house as Difficult Terrain until the end of the turn.

WINDOWS. The windows are sealed and unopenable by any means. Additionally, the windows magically obscure what is inside the house, showing only darkness within when looking through from outside.



THE FIRST FLOOR

The first floor of the Crooked House is where the characters first encounter the hauntings of the manor and start to discover the horrors that have happened there.

The **Crooked Man** appears in the hallway following the séance in the Parlor (area H3), brandishing an axe that he swings wildly at the characters. His blows never connect, however, and he shouts, "I cut them down, one by one!" before disappearing.

FIRST FLOOR LOCATIONS

Below are the rooms that can be found on the first floor of the Crooked House, corresponding to map 12.1.

H1: PORCH

First Floor

> A deafening crash of thunder rolls through the ancient timbers, rattling the very bones of the house. Lightning splits the sky, striking just feet from the porch as the air crackles with energy. The wind howls, whipping rain in relentless sheets, threatening to drench you to the core.
>
> The porch offers no refuge; the storm seems alive, clawing at you from every side. With nowhere else to go, the Crooked House beckons. The front door creaks open of its own accord, a low groan of invitation—or warning—drawing you inside to investigate.

No Escape. A creature that steps off the porch takes 3 (1d6) Lightning and 3 (1d6) Thunder damage, and appears back on the porch where it tried to leave.

H2: FOYER

First Floor

> This ruined foyer might once have been quite grand in its design but now languishes in the decay of decades of neglect. Above, a crooked chandelier sways gently, casting flickering shadows across cracked tiles that stretch toward three closed doors. A staircase twists unnaturally along the wall, leading to a second-floor balcony that looms in darkness. Every inch of the walls is consumed by portraits—families, lifelike yet haunted, with wide, terror-filled eyes that seem to follow your every movement.

The ceiling of the Foyer rises to 20 feet high.

Cursed Paintings. These paintings immortalize the families sacrificed within the Crooked House over centuries. Most of the name plaques have been worn away, but with closer inspection, the characters can uncover the tragic history through a few noteworthy portraits described below.

THE LOCKWOODS. The patriarch in this portrait bears an unsettling resemblance to the Crooked Man. The plaque, though weathered, reveals the names: Eustace Lockwood, his wife Petunia, their daughter Sally, their infant son Arthur, and Petunia's frail mother, Keziah. Standing beside them are their servants—Joseph and Gail Patrini, along with their son Francis.

THE DRUSKENVALDS. The familiar faces in this portrait are rendered in a chilling light. Though the characters cannot know it, this painting foreshadows the Druskenvalds' doom. Adela stands uncharacteristically stoic, adorned with a woven wicker choker and vibrant red and orange flowers in her hair. Phillip is weeping, a black crown of six points atop his head and a crescent moon pin glinting from his right lapel.

THE CHARACTERS. The most shocking of all is the final portrait—it features the characters themselves. They grin widely in the frame, but their mouths are empty, void of teeth, their hollow smiles a haunting omen.

Vessla Browntooth laid curses on the portraits. A character who examines the paintings must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or take 3 (1d6) Psychic damage and be cursed. When the cursed character rolls a 1 on a D20 Test, a **Boogleswarm** emerges from cracks or holes in the walls and attacks that character immediately. That character can't trigger the curse's effect again until they finish a Short or Long Rest. This curse lasts for 24 hours or until the character leaves the Crooked House.

H3: PARLOR

First Floor

When the characters enter the Parlor, read or paraphrase the following:

> This parlor contains furnishings with once-elegant upholstery now caked with dust. On a circular table by the cobweb-choked fireplace is a wooden spirit board of impeccable craftsmanship. A small heart-shaped planchette rests atop it, engraved with the initials "A.D."

This spirit board clearly belongs to Adela Druskenvald and can be used to conduct a séance that can give the characters critical information to unravel the mysteries of the Crooked House. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check knows that to begin the séance, two or more characters must place a hand on the planchette and ask if there is a spirit in the room.

If two or more characters agree to use the spirit board, it summons the spirit of Joseph Patrini, the servant who was murdered by Eustace Lockwood 70 years ago. A pleasant fire crackles to life in the fireplace, and the planchette moves to "HELLO."

The spirit board has numbers, letters, and the words "YES," "NO," "HELLO," and "GOODBYE." If one of the characters using the spirit board asks a question, the spirit of Joseph Patrini will answer to the best of his ability.

His memories are muddled, clouded by time and the horrors he's witnessed, and though far from omnipotent, he remembers the night of Eustace Lockwood's rampage with grim clarity. He knows of the hag lurking in the attic and the six cursed mementos that will unlock the hidden chamber where she waits.

You can decide what information to provide and what to hold back, but if clever questions are asked, be sure to reward the characters with useful information. Use this opportunity to provide clues, foreshadow, and increase the tension. Below are some possible questions and answers to guide your own play:

WHO ARE YOU? PATRINI
ARE PHILLIP AND ADELA HERE? YES
WHERE ARE THEY? UPSTAIRS
HOW DID YOU DIE? MURDER
WHO KILLED YOU? EUSTACE LOCKWOOD
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS? HAG
WHERE IS THE HAG? ATTIC
HOW DO WE GET TO THE ATTIC? 6 MEMENTOS
WHAT ARE THE MEMENTOS? GEM KEY CUP DOLL BEAR PIN
WHERE ARE THEY? EVERY FLOOR

Roll 1d10 every time the characters ask a question. On a 1, every character using the board takes 2 (1d4) Psychic damage. For each damage roll after the first, increase the damage die as follows: 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, and to a maximum of 1d12.

As the séance draws to its close, Patrini offers one final, urgent message. This is your chance to reveal any critical information the characters may have overlooked. If they have gathered all the necessary clues, Patrini's final words are etched in chilling clarity: "FIND MY SON HE LIVES." This refers to Old Rusty, the groundskeeper of Wickermoor Village (see chapter 11).

The planchette slowly drags itself to "GOODBYE," and the fire in the hearth extinguishes with a hiss, plunging the room into a suffocating darkness. Any attempts to resume the séance are met only with cold, dead silence.

Mementos. A list of the locations of the six mementos needed to break the barrier to reach Vessla Browntooth is included in area H16.

H4: GALLERY
First Floor

When the characters enter the Gallery, read or paraphrase the following:

> This circular room, built into the base of the manor's turret, houses a modest gallery. Paintings of sweeping landscapes and dour busts of forgotten historical figures dominate the space, their placards forever faded from the decades of neglect. The most prominent piece in this collection sits in an alcove at the far end of the room. Carved from weathered marble is a larger-than-life statue of an albino peacock. One eye socket is empty, and the other features a dull red bloodstone.

The landscapes in the room were all feverishly painted by Keziah Endicott in the final year of her life, inspired by her dreams in the Crooked House. As a Study action, a character who inspects the paintings and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers her signature and that each one contains hidden weasels, centipedes, and pigeons, all grotesque.

The peacock statue animates and attacks (use the **Basilisk** stat block, except it is a Construct) when a creature attempts to remove its bloodstone. On Initiative count 20 of each round, the twisted spirit of Keziah appears and randomly selects a character, who must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or vanish and be drawn into a demiplane inside the landscape painting. While there, the character has the Incapacitated condition and can't be targeted by attacks, spells, or other effects. At the end of their next turn, the character is expelled from the painting and lands in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of it with the Prone condition. When the peacock is defeated, it crumbles to pieces, and the shade of Keziah vanishes with an unsettling cackle.

Treasure. The red bloodstone gem eye of the peacock statue is one of the six mementos needed to break through the barrier into the attic.

H5: MUSIC ROOM
First Floor

> A scattered array of decaying instruments surrounds the wooden dance floor at the room's center, its boards blackened with age and splintered by time's cruel hand. On the wall, a large oval mirror hangs, its long, jagged crack twisting the room's reflection into a crooked mockery, where, through the fractured glass, everything appears stretched and warped. At the far end, a harpsichord stands, its lid propped open like a yawning casket, its rusted wires stretched like the brittle tendons of some forgotten corpse. The yellowed ivory keys lie exposed, tangled with cobwebs.



12.1 The Crooked House (First Floor)

When a character steps onto the dance floor, the harpsichord begins playing a discordant melody that can be heard throughout the first floor of the Crooked House, and the mirror shows the room filled with distorted spectral dancers while the song plays. These are spirits of people sacrificed in the Crooked House over the years.

Roll Initiative! Any creature that can hear the music must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition for 1 minute. While Charmed in this way, the creature must use all its movement on its turn to dance erratically without leaving its space and takes 3 (1d6) Psychic damage. The creature repeats the save at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success. For every three consecutive turns a creature dances in this way, it gains 1 Exhaustion level.

Weasels. When Initiative is rolled, 7 (3d4) Weasels scurry out of the walls and attack, speaking with one voice: "Vessla Browntooth will sacrifice your souls!"

Harpsichord. The harpsichord has Immunity to all damage. To stop the discordant music, a character must sit down at the harpsichord and attempt to play a different song. The character must make a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check. On a success the music stops, ending the Charmed condition caused by the music. If the character is not proficient in any type of Musical Instrument, they experience a supernatural ability to play this harpsichord with the assistance of Joseph Patrini, the benevolent spirit that the characters can commune with in the Parlor (area H3).

When the discordant melody ends, the shimmering blue spirit of Patrini appears at the harpsichord and plays a melancholic song, wistfully singing about better times and the fall of the Lockwood household. The lyrics are as follows:

> *How I long to see the glow of fire's face in my window.*
> *How tender she'd dispel the night and fill my heart with amber light.*
> *Those radiant hours now fade in me slowly, and time, bereft, drifts icy and lonely.*
> *Where shrieking death stripped life from their bones, and all light now gone from a house I called home.*
> *Let there come a wind to drive light in and let life in my home again.*

The spirit of Patrini then fades, and a single black ivory key pops out of the harpsichord, clattering to the floor.

Treasure. The black ivory harpsichord key is one of the six mementos needed to break through the barrier into the attic.

H6: DINING ROOM

First Floor

When the characters enter the Dining Room, read or paraphrase the following:

> A grand dining table commands the center of the room, its surface unnervingly clean amidst the dust-choked neglect that clings to the surrounding chairs, sideboard, and cabinets.
>
> But most unsettling of all is the feast spread across the table—a garish display of roasted boar, poultry, fish, and other meats, laid out on gleaming silver platters. Plates of sautéed vegetables, bowls of rich gravy, and trays of sweets complete the banquet, their aroma intoxicating, almost too perfect. The air is replete with the scent of the feast, but beneath the savory allure lingers a sense of apprehension, as if the meal is waiting for more than just a bite.

The food and tablecloth come to life when the characters approach the table, twisting into a putrid-smelling abomination and a smothering cloth. An **Ochre Jelly** and an **Animated Rug of Smothering** attack the characters until they're destroyed.

Feast of Fury. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), one of the foul food items makes a ranged attack against a random character within the Dining Room as it flies toward them. Roll on the Phantom Feast table to determine what food or implement attacks. These attacks cease when the cockatrices and boars have been destroyed.

Phantom Feast

1d20	Effect
1–8	**Sugar Bowl.** *+5 to hit;* 6 (1d6 + 3) Bludgeoning damage; target has the Blinded condition until the end of its next turn.
9–14	**Roast Fish.** *+4 to hit;* 4 (1d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage; target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.
15–18	**Lobster Claw.** *+5 to hit;* 9 (1d12 + 3) Slashing damage.
19	**Creampuff.** *+4 to hit;* no damage; character is suffocating with no chance to hold their breath. The character, or another creature within reach, can take a Utilize action to clear the dessert from their throat and end the suffocation.
20	**Beef Tongue.** *+4 to hit;* no damage; character must succeed on DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the Prone and Grappled conditions (escape DC 15), and they have the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Treasure. As a Search action, a character can rifle through the food and succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to find a cloudy *Pearl of Power* and a gold ring worth 75 GP.

H7: KITCHEN
First Floor

The kitchen lies in utter ruin, its floor littered with shards of broken pottery and rusted cutlery. A heavy metal shelf has collapsed, ripping chunks of plaster from the wall and crushing a table beneath its weight. Nearby, a hulking brick oven stands ominously, its iron door sealed shut by a thick, rusted lock.

Suddenly, the greasy stench of burning flesh fills the air as black smoke seeps through the cracks around the oven door. Muffled screams and frantic pounding echo from within, as though something—or someone—is trapped inside.

This is no ordinary fire, but a cruel ruse crafted by the malevolent spirits bound to the Crooked House. The agonized sounds lure the characters into action, tempting them to open the Lock or force the door. The moment they try, the trap is sprung. The iron door bursts open with a thunderous crash, revealing the shrieking, flaming souls trapped within. A wave of blistering heat and acrid smoke floods the Kitchen, choking and unrelenting, as the trapped spirits scream their torment into the air.

Each creature in the Kitchen must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) Fire damage and 3 (1d6) Acid damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Then the burning spirits disappear, and the oven goes cold.

As a Search action, a creature that examines the Lock before interacting with it can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the faintly glowing glyph, which can be disarmed as a Utilize action and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Failing the check by 5 or more sets off the trap.

H8: CONSERVATORY
First Floor

Rain hammers against the glass walls and ceiling of the conservatory, while desiccated vines and withered shrubs choke the space. Benches are interspersed throughout the ruin, and one faces a shockingly vibrant tree—its green fruit the only sign of life in the decayed room. Seated upon the bench is a pale woman in a black mourning gown, a faded green ribbon tied around her neck. In her hands, she cradles a delicate porcelain teacup filled with dark liquid, her gaze lost in distant memories.

This is the spirit of Petunia Lockwood manifested. She uses the **Wight** stat block, except her alignment is Neutral and she only has the Life Drain action. She gazes wistfully at the thriving bergamot tree—the same one she tended in life, whose fruit flavored the tea she holds. Petunia doesn't notice the characters until they speak or approach her directly.

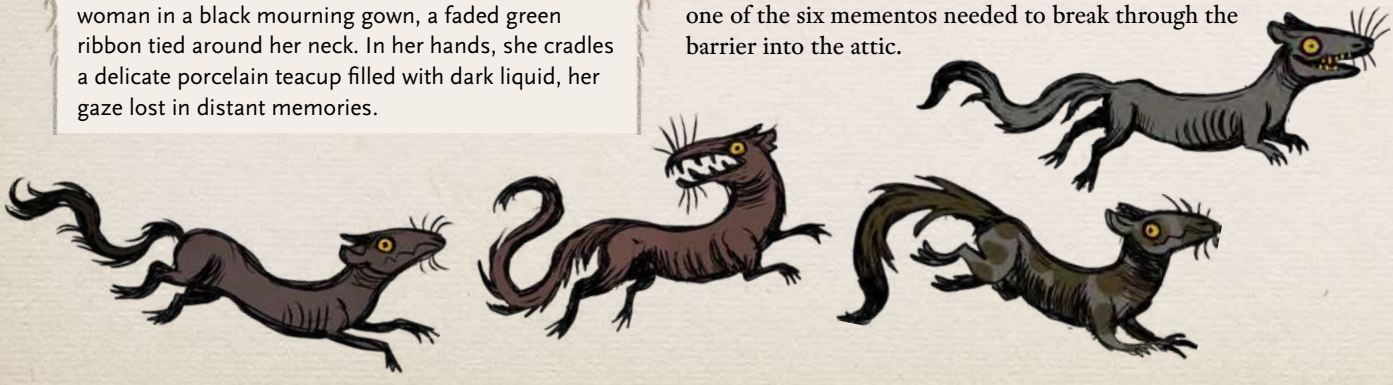
Petunia's fragmented memories cling only to the life she once knew; she remembers nothing of the horrors that have befallen her family. The twisted nature of the Crooked Man, Vessla Browntooth, and the primordial power of the Crooked House remain beyond her understanding. The characters will need her cup, a precious heirloom, as one of the six mementos to break the barrier to the attic, but Petunia will not part with it easily.

As an Influence action, a character can convince her to give them the cup with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, made with Advantage if they appeal to her love for her children, Sally and Arthur. If Petunia hands over the cup, she implores them to help her children before fading peacefully into the gloom. If the characters show Petunia both the wooden doll from area H10 and the blue teddy bear from area H13, they succeed automatically.

However, should the characters try to intimidate Petunia or forcefully take the cup, her sorrow twists into rage. She attacks, her grief transforming into fury as she seeks to drag the characters into her eternal mourning.

The Green Ribbon. The green ribbon Petunia wears falls away if she is reduced to 0 Hit Points, or if a character forcibly removes it. To remove it, Petunia must have the Grappled, Incapacitated, or Restrained condition, and a character must take the Utilize action and succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (the character's choice). When the ribbon comes undone her head rolls from her body, causing blood to spray around the room. Creatures within a 30-foot Emanation originating from her are drenched in her blood and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage. Once her head rolls off, she is destroyed and fades away.

Treasure. Petunia's *Green Ribbon* falls to the ground and is left behind after she fades away, whether in peace or violence. The white porcelain teacup is one of the six mementos needed to break through the barrier into the attic.



THE SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is where the characters continue their investigation and collection of the mementos needed to eventually reach Vessla Browntooth.

The **Crooked Man** appears in the hallway following the exploration of the Master Bedroom (area H12), swinging from a noose fastened to the ceiling. He slams into the walls and shakes the whole house, exclaiming, "I couldn't live with the guilt!" before disappearing.

SECOND FLOOR LOCATIONS

Below are the rooms that can be found on the second floor of the Crooked House as shown on map 12.2 This floor is accessible from the stairway in the Foyer (area H2).

H9: SITTING ROOM
Second Floor

> This formal sitting room looks over the foyer past the cracked wooden railing, providing a direct view of the tilted dust-covered chandelier. The finely crafted furniture is now shrouded by cobwebs, and the shelves that flank the window are filled with all manner of antiques. An ancient grandfather clock ticks away despite the decades of dereliction.

As the characters begin to investigate the room, the clock hands spin violently and then stop at 12 o'clock. The chimes strike out, and on the twelfth chime, each character on the first or second floors must succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, a character gains the Frightened condition for 1 minute. A character in the Sitting Room that is Frightened in this way can't leave the room by any means. At the same time, a shrieking spirit covered in biting weasels emerges from the clock. The **Boogleswarm** consumes the apparition in an instant and then turns on the characters.

The minute hand on the clock moves rapidly back around to 12 o'clock. On Initiative count 20, the clock chimes, warning of what's happening. On the fifth chime, another spirit emerges with a new boogleswarm ravaging it. The clock continues to chime while the characters are in the room.

As a Utilize action, a character can disable the gears on the clock with a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using Thieves' Tools. The clock has AC 15, HP 5, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage. Disabling the gears or destroying the clock stops more spirits and weasels from appearing.

Treasure. All that is left of the devoured spirits is a gold pocket watch worth 100 GP with the words "Remember the Third" etched into the back.

H10: CHILDREN'S ROOM
Second Floor

> This children's bedroom has a pair of tiny beds flanking a darkened window. Toys are strewn carelessly across the floor. A large, weathered toy chest sits against the wall, facing a child's armoire, while in the corner, the closet door hangs slightly ajar.
>
> Suddenly, from a pile of letter blocks, a small wooden doll clambers forward, its painted face chipped and its yarn hair frayed. It trembles with fear, raising its tiny arms toward you, its voice soft and innocent: "Please! Please check for monsters!"

The doll contains a fragment of Sally Lockwood's soul forever bound to the Crooked House, despite her escape and eventual reincarnation into Shuck. It is terrified of the bogeyman that it believes is waiting to devour it. There is indeed a **Lurker in the Dark** hiding in the shadows of the room, which must be destroyed before the fragment of Sally's soul can be soothed.

There are six possible spots where the lurker might be hiding. As a Search action, a character can check one of these locations and make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, roll on the Lurking Shadows table. If the result is the same as the location being checked, the character finds the lurker, which attacks until it is destroyed. If the result doesn't match, the character finds nothing but hears a scraping sound from the location rolled.



Lurking Shadows

1d6	Location
1	In the Closet
2	Under the Left Bed
3	Under the Right Bed
4	In the Toy Chest
5	In the Armoire
6	Outside the Window

If the lurker is discovered outside the window, it begins combat by using Dark Teleport to appear next to the character who discovered it. If it isn't revealed in six attempts, the lurker attacks from the ceiling, surprising the characters. Once the lurker is destroyed, the wooden doll climbs onto the left bed and settles in comfortably before becoming inanimate as the soul fragment is put to rest.

Treasure. The wooden doll is one of the six mementos needed to break through the barrier into the attic. The characters gain Heroic Inspiration for putting Sally to rest.

As a Study action, a character who looks through the closet and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices an eye move on a satchel (*The Bag*) hanging behind dusty children's clothes. The first character who touches the satchel automatically becomes attuned to it. If the character is already attuned to three magic items, they must choose one of those to which their Attunement ends.

H11: BATHROOM
Second Floor

This oddly warm and humid bathroom is filled with steam, nearly shrouding a crumbling sink and cracked bathtub with clawed feet. There are streaks of mold across the tiled walls and floor that fill the room with a pungent odor.

When the characters investigate the bathtub, they find that the inside is stained a bright red, and blood begins bubbling up from the drain in the tub. The door slams shut and locks as the room rapidly fills with putrid blood.

The Blood Rises. Roll Initiative! The level of blood rises dramatically on Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), completely filling the room on the fourth round. Once the room completely fills, each creature in the Bathroom must hold its breath or begin suffocating.

It is not possible to plug the drain, and the only way to escape is out the way the characters came in. The door is locked (DC 20). Unlocking or breaking down the door lets the foul blood empty out into the hallway in a gush, and any creatures in the room end up in the hallway with the Prone condition.

Weasels. When Initiative is rolled, 7 (3d4) **Weasels** scurry out of the walls and attack, speaking with one voice: "Vessla Browntooth will drink your blood!" The weasels are unhindered by the blood.

Treasure. A wooden bath toy in the form of a yellow duck washes out with the blood. It acts as a *Figurine of Wondrous Power* (Silver Raven) but with a duck instead of a raven.

H12: MASTER BEDROOM
Second Floor



A large bed with a torn canopy is the centerpiece of this room that's complete with a bent wardrobe, pock-marked nightstands, and a cracked vanity. The far end of the room features a double door that leads to a second-story balcony. Beside the door stands a dusty writing desk, atop which sits a beautiful black leather journal adorned with silver embossed initials that read "P.D."

Beneath the faded covers of the master bed, a human-sized shape squirms frantically, as if in the throes of a terrible nightmare.

The creature under the covers is Vessla Browntooth's familiar Filthy Jasper (**Vermin Familiar** (Weasel)), who writhes and wriggles in one of Phillip Druskenvald's suits along with twelve **Weasels**. They attack when the covers of the bed are pulled back, or if he is attacked in some way before that happens. Jasper and the weasels speak with one voice: "Vessla Browntooth will live in your nightmares!" Dozens of human teeth are scattered throughout the bedding.

When Filthy Jasper is Bloodied, he attempts to escape the room through a window, the balcony doors, or a hole in the wall, easily passing through if he makes it that far.

Journal. Phillip Druskenvald's journal is locked (DC 10), or it can be broken easily as a Utilize action.

Reading the journal reveals that the moment Phillip entered Wickermoor Hollow, he lost the fearsome powers of a lord of death that he possesses everywhere else in Druskenvald. He has no guesses as to why this happened and has a feeling of dread that grows larger every night. Adela has pleaded with him to try to leave Wickermoor Hollow before the *Ghostlight Express* returns, but Phillip talked her into agreeing to stay so they both might face their fears and come out stronger in the end.

Phillip has his doubts but is willing to try to uncover the reason he's lost his powers. He also has learned from the Jenkins about how dangerous and deadly life in Wickermoor Hollow is, especially away from the village. He wants to help the people of the hollow and earn back the trust he lost by neglecting the minor province for so long.

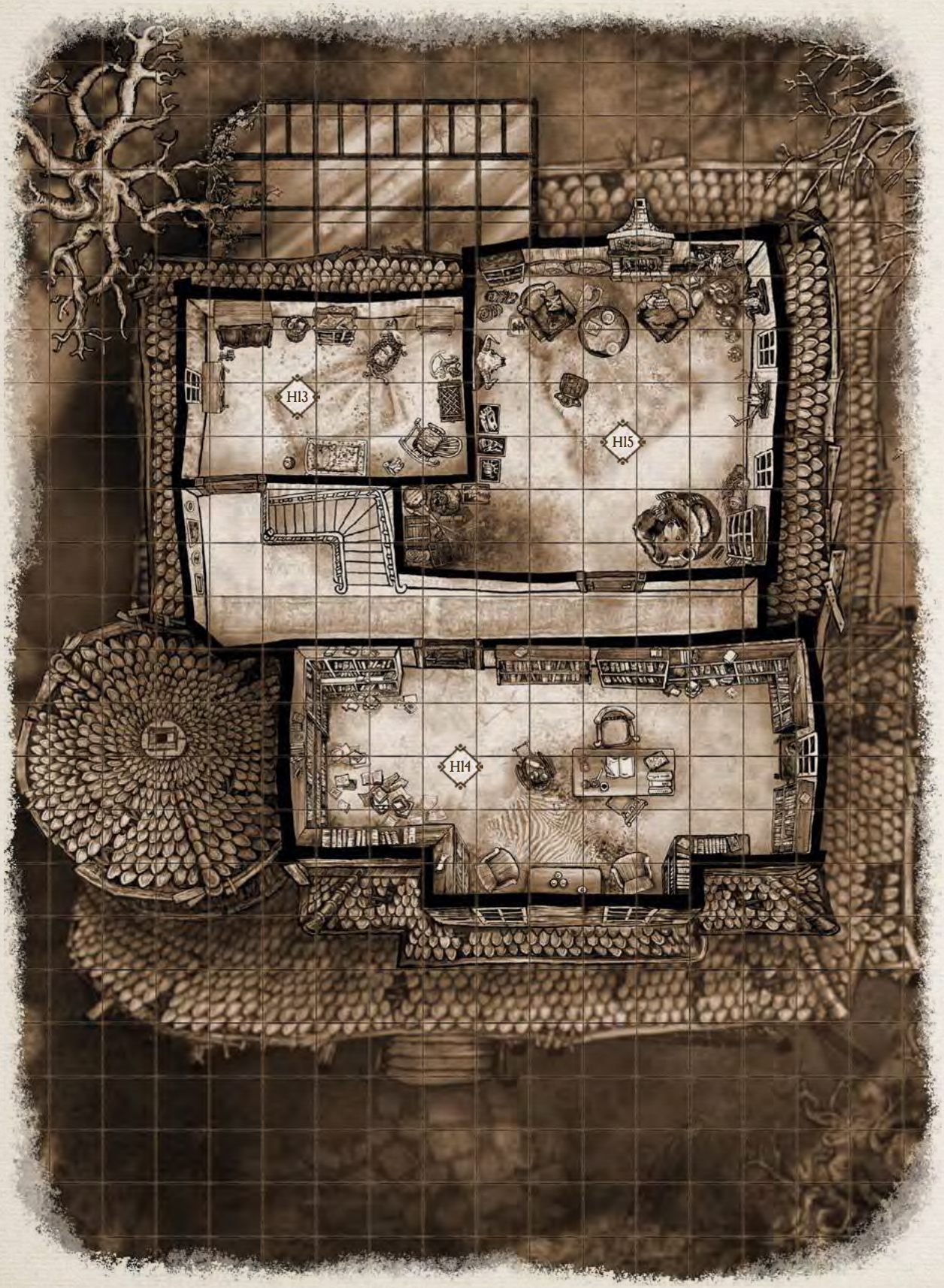
You can use this opportunity to include any additional information about Druskenvald, Phillip and Adela, and the Crescent Court that you wish to convey (see chapters 1 and 10).

Balcony. The double door that leads to the second-floor balcony is locked (DC 15).

No Escape. A character who jumps or climbs off the balcony takes 3 (1d6) Lightning damage plus 3 (1d6) Thunder damage and appears back on the balcony.



12.2 The Crooked House (Second Floor)



12.3 The Crooked House (Third Floor)

THE THIRD FLOOR

The third floor is where the characters finally discover the secret door to the attic.

The **Crooked Man** appears in the hallway following the exploration of the Nursery (area H13), bent and folded into a nearly rectangular shape. He shuffles across the floor as the sound of snapping bones fills the air, proclaiming, "She stuffed me into a crack in the foundation!" before disappearing.

THIRD FLOOR LOCATIONS

Below are the rooms that can be found on the third floor of the Crooked House as shown on map 12.3. This floor can be accessed by the staircase on the second-floor hall near the Children's Room (area H10).

H13: NURSERY
Third Floor

> The moment the door creaks open, an infant's wail pierces the air, sharp and relentless, clawing at your nerves. The room, a nursery, is filled with ordinary furnishings, yet the centerpieces—the mahogany crib and cradle—are riddled with countless tiny holes. The cradle rocks violently, and within it, a squirming, shrieking infant shimmers with a spectral blue glow, its cries filling the room with an overwhelming sense of dread.

This is the spirit of Arthur Lockwood, trapped within the cradle, his ghostly form writhing with distress. No matter what the characters attempt, Arthur remains inconsolable—his cries never ceasing, echoing in the space like a terrible, oppressive weight. Only his beloved blue teddy bear in the crib can calm him.

Stuffed Animals. When the characters investigate the crib, they find four worn stuffed animals: a black goat, an antlered bunny, and a round crow, all of which surround a blue teddy bear. If any of them are moved, touched, or otherwise disturbed, the goat, bunny, and crow animate and attack. Use the **Quasit** stat block for the three stuffed animals. When defeated, they revert to their inanimate form, purged of the malevolent spirits that possessed them.



On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), Arthur's wails grow loud enough that all creatures within the Crooked House can hear them. Creatures other than the house's denizens that can hear the crying must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or have the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn.

Once Arthur has his bear, he can finally be soothed as an Influence action with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to talk to him gently, or a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check to sing him a soothing lullaby.

When Arthur finally stops crying, he raises his hands up to the character who succeeded in calming him down. Once the spectral baby is picked up and held, he falls asleep and fades peacefully.

Treasure. The blue teddy bear is one of the six mementos needed to break through the barrier into the attic. The characters gain Heroic Inspiration for putting Arthur to rest.

H14: LIBRARY
Third Floor

> This cluttered library is filled with sagging bookshelves close to bursting with dusty tomes. More books litter the stained rug below. A cobweb-choked liquor cart leans precariously against a once-sturdy desk at the center of the room.
>
> A leaning stack of old books rests on the desk, and sitting atop that, a gray cat observes you with large golden eyes. It opens its mouth and speaks with the voice of a man. "Tell me a tale."

This cat is Wisp, the cat taken in by the Jenkin family that is actually a shape-shifted, Chaotic Evil **Ketgrinn**. He speaks with the stolen voice of Walter Jenkin, although the characters would have no way of knowing this. He is clearly alive and not a spirit.

Wisp is a minion of Vessla Browntooth and is hoping to trick the characters into writing their stories into a book, giving the ketgrinn a tether to their souls. Wisp acts benevolent and lies as much as possible to encourage the characters to simply share a story with him. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the cat has wicked intentions.

If the characters attack, threaten, or show hostility toward Wisp, he shifts into his true form and attempts to escape out the window, which he can pass through effortlessly.

Spin a Yarn. If a character tells a story, Wisp deems the story acceptable if the character succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) or Intelligence (History)

check. As a story is told, one of the books on the table opens, and the pages are filled with words and illustrations matching what the character shared. After three books are filled, Wisp thanks the characters and winks at them before disappearing.

As the cat vanishes, a sense of magical whimsy washes over the characters. They can immediately expend Hit Point Dice as if they finished a Short Rest, and they add a +4 bonus to each Hit Die expended.

The Catch. 5 minutes after Wisp leaves the library, any character who shared a story that was written in a book must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or have the Charmed condition for 1 minute. While Charmed in this way, the character attacks the nearest creature using their most powerful attack or spell for 1 minute. A Charmed character makes a DC 10 Charisma saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themself on a success.

Treasure. Four of the bottles on the liquor cart are medicinal tonics (*Potions of Healing*).



H15: TROPHY ROOM
Third Floor

> This moldering trophy room is teeming with stuffed creatures of all varieties—standing on the floor, resting on tables, placed in display cases, or mounted on walls. Each of these trophies is frighteningly uncanny, with figures in unnatural poses, enormous glass eyes, and strangely bulging hides.

This is the threshold to the secret attic door, which is hidden beneath layers of shadow and sealed by a powerful magical barrier. Should the characters touch the trapdoor, these creatures defend the entrance to the attic.

Secret Trapdoor. As a Search action, a character can succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the trapdoor hidden in the ceiling. When the trapdoor is opened, it pulls downward, releasing a folding wooden ladder that leads into area H16.

When a character touches the trap door, read or paraphrase the following:

> Without warning, the creatures around you begin to convulse and writhe—hissing, barking, howling, flapping, yipping—all merging into a maddening cacophony that claws at your mind. Amidst the frenzy, you feel a force burrow into your psyche—its source, which provoked this eruption of madness, remains veiled in the frenzy of limbs and snarls.

Psychic Roar. Roll Initiative! On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the stuffed brown bear within this room emits a pulse of psychic energy, and each character must succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence saving throw or take 1 Psychic damage.

On the second round, the DC increases to 11, and the damage increases to 2 (1d4). On the third round, the DC is 12 and the damage is 3 (1d6). On the fourth and subsequent rounds until the pulse is stopped, the DC is 13 and the damage 4 (1d8).

The characters can locate and destroy the instigating trophy causing the psychic pulse using various ability checks. A total of three successful checks allows the characters to locate the focus of this source: the brown bear in the northeast corner of the room. Each successive check helps the characters narrow it down more. The DC is 14, but after a successful ability check, further uses of the same check increase by 3.

For example, if the first character succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, the next Wisdom (Perception) check is DC 17, and the third is DC 20. However, if the second check attempted was an Intelligence (Arcana) check instead, the DC would only be 14 instead of 17. Therefore, different tactics working together are more effective than one tactic used repeatedly.

Use the following checks as a guide for what characters might attempt—and be flexible:

- Wisdom (Perception) to notice where the noises are loudest and the movements more visible.
- Intelligence (Investigation) to discern patterns and direction in the noise and motion.
- Intelligence (Arcana) to focus on the arcane energies and their most likely points of emanation.
- Wisdom (Insight or Medicine) can observe the other characters in the room and how they are reacting to the pulse based on their location in the room.
- Spells like *Detect Magic* can't find the exact source but can narrow the focus and count as one automatic success. The same spell can't generate another success.

After three successful checks, or any alternative solutions to the problem you deem effective, the characters locate the stuffed brown bear.

Weasels. When Initiative is rolled, 7 (3d4) **Weasels** scurry out of the walls and attack, speaking with one voice: "Vessla Browntooth will eat your flesh!"

Spirit Inside. When the characters identify the instigating bear, they also discover that a woman has been sewn inside with only her face sticking out of the bear's neck beneath its crooked snout. This is the spirit of Gail Patrini, who joins the bestial chorus with her own roars.

As a Utilize action, a creature can rip open the taxidermized bear, freeing the spirit and the many pounds of sawdust the bear had been stuffed with. Gail looks confused and says nothing but pulls herself free from the hide. She then removes a silver pin from her hair and stabs it into the bear's nose before fading with a bewildered and strangely bestial grunt.

Treasure. The silver hairpin is one of the six mementos needed to break through the barrier into the attic.

THE ATTIC

This is where Vessla Browntooth lives and performs her vile magic. She has captured Phillip and Adela Druskenvald, keeping them in a stupor of feverish nightmares. She has been performing a ritual in her Cauldron Room (area H17) in preparation for the sacrifice of Phillip and Adela within. She has been alerted to the characters' coming by the weasels that scurry through the walls and has laid a trap for them.

ATTIC LOCATIONS

Below are the rooms that can be found in the attic of the Crooked House as shown on map 12.4. This floor can be accessed through the trap door in the Trophy Room (area H15).

H16: SECRET LANDING

Attic

> The cramped space at the top of the ladder is bathed in an eerie, blood-red glow, cast from runic symbols etched into the wooden walls, floor, and ceiling. Each marking pulses with a sinister energy, as if alive with some ancient, malignant force. On the wall opposite the trap door, a small door shimmers with the same haunting light, its glow flickering like a silent, unholy invitation into whatever darkness lies beyond.

This is the final attic chamber before Vessla's Cauldron Room (area H17). The door and the wall it's built into are warded with a magical barrier that is completely impassable.

Mementos. A character who examines the symbols finds six empty circles in the runic markings perfectly sized for the six mementos the characters have been collecting throughout the Crooked House:

GEM. Keziah Endicott's bloodstone, found in the Gallery (area H4).
KEY. Joseph Patrini's harpsichord key, found in the Music Room (area H5).
CUP. Petunia Lockwood's teacup, found in the Conservatory (area H8).
DOLL. Sally Lockwood's doll, found in the Children's Room (area H10).
BEAR. Arthur Lockwood's teddy bear, found in the Nursery (area H13).
PIN. Gail Patrini's hairpin, found in the Trophy Room (area H15).

> When the six mementos are carefully placed into the vacant slots within the glowing runic circles, the room fills with a rising, arcane energy. The air crackles, and the barrier before you shimmers, wavering as if resisting for one final moment, before fading into nothingness with a soft, eerie hiss. The door, now unlocked, creaks open, revealing a dark passage.

This passage leads to the Cauldron Room—where Vessla Browntooth awaits. The final confrontation looms, her presence already thick in the air, beckoning the characters toward the showdown that will decide all.

H17: CAULDRON ROOM

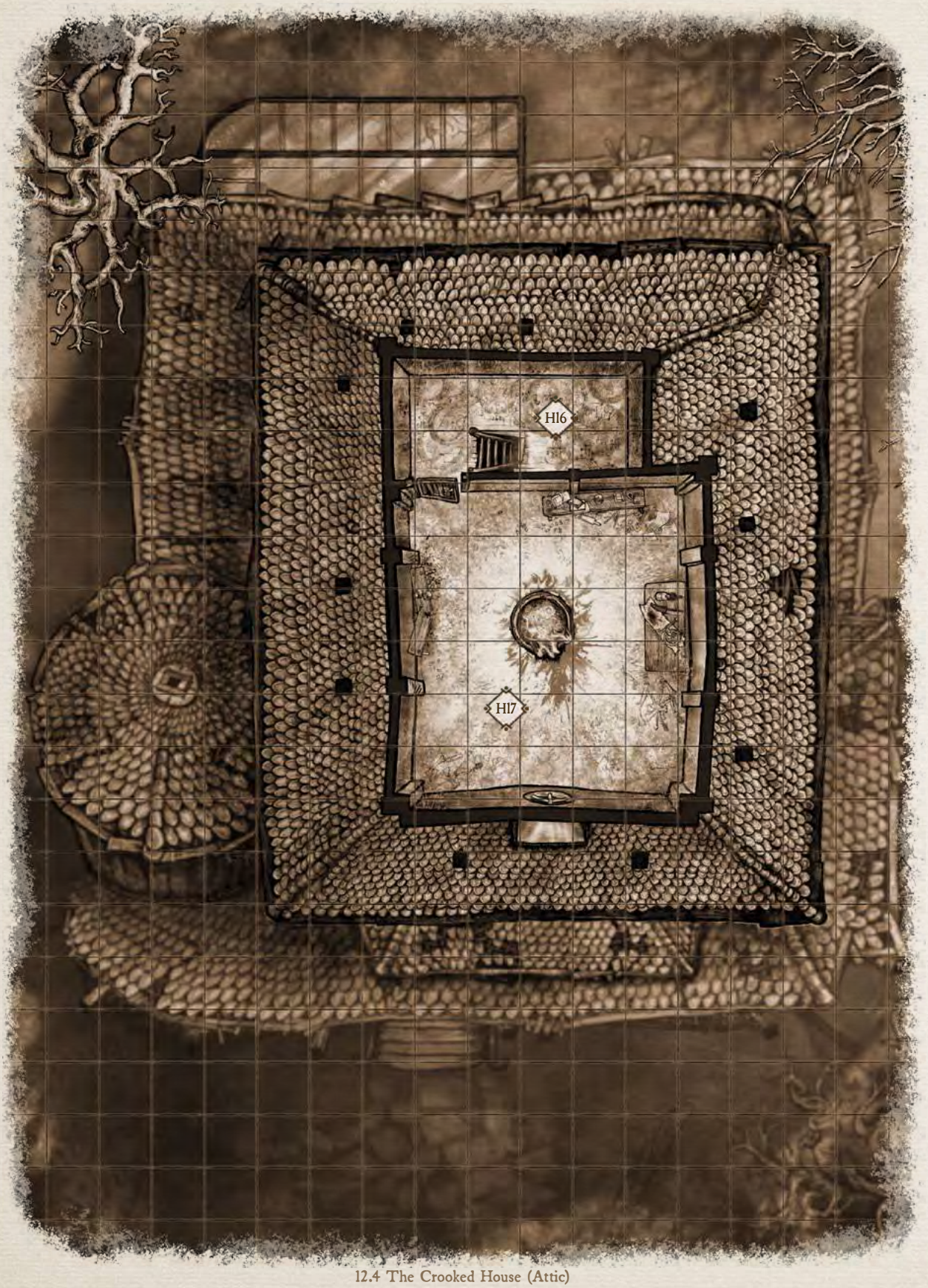
Attic

> The floor of this secret attic room is covered with human teeth that crunch beneath your feet. At the center of the chamber looms a massive cauldron, its bubbling contents glowing an eerie red, casting flickering shadows across the walls. Bound and slumped against either side of the cauldron, barely conscious, are Phillip and Adela, their wrists raw from the ropes that bind them.
>
> Beyond the cauldron, a cloaked figure sways and moves in strange, erratic jerks, as though her joints do not bend quite right. Her back remains turned, oblivious to your arrival.
>
> The cauldron gurgles violently, the vile red ichor within roiling over the rim. Each drop that spills hisses against the floor, eating away at the wood with a harsh, acidic burn, filling the air with a noxious stench. Time is slipping away, and the hag, Vessla Browntooth, is just moments from completing her profane ritual.

Vessla Browntooth (**Weasel Hag**) lurks here, waiting and ready to strike, having been warned by her precious weasels. The cloaked figure is really Adela, suffering the horror of nightmarish visions. She has the Blinded and Incapacitated conditions, and her Speed is 0. The hag Vessla has taken Adela's form, and lays on the floor pretending to be unconscious.

As a Search action, a character within 10 feet of the false "Adela" or the cloaked figure can examine one or both and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check to see through the ruse.





12.4 The Crooked House (Attic)

Surprise! If a character approaches Vessla, who is in the form of Adela, without succeeding on the check to inspect her, the hag surprises the characters when she attacks. The first time she hits a creature with a Bite attack, if that creature hasn't yet taken a turn in the combat, she can also dunk the creature's head into the bubbling cauldron. The target takes an extra 5 (1d10) Acid damage.

Whether Vessla manages to surprise the characters or not, read or paraphrase the following once combat begins:

> The weasel-like hag hisses and lunges forward as she shrieks in a shrill voice, "Your souls will join the sacrifice, and you are damned to forever wander the halls of the Crooked House!"

Filthy Jasper. If Filthy Jasper (**Vermin Familiar** (Weasel)) escaped earlier in area H12, the familiar is here to assist his master in the battle. Any damage he took previously remains.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Moon* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the character this card was pulled for receives three Twists of Fate after defeating Vessla Browntooth. Once per turn, when a creature the character can see makes a D20 Test, the character can expend one Twist of Fate to replace the d20 roll with a 1 or a 20. When all three twists are expended, the boon vanishes.

Level Up. The characters reach level 4, if they are still at level 3, when they defeat Vessla Browntooth.

CONCLUSION: HAUNTED NO MORE

After the characters have defeated Vessla Browntooth, read or paraphrase the following:

> Vessla Browntooth's eyes fill with a sudden realization mixed with terror and rage as she draws her final breath, whispering out "Sisters..." before collapsing into a pile of human teeth.
>
> Suddenly, the Crooked House begins to shake and creak. With the terrible crunching of breaking wood and creaking nails, the house takes on a new shape that is still crooked but vastly less so. The years of disrepair fade, and its new form is a manor home fit for the Druskenvalds.

With the hag defeated, Phillip and Adela regain their senses and thank the characters, both thrilled to be alive. All they remember is preparing for dinner and then passing out and experiencing horrific nightmares until rescued.

Most of Vessla's work in the Cauldron Room vanished when the house returned to its more pleasing configuration, but scratchings in the attic reveal that this hag was just the first of three in the Vermintoll Coven. The names of her sisters are among the scratchings: Stonoga Blackstinger and Golub Graygullet. Hundreds of human teeth remain, littering the floor.

Despite the horrors the characters witnessed in the Crooked House, Phillip decides to stay in the mansion while in Wickermoor Village. Phillip is hopeful that whatever curse has been afflicting him will now be lifted. He pays each character 75 GP for their assistance. Phillip and Adela insists the characters get some rest and take their time exploring Wickermoor Village.

When the Jenkins return to the Druskenvald Estate, they are mortified to discover what had transpired but are relieved that the haunting has been purged. If the characters mention the library encounter with Wisp, the family finds it hard to believe but are unable to find the cat from then on.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

Back in the village, little has changed, and none of the townsfolk noticed anything strange about the Druskenvald Estate.

The Crooked Man visited the nefarious members of the Followers of the Old Ways, and informed them that the final plans are in motion and the return of the Crooked Queen is near (see chapter 8). The secret cultists try to conveniently "run into" the characters around town and go out of their way to gain their trust.

With Vessla Browntooth dead, the weasels that lived in the walls of the Crooked House have scattered and fled into Wickermoor Village, still influenced by their master's spirit, which is tethered to Wickermoor Hollow. They can be found scurrying through the back alleys and in the walls of the town, particularly lingering around Randall's Barber Shop to steal pulled teeth.



Chapter 13: FIELDS OF THE CROW

"The crows sing. The fields remember. With every rustle of the stalks, every whispered secret, I feed. Come now. Let the stalks say your name. Let the crows sing your story. I'll harvest what you hide."

- Raum, the Harvest Terror -

A DEMON HAS COME TO FOXWILLOW. ONCE A QUIET TOWN CRADLED BY endless cornfields, now these fields devour any who dares enter. They belong to Raum, the Harvest Terror—a demonic scarecrow with the head of a crow, cursed with an insatiable hunger for secrets. His very being is nourished by forbidden truths, yet he doesn't merely feed on them. He weaves them into chaos, turning neighbor against neighbor, sowing discord as effortlessly as seeds. Only the destruction of Raum can save this once-peaceful town.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

East of Wickermoor Village lies the town of Foxwillow, known far and wide as the breadbasket of Wickermoor Hollow. The people of this idyllic town are friendly, rural folk. They worship the Patient Lady, dutifully tend to the fields, help one another, and never speak ill of other souls... to their faces, at least. But evil lurks below the façade.

Secret resentments have multiplied in recent months, darkening Foxwillow like the shadow cast by a murder of crows. People have grown suspicious of others, certain their neighbors harbor vile secrets. Crops have failed (sparing only the corn), insects swarm, and cattle waste away and die, while the Foxwillow folk blame each other for negligence, laziness, and stupidity.

It began six months ago when Ol' Jericho Sticks disappeared. A living scarecrow, Jericho had wandered Foxwillow for generations, crafting effigies for the fields and singing as evening fell. When he vanished into the corn, no trace of him remained. Whispers of murder spread, and hidden grudges tore the town apart.

As blame grew, the crops withered—except for the cornfields to the east. Worse still, more townsfolk disappeared, their places taken by grotesque scarecrow effigies (see "The Harvest Terror" later in this chapter).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Foxwillow is a haunted husk of a town. None dare trust enough to band together, nor is anyone brave enough to venture into the corn where the lost have vanished. Characters drawn to the town by the Quest Hook later in this chapter have these goals:

- Venture to Foxwillow with the quest-giver, William Lodge.
- Stop the survivors in Foxwillow from turning on each other.
- Offer secrets to Raum (their own, or secrets learned within Foxwillow) to gain entrance to the demonic corn maze demiplane known as the Fields of the Crow.
- Survive the dangers of the Fields of the Crow and find Raum.
- Destroy Raum, the Harvest Terror.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with Raum, the key NPC, to infuse his menace throughout. A casual reading of the Foxwillow locations helps when you improvise interactions. Lastly, reviewing the climactic battle, "The Wicked Harvest," ensures a smooth and gripping final encounter.

This chapter is designed for four level 4 characters.

THE HARVEST TERROR

A strange and wonderful creature named Ol' Jericho Sticks, a sentient scarecrow, came to Wickermoor Hollow years ago. The scarecrow, a wandering tunesmith, held a secret inside of him, literally and figuratively: a crow demon lurked within Jericho's straw-stuffed body and was the true and terrible power that gave him life.

OL' JERICHO STICKS

Jericho was a haunted scarecrow—but a friendly one. He traipsed about the farmlands around Foxwillow, singing songs to drown out the sounds of sorrow within him. The people of Foxwillow loved the straw-stuffed drifter who wove through the rows of straw and stover, serenading the fieldhands on his banjo as they worked.

But eventually, even music was not enough to resist the voice inside his head. As the decades passed, the demon that Jericho called "Virgil" grew in power and slowly spread his discord to the people of Foxwillow. As a result, the townsfolk became more suspicious of him, filling the scarecrow with increasing self-doubt. Virgil preyed on this uncertainty, manipulating the wounded psyche of his host until Jericho gave in to the whispers.

When Jericho realized the demon inside him was gaining control, he retreated into the cornfields to keep his beloved Foxwillowers safe. Tragically, the struggle was short. His soul was devoured by Virgil, and the two merged into a new demon in the crumpled scarecrow body. He is now Raum, the Harvest Terror, a crow-like Fiend with a body of straw and rusted metal.

THE SCOURGE OF FOXWILLOW

Raum *(rah-OOM)* loves to destroy all that Jericho loved to create. He stalks the rural lands of eastern Wickermoor Hollow, wielding sharp blades and sharper words to drive fear into the hearts of all who live there. He takes special glee in luring people from Jericho's beloved Foxwillow into his demiplane of endless corn mazes, the Fields of the Crow, to steal their bodies, souls, and secrets.

Jericho is gone forever, but tiny scraps of his kindly consciousness still cling like rotten flesh to Raum's vile bones. If the characters learn the tender secrets of Ol' Jericho Sticks, what's left of him fights back and aids them (see "Gathering Information" and "The Wicked Harvest" later in this chapter).



RAUM'S CURSE

Raum feeds on secrets and delights in destruction. Learning secrets sustains him and grants him greater power. Not only do they increase his demonic magic, but they also empower him to manipulate mortal hearts. He has two primary means of harvesting secrets:

BLACK-FEATHERED SPIES. Murders of crows gaze hungrily upon Foxwillow in numbers great enough to make bare trees look flush with black leaves when they gather. They are always listening, waiting to report back bits of information to Raum.

GATEWAY TO THE STALKS. The second method is the gateway to the Fields of the Crow. All who approach it of their own free will are addressed by Raum directly. They are bidden to sacrifice a damning secret if they wish to gain entry to Raum's domain. This sacrifice empowers Raum's game statistics (see "The Wicked Harvest" at the end of this chapter). At your discretion, this secret sparks nasty rumors about the character who divulged it back in Foxwillow and Wickermoor Village.





NPCS OF FOXWILLOW

The town of Foxwillow is largely abandoned. Most of its people have been lured into the cornfield and vanished. All missing folk have been replaced in town by eerie scarecrows, described wherever they are in town (see "Areas within Foxwillow" later in this chapter). However, there are five noteworthy NPCs still in town.

These NPCs have complicated relationships and hide many secrets from one another that prevent them from trusting each other. When the characters meet the NPCs in town, use these descriptions and the Foxwillow Relationship Chart at the end of this section to help you roleplay them.

WILLIAM LODGE

A tenant farmer of the wealthy Thatcher family, William (Neutral Good, human **Commoner**) lives on the outskirts of Foxwillow and tends grains and gourds while raising livestock. As such, he has a close relationship with both the people of Foxwillow and of Wickermoor Village, which he often travels to monthly for market.

CHANGING WILLIAM'S ATTITUDE

Though Indifferent toward the characters when they meet him, his attitude increases one step to Friendly if they agree to join him in saving Foxwillow. His attitude decreases one step to Hostile if they intentionally cause destruction or loot the town (such as looting the statue in area J2) but increases one step if they take action to help (such as putting out fires when the town is burning).

His attitude increases one step if the characters demonstrate selfless heroism or emotional tenderness. His attitude decreases one step if they are selfish or try to Influence him to learn a secret from him and fail their Charisma check.



William Lodge

WILLIAM'S SECRET

Though unmarried himself, William had an affair with another farmer's wife, Martha Langtree, who soon had a son with him. This son is the middle Langtree child, Isaac.

Learning His Secret. As an Influence action, a character convinces William to reveal this secret with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check.

MARTHA LANGTREE

Martha (Lawful Good, human **Commoner**) is a widow of ten years who works her farm with the help of her three children Adelaide, Isaac, and Rosemary. Lean and toned from years of hard work, she has a brash personality and is often called a force of nature by the townsfolk.

Martha loves all her children dearly but worries for them. Adelaide has acted strangely since Ol' Jericho Sticks vanished, then Rosemary vanished a week ago. Just this dusk, Isaac went missing too and Adelaide seems unconcerned. Martha is at her wits' end and inadvertently started a brawl in the Old Windmill (see "Foxwillow in Flames" later in this chapter) while William was out of town seeking aid.

CHANGING MARTHA'S ATTITUDE

Despite the horrors occurring at her doorstep, Martha is easy to befriend. She becomes immediately Friendly if they save Jonah from death in the "The Burning Mill" encounter. Otherwise, she is Indifferent.

Her attitude increases one step if the characters demonstrate selfless heroism or emotional tenderness. Her attitude decreases one step if they are selfish or try to Influence her to learn a secret from her and fail their Charisma check.

MARTHA'S SECRET

Farmer Malachai, Martha's husband, was a violent drunk, and Martha accidentally killed him while defending herself. She has kept this secret ever since to protect her children.

Learning Her Secret. As an Influence action, a character convinces Martha to reveal this secret with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. This secret is in addition to her extramarital role in William's secret (see above).

ADELAIDE LANGTREE

Adelaide (Chaotic Evil, human **Cultist**) is the eldest child of Martha at twenty-five years old. She was a difficult child who played over-competitively with the other children and enjoyed morbid practical jokes to peeve her unpleasant father, like hiding rat carcasses in his boots overnight. Jericho was her best friend because she had a hard time making friends with other kids her age.

As she grew older, Adelaide's antisocial behavior deepened. Jericho vanished on her twenty-fifth birthday, and ever since, she's wandered into the cornfields after her nightly work, only returning when it's time for bed. Some whisper she killed Jericho, while others claim she's searching for her only friend. None who followed her into the corn have ever returned.



Martha Langtree



Adelaide Langtree

Three weeks after Jericho's disappearance, she found him—now the monstrous, crow-headed demon, Raum. The Harvest Terror spoke with Jericho's voice, calling himself her best friend, vowing to love her if she revealed her secrets. She confessed witnessing her father's abuse and her mother's fatal act.

The demon Raum told her that he is an angel sent to reveal the evil secrets in Foxwillow. Confused, but seduced by his words, Adelaide has spent recent months gathering secrets and luring folks into the cornfields, where Raum spirits them away to wander forever in the Fields of the Crow.

CHANGING ADELAIDE'S ATTITUDE

Adelaide is fully in Raum's thrall. She can't be swayed from being Hostile toward the characters.

ADELAIDE'S SECRET

In her communion with Raum, Adelaide has learned William's secret—that her brother Isaac is really her half-brother. She's been manipulated into believing that her mother's infidelity and her half-brother's birth are the real causes of her fear and suffering in childhood. She was goaded by Raum into murdering Isaac, and she hid his corpse in the basement of the Old Windmill (area J1), where it is incubating a demonic servant of the Harvest Terror.

Learning Her Secret. Adelaide's murderous secret is revealed when the characters find her brother's corpse in the Windmill Cellar (area J9b). If her mother Martha is told of what happened, Martha weeps and gives the characters a handmade brass locket her brother made for her to try and earn her love as a child.

JONAH SAWYER

Jonah (Neutral Good, human **Tough**) has a reputation as a rugged, broad-shouldered man with a humor as hefty as his sinewed frame. As Foxwillow's butcher, he's often seen in a bloodstained apron striding through town. His signature platform shoes, worn to keep his feet dry from pigs' blood, earned him the nickname "Heels." His only daughter, Liza, has gone missing in recent nights.

Though he's truly not responsible for all Foxwillow's ills, Jonah has been on edge lately, burdened by guilt over the town's curse and the disappearance of his daughter. In a fit of rage, he cursed William Lodge, and his shame has made him antagonistic toward his neighbors (see "Foxwillow in Flames" later in this chapter).

CHANGING JONAH'S ATTITUDE

Suspicious by nature, Jonah is difficult to befriend. If characters talk with him about breaking the curse, he asks if they think whoever caused the curse was evil, or just misguided. His attitude increases one step to Friendly if they say they'll be sympathetic to the curse-maker or that they'll keep an eye out for Liza. If they suggest that they'll kill the person who cursed Foxwillow, he becomes fearful and Hostile, refusing to speak at length.



Jonah Sawyer

JONAH'S SECRET

Jonah has harbored resentment for William Lodge for years, though he no longer recalls why. By all accounts, William is well-liked and even sells livestock to the butcher. But Jonah recently discovered William had been selling him scrawnier stock than he sells to Siv Harga in Wickermoor Village, who pays a higher price for well-cared-for prize beasts.

In a fit of ire, Jonah slaughtered a lamb and invoked an old folk hex his grandmother once whispered about. He cursed William's fields and herds and—to his horror—the curse took root. Now, Foxwillow's crops and livestock wither—save for the demon-infested cornfield, which thrives unnaturally. Jonah, wracked with guilt, grows defensive, fearing the town's ruin rests on his shoulders.

Learning His Secret. As an Influence action, characters convince Jonah to reveal this secret with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check.

Foxwillow Relationship Chart



ISAAC LANGTREE

A boyishly handsome man of twenty-one, Isaac Langtree ran the Hooded Lantern, his family's tavern, but he continued helping his mother on the farm when able. He vanished the night before the characters arrived, but not into the cornfield. He was lured into the basement of the Old Windmill (area J1) by his sister Adelaide and ritualistically murdered. His corpse is there still.

ISAAC'S SECRET

Charm and good looks made him popular in town, but he secretly despised the quaint, folksy ways of his rural neighbors. He had developed an especially intense dislike of manual labor after apprenticing as a butcher under Jonah Sawyer in his youth. Each market night, he skimmed money from his mother and stashed it under a floorboard in the tavern in preparation to leave for a life on the road. He was trying to convince his sister Adelaide to skip town with him when she killed him.

Learning His Secret. Isaac's duplicitous secret is revealed when the characters find his secret cache under a floorboard in the Hooded Lantern (area J4).



SCARECROW TOWNSFOLK

Most of Foxwillow's people have vanished, lost in the Fields of the Crow. Their bodies, twisted under Raum's control, are now grotesque scarecrows—burlap stuffed with straw and pumpkin heads carved into haunting mockeries of their former faces. Their spirits, however, are doomed to wander the endless maze of cornstalks. Only Raum's destruction frees the lost spirits and turns the scarecrows back into people.

These scarecrows litter the town, sitting slumped in homes and shops, grim reminders of those they replaced. Descriptions of several scarecrows are found in each area.

JUMPSCARECROW!

If the investigation of the town is slowing down, 1d3 **Pumpkin Heads** spring to life and attack. After the scarecrows are defeated, have a Friendly NPC rush up and share a Vital Clue or Optional Clue they've learned (see "Investigating Foxwillow" later in this chapter) to give the characters a new lead.

These scarecrows are the missing townsfolk's mortal bodies. If a pumpkin head is reduced to 0 Hit Points by Fire damage (burning the body) or Bludgeoning damage (squashing the pumpkin head), the mortal body is also destroyed in a similarly gruesome way when it reverts back to its original human form after Raum is defeated. Other types of damage typically just muss the straw or burlap, leaving the mortal body with scars but no lasting wounds once reverted.

QUEST HOOK

The many ills of Foxwillow (described in the Chapter Background earlier in this chapter) have finally driven one man to flee his town and seek aid in Wickermoor Village.

FOXWILLOW'S CURSED!

In Wickermoor Village, the characters are approached by Jeremiah Stover and introduced to his friend William Lodge, a man from Foxwillow who has told Jeremiah his tale of fear and woe. Jeremiah asks William to repeat it and pleads with the characters to listen. William Lodge is a salt-of-the-earth, middle-aged farmer with a folksy accent and an earnest love for his village in his eyes. He lives on one of the failing farms on the outskirts of town, so he doesn't know the whole story, but he explains what has happened as best he knows it,

- Ol' Jericho Sticks, the living, singing scarecrow, vanished from town six months ago. Ever since, townsfolk have been accusing one another of murdering the beloved handyman and songster. (If asked for more information on Jericho, William explains that no one knows how the friendly strawman came to be, but he's been beloved by Foxwillow since before William was born.)
- After a few months, no one in town trusted each other, and recently everything started going wrong. All crops but the corn failed, livestock withered and died, and strange sigils started appearing in the cornfields.
- Then, only weeks ago, townsfolk began going missing, seemingly replaced by mysterious scarecrows.
- Hardly anyone is left in Foxwillow, and most everyone has barricaded themselves inside their houses. No one sets their suspicions aside to work together.

Jeremiah explains that while the farmers of Wickermoor Village produce as much food as possible, they still rely on the grain Foxwillow produces to feed the town. If the characters break the curse upon Foxwillow, save its people, and salvage the harvest, Jeremiah rallies the town to chip in and pay them each 50 GP.

If Phillip Druskenvald is with the characters at the time or learns of the request from them later, he offers to match the 50 GP from his own funds and says he wants to take a more active role in helping the people of Wickermoor Hollow since it's technically his responsibility as Lord of Druskenvald.

If the characters have more questions, William says he'll be happy to talk about the villagers and the specifics while they travel, offering passage on his horse-drawn cart; it'll take them a couple nights to reach Foxwillow, so there'll be plenty of time.



FOXWILLOW IN FLAMES

The journey to Foxwillow is about 2 nights at a Normal pace. At the end of the trek, they find Foxwillow aflame, with lifelike scarecrows brawling in the streets. It happened like this:

- Jonah Sawyer called Martha Langtree's daughter Adelaide a "creep" and a "killer" to Martha's face in the town square.
- Martha, already on edge due to the disappearance of Rosemary last week, threw a punch at Jonah, who retaliated.
- Their anger awakened the hatred lingering within the bodies of the scarecrow townsfolk (see "Scarecrow Townsfolk" earlier in this chapter). As they fought in the square, the scarecrows came to life and joined the brawl.
- Horrified, Martha and Jonah fled to the windmill. In their haste, the butcher dropped his lantern. Flour in the mill went up like tinder, setting the whole structure ablaze.
- The windmill's burning, spinning sails spread the fire to nearby houses.
- Raum's scarecrows continue to fight until Martha and Jonah apologize to each other.

ARRIVING IN FOXWILLOW

The characters arrive at the outskirts of Foxwillow amidst this conflagration.

> For hours, your cart has creaked through barren fields littered with ragged scarecrows, wilted wheat, and rotting pumpkins. The air carries the bitter scent of smoke, and ahead, a fiery glow consumes the horizon—the town is burning. William urges the horses faster.
>
> Moments later, you arrive in the town square, where a wild brawl unfolds among a dozen farmers. Two buildings—the town hall and a small shop—are engulfed in flames, set alight by the blazing windmill, now a spinning tower of fire. William turns to you, eyes wide with horror, and pleads, "By the Lady! Please save Foxwillow!"

The brawlers are all scarecrows of the townsfolk dressed in their clothes and with eerie carved or painted faces (see "Scarecrow Townsfolk," earlier in this chapter), though their pumpkin heads are obscured by hair, hats, or bonnets from a distance. As a Search action, characters scrutinize the townsfolk and discern what the scarecrows are with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character within 5 feet of a brawler sees the truth automatically.

The solution to ending this brawl is to save the people who started it: Martha Langtree and Jonah Sawyer. They're fighting in the Old Windmill (see "The Burning Mill"). Likewise, the town continues to burn until the windmill fire is put out.

The characters are under no obligation to stop the fight or put out the fires, but William urges them to help and mentions the pump west of the town square (see "Getting Water" below). It's a good idea, too: they have an easier time entering the Fields of the Crow and finding Raum if they've met Martha.

NAVIGATING THE BRAWL

Using map 13.1, the characters must pass through Magpie Square (area J2) to reach the Old Windmill (area J1). Each brawling townsperson is a **Pumpkin Head** animated by Raum's demonic influence.

The scarecrows exclusively fight each other unless their attention is drawn by casting a spell, attacking one of the pumpkin heads, or putting out the fires in areas J5 and J8. During this event, scarecrows are found in:

MAGPIE SQUARE (AREA J2): Three pumpkin heads hurl each other about and kick up the mud in the streets, making the town square Difficult Terrain.

GENERAL STORE (AREA J5): Two pumpkin heads toss bottles and bags of cornmeal while the building burns around them. A creature that ends its turn in the store takes 2 (1d4) Fire damage.

TOWN HALL (AREA J8): Three pumpkin heads smash chairs over each other. The fire hasn't spread past the roof yet.

The scarecrows in other areas of town are inanimate.

FIREFIGHTING

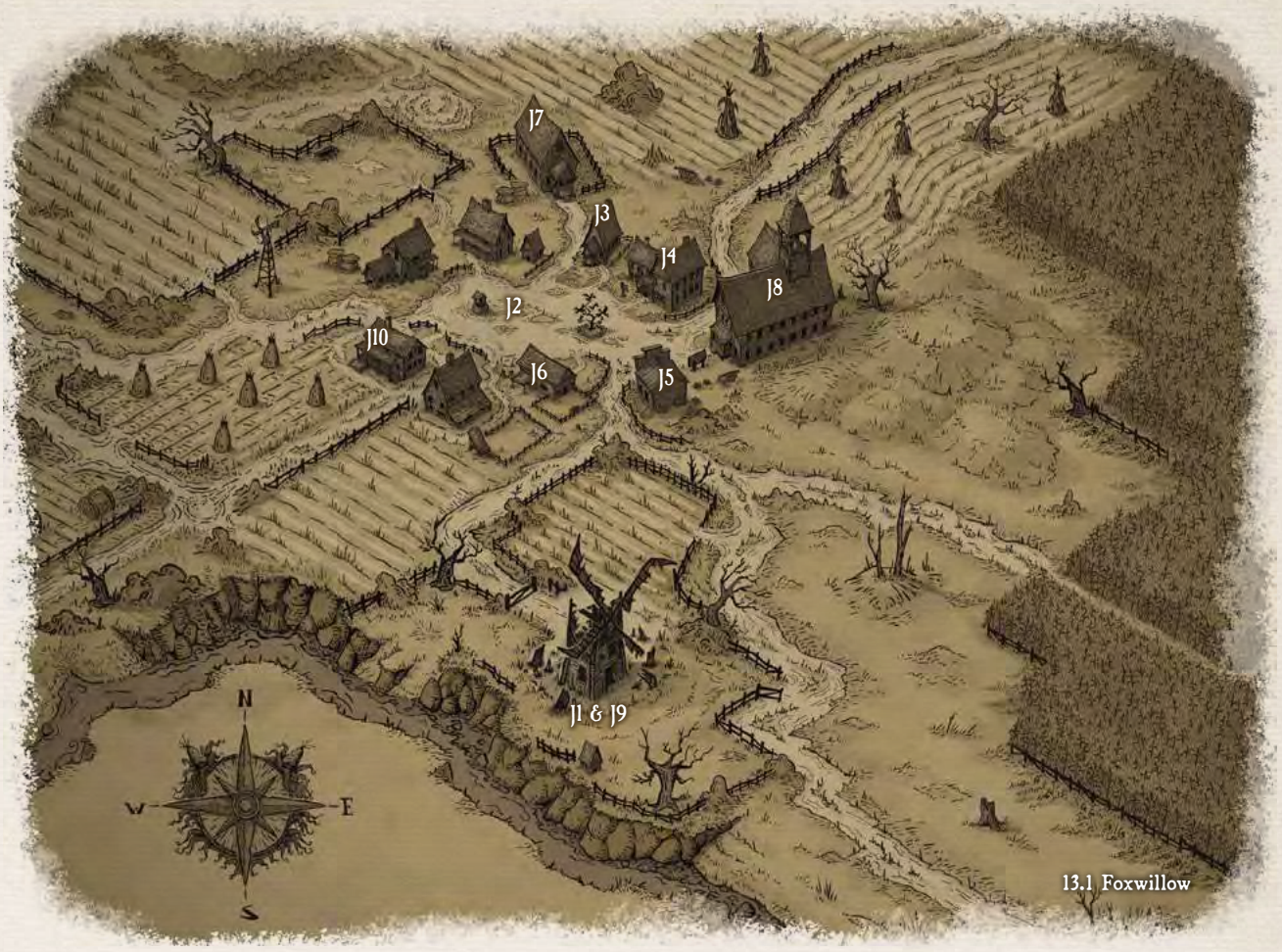
Fire is raging in the General Store (area J5) and the Town Hall (area J8). If these buildings aren't doused, the fire spreads through the densely packed town square and burns Foxwillow (and all the scarecrows in it) to the ground.

PUTTING OUT A FIRE

Putting out the fire in areas J5 and J8 requires at least 10 gallons of water to be hurled on each area's blaze.

GETTING WATER

The best way to put out these fires is by casting the *Create or Destroy Water* spell or using other magic that creates water. There is also a water pump west of



Magpie Square (area J2). William assists the characters by operating the pump to fill buckets of water. Characters who grab a filled bucket can take the Utilize action to douse an area's flames with 1 gallon of water.

DRAWING ATTENTION

Putting out a fire causes all the **Pumpkin Heads** in that area to attack the characters responsible.

THE BURNING MILL

Isaac's corpse is in the basement of the windmill, but the roar of the fire and the collapsed debris obscures his remains. When the fire ends, the characters can find his body in the basement (area J9a). Adelaide is missing and under Raum's influence (see "Into the Fields of the Crow").

Martha Langtree and Jonah Sawyer are trapped in the windmill. If they die without setting their anger aside, the scarecrows remain fueled by hate and fight until they're destroyed. Map 13.2 shows the interior of the windmill, including its four floors and basement.

Burning. Spaces marked with Xs on the map are burning. A creature that enters a burning space for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (2d4) Fire damage.

Townsfolk. Jonah Sawyer is on the fourth floor, trying to fend off a slowly approaching **Pumpkin Head** that has taken the shape of his daughter, Liza. Martha is on the first floor, trying to clear rubble blocking the door.

J1A: WINDMILL EXTERIOR

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters reach the door to the windmill:

> The windmill's sails spin wildly, spewing cinders all around. A portion of the wall above the door has collapsed, blocking the door with burning debris. You hear rubble being shifted and a woman yelping in pain from the other side of the door.

Two 5-foot squares in front of the main doors and two more 5-foot squares behind it are filled with burning rubble. The door opens outward, and all four squares of rubble need to be cleared for the characters to enter.

Difficult Terrain. A space of rubble is Difficult Terrain, and as a Utilize action, characters clear it with a successful DC 15 Strength check. It is also cleared by bringing a 5-foot space of rubble to 0 Hit Points (AC 8, HP 20, Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage, and Vulnerability to Bludgeoning, Cold, and Thunder

damage). A creature that touches the rubble without tools takes 5 (2d4) Fire damage.

Alternative Route. The source of the rubble is the wall above the door. There is a 5-foot-wide hole in the wall 10 feet above the ground. This space is burning.

J1B: WINDMILL FIRST FLOOR

Inside the burning mill is Martha Langtree. Her hair singed, her hands burned and hastily wrapped in torn cloth, she stammers her thanks. Shaking, she admits the fire was her doing—a fight with Jonah led to a lantern falling, igniting the mill. Then, in terror, she recounts how a grotesque scarecrow burst through the door before the wall collapsed, chasing him upstairs. "You have to help Jonah!" she pleads, fleeing the windmill.

J1C: WINDMILL SECOND FLOOR

This floor is burning, and the flames have spread to block the path to the stairs leading up.

Time Pressure. There are no foes in this room, but roll Initiative when a character ascends to this floor and keep them in Initiative order the entire time they are in the windmill. On Initiative count 20 of each round, describe how the windmill trembles as the strain of its wildly spinning sails threatens to tear the fire-weakened structure apart. Each creature in the mill must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) Fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

On Initiative count 0 (losing Initiative ties) of the ninth round after the characters enter this floor of the windmill, the entire structure collapses. When it does, each creature in the windmill falls to the bottom floor, taking 21 (6d6) Fire damage from the collapse, plus 3 (1d6) Bludgeoning damage for each floor they fell.

J1D: WINDMILL THIRD FLOOR

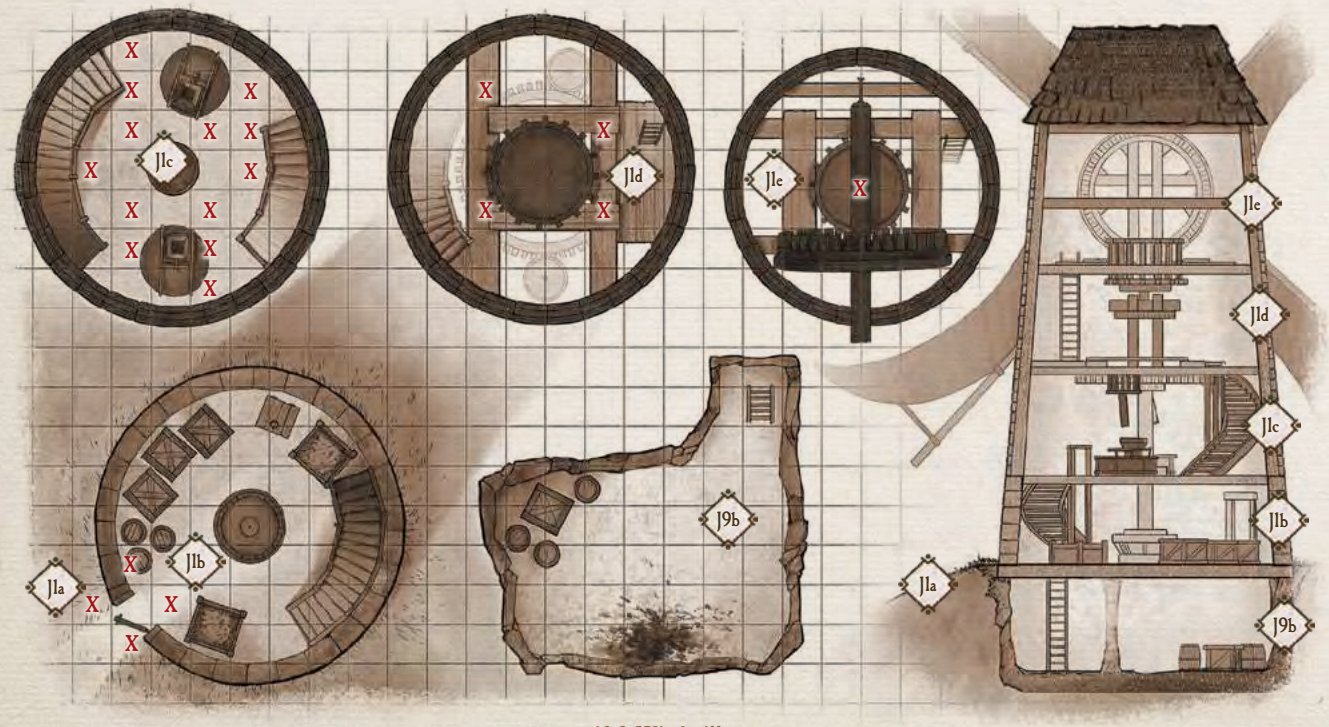
This floor has collapsed, leaving nothing more than smoldering support beams and the wildly spinning central shaft and driven gears.

Spinning Cog. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the cogs spin 180 degrees, moving any creature on the cog to the space opposite of the space they were on.

J1E: WINDMILL FOURTH FLOOR

The cramped top floor of the windmill is dominated by a single horizontal beam that supports the mill's main shaft and the gears which turn it. This beam is burning, and Jonah Sawyer is on the far side. A **Pumpkin Head** is on the side closest to the ladder the characters are ascending. The scarecrow is menacing Jonah as it tries to find a way around the fire. He's been reduced to 15 Hit Points. Jonah begs the characters to not destroy the scarecrow, as its face is twisted into the visage of his missing daughter, Liza.

The characters must get Jonah out before the mill collapses (see area J1c).



13.2 Windmill

AN END TO THE BRAWL

The resolution to the burning mill depends on if Jonah survived or not.

IF JONAH SURVIVED

Once Martha and Jonah escape the windmill, they exchange apologies. Martha, trembling, apologizes for striking Jonah, and he begrudgingly admits fault for insulting Adelaide, especially with Rosemary missing for a week. To their shock, all remaining scarecrows collapse as they speak. Regardless of the fate of the Liza scarecrow, Jonah takes a moment to mourn his daughter. He sees it as a punishment for cursing Foxwillow.

Martha then tells the characters that, to her knowledge, all residents of Foxwillow but her, Jonah, and William have gone missing. Her children, Isaac and Adelaide, haven't been seen tonight. Martha believes they're hiding, as everyone else who vanished was replaced by a scarecrow. She also suspects any who might remain have locked themselves inside their homes, refusing to emerge until the terror has passed.

Jonah privately confides that he shouldn't have insulted Martha's daughter, though he adds that Adelaide has always been withdrawn, and the curse on Foxwillow has only deepened her isolation.

Martha returns to the Hooded Lantern (area J4) and is Friendly to the characters (see "Townsfolk Attitude" below). She asks them to speak to her there if they need help investigating the town. Jonah likewise returns to his shop (area J6) but is Indifferent toward the characters. William Lodge heads to the Town Hall (area J8) after reuniting with Martha and Jonah.

If there are still fires in town, Martha, Jonah, and William work together to put them out.

IF JONAH DIED

Without being able to apologize to Jonah, Martha's anger at him keeps the scarecrows alive. They continue to stalk the town. Whenever the characters roll Initiative while in Foxwillow, two **Pumpkin Heads** join the combat on Initiative count 20 of the second round.

Martha and William hide in the Town Hall (area J8). Any remaining fires slowly burn out. The town hall's sturdy roof prevents serious damage to it, but all other buildings in the town square eventually burn to the ground if no one tends to them.

INVESTIGATING FOXWILLOW

Once Martha and (possibly) Jonah have been saved from the windmill, the characters begin their investigation regarding the curse and learn how to enter the Fields of the Crow. They interview the townsfolk to gain vital clues and optional secrets.

It is possible to skip the windmill and the investigation in town by proceeding directly to the Fields of the Crow, but it would be at the cost of the town and the only people left in it.

TOWNSFOLK ATTITUDE

All of the Foxwillow NPCs (except William Lodge) are Hostile toward each other and the characters during the "Foxwillow in Flames" section, above. However, the townsfolks' attitudes change based on the actions during the brawl and while investigating the town. Their attitude affects how easily the characters Influence them to aid them or divulge information, which is vital to gaining the upper hand in their battle against Raum.

STARTING ATTITUDE

After the brawl, the NPCs of Foxwillow have the following attitudes, which are tracked on the Foxwillow Relationship Chart.

- William Lodge: Indifferent
- Martha Langtree: Indifferent (Friendly if Jonah survived)
- Adelaide Langtree: Hostile
- Jonah Sawyer: Indifferent

GATHERING INFORMATION

By the end of their investigation, the characters must learn several key clues, and they might also learn optional secrets that aid them in the battle against Raum. It's your job to naturally supply the must-know information and the players' job to decide if they want to dig deeper or press on. Ultimately, you want the players to use their wits but not get stuck.

VITAL CLUES

Be sure to convey these points clearly. Any NPC in town is quick to communicate the information below, especially if the pace of the investigation is dragging:

- The demonic happenings only started after the scarecrow Ol' Jericho Sticks went missing.
- A few people who later went missing reported a horrific birdlike monster stalking the fields and heard a name whispered to them: Raum.
- Whenever someone goes missing, a scarecrow wearing their clothes with a pumpkin head carved or painted in their likeness appears in their home or workplace.
- Cornfields surround the town, but people only go missing after they venture into the cornfields to the east of Foxwillow.
- Just before people vanish into the cornfield, they have been seen whispering to the stalks as the wind rustles through them.

OPTIONAL CLUES

The NPCs also know optional clues that aid in navigating the Fields of the Crow or fighting Raum. They only reveal these secrets if they're Friendly with the characters. You decide which questions succeed on a DC 15 Charisma check to get an NPC to divulge this information:

- The Old Windmill had a cellar (area J9b) that Adelaide and Isaac used to play in as children. She had been spending more time there as of late.
- Jonah is poised to answer Raum's call and vanish into the corn in search of his daughter after being attacked by a scarecrow bearing her face in the Old Windmill (area J1e).
- The living scarecrow called Ol' Jericho Sticks liked to sing a song called "Virgil's Birdcage," which was about a kindly man with an angry crow for a heart, and only singing and dancing could keep the nasty crow asleep. The librarian loved the tune and would always ask Jericho to play it for her.
- The General store owner loved Jericho's music so much that he secretly commissioned a master luthier to make Jericho a new banjo.
- The people of Foxwillow had become so fond of Jericho that they asked William Lodge to petition the mayor to make him a citizen.

FOXWILLOW LOCATIONS

Map 13.1 shows the center of Foxwillow, but the true heart of the town lies in the farmlands the characters passed to reach the square. The town center holds all the information needed, while the cursed fields beyond are barren. Farmhouses scattered across the land are either abandoned by those who vanished into the corn or sealed shut by frightened farmers unwilling to speak. There's little left to see here (though for creating your own regions within Foxwillow, see the "Outside of Town: Pastures" section later).

J1: OLD WINDMILL

This area is only visited during the "Foxwillow in Flames" encounter earlier in this chapter. After the windmill burns out, see the Burned-Out Windmill (area J9).

J2: MAGPIE SQUARE

Foxwillow's market square is called Magpie Square by its townsfolk because of a stone statue of a flock of magpies painted in lifelike piebald colors.

Treasure. As a Study action, anyone who inspects the statue and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds that the magpies' eyes are made of tiny black onyx stones. Working for 10 minutes to remove the eyes produces eighteen onyx marbles each worth 10 GP.

J3: FOXWILLOW SCHOOLHOUSE

All twenty seats in this schoolhouse are filled with child-sized scarecrows, and an effigy of a human woman stands before the blackboard, chalked with lyrics for a children's song called "Tubers and Treacle."

Clue. Drawn on the blackboard beneath the lyrics is an eerie image of a crow head emerging through tall stalks. The bird is speaking to a group of children and holding out a stick hand toward them, as if expecting payment.

J4: THE HOODED LANTERN

This inn was run by Isaac Langtree. The door is locked, opened with a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using Thieves' Tools, and the interior is tidy. He wasn't taken by force. All the rented rooms hold a scarecrow effigy of various travelers but no clues. Martha Langtree takes shelter here after the fire has fully burned out.

Searching the Reception. Those who spend 10 minutes searching the inn and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check find an upturned board behind the counter with a hidden compartment below.

Isaac's Secret. Underneath the floorboard is a sack of 300 SP and 1,000 CP embezzled from Martha Langtree. Outside of the sack is a single black coin with a feather icon on one face. The coin crumbles to corn kernels when touched, and whoever touched it hears Raum's raspy voice whisper, "What mother doesn't know won't hurt her. I'll pay her back someday."

J5: GENERAL STORE

The local General Store's roof collapsed during the fire. Sifting through the rubble, the characters find two scarecrows of the shopkeepers with their pumpkin heads caved in.

A Tender Secret. As a Search action, characters who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check find a beautiful banjo buried unharmed in the rubble. Attached to it is a note that reads, "Keep it secret from Jericho 'til next market night. He can't know how much we spent ordering this six-stringer for him."

Finding this secret strengthens the character who finds it in the battle against Raum (see "The Wicked Harvest" later in this chapter).

J6: BUTCHER'S SHOP

Jonah Sawyer takes refuge here once the brawl subsides (assuming he didn't perish in the windmill). The shop's storefront leads to a back room, heavy with the metallic stench of blood. A search reveals no meat left—Foxwillow's livestock have withered. Only crows remain, and a few pitiful, plucked bird carcasses hang limply in the shop, a grim reminder of the town's decay.

Investigating the Shop. Jonah won't let anyone into the back room. If a character manages to get in, as a Search action, a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the following:

- A ritual circle drawn in dried calf's blood hidden under a rug
- A cow skull, a chicken skull, and a lamb skull on a shelf, all marked with a bloody thumbprint
- A bundle of dried wheat, barley, and flax, bound in a blood-drenched rag

As a Study action, those that succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check realize that these are components for a ritual curse that causes crops to wither and animals to waste away. It couldn't cause the horrors surrounding the scarecrows and the vanishings. Confronting Jonah with this evidence causes him to reveal his secret but reduces his attitude by one step.

Jonah's Plan. As a Search action, those who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check realize something is bothering Jonah. He keeps toying with a crow feather. If Jonah is Friendly, he tells the characters that he's going into the cornfields in a few hours. Seeing a scarecrow with his daughter's face chilled him, and he decided he must save her. As an Influence action, a successful DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check convinces him not to go. On a failure, he suggests that he become bait for whatever is lurking in the field so the characters can sneak in after him.

If Jonah isn't on Friendly terms with them, a successful group DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check allows them to follow him to the edge of the cornfield.

J7: LIBRARY

The Library is small and doesn't have many books in it. However, it has hundreds of town records, maps showing the boundaries of local farmers' property, and other civic documents. A scarecrow of the librarian has been shoved into an empty bookshelf.

A Tender Secret. Clutched in the librarian scarecrow's hand is a gorgeous transcription of a song titled, "Virgil's Birdcage," one of Jericho's classics. If taken, she awakens as a **Pumpkin Head** and attacks. If the scarecrow is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it mutters, "He loved this song... I wanted to give him this..."

Finding this secret strengthens the character who finds it in the battle against Raum (see "The Wicked Harvest" later in this chapter).

J8: TOWN HALL

Foxwillow's Town Hall looms in the heart of the settlement, where the farming folk once gathered at twilight. A crooked billboard stands outside, covered with weathered papers that cling to it stubbornly. William Lodge, who usually holds meetings here, now scours the building for clues while the characters investigate.

A Tender Secret. If William is asked if he's found anything, he admits he hasn't found much, except for something strange: the mayor had granted Ol' Jericho Sticks official citizenship, complete with a "birth certificate." William hands it over with a shrug, unsure of its significance.

Finding this secret empowers the character against Raum in the final battle (see "The Wicked Harvest" later in this chapter).

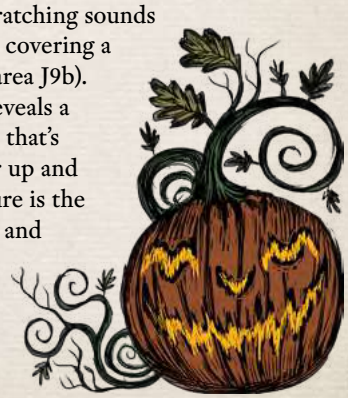
J9: BURNED-OUT WINDMILL

When the characters arrive in town, this windmill is a towering inferno thanks to a lantern that was knocked over during a brawl. The burning windmill is described in "The Burning Mill," above. This section describes the windmill after the battle.

J9A: CHARRED FOUNDATIONS

Not much remains of the old windmill after the blaze.

Scritch-Scratch. As a Search action, those who examine the area and succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check hear scratching sounds from beneath a charred rug covering a trapdoor to the cellar (see area J9b).



Opening the trapdoor reveals a ladder and a **Ravencraft** that's trying to push the trapdoor up and escape. The macabre creature is the work of Adelaide Langtree, and it croaks and caws at the characters but doesn't attack unless provoked. As an Influence action,

a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) or Charisma (Persuasion) check shifts its attitude to Friendly. After being calmed, it agrees to serve one of the spellcasting characters as a familiar.

J9B: WINDMILL CELLAR

A dark secret is buried here: the body of Isaac Langtree. The characters may have learned that Isaac vanished recently by speaking to his mother Martha, or they may not know who this is and ask about him.

Clue on the Corpse. Those who investigate Isaac's body find a note clenched in his rigid fist. It reads:

> "Isaac, come meet me in the windmill cellar where I used to hide when we played as kids. Remember? I've learned something amazing."

Cause of Death. As a Search action, anyone who examines the body and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that Isaac was killed by a knife, probably a kitchen knife, with a cut to the throat. His chest was then gruesomely carved open. While investigating the corpse, a song is heard being sung from within Isaac's chest called "Virgil's Birdcage," which is about a nasty crow living in the chest of a kindly man. Investigating further reveals a monster (see below).

Carrion Demon. When Adelaide sacrificed Isaac in Raum's name, the Harvest Terror planted a demon within his ribcage. When the characters investigate the body, crows shoot out of Isaac's chest and caw at the characters before bloodily mutating into a **Corvodaemon** and a **Crowstorm**. The Fiends fight to the death and prioritize any character who tries to flee.

Isaac's Locket. As described in "Adelaide's Secret" in the "NPCs of Foxwillow" section earlier in this chapter, Isaac made a locket for his older sister as a child, which his mother now possesses. If the characters tell Martha of Isaac's death and show her the note, she realizes that Adelaide must have killed him. She tearfully gives the characters the locket to help protect them against the monster her daughter has become. It acts as a *Cloak of Protection*.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Hanged Man* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Banjo of Ol' Jericho Sticks* can be found propped up against the stone of the windmill's foundation.

OUTSIDE OF TOWN: PASTURES

At the edge of the town square, a cluster of farmhouses encircle a courtyard with an old water pump. Acres of pasture stretch beyond, anchored by the Langtree farm. Lazarus Thatcher, a wealthy farmer, once formed this cooperative with twelve families, but now none remain. All have vanished into the cornfields, replaced by eerie scarecrow effigies.



INTO THE FIELDS OF THE CROW

To the east of Foxwillow is a cornfield with overly tall stalks that sway and whistle in the wind. The outer edge of this cornfield is a supernatural border; everything within is a nightmarish, demonic demiplane that morphs according to Raum's whims.

ENTERING THE CORNFIELD

The Fields of the Crow are guarded by a looming and impenetrable wall of stalks. When approached, two large, orange eyes with pupils in the shape of four-pointed stars appear through the stalks and a raspy, croaking voice whispers:

> "Lay bare your secrets. Lighten your burden. Do this and you may enter my land of dreams."

If a character tries to force their way through, they push into the corn only to find themselves emerging from the same spot they entered. The thing in the rows laughs gratingly and repeats its offer after the character is forced out. The thing recoils if attacked and retreats into the stalks for 1 hour, after which it returns to repeat its offer to any who approach.

DARK WINGS, DARK WORDS

The cornrows are entered by revealing a dark, personal secret to the presence lurking within, or by slipping through with another who paid in secrets before the threshold seals. Sharing the secret feeds Raum, granting him greater strength and control over the character (see "The Wicked Harvest" later in this chapter).

Those who share someone else's secret can also enter. This grants Raum extra power, but no control over the character.

SNEAKING IN

When someone enters the Fields of the Crow, the stalks remain open for them, and only them, for up to 1 minute. However, those who make a successful DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check slip through unnoticed by Raum. If this check fails, they are ejected from the corn as described earlier.

FIELDS OF THE CROW FEATURES

The Fields of the Crow have the following features:

IMPENETRABLE BOUNDARY. The Fields of the Crow is a hellish corn maze. Trying to push through or damage the stalks causes the wind to howl and the stalks to thrash at the intruder. The stalks have Immunity to all damage, and if the intruder is within 5 feet of the stalks, they are pushed 10 feet away and must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) Bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

INFINITE STALKS. Corn stalks grow as tall as redwoods, and creatures that fly can soar upward forever and never reach the top. Despite constantly moving upward, every time a flying creature reaches 120 feet above the ground, they are suddenly 60 feet above the ground.

LIGHTING. A nightmarish swirl of orange clouds stretches like writhing tendrils from an orange harvest moon that fills half the sky and obscures the stars. The entire area is bathed in Dim Light, tinged pumpkin-orange by the moon.

SOUNDS OF MURDER. Hollow echoes of thousands of overlapping cawing crows fill the area.

NAVIGATING THE MAZE

When the characters enter the Fields of the Crow, Raum's voice rings out upon the wind:

> "Such strong wills have entered the rows. I can feel your souls struggle to cling to your flesh. Now you scurry like rats in a maze. No more than three creeping hours until you are lost forever. Come to me in the heart of the fields. Feed me your secrets and drift into eternal sleep."

After entering the demonic realm of Raum, the characters experience a reality warp into a waking nightmare as they are trapped in an infinite corn maze. They must reach the center of the maze to find and destroy Raum. Along the way, they find wandering spirits of the people of Foxwillow. Destroying Raum saves these spirits, but freeing them from their listless wandering grants the characters boons in the final confrontation.

TIME PRESSURE

While in the Fields of the Crow, the characters feel, with growing dread, their sense of self slowly slipping away. After three hours, the characters' souls are ripped from their bodies, condemned to wander the Fields of the Crow for eternity. Their bodies transform into scarecrows, forever trapped in Foxwillow. This could mark the end of the campaign—unless a path to salvation remains. Perhaps a new band of adventurers is introduced, guided by the willful spirits of the fallen, or the Crooked Man, acting for the Crooked Queen, offers salvation at a dreadful price.

WHICH WAY?

This maze has no map. Instead, those lost inside must choose the correct path at three Junctions to reach Raum. Each Junction is a 50-foot-radius clearing with three new paths to choose from: Left, Right, or Center. To discover which path is correct, a Search action and a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the characters to discern which path has the loudest cawing of crows. On a failure, they only learn which path is the quietest (narrowing their options down to two). If the check fails by 5 or more, the crass cacophony of the crows surrounds them, making it impossible to discern the paths. The correct order of paths to follow is:

- First Junction: Left Path
- Second Junction: Right Path
- Third Junction: Left Path

When the characters enter the maze, they travel through the winding, 5-foot-wide paths of the maze for 10 minutes before reaching a Junction with three paths and a random encounter (see "Random Encounters" below). If they choose the wrong path at any Junction, they wander for 10 minutes before reaching a Dead End (also a 50-foot radius clearing in the corn maze and a random encounter). They must then backtrack to the last Junction to choose again.

If they choose the correct path, they wind through the corn maze for 10 minutes before reaching the next Junction. When they choose the correct path from the Third Junction, they travel for 10 minutes before reaching the center of the maze. See "The Wicked Harvest," for the final battle against Raum.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Each time the characters enter a Junction or Dead End for the first time, roll once on the Cornfield Encounters table and once on the Cornfield Environment table below to determine what creatures are in that Junction or Dead End and what environmental effects are in play. Roll again if you roll a result that's already been used. After all encounters and environments have been rolled, any further random encounter results in a Crowstorm with Disorienting Crowsong.



Cornfield Encounters

1d4	Encounter
1	Controlled by Secrets
2	Crowstorm
3	Familiar Faces
4	Lost Soul

Controlled by Secrets. Adelaide Langtree (**Corvodaemon**) is here. As a chosen disciple of Raum, she has the power to manipulate characters who have given up their secrets to Raum to buy entrance to the maze. Should the characters find themselves here, Adelaide can cast *Dominate Person* at will (spell save DC 14), targeting only someone who paid their own secret to enter the maze and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability. This use of the spell plays on the character's fears about their secret coming to light, so targets that have Immunity to the Frightened condition automatically succeed on the saving throw.

Crowstorm. The twisting maze of moving corn narrows, and suddenly the characters are surrounded by screeching crows from all sides. An enraged **Crowstorm** attacks in a frenzy. The characters can defeat or evade the crowstorm to proceed through the maze.

Familiar Faces. Two Foxwillowers are chained to stout, blood-stained wood poles in the center of the Junction. Their heads are bowed, and they call weakly, begging for help when they see the characters. Choose whichever two villagers the characters formed the best relationship with. The figures are imposters created by Raum's stolen secrets and crow spies. The imposters use the **Doppelganger** stat block and immediately begin reading the character's surface thoughts with *Read Thoughts*.

As a Study action, a character who examines the figures and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check—made with Disadvantage if the character is more than 10 feet away—notices subtle, unsettling warps of facial features that give away the disguise. Anyone that doesn't succeed on the check is surprised when the imposters attack.

The imposters' chains vanish and they attack as soon as someone comes within reach, or when they realize their ruse failed. When defeated, they dissolve back into whisps of nightmare and fade away.

Lost Soul. The spirit of someone from Foxwillow is being tortured for any secrets it has left to hide by two **Corvodaemons**. The spirit has AC 14, HP 40, and a Speed of 20 feet. It fails all ability checks and saving throws and can't take actions. Only one demon

attacks the spirit each turn, and they only use their Feeding Frenzy action when attacking the spirit; the other demon focuses on the characters. If someone destroys the demons or escapes from them to the next Junction before the spirit is reduced to 0 Hit Points and devoured, it thanks them and promises to aid them against the Harvest Terror before fading away. Each character gains Heroic Inspiration.

Cornfield Environment

1d4	Environment
1	Blood Rain
2	Body of Crops
3	Disorienting Crowsong
4	Shadows of the Lost

Blood Rain. The ground shakes and thunder booms as a storm suddenly arises. Blood rains down in sheets, the thick liquid blinding and stinging eyes. The air becomes heavy and hot, and the stinking smell of copper becomes suffocatingly thick. Each character must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition while in this Junction.

Body of Crops. The corpses of people Raum has not yet returned as scarecrows form a nauseating crop circle in the middle of this clearing. Corn sprouts from the corpses in various states of decay—stalks rip out of chest cavities, biceps, and even mangled faces with lifeless, staring eyes. Choose twelve spaces in this Junction to place these corpses when the characters first enter it. A character who comes within 5 feet of a gruesome corpse or starts its turn within 5 feet of one must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level from horror and disgust.

Disorienting Crowsong. A murder of crows circles above the corn maze clustering thick enough to blot out the orange moon, and their song becomes a disorienting cacophony. At the start of each character's turn while in this Junction, roll 1d6 and subtract the number rolled from their attack rolls and spell save DC until the start of their next turn. Anyone who paid a secret hears Raum taunting them about it in the crowsong and must roll 1d10 instead.

Shadows of the Lost. Shadowy, insubstantial figures rise out of the ground in this Junction—screaming images of all the people that the Harvest Terror spirited away into the Fields of the Crow. At the start of each of their turns, a character must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or take 11 (2d10) Psychic damage. Those who have paid a secret to enter the maze have Disadvantage on this saving throw.



THE WICKED HARVEST

The Harvest Terror lurks at the heart of the cornfield, weaving the secrets given to him by his crow messengers into fiendish straw, which he uses to stuff his fiendish scarecrow body. Use map 13.3 for this battle.

DEMONIC INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the demonic influence suffusing the Fields of the Crow causes one of the following effects; it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

GLEAN SECRETS. The fields steal fragments of a victim's secrets and whisper them to Raum. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature in the clearing. *Failure:* The target's attack rolls against the Harvest Terror have Disadvantage until Initiative count 20 on the following turn.

STALKING CORN. Demonic corn snakes around an intruder. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, up to three creatures in the clearing. *Failure:* The target's Speed is reduced to 0 until Initiative count 20 on the following round.

PHASE I: A FEAST FOR CROWS

In phase one of the fight, Raum conjures thousands of demonic crows to his side to gather the full power of his hoarded secrets over the course of three rounds. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter this arena:

> You break free from the maze's twisting paths and step into a large crop circle where the corn is carved into arcane sigils and demonic eyes. At the center stands a scarecrow—burlap head, straw hat, and a rusty cage for a chest. Slowly, it swivels toward you, and in a trembling, terrified whisper, it says, "Virgil is coming! Too late for me. No, gosh, no... he's here! You gotta get out of—!"
>
> The scarecrow's body erupts into a great abomination of black feathers, twisted metal, and ragged burlap, a horrific demon that lets out a high pitched screech followed by rapid clicking. A guttural voice crows out, "Feed me your secrets, your flesh, your souls, your power!" Raum the Harvest Terror spreads four black wings and lunges forward with its rusted claw and scythe appendages raised high toward the fiendish harvest moon above.

The desperate cries are the last vestiges of Ol' Jericho Sticks, still trapped deep within Raum, **The Harvest Terror**. Roll Initiative! This first phase of the battle is to stop the Harvest Terror from devouring secrets in the form of the amber-eyed crows, limiting his power. Three crows that break off from the mass are **Corvodaemons**. The demons seek to shred the intruders, prioritizing anyone attacking or catching amber-eyed crows (see "Growing Murder" below). The demons have the following special considerations:

- The demons lack the Multiattack action.
- If a corvodaemon takes any damage, it vanishes in a swirl of feathers and black mist. It reforms in an unoccupied space of the Harvest Terror's choice on Initiative count 0 (losing Initiative ties).

GROWING MURDER

A dense murder of amber crows surrounds the Harvest Terror in a 5-foot Emanation with the following effects:

- A creature other than a demon has Disadvantage on attack rolls while in this area.
- A creature that ends its turn in the area must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or have the Prone condition.

DEVOURER OF SECRETS

While the murder of crows persists, the Harvest Terror can take a Bonus Action to catch and devour one of the amber-eyed crows. Each time it does, the following occurs:

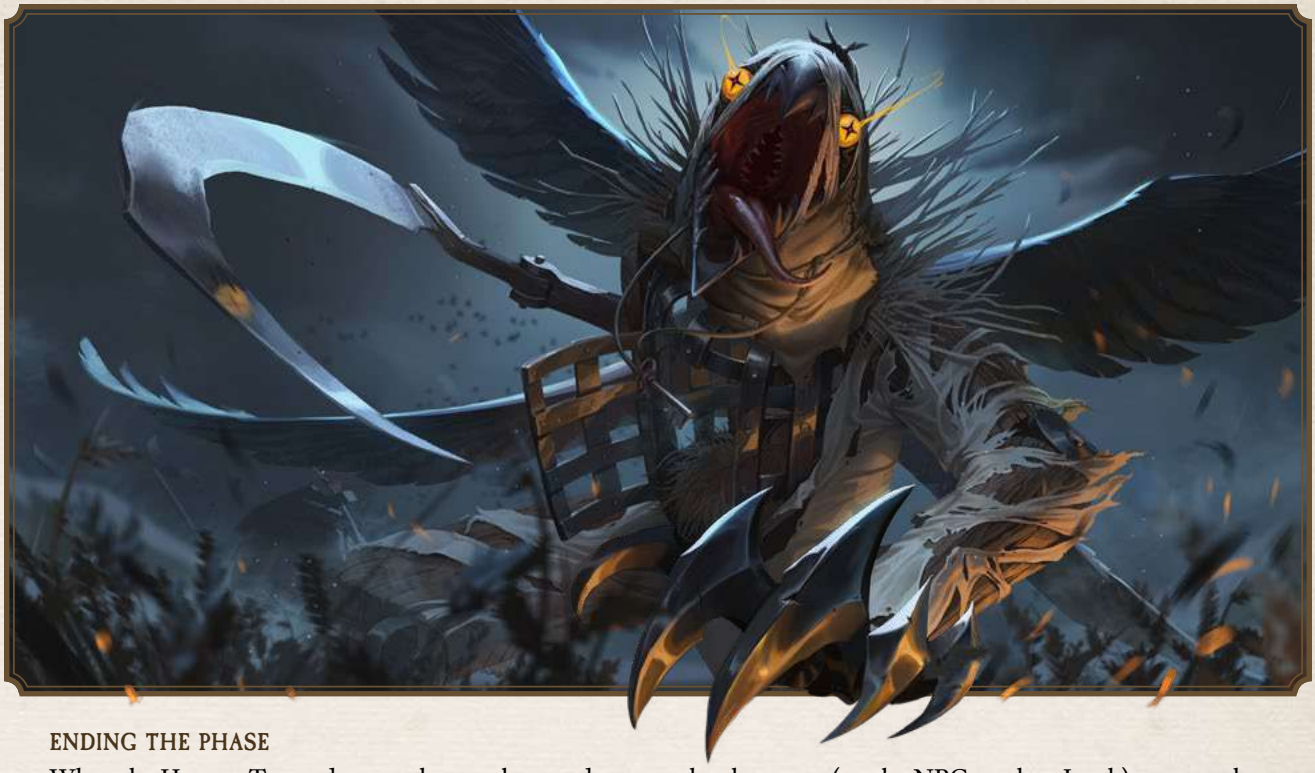
- The Harvest Terror gains 10 Temporary Hit Points. Each crow beyond the first increases this number by 10.
- The Emanation of crows increases by 5 feet.

The characters can stop Raum from devouring crows in two ways:

CATCHING. A character can catch a crow with an Unarmed Strike to grapple it, catch it in a Net, or any other method that you deem acceptable. To grab a crow by hand, a character must enter the murder.

DESTROYING. An amber-eyed crow is a Tiny Fiend with AC 14, HP 5, and +0 to any D20 Tests it is forced to make. It automatically succeeds on Dexterity saving throws against areas of effect and takes no damage from such effects that would deal half damage on a successful save.

Each time a crow is caught or destroyed, it vanishes in a puff of amber motes, and the characters hear a whispered secret, such as "I always loved you," "I took it," or something similar, with no indication of who the secret belonged to.



ENDING THE PHASE

When the Harvest Terror devours three amber-eyed crows, or when six crows are destroyed or captured, the swarming murder explodes into feathers and its effects end. Any remaining corvodaemons have 20 Hit Points and no longer vanish when they take damage. Move on to the next phase, "Demon of Secrets," below.

PHASE 2: DEMON OF SECRETS

Fully empowered by secrets, Raum seeks to feast on the interlopers' flesh and souls.

FOXWILLOW'S TENDER SECRETS

Not all secrets are sinister. If the characters have discovered any of the tender secrets of the Foxwillowers' love for Ol' Jericho Sticks while investigating (see "Optional Clues" earlier in this chapter), read or paraphrase the following:

> A memory flares in your mind of a joyful secret that the people of Foxwillow kept for Ol' Jericho Sticks. As the memory fades, an amber strand of straw winds around your wrist, radiating protective warmth.

When the Harvest Terror reduces a character to 0 Hit Points, the amber strand shatters, immediately restoring half of that character's maximum Hit Points. Each character can benefit from this effect only once.

THE HEROES' DARK SECRETS

Those who paid their own secret for entrance to the Fields of the Crow have granted Raum special power over them. The Harvest Terror gains one additional use of Legendary Resistance for each secret that was paid by the characters (not by NPCs such as Jonah) to enter the Fields of the Crow.

DEFEAT OF THE HARVEST TERROR

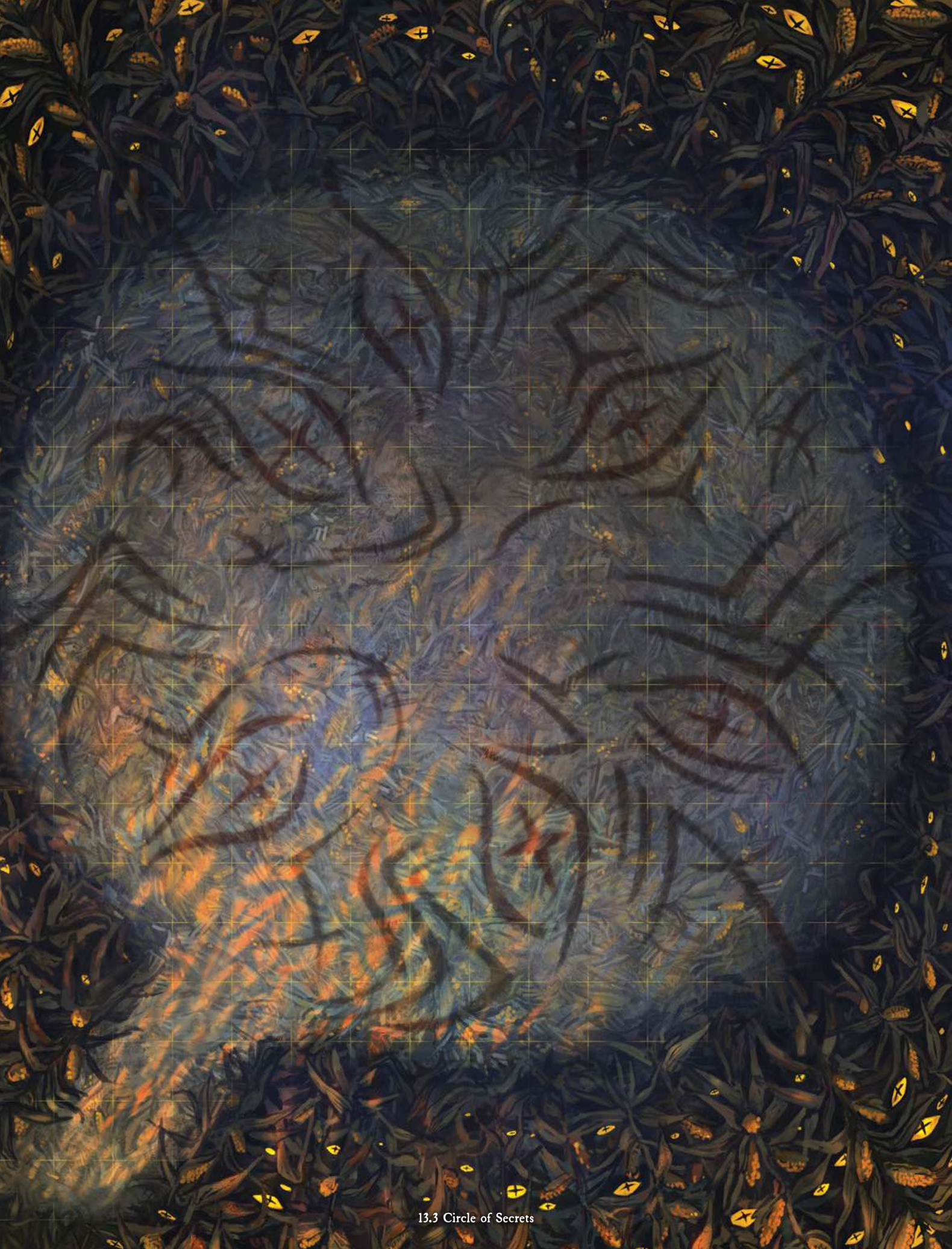
When the Harvest Terror is reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

> Raum lets out a piercing wail, exploding into a storm of fiendish straw and black feathers. As the cloud fades, a faint image of a scarecrow emerges, strumming a sorrowful tune on a banjo. He gazes at you with a sad smile, tipping his hat.
>
> "Bring 'em home safe," he murmurs. "They'll come out of the corn, so long as their bodies ain't too damaged." He glances up as the moon shifts from orange to white. "I'm sorry, didn't mean for any of it. Virgil's words were sweet. Didn't know what I was doin'. Not sure if it helps, but... well. Show's over."
>
> With a final bow, he vanishes. Your vision blurs, and when it clears, you stand at the edge of the cornfield. The stalks have shrunk back to normal. Silvery spirits emerge, drifting dazedly toward their bodies in Foxwillow.

The iron cage that made up Raum's chest remains behind and thrums with magical power. It can be used as an *Amber Birdcage*.

Level Up. The characters reach level 5, if they are still at level 4, when they destroy Raum.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Chariot* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Scythe of the Harvest Terror* can be removed from the broken scarecrow body of Raum.



13.3 Circle of Secrets



CONCLUSION: OUT OF THE MAZE

The Fields of the Crow have been banished from Druskenvald, and now the corn can be harvested as usual. After a few nights of uneasy rest, the people of Foxwillow return to their work, sending shipments to Wickermoor as though nothing had happened. But something did happen, and it cannot be forgotten.

Martha's youngest, Rosemary, is among the saved, as is Jonah's daughter Liza—if her scarecrow wasn't lost to the flames. Regardless of Adelaide's fate in the maze, she never returns from the Fields of the Crow. Martha grieves for her two eldest but finds solace in their vengeance and the souls that were spared.

William thanks the characters for their help and sends them to Wickermoor Village with a letter for Jeremiah Stover, detailing their heroic deed. Before they leave, he offers to host a feast in their honor, sharing the crops they saved. Whether they stay or move on is their choice.

If the characters ever return to Foxwillow or meet a familiar face at the market in Wickermoor Village, they'll find the town's dark secrets have been laid bare. The people, haunted by their ordeal, have shed tears, and those bonds unbroken by secrets are now stronger, forged in shared suffering.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

Jeremiah Stover cries the news of the victory in Foxwillow after reading William's letter, easily gathering the reward owed to the characters. Whether or not Phillip had previously offered, upon hearing the news, he matches the reward from his own purse.

Sister Rain arrives in Wickermoor Village, seeking members of the Fold of the Patient Lady to help in Foxwillow. Jonah Sawyer's curse still hangs over the land, and Sister Rain hopes to bring the Patient Lady's blessings to heal the withered crops and livestock. She extends an invitation to the characters, believing they can assist.

Adela Druskenvald approaches with a painting from Gaston Doray, hauntingly similar to Raum's demonic realm. She reveals it came from a prophetic vision and hands them a second vision-inspired painting: a swarm of bats in the mountains beneath a blood-red moon.



Chapter 14: THE CRIMSON MONASTERY

"In the flames, there is purity and salvation. From the flames, she speaks. Her voice rings out, like the bell of our great cathedral, with truth, love, and beauty that only the divine can know. Cast by the flames, her shadow spreads and dances, as does her holy word. Under her shadow, we are but weeds in the garden of paradise. But through the flames, our ashes may sprout a brilliant, blood-red rose."

- Father Renathyr, the Crimson Abbot -

Within the stone walls of the Crimson Monastery lies a beating and repulsive heart. Led by one of the Fallen, the blood-stained fallen knight Marius Renathyr *(MAIR-ee-iss REN-uh-theer)*, the zealous and self-righteous adherents of the Crimson Faith swarm across Wickermoor Hollow, claiming all outside their faith to be impure, and that only conversion to the worship of their esoteric goddess, the Crimson Rose, will set them on the path to purity. Those who do not convert are kidnapped and burned at the stake, and those who resist are slaughtered.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

The Crimson Monastery looms high above Wickermoor Hollow in the mountain range called the Howlers, leering down at the town of Dawn's Gate, which now trembles whenever the charging riders and baying bat hounds of the Sanguine Hunt thunder down the mountainside in search of fresh blood to spill. Any infraction against Father Renathyr's obsessive code of virtue and purification makes that person a target. The people of Dawn's Gate yearn for freedom from fear.

At the center of this twisted faith lies Viraxys *(vih-RAK-seez)*, a devil who calls herself the Crimson Rose. Renathyr, once a noble knight, was tainted by her, turning his piety into relentless zealotry. Should her corruption be exposed, the Crimson Faith would crumble into chaos.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Father Renathyr must die! Or so believe the people of Dawn's Gate, who suffer most at the hands of his zealots. Characters who are drawn to the monastery by the Quest Hook later in this chapter have several goals:

- Discover the whereabouts of Gareth Creed.
- Discover the truth of Viraxys, the Crimson Rose.
- Slay Father Renathyr, the Crimson Abbot.
- Disband the Crimson Faithful.

While investigating the order, characters may avoid combat through deception or stealth. However, the confrontation with Renathyr and the corrupting devil Viraxys inevitably ends in battle.

Before running this chapter, you should read about the NPCs of the monastery. Because the characters will be watched, knowing the clergy's methods of investigation and reactions to what they observe—whether the characters are hostile, deceptive, understanding, or stealthy—makes running the monastery more organic. Further, combing through the room descriptions of the Crimson Monastery will help you build tension and dread for your players, better equipping you to react to what the characters choose to do.

Finally, reading through the boss encounter "Bloody Tears" will help you run the final battle of this chapter in a dynamic and thrilling way.

This chapter is designed for four level 5 characters.

THE CRIMSON ABBOT

Father Marius Renathyr is the leader and abbot of the Crimson Monastery. His name is whispered by the villagers of Dawn's Gate and rapturously exulted by his flock. Though he was once a human knight of unimpeachable character, Father Renathyr is now a vampire sustained by the blood of his converts. His noble zeal was twisted into fear and cruelty by the devil that saved his life and granted him his vampiric immortality.

The tragedy of Marius Renathyr is inexorably tied to that of Lethica Nightborne, another of the Fallen (see chapter 17). This is the beginning of that tale.

THE KNIGHT'S TALE

Sir Marius Renathyr was once a knight-errant of another world. His armor gleamed gold, his banner a lionhearted red. Cast into the fallen land of Druskenvald by means unknown, his conviction toward righteousness was undeterred. He gathered knights to his side to protect the innocent from monsters and wicked men.

One such innocent was a traveling priestess named Lethica Nightborne, a devotee to a goddess of sheltering night called the Nightmother. Accosted on the road by cruel men, Marius rescued her and delivered her safely to her cloister. Love blossomed between the knight of light and the priestess of darkness, but Marius remained chaste and returned to his questing.

Marius's return to the cloister became frequent as their love burned, yet Marius's sacred mission took its toll. Over the years, his kindness dulled, making way for zeal and wrath. It was this wrath that attracted a devil named Viraxys, who preyed upon men with wickedness; mortals acting upon their evil impulses by inflicting sorrow corrupted their souls, making them a delicious ambrosia on which she fed. Marius had slain his fair share of her puppets over the years, but now she saw her chance to make him into a puppet himself.

Seeking to ensnare him, Viraxys set a small army of bandits against Marius, leaving him near death. Whispering falsely as a goddess, she offered immortality in exchange for his blood and his service in her quests. Marius accepted and was made immortal—a vampire. His knightly sword transformed into a blood-soaked blade, a symbol that he was now her champion. Marius returned to his wife and revealed his affliction. Though Lethica loved him, his shame blinded him to her devotion.

Bloodthirst overtook him. In a moment of lost control, he nearly fed on his wife. Though regaining his senses in time, the guilt was too great, and Marius abandoned his love, wandering until he reached the town of Dawn's Gate. There, Viraxys led him to a small monastery, where his knightly charm and renewed zeal for the Crimson Rose corrupted the monks into followers of his false goddess. Four years passed before Lethica found him again, now as Father Renathyr, fanatical leader of the Crimson Faith. Horrified, she fled to the Isle of Mourn.

Her story continues in chapter 17, but Renathyr's must end here. He crusades now against all the sins of the world, real or imagined, and brings terror to Dawn's Gate and beyond.

PARLEY WITH THE ABBOT

Father Renathyr spends his waking hours searching for those who will accept the teachings of his goddess, the Crimson Rose, or destroying those who reject his faith—either with fire or by feeding. In public, he masks his true form with *Disguise Self*. He meets with the faithful, leading spirited services and offering devotion to his goddess in the Sanguine Cathedral (area M12), and he offers private guidance to those who seek it atop the bell tower (area M14). As abbot, he meets with each of his key clergy and initiates to ensure the piety of Dawn's Gate, and that the townsfolk seek out nonbelievers.

In the late hours of night, Renathyr takes his own form of communion with his goddess, feeding in secret within a private sanctum beneath the monastery (area M16). Outwardly, he may appear compassionate and wise, the exemplar of a pious leader. Inwardly, he broods with growing bitterness, driven by the unquenchable need to deliver more souls to Viraxys.



If the characters meet Renathyr and speak with him, these are his answers to some common topics:

MISSING PERSONS. "We may take in those in need of our protection or atonement for wrongdoing, but we do not keep anyone prisoner. You are more than welcome to walk our halls if you do not trust my word." This is a lie, and a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals it as such.

THE PYRE. "The pyre before you will only burn the wicked—those whose souls are tainted by impure, mortal blood. Those who accept the Crimson Rose into their hearts will be purified willingly, as part of our Crimson Faith. It saddens me that there are those whose pride is so great they refuse our goddess's gift, for they leave me only one way of purifying them."

YOUR CRIMSON GODDESS. "The Crimson Rose. I am her champion. In my darkest hour, she saved me from death and whispered to me the truth: that mortal blood is impure and the source of all suffering in this sorrowful land. It must be cleansed."

ENTRY TO THE MONASTERY. "By all means, my children. Think of it as home. We keep neither property nor secrets in this sacred community. All that is ours is yours."

DUCHESS

Father Renathyr believes Duchess, the blade he keeps at his side, is sentient. The sword claims to be a divine tool bestowed by the Crimson Rose upon her champion so that he may cleanse the evil of this realm. Father Renathyr mutters to it constantly, both in response and unbidden, and has become addicted to heeding its commands.

In truth, it possesses no sentience of its own and is a conduit for Viraxys. She orchestrates Father Renathyr into committing acts of depraved cruelty to feed upon the tormented souls of those slaughtered by the Sanguine Hunt and burned alive by his Crimson Faithful. While she dines well upon the souls of the innocent, Renathyr remains her crowning achievement; it is no small joy for her to make someone fall, but to make someone as devoted as Renathyr fall is ecstasy.

NPCS OF THE MONASTERY

The Crimson Monastery is filled with zealous acolytes of the Crimson Rose. Many are cowards who chose to convert to this cruel cult to avoid being slain by the inquisitors of the Sanguine Hunt, but most are well-meaning people who were brainwashed by the order's overwhelming false love and black-and-white morality.

THE BLOODLESS

The most devoted inner circle of this faith are vampires, turned by Father Renathyr personally in a ceremony of ascension called the Rite of Bloodletting. They call themselves "The Bloodless," and their pale skin is a blessed sign that they are devoid of the impure blood that sullies mortal souls. They stalk the halls of the monastery and menace the town of Dawn's Gate as part of Renathyr's crusade to spread his depraved faith. All the Bloodless besides Renathyr's priors use the **Crimson Clergy** stat block.

These vampire supplicants are so brainwashed that they would follow this path even if they learned the truth: that their goddess was a devil in disguise. However, the general faithful would not accept this revelation and would turn against them if it were revealed.

RENATHYR'S PRIORS

Father Renathyr has elected his three closest confidants as priors of the Crimson Monastery: Houndmaster Jaeger, Friar Olaf, and Inquisitor Cromwell. In this role, they act as Renathyr's "lieutenants," forming the leadership of the faith and overseeing their respective duties. They are, without a doubt, the most faithful of the Bloodless, and any one of them could succeed Renathyr and keep the Crimson Faith alive if he is slain.

In return for their service, Father Renathyr has granted them a grotesque gift. Through profane rituals and blood magic, Renathyr has transformed each of his priors into **Night Creatures**. The priors are gifted with a potent disguise to keep their nature hidden from the Crimson Faithful and only shift into their true forms when "killed" (see "Houndmaster Jaeger," "Friar Olaf," and "Inquisitor Cromwell" below).

If the characters arrive at the monastery during a Night of Flames (see "Investigating the Village" below), the priors are in the Courtyard of the Rose (area M4) to witness the burnings. Afterward, they retreat to their individual quarters. Each prior is described in further detail below.

HOUNDMASTER JAEGER

Sigmund Jaeger served Father Renathyr as a squire during Renathyr's time as a knight, raising hunting dogs to track down men and monsters alike.

When the knight founded the Crimson Faith, Jaeger was the first Renathyr sought and the first to convert. The houndmaster had a loving family once, but—like Renathyr—he abandoned them, tempted by the promises of the Crimson Rose. He took only his hounds with him, which he turned into batlike hybrids using blood magic. Now a prior of the Crimson Monastery, Jaeger rears and trains the **Bat Hounds** and **Warhorses** used to track down the faithless.

MEETING JAEGER

Jaeger resides within his cabin (area M3) and trains his bat hounds near their houses (area M2a) outside the monastery walls. He treats the characters as treasured guests, so long as they show interest in the Crimson Faith. The moment they refuse the faith, he attacks, siccing his bat hounds on them.

Jaeger is a Neutral Evil, human **Bandit Captain**, but when he is reduced to 0 Hit Points, he takes on his true **Night Creature** form with full HP.



Houndmaster Sigmund Jaeger

FRIAR OLAF

As a young monk, Friar Olaf of the Silver Bells was the leader of the monastery before Renathyr took it over and became his second convert thereafter. In its early years, the cloister was called Silverbell Monastery, for it overlooks the Silverbell River in the valley below, and it was dedicated to the Patient Lady. There, Olaf and his monks tended to the infirm and to outcasts, but he longed in his heart for glory. He demanded payment from his charges and commissioned a great silver bell for the monastery inscribed with his name so that he would be remembered forever.

Renathyr's arrival stoked Olaf's hunger for reverence and immortality. It was simple to urge Olaf onward from stipends of coin to sacrifices of blood.

MEETING FRIAR OLAF

In his role as prior, Olaf is most often found leading sermons in the Sanguine Cathedral (area M12), though he may also be in his chambers (area M8). He is feared, not beloved, by the people of the Crimson Faith, making him the perfect foil to the adored Father Renathyr. He makes a show of kindness toward the characters as potential new converts but will gladly feed on anyone who questions him if he thinks they will not be missed.

Olaf is a Neutral Evil, human **Priest**, but when he is reduced to 0 Hit Points, he takes on his true **Night Creature** form with full HP.



Friar Olaf

INQUISITOR CROMWELL

Leona Cromwell was once a child of Dawn's Gate, learning her letters and numbers under the shadow of Friar Olaf. Yet, over the years, her contempt for the pompous friar festered, driving her away from the monastery. She wandered to Wickermoor Village, picking up odd jobs and eventually working as a town guard. Her fate changed course when a group of highwaymen took her captive. Marius Renathyr came to her rescue and drove the bandits to the marshes south of Moonsong Lake. Rather than flee, she used her skills with a blade to slay their leader and demanded obedience from the weakened crew.

For years, she was known as Leona the Relentless, leading raids through Wickermoor Hollow. But the guilt of her deeds gnawed at her soul. She learned that the great Sir Marius who saved her life years prior had hung up his sword, and she traveled to his Crimson Monastery to repent. Father Renathyr, a twisted reflection of the knight he once was, spoke of the Crimson Rose, offering redemption for her tarnished soul. Stricken with guilt but unwilling to let go of the power she craved as a bandit queen, Leona accepted his gift.

Now, as prioress and head inquisitor of the Crimson Monastery, she leads the Sanguine Hunt with ruthless devotion; whenever their hooves echo through Wickermoor Hollow, it is Leona's blade that cuts the path.

MEETING INQUISITOR CROMWELL

Cromwell is often away from the monastery, but the first time the characters visit Dawn's Gate, she is present for the Night of Flames in the Courtyard of the Rose (area M4). After the pyre is cleared, she spends her time in her chambers (area M9) planning her next hunt. Cromwell is suspicious of the characters, for she knows all too well how people of great strength resist the call of the Crimson Rose. She resents their resolve and tries to kill them if goaded even mildly. If Renathyr is defeated while she is absent, she may return to revive his faith later—if you wish to create subsequent adventures in this region.

Cromwell is a Neutral Evil, human **Knight**, but when she is reduced to 0 Hit Points, she takes on her true **Night Creature** form with full HP.

CRIMSON FAITHFUL

Most of the Crimson Faithful are simple people who have been taken in by Renathyr and his vampiric minions' charisma. These initiates make up a majority of the congregation in the Crimson Monastery and are simple believers without rank or station. They revere the Bloodless as leaders of the faith, holding great respect for their closeness to Father Renathyr.



Inquisitor Leona Cromwell

They are kept from thinking too deeply about the atrocities they commit, as their blood loss causes them to drift absentmindedly through their nights. They regularly sacrifice their impure blood in phony rituals of purification. They have a Friendly attitude toward any newcomers until given a reason to think differently. Unless otherwise noted, Crimson Faithful are Lawful Evil, human **Commoners**.

LOSING FAVOR

The characters are immediately welcomed in as prospective converts. However, if they commit three actions to upset the faithful, such as those listed below, all clergy members turn Indifferent toward them within the hour. Being caught committing one more infraction turns them all Hostile, and they attack on sight:

- Harm or threaten a member of the clergy.
- Steal from a member of the clergy.
- React negatively or disagree with the clergy's torture, teachings, or bonfires.
- Attempt to remove, kidnap, or free any creature from the monastery grounds without permission from Jaeger, Olaf, Cromwell, or Father Renathyr.
- Trespass anywhere in the monastery.

Anyone seen killing a member of the faithful instantly becomes an enemy of the faith. All the Crimson Faithful who witness or hear of the killing immediately become Hostile.

REGAINING FAVOR

Characters who have frustrated the Crimson Faithful enough to turn them Indifferent can make them Friendly again by committing three of the following actions and succeeding on a DC 13 Charisma (Deception) check:

- Respond positively to torture or corporal punishment against the faithless.
- Respond positively to or agree with the teachings of the Crimson Rose.
- Respond positively to or agree with the bonfire killings the clergy commit.

ATONEMENT

If the Crimson Faithful become Hostile toward the characters, there's only one way to win back their trust: repent. Characters attacked by Hostile members of the Crimson Faithful aren't killed but are instead captured and bound in the Dead Larder (area M11). They are held for up to three nights without food before they are mounted upon a pyre at the next Night of Flames, where they must recant their wickedness or burn.

QUEST HOOK

The characters may travel to the Crimson Monastery of their own volition, but this adventure starts from Wickermoor Village with the following Quest Hook.

THE MISSING PILGRIM

The characters are approached by Weston Murdoch and are told a concerning story about two followers of the Brightsinger named Melina and Gareth. They traveled together to the village of Dawn's Gate after hearing tales of the beautiful bell of Silverbell Monastery, but they found that it had changed. The villagers praised someone called the "Crimson Abbot" with strained smiles, and when a stable hand took Gareth aside to tell him a secret about the village, neither the boy nor Gareth returned.

Melina fled the village and told Murdoch, hoping that he might know someone brave enough to find Gareth and solve the mystery of the Crimson Abbot. Murdoch describes Gareth Creed as a tall, dark-haired, short-bearded man with gray eyes.

Traveling to Dawn's Gate requires crossing the Silverbell River by either bridge or boat and following its southern side for about 3 nights until the burnt copper glow of the village's lights are visible. Characters who camp within walking distance of the settlement are ambushed during the Midnight Hour by an **Alpengrendel** that has come down from the Howlers to hunt.



ARRIVAL IN DAWN'S GATE

To reach the Crimson Monastery, the characters must first pass through the dour village of Dawn's Gate. Once a shining example of hope in the shadows of Druskenvald, the village had clung to the belief that the Patient Lady might one night deliver sunlight to Wickermoor Hollow. But that hope has long withered, buried alongside the optimism of the town's founders.

Now, the village ekes out a living through hunting, farming, and mining silver and iron from the nearby mountains. Worship of the Crimson Rose is enforced with unwavering severity. Each night, the monastery's bell calls the village to prayer at the Twilight and Evening hours. Any who worship another god, hide their sins, fail to kneel, or speak ill of the Crimson Faithful are swiftly taken to the monastery—and never seen again.

A COLD ALE AT BRIAR PUBLIC HOUSE

Being a small community, there is little here for outsiders. Briar Public House was opened to provide a drinking spot for locals, but it also offers food and lodging for travelers and merchants who find their way into the small village. Briar Public House is owned and operated by Kristoff Gruber (Neutral Good, human **Commoner**), a portly, gruff man whose sour disposition belies his caring nature.

INVESTIGATING THE VILLAGE

The people of Dawn's Gate never speak ill of the Crimson Faithful in public. In fact, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals insincere smiles and furtive looks over their shoulders. They speak truly that Dawn's Gate rarely suffers the monsters or brigands that plague other parts of Wickermoor Hollow, but it's clear they fear something else.

Missing Person? Those who ask around the village for clues about the missing pilgrim, Gareth from Wickermoor Village, are stonewalled by smiling villagers. They say that they saw someone of that description come through the town, but he asked too many questions. If they wait until the Evening Hour bell, they see a huge bonfire alight in the mountains, and the villagers become slightly more talkative (see below).

The Night of Flames. Every three nights, the Sanguine Hunt thunders through town and up the mountainside, returning from their raids. That evening, a fire burns atop the hill, its light visible for miles around. During this time, the villagers of Dawn's Gate speak more freely, since all the Crimson Faithful in the village have returned to the monastery. They whisper that they are being watched, and that those who are taken to the monastery for "purification" are never seen again. That includes a man who matches Gareth's description.

IMPROMPTU AMBUSH

The characters may decide that intercepting the Sanguine Hunt on their next outing is the best course of action. The Sanguine Hunt returns to the monastery during a Night of Flames, and when the Twilight Hour bell rings on the following night, their departure from the monastery back into Wickermoor Hollow echoes across the countryside.

This unit of the Sanguine Hunt is an inquisition force of three Lawful Evil, human **Knights** led by Head Inquisitor Cromwell (Neutral Evil, human **Knight**) all on **Warhorses**. One knight grips the leash of a vicious **Bat Hound**, ready to be sicced on anyone foolish enough to turn tail in the Sanguine Hunt's presence. If Cromwell is reduced to 0 Hit Points, she transforms into her true **Night Creature** form and presses the attack.

If the characters attack the Sanguine Hunt as they pass through Dawn's Gate, five villagers wielding shovels and cleavers (Neutral Evil, human **Bandits** with descriptive changes but still use the Scimitar action) attack the characters to prove their loyalty to the Crimson Faith, but the rest of the villagers watch with rapt attention, hoping the characters triumph over the riders.

Cromwell is a fanatic and, if addressed or captured, speaks glowingly of Father Renathyr, the noble knight who hung up his sword to serve the Crimson Rose and purify the sullied blood of mortals in her name. As an Influence action, characters who press her for secrets about the cult and succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check learn each of the following pieces of information:

- The Crimson Faithful worship the Crimson Rose, a goddess who speaks directly to Father Renathyr through the blade Duchess, which marks him as her champion. All of Druskenvald will be cleansed of evil and made pure again if its people convert.
- The leaders of the Crimson Faith are the Bloodless—mortals blessed by the Crimson Rose. Their bodies have been made pure by being drained of blood. Though they must drink blood to survive, unclean mortal blood is purified when it touches their lips.
- Cromwell and her Sanguine Hunt bring the sacred word of the Crimson Rose to worshipers of other gods or any whose actions they deem impure. Those who repent may join the Crimson Faithful. Those who do not are taken to the monastery and encouraged to repent on a Night of Flames.

THE CRIMSON MONASTERY

Stone walls rise high into the night, its imposing and spiked silhouette jutting against the night sky. The monastery gazes down upon Dawn's Gate and the Silverbell River from atop its mountainous perch, hiding a blood-drenched order behind its battlements.

CRIMSON MONASTERY FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, the indoor areas of the Crimson Monastery have the following general features:

CEILINGS. Rooms and hallways are 15 feet tall.

DOORS. The side of doors that face hallways and common areas are covered in spikes. A creature who attempts to break down the door from its spiked side takes 2 (1d4) Piercing damage. All doors are unlocked unless stated otherwise.

LOCKS. Some doors within the Crimson Monastery are locked and can only be opened with a skeleton key or picked using Thieves' Tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Renathyr and his priors possess skeleton keys.

LIGHTING. Unless otherwise stated, areas within are lit by candles and torches and are Bright Light.

BLOODSTONE STRUCTURE. The material of the monastery prevents blood from drying on its surface, creating an easy trail for those who smell blood to follow. Creatures missing any Hit Points have Disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, and creatures that are Bloodied automatically fail Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

BLOOD-RED WINDOWS. All the windows in this monastery are made of uniformly red stained glass arranged into mesmerizing, rose-petal patterns. Candlelight that spills out bathes the area around it in an eerie red hue.

ETERNAL NIGHT. The blessing of the Crimson Rose protects her Bloodless worshipers. Sunlight from spells or other magical effects doesn't harm vampires within the walls and grounds of the monastery.

RETREATING FROM THE MONASTERY

If the characters become overwhelmed and need to retreat from the monastery, the situation changes by the time they return, based on the Crimson Faithful's attitude toward them.

Friendly. The characters are welcomed back as old friends and chided not to leave again unless commanded, lest they accidentally spread wickedness throughout the world.

Indifferent. They are scolded for leaving and made to lead a Night of Flames to atone for their departure.

Hostile. The gates are barred against the characters, and the Crimson Faithful attack on sight to drive them away.

Some adjustments to areas may be necessary depending on the actions of the characters. A character who offended or acted against a clergy member might discover someone they are close to has been taken and held within the Dead Larder (area M11), or Father Renathyr may greet the characters personally upon their return if they have made themselves beloved among the congregation.

CRIMSON MONASTERY LOCATIONS

The following areas are keyed to map 14.1. The descriptions of these areas assume that the characters have arrived on the night of a Night of Flames (see "Investigating the Village" earlier in this chapter).

M1: MONASTERY GROUNDS

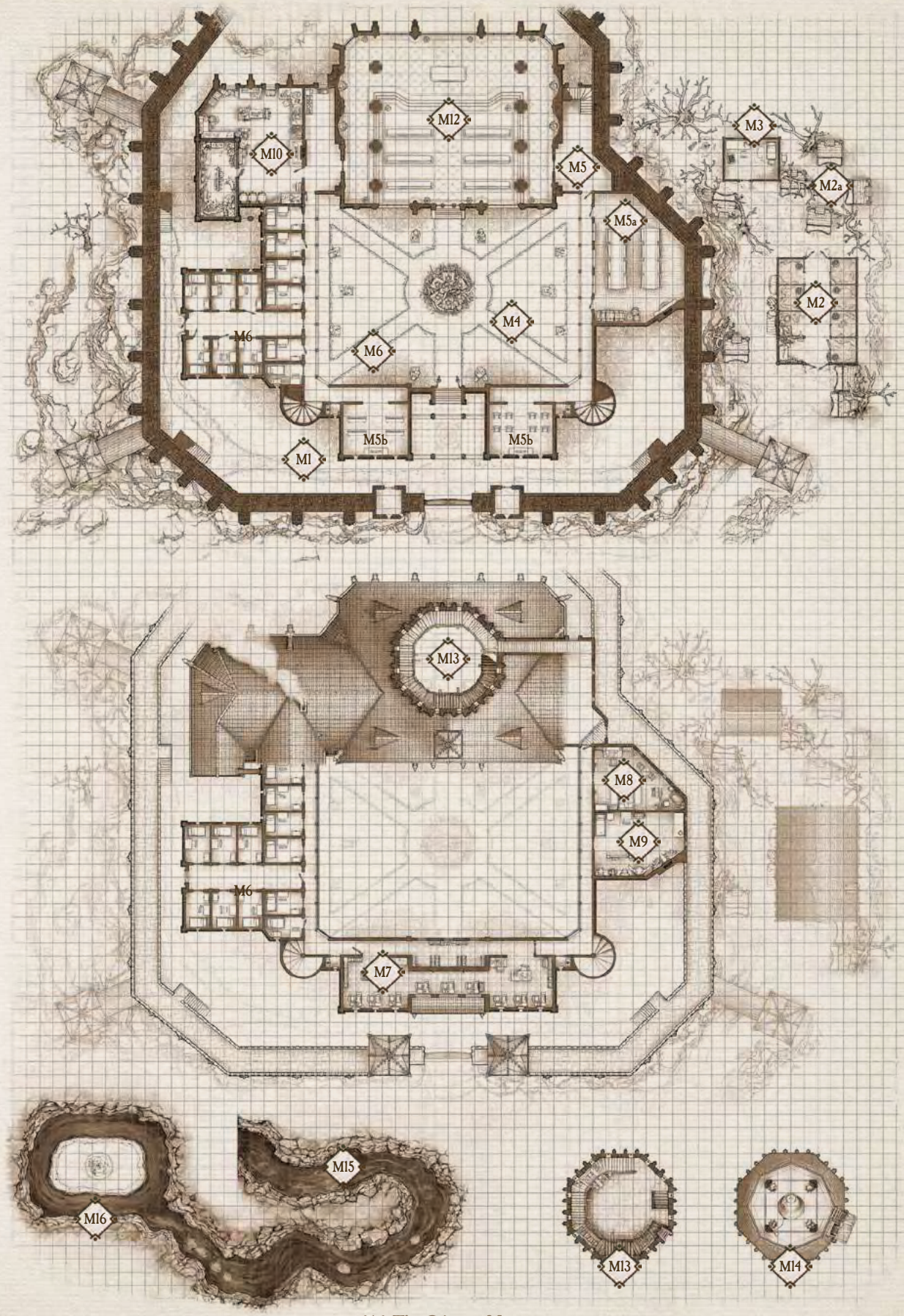
Area open to visitors

> You travel up a winding pass through the slate-gray mountains for what feels like hours. Then, through a copse of dead trees, you see it: the high stone walls of a monastery with a bell tower rising stories above. Thousands of bats swarm in and out of the belfry, spreading out on a night flight into the valley below.
>
> At the center is a grand cathedral, its magnificent stained-glass windows casting crimson light into the mountain pass, lighting a path toward the monastery's sealed gates. Blood-red banners hang from its walls, emblazoned with a golden rose.
>
> A pair of armored warriors keep watch atop the battlements, but they haven't noticed you yet. To one side of the gates is a clearing that holds a stable, a cabin, and several strangely large wooden boxes.

Two **Warrior Veterans** watch the gate. If the characters approach it, read or paraphrase the following:

> One of the warriors on the battlements raises a hand in greeting. "New guests! Please, come. We have warm beds and food for the weary. What brings you here? Were you drawn by the grace of the Crimson Rose?"

If the characters respond that they're visiting, are curious about the monastery's faith, or seeking someone, they are welcomed into the Courtyard of the Rose (area M4). If they approach with hostility, make threats, or otherwise make any aggressive or violent action, the guards call for aid and attack. Three **Cultist Fanatics** from area M4 open the gates at the start of the next round.



14.1 The Crimson Monastery

Sneaking In. The outer walls of the monastery have several footholds made of vines or loose stonework that make them climbable. To scale unnoticed by the guards, the characters must succeed on a group DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

M2: STABLES

Area open to visitors

This wooden structure is where Inquisitor Cromwell and the Sanguine Hunt stable their **Warhorses** during the night of a burning. There are also four **Riding Horses** here. These horses are Indifferent and suspicious of new people but become Friendly and ridable with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check (DC 20 for a warhorse).

One corner of the stables is a small armory where the various weapons, shields, and sets of armor of the Sanguine Hunt are stored. Three members of the Sanguine Hunt (Lawful Evil, human **Knights** with an AC of 10) named Landers, Marla, and Fremont are doffing their armor and celebrating the successful capture of the faithless, who are now captive in the courtyard (area M4). They are here with a stable hand (Neutral, human **Commoner**).

Fated Tarot Reading. If *Justice* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Shield of Marius Renathyr* can be found within the armory, hanging in a place of honor as if it hasn't been used in years.

M2A: BAT HOUND KENNELS

A copse of dead trees surrounds the stables. Built into the base of the trees are wooden boxes 10 feet long on all sides with a hole in one face large enough for a mastiff to clamber through. These overlarge bat houses are home to Houndmaster Jaeger's fearsome **Bat Hounds**. During the Dusk and Twilight Hours, eight bat hounds reside here, though none are present from the Evening Hour through the Witching Hour, when they are hunting in the surrounding foothills or lingering in the Watchful Belfry (area M14). They are aggressive but can be distracted with bloody treats (see area M3).

M3: JAEGER'S CABIN

Area closed to visitors

Adjacent to the stables is Houndmaster Sigmund Jaeger's personal cabin. The fastidious houndmaster keeps a rustic and tidy home, though there are bloodstains all over the floor—when he feeds on the blood of the faithful, he feeds his "table scraps" to his hounds.

If the characters come here during a Night of Flames while Jaeger is gone, his worktable is festooned with bloody butchers' tools and covered in the scraps of a freshly hacked Humanoid corpse. If they arrive after he's returned, he greets them with cultish familiarity but tries to shoo them toward Friar Olaf or Father Renathyr.

Treasure. Next to the table is a crate containing training tools and bloody treats for the hounds. If a treat is thrown (up to 30 feet), any bat hounds within 60 feet of the treat rush to it and fight any other hounds for 1d3 rounds before one of them wins the treat. That hound is distracted for 1d10 minutes as it chews on the blood-soaked meat.

Additionally, characters who search the cabin and succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check find Jaeger's workbook that contains his notes on utilizing blood magic for a variety of processes, including the creation of **Bat Hounds**, the enchantment of weapons, and the general transference of vitality from one person to another. It also includes his observations on the behavior of the monastery's people, including a note that Father Renathyr spends the Witching Hour in the bell tower every night.

M4: COURTYARD OF THE ROSE

Area open to visitors.

> Scattered throughout the monastery's courtyard are stone statues—angels, priestesses, and mourners—dripping with slick, red liquid. Foreboding walls enclose the space, and the red-stained windows and bell tower loom like glaring eyes. In the center, an unlit pyre stands with six stakes, each holding a bound, sobbing figure.
>
> A crowd in red robes surrounds them, waving torches and shouting, "Glory to the Crimson Rose! Blood from the thorn, beauty from the petal!"
>
> Atop a staircase, a man in crimson and gold robes watches silently, waiting for the moment to address the crowd.

The man presiding over this congregation is Father Renathyr (**The Crimson Abbot**). If the characters enter through the main gates, he throws his arms wide and invites them forward (see "Renathyr's Greeting" below).

Crimson Congregation. The crowd consists of fifteen **Cultist Fanatics**, eight **Warrior Veterans,** and three dozen adult and child noncombatants (Neutral, human **Commoners**).

Additionally, six of the Bloodless (see "NPCs of the Monastery" for their description) are present: Houndmaster Jaeger (**Bandit Captain**), Friar Olaf (**Priest**), Inquisitor Cromwell (**Knight**), and three **Crimson Clergy**. If Jaeger, Olaf, and Cromwell are reduced to 0 Hit Points, they transform into **Night Creatures**.

Renathyr's Greeting. Father Renathyr greets the characters and bids them watch the purification. He meets them on their first visit, answering questions they may have while coloring his answers in ways that present the monastery as a sanctuary and safe place to reside and rest. He even offers meals and warm beds should they need them.



Burning at the Stake. The six **Commoners** about to be burned at the stake are from small towns and settlements across Wickermoor Hollow. One of them is a Neutral, human **Commoner** named Gareth Creed (see "Quest Hook" earlier in this chapter). These events play out in order, unless the characters intervene:

- Renathyr genteelly commands Friar Olaf to preach to the captives and incite them to repent.
- Olaf approaches the pyre and accusingly brandishes a lit torch. He tells each of the captives in turn that their lives are worth living, if and only if they accept that their impure mortal blood makes their souls wicked. Only by opening their hearts to the Crimson Rose are they set on the path to purification. If not, their blood must be purified in holy flame.
- All but one of the captives, in turn, agree to convert, eliciting manic cries of prayer from the crowd. The gathered worshipers climb onto the pyre and untie the five who accept. These noncombatants join the congregation, shaken.
- Gareth, however, refuses. Renathyr frowns, Olaf grins wickedly, and the congregation jeers. Olaf repeats himself, Gareth refuses again, and Olaf lights the pyre.
- Renathyr preaches for 1 minute as the flames climb higher, speaking on the futility of clinging to impure mortal blood and how such pride is the source of all Wickermoor Hollow's many sorrows.
- Gareth then begins to burn alive, dying in agony over the course of another minute. The congregation falls into a reverent silence. The faint scent of sulfur fills the courtyard as his body is consumed.
- After Gareth dies, several of the faithful clean up the pyre, and Renathyr concludes his sermon and bids the characters welcome to the monastery. He urges them to rest, and he will speak to them in his Sanguine Cathedral (area M12) after the Twilight Hour bell.

Interrupting this Cruelty. If the characters interrupt the Night of Flames, Renathyr urges them to be silent, unless they succeed on a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check attempting to convince Gareth to recant and save himself. It takes an additional successful check for Gareth to concede (the DC lowers to 10 if the character mentions Melina). Recanting, Gareth is freed like the others and rejoins the congregation, though he will flee to Wickermoor Village as soon as he is safe to get away.

If the characters attempt to dissuade Father Renathyr or the crowd, or if they try to free Gareth, Renathyr commands his congregation to subdue them (the veterans in the crowd try to grapple them), before finally ordering the crowd to attack. With his sermon completed and the order given, he retreats to the Bloody Sanctum (area M16) to commune with Duchess until early Twilight.

No Victory. A fight against the entire congregation is doomed to failure. Their best hope is to fight, retreat, and approach with stealth. If the characters are all defeated, they are knocked Unconscious rather than killed, and they awaken as captives in the Dead Larder (area M11).

M5: MONASTERY HALLS

Area open to visitors

The stone halls of the monastery are lit with eerie crimson torches. Wooden doors line one side of the passage, while the other has windows that face the inner courtyard of the monastery. Red-and-gold banners line the walls, and droning prayers echo throughout the halls.

First Floor. These halls encircle the main courtyard and connect all the rooms on the first floor.

Second Floor. Spiral staircases in two corners of the first floor of the Monastery Halls lead to a hallway that connects all rooms on the second floor.

Prying Parishioners. Members of the Crimson Faithful walk trancelike through these hallways periodically. Whenever the characters make a loud noise (such as shouting or casting *Thunderwave*), or if a golden opportunity to foil their plans presents itself, roll on the Monastery Halls Encounters table below. How these encounters play out is up to you based on the Crimson Faithful's attitude toward the characters.

Monastery Halls Encounters

1d10	Encounter
1	Friar Olaf (**Priest**) and three **Priest Acolytes**
2	Inquisitor Cromwell (**Knight**) and two **Knights**
3	Houndmaster Jaeger (**Bandit Captain**) and three **Bat Hounds**
4	Three **Crimson Clergy**
5	One **Knight** and two **Bat Hounds**
6	Two **Cultist Fanatics** and four **Cultists**
7	Two **Warrior Veterans** and one **Crimson Clergy**
8–10	Voices pass in the hallway; no one notices you.

M5A: REFECTORY

Area open to visitors

This humble room of simple stone walls and rustic, wooden tables and benches is a refectory where the Crimson Faithful take their meals. Eating in quiet is highly encouraged, with only pre-meal and post-meal prayer and light discussion about the Crimson Rose permitted.

Disruption. If the peace of mealtime is violated by the characters, an encounter from the Monastery Halls Encounters table above occurs.

M5B: PRAYER NOOKS

Area open to visitors

Two small rooms with sparse furnishings are used for quiet prayer for solitary worshipers or small groups. Large windows in each space provide a surprisingly beautiful view of the valley below the foothills and a comprehensive look at Dawn's Gate.

Disruption. If the quiet prayer is interrupted by the characters, an encounter from the Monastery Halls Encounters table above occurs.

M6: MONASTIC CELLS

Area open to visitors

> A small and bare room containing simple furniture: a table, a chair, a bed, and a footlocker. The only decoration in this room is the monastery's rose crest carved across the stone floor.

These rooms serve as sleeping quarters for 1d3 members of the Crimson Faithful. No one is here during the Night of Flames.

Who's Here? From the Evening Hour through the Witching Hour, there is an 80 percent chance for someone to be sleeping here. From the Twilight Hour through the Nightfall Hour, there is a 25 percent chance someone is resting, eating, or being amorous here. Choose if the people present are **Priest Acolytes**, **Cultist Fanatics**, **Cultists**, **Knights**, **Warrior Veterans**, or **Crimson Clergy**. A single window looks out onto the monastery grounds. If the characters accept the offer to sleep at the monastery, they are shown to separate cells.

Second Floor. Above this floor is a second, identical set of cells that can be accessed from the second floor of the Monastery Halls.

M7: SCRIPTORIUMS

Area open to visitors

Simple wooden writing lecterns occupy the center of the room, and shelves filled with tomes and scrolls line the walls.

Who's Here? During the Evening Hour there's a 10 percent chance one of the Crimson Faithful is reading or copying a manuscript. This rises to a 50 percent chance during Twilight Hour through the Nightfall Hour. No one is here during the Night of Flames.

Reading the Texts. The so-called holy scripture of the Crimson Faith in these scriptoriums is a mix of ramblings by people brainwashed by Renathyr's cult, copies of Olaf's self-righteous sermons, and heartachingly sad messages from members of the faithful who miss their families. A few are surprisingly persuasive texts written by Renathyr on the virtue of surrendering your will to the divine power of



the Crimson Rose. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that Renathyr's writings speak of a "Holy Vein" and a "Bloody Sanctum" beneath the sanctuary where he communes with the Crimson Rose.

A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that Renathyr describes himself and his most trusted clergy as "the Bloodless," and cryptically, poetically describes that the Crimson Rose's blessing allows him to purify the blood of the faithful by drinking it.

Treasure. The chamber contains five sets of ornate Calligrapher's Tools worth 50 GP each, seven blank Books, 50 sheets of Paper, and a few texts with useful information. Five Books are general religion texts, and one copy of *The Rosen Testament*, the core scripture of the monastery's religion. The testament is a Book worth 250 GP due to its artistry and illumination, and functions as a useful reference for information about the Crimson Faithful or vampires.

M8: OLAF'S CHAMBERS

Area closed to visitors

Compared to the cells that other members of the faithful live in, Olaf's private study and bedroom is opulent and well-furnished. The door to this chamber is locked. Extravagant stained glass windows look over the eastern battlements.

Treasure. Tucked away in a drawer within Olaf's writing desk is his personal missal, a liturgical book that contains the prayers and rituals of the Crimson Faith. As a Search action, a character who examines the room and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the missal. Those who take time to read it find details on the ritual to enter the secret chamber beneath the monastery where the Bloodless receive the gift of the Crimson Rose, and where he, Cromwell, and Jaeger had been anointed as the goddess's chosen. To access this chamber, a hidden goblet beneath the altar in the cathedral must be filled with a pint of blood.

M9: CROMWELL'S CHAMBERS

Area closed to visitors

Cromwell treasures her private room, though she is rarely around to use it, and she keeps the door locked when she is not inside. It contains trophies of all manner of hunts and kills over her time as the leader of the monastery's inquisitors. Her chambers possess the same amenities as one of the monastic cells but also includes a chest for her trophies and windows that overlook the eastern battlements. The lid to her chest of trophies is locked by Cromwell's skeleton key and can be picked using Thieves' Tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

Treasure. Beneath a bevy of furs, horns, claws, and bones of largely sentimental value within the chest is a small jewelry box filled with rings, necklaces, and other trinkets. The jewelry amounts to 300 GP worth of diamonds and 200 GP worth of rubies. All were looted from people she killed or captured. Cromwell keeps hold of these trinkets to pay for any expenses incurred while riding afield.

M10: KITCHEN

Area closed to visitors

The Kitchen is where the food is prepared for the Crimson Faithful. Meat from the Dead Larder (area M11) is kept as bloody as possible and is often served to the bat hounds. Bones are ground into meal to pad out the horse's feed. The fat is also used, cut away, and repurposed into the candles that are lit throughout the monastery.

M11: DEAD LARDER

Area closed to visitors

> The air in this room is frigid and pungent with the stench of flesh. Around the walls, corpses hang on meat hooks amidst other stacks of stored foodstuffs. The floor is slick with congealed blood.

This room's floors, walls, and ceilings are made of metal plating, all of which are cold to the touch. Several corpses, some animal, some human, and one alpengrendel, hang here on meat hooks. Blood coats the floor an inch thick.

This room stores any unconsumed food, unprocessed corpses, and still-living people captured by the monastery.

Captives. Searching the room finds four captive human **Commoners** shackled to the wall with Manacles, barely conscious and alive with 4 Exhaustion levels. A red-bearded man named Axel Farley speaks for the group, who are members of the Crimson Faithful that lost faith in Renathyr's teachings and followed him into his Bloody Sanctum. What they saw traumatized them so awfully that they shudder when they speak of it. They say the sanctum has walls which ooze blood and that they all heard an awful whispering voice call to them. No righteous goddess would have a sanctum so heinous. Farley knows:

- Exactly where the entrance is in the Sanguine Cathedral (area M12), hidden beneath the altar.
- That Olaf knows the ritual to open the entrance, and searching his quarters (area M8) might give more critical information.

Food Supplies. Food here is preserved by the ice the Crimson Faithful cut from the mountains above the monastery every few weeks. The slain alpengrendel hanging here had attacked the last ice-harvesting expedition.



M12: SANGUINE CATHEDRAL

Area open to visitors

> You step into a grand cathedral with a domed ceiling. Marble statues of angels adorn the stained-glass windows, but the white stone is slick with red liquid. The droning hymns of the Crimson Faithful echo, amplifying the voices of the worshipers seated in the pews.
>
> An altar, covered with roses and candles, stands at the back. A corpse rests on a platform, its blood flowing into a golden bowl. A stone pulpit separates the altar from the pews.
>
> On the east and west walls are doors leading further into the monastery.

The Crimson Faithful are called here at the Twilight and Evening Hours each night by the bells to listen to either Friar Olaf (**Priest**) or Father Renathyr (**The Crimson Abbot**) deliver a cloying sermon about surrendering one's wicked desires and filling one's mind only with the purity of the Crimson Rose. However, members of the Crimson Faithful can be found worshiping and singing the praises of their goddess at all times of night.

Bell Tower Gate. The door on the eastern wall of the cathedral leads to the Bell Tower Ascent (area M13) of the monastery. The door to it is locked and can be opened with any skeleton key.

Thirsting Altar. Anyone near the altar smells a metallic tang and hears dripping water, which conceals the only passageway to the Bloody Sanctum (area M16). As a Search action, a character who examines the altar and succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a golden chalice hidden behind the altar's dossal. A crust of dried blood mars the surface within the chalice.

Filling the chalice with blood causes the altar to glow with crimson light and shift, sliding forward to reveal a hidden shaft beneath. Otherwise, the altar is fastened to the stone floor. The revealed vertical shaft leads 40 feet down into the Holy Vein (area M15). A character with blood can offer their own to fill the chalice, taking 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage to fill the goblet. They can also use the blood of any of the Crimson Faithful.

Meeting with Renathyr. The characters may seek to speak with Father Renathyr before or after one of his sermons. If so, Renathyr will instead invite the characters to meet with him privately in the belfry after he delivers his sermon (see area M14).

M13: BELL TOWER ASCENT

Area closed to visitors

The Crimson Monastery bell tower rises two stories above the rest of the structure and looms above the common grounds. The stairs begin on the first floor, and the second floor is occupied entirely by the spiral staircase. The third floor is a landing where five **Bat Hounds** rest during the Evening Hour through the Witching Hour. If roused by anyone other than a vampire, they attack and fight until Bloodied, after which they flee through the windows back to their houses (area M2a).

Heading Up. At the top of the stairs is a 20-foot-tall ladder, which leads to a trapdoor that opens to the belfry (area M14).

M14: WATCHFUL BELFRY

Area closed to visitors

> You step through the trapdoor onto a wooden platform clumsily fastened to the stone supports. Above, four pillars converge into arches, forming the dome of the bell tower. At the center, a massive silver bell sways gently in the wind, its pull rope tied to a pillar.
>
> From this height, Wickermoor Hollow stretches out before you—from the shores of Moonsong Lake to the distant lights of Wickermoor Village. The gravity of the monastery's influence is clear as it spreads its faith across the land.
>
> Braziers flicker here, shedding an ominous red and orange light throughout the space. Hundreds of bats roost in the rafters overhead, casting eerie shadows that seem to writhe in the dancing fire. The faint smell of sulfur drifts on the hot air that passes through the flames.

Renathyr only visits the belfry for two reasons: to meet with those who have ingratiated themselves with him and the other members of the Crimson Faithful, and privately during the Witching Hour every night to gaze upon the mist rising from Moonsong Lake.

The characters are invited to join Father Renathyr here if they remain in good favor with the Crimson Faithful (see "Crimson Faithful" earlier in this chapter) for a full night after their arrival. But even if they surprise him here during the Witching Hour, he'll be open to a more intimate conversation.

The Abbot's History. Renathyr is willing to talk about his goals and his past with those he feels are good candidates to join his clergy. If someone asks about his time before becoming abbot of the monastery, he'll grip the hilt of his sword and mutter before changing the subject.

WHY DO YOU COME HERE? "The flames bring clarity. From up here, the view is... different, as though the world has been cleansed for a brief moment. You will understand, in time."

WHAT DO YOU SEE FROM THIS BELL TOWER? "I see the land I swore to protect, trembling under the weight of its sins. I also see the life I left behind. But no matter how long I stare, it is only a reflection."

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER OF YOUR CLERGY? "There is no single path. The Crimson Rose calls to those ready to hear her voice. We are all tested, in different ways."

IS THERE NOTHING THAT WILL MAKE YOU STOP? "Stop...? Stop cleansing the evil from this realm and spreading the love of the Crimson Rose? Never."

Calling for Aid. If combat breaks out here, Renathyr rings the bell, alerting all within the monastery to something unexpected, and he casts *Word of Recall* on his first turn to teleport to the Bloody Sanctum (area M16). When the bell rings, eight **Swarms of Bats** swoop down from the rafters and attack.

Combat in the belfry is easily visible from the courtyard. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) each round after the bell rings, roll 1d4 on the Reinforcements table below and increase the modifier (X) by 1 for each round that has passed. Once an entry has been rolled, treat future rolls of it as "no reinforcements."

Reinforcements

1d4+X	Reinforcements
1–4	No reinforcements
5–6	Three **Bat Hounds**
7–8	One **Cultist Fanatic** and four **Cultists**
9	Two **Crimson Clergy**
10	Houndmaster Jaeger (**Bandit Captain**) and two **Bat Hounds**
11	Friar Olaf (**Priest**) and four **Priest Acolytes**

Reinforcements stop arriving on round 10 of combat, if the characters are captured, or if they flee, such as by using rope to rappel down the tower or running past reinforcements in the Bell Tower Ascent (area M13).

Trapdoor. The only entrance to the tower is a single wooden trapdoor that leads to the Bell Tower Ascent (area M13).

M15: HOLY VEIN

Area closed to visitors

> You splash into a murky pool beneath the altar. In this dark room, the smell of wet earth and iron is almost overpowering. Unworked walls of rough stone rise to a low ceiling only six feet above you. The passageway is filled with three feet of sticky, inky liquid, leaving you little breathing room.

The passageway is completely dark. If the characters create a light, read or paraphrase the following:

> You see now the truth: it is not water that you travel through. It is blood.

This passageway was once used by Father Renathyr to enter his sanctum, but as his vampiric curse strengthened, he found he could come and go as he pleased. He sealed and hid the entrance, now only using it when bringing victims to feed upon in the sight of his devil goddess, Viraxys.

The entirety of this passageway counts as Difficult Terrain, as the blood and cramped conditions make traversal slow and arduous. The blood in the tunnel drenches and stains other creatures, but it slides away from Father Renathyr's body and clothes when he emerges from it.

Sickening Gore. When a creature that isn't a Fiend or an Undead ends its turn in the blood, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until it leaves the blood.

Bloody Guardian. A large stone door partially submerged in blood stands at the end of the Holy Vein and leads to the Bloody Sanctum (area M16). It is magically sealed with the effects of an *Arcane Lock* spell. When a character examines the door or tries to open it, the blood before the door begins to bubble and roil. As a security measure, a blood elemental (use the **Water Elemental** stat block, except its Slam attack deals Necrotic damage) emerges from the sanguine river and attacks anyone who tries to enter the sanctum that isn't Bloodless. Dousing this blood elemental in Holy Water destroys it instantly.

Destroying the blood elemental removes the enchanted protection from the stone door, and it can be pushed open with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.



M16: BLOODY SANCTUM

Area closed to visitors

> The rough stone transitions to polished walls, and the ceiling rises into a larger chamber, lit by a chandelier. The circular room's smooth stone walls surround a blood channel that runs along the edges. At the center stands a circular altar, etched with a rose and covered with dried roses. On the altar is a painting of an elven woman. A leather-bound journal rests beside the painting.

This 40-foot-high, vaulted chamber is the private sanctum of Father Renathyr. It is here where he converses freely with his supposed goddess through Duchess, speaking to him of the conquests to come. When not performing his duties as abbot, Father Renathyr retreats here to commune without prying eyes.

Renathyr is Present. If the characters arrived here shortly after the pyre was cleaned, Renathyr is here and attacks the characters (see "Bloody Tears," below). Renathyr leaves for the belfry (area M14) just before the Witching Hour on a Night of Flames.

Renathyr is Absent. If the characters snuck in and arrived here before the crowd in the courtyard dispersed, Renathyr is not here. However, if the characters touch either the painting of his wife (see "Treasure" below) or the rose on the altar beneath it, his devil goddess, Viraxys, alerts him to intruders, and he casts *Word of Recall* to intervene (see "Bloody Tears" below).

Sickening Gore. Blood from the Holy Vein (area M15) fills the outer channel to a depth of 4 feet—Medium and smaller creatures must swim. Wading in the blood is Difficult Terrain. When a creature that isn't a Fiend or an Undead ends its turn in the blood, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until it leaves the blood.

Treasure. The painting on the altar is of the wife Renathyr abandoned—Lethica Nightborne. It's of fine craftsmanship and has a haunting quality, easily worth 500 GP to a collector in Wickermoor Village. The roses crumble if touched, and that character gains Immunity to the Poisoned condition for 24 hours.

Journal. Renathyr's journal contains an account of everything described in "The Crimson Abbot," at the beginning of this chapter as Renathyr recalls it. In early entries, he knows he has become a vampire but is unaware that he is being manipulated by a devil. After the entry detailing the time his wife came to the monastery to save him but was turned away, Renathyr became convinced that he was tricked by a devil. Despite this realization, he now believes he is too far gone to atone. He only follows the wretched path he has been set upon. The pages become increasingly difficult to read as they become smudged or stained with blood until eventually the pages are completely smeared with red.

BLOODY TEARS

This section assumes that the characters confront Father Renathyr (**The Crimson Abbot**) in the Bloody Sanctum (area M16). If confronted elsewhere, he casts *Word of Recall* on his first turn to teleport to the sanctum.

VIRAXYS'S INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), Viraxys exerts her power using one of the following options; she can't choose the same option two rounds in a row:

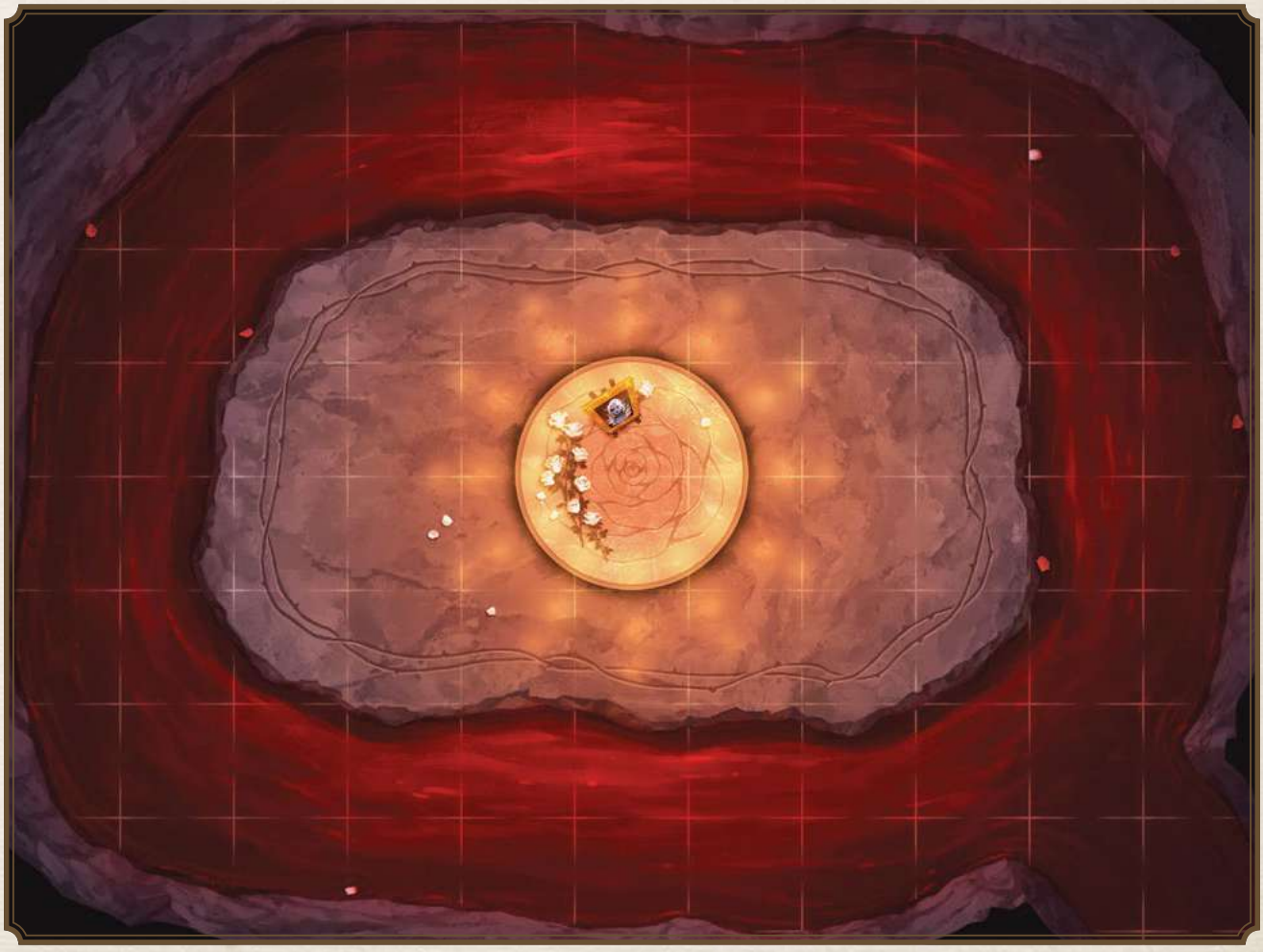
BLOOD TORRENT. Blood surges and grasps Father Renathyr's foes. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15. Up to three creatures within 30 feet of the blood pool. *Failure:* The target is pushed up to 15 feet in a horizontal direction of Viraxys's choice, and its Speed is reduced to 0 until Initiative count 20 on the following round.

SANGUINE SHIELD. An undulating swirl of blood surrounds Father Renathyr. The first time he takes damage during a turn before Initiative count 20 on the following round, reduce the damage taken by 2d6 (to a minimum of 1).

PHASE I: UNDER HER SHADOW

Use map 14.2 for phase 1. When Father Renathyr confronts the characters, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Crimson Abbot's face twists in rage. He clutches his blackened sword, which surges with crimson light. His image shimmers and he grows to towering height, monstrous wings sprout from his back, and his face becomes a bestial mask of hate and hunger.
>
> "This heresy will not stand, unbelievers. I have tried to show you the beauty of the Crimson Rose, but you reject the truth. We all walk under her shadow, and now you will die beneath it!"



14.2 Bloody Sanctum

Father Renathyr prioritizes anyone who has offended the Crimson Faithful, or him personally, the most. He targets that character until someone else angers him by doing one or more of the following:

- Deals Radiant damage or uses magic to create sunlight
- Touches or damages the portrait on the altar
- Insults his goddess or his faith
- Fights in a way that reminds him of his past life as a knight by wearing heavy armor and wielding a sword and shield

Renathyr does not yet assume his true form and attempts to quickly destroy the characters. He repositions himself during combat so that he is targeted by as few attacks as possible—ideally only taking damage from the character he's attacking.

When Father Renathyr is Bloodied, his goddess infuses him with power, transitioning the battle to the next phase.

PHASE 2: BENEATH A BLOOD MOON

Use map 14.3 for phase 2. Read or paraphrase the following. If phase 1 took place somewhere other than the Bloody Sanctum, modify the description to have a great torrent of blood swirl out from Renathyr and engulf all the combatants.

> A mocking feminine laugh fills the room as shadows in the chamber take the form of a shapely horned woman with burning eyes the color of rose petals. "Arise, my champion. Ascend beneath my blood moon," she says as the blood that fills the sanctum seethes and churns and erupts like a geyser, hurling you up in a crimson torrent.
>
> When your vision clears, you are within the Sanguine Cathedral. Blood pours from the altar and weeps from the eyes of the statues. Above you, silhouetted by an unnaturally red moon and showering the cathedral in gore with each dreadful wingbeat, is a bat-like monster garbed in Father Renathyr's shredded vestments and wielding a malefic sword. Tears of blood stream down its face.

Renathyr has assumed his true form, empowered by his devil goddess's wrath, and fights in the Sanguine Cathedral dedicated to her glory. Three bipedal figures made of blood rise to fight by his side, sent by Viraxys to aid her champion. These blood effigies use the **Crimson Clergy** stat block, but they have 10 HP.

The honorable man Marius Renathyr once was is now gone—he is nothing more than a vessel for his sorrow, hatred, and hunger. He unleashes that full fury on the characters, fighting until they—or he—are destroyed.

Blood Pool. Blood bubbles up from the shaft beneath the altar and flows from the altar itself, covering the stones within 60 feet of it. Viraxys can use the Blood Torrent effect on this pool.

Viraxys's Influence. Viraxys continues to affect the battle as in phase 1 and gains the following option:

ENDLESS MINIONS. If there are fewer than 3 blood effigies alive, one more rises from the blood coating the cathedral. It acts on the Initiative count of the others or immediately after the Crimson Abbot on his Initiative count.

HELLFIRE

When Renathyr is reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following.

> Renathyr wails in pain, and his blood-streaked sword flies from his hands and embeds itself far into the stone altar. He collapses into the morass of blood on the floor—and the blade suddenly emits a thunderous wave of crimson light and force. All of the candles in the cathedral erupt into a hellish blaze, and the stench of brimstone fills the air.
>
> The stained glass windows shift, becoming the mosaic visage of a voluptuous devil leering at the scene, and a sultry voice slithers from the image: "What a pathetic disappointment you are, Renathyr. But perhaps, you who slew him would replace him? His mission remains incomplete, and I can sense your hunger for power. Cast aside your petty concerns, turn away from the weaklings huddled around you and become the bloody instrument of my will."

Viraxys, the Crimson Rose herself (see "The Crimson Abbot" at the beginning of this chapter), speaks through and shows her true form in the windows of the cathedral, offering the characters infernal power. She claims to be a goddess, but those who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Religion) check see through her deception and know she is clearly a vile Fiend. A *Detect Evil and Good* spell or a Paladin's Divine Senses reveals the blade to be a desecrated object with a fiendish resonance—she is a devil of deceit and desire. She might say:

ABOUT RENATHYR'S DEFEAT. "You are stronger than him and more controlled. You would use my power more effectively."

AFTER BEING CALLED A DEVIL. "Ha! You are cleverer than him, too. Yet with the Crooked Queen making her move, can you afford to pick and choose your allies?"

IF HER POWER IS ACCEPTED. "And you are most wise. Though you are not yet ready to become Bloodless, as he was, you soon will be. Wield my blade. Kill in my name. Do great deeds—heroic deeds in my name. Die in my name. I will gift you peace and power."

IF HER POWER IS REFUSED. "We shall see. Once you are broken, once my true power has bled you dry, then we shall see how proud and noble you still are."

Accepting Infernal Power. Characters who consider accepting feel an almost insurmountable hunger for the blood spattering the cathedral, and for that coursing through the veins of their companions. This is a pivotal decision, with dire consequences. Take a moment to impress that upon the player through their character's sensation of Viraxys's temptations. If a characters accepts, that hunger overwhelms them. Viraxys laughs with wicked glee and purrs, "Now you are mine."

The character claims the sword and becomes a **Vampire**, and their alignment changes to Evil if it wasn't already. The character then becomes an NPC under your control and attempts to escape in the form of a bat or red mist. This is a grave decision, but it can serve as a dramatic end to a character and introduces a new enemy to harry the remaining characters as you see fit.

Refusing Infernal Power. If the characters refuse Viraxys's power, the devil hisses, "You are too weak to claim my gift. You lack resolve and are damned." Then, the hellfire in the cathedral snuffs out, the stained-glass windows shatter, and the essence of Viraxys leaves the Crimson Monastery forever. The blade once called Duchess remains entombed in the altar.

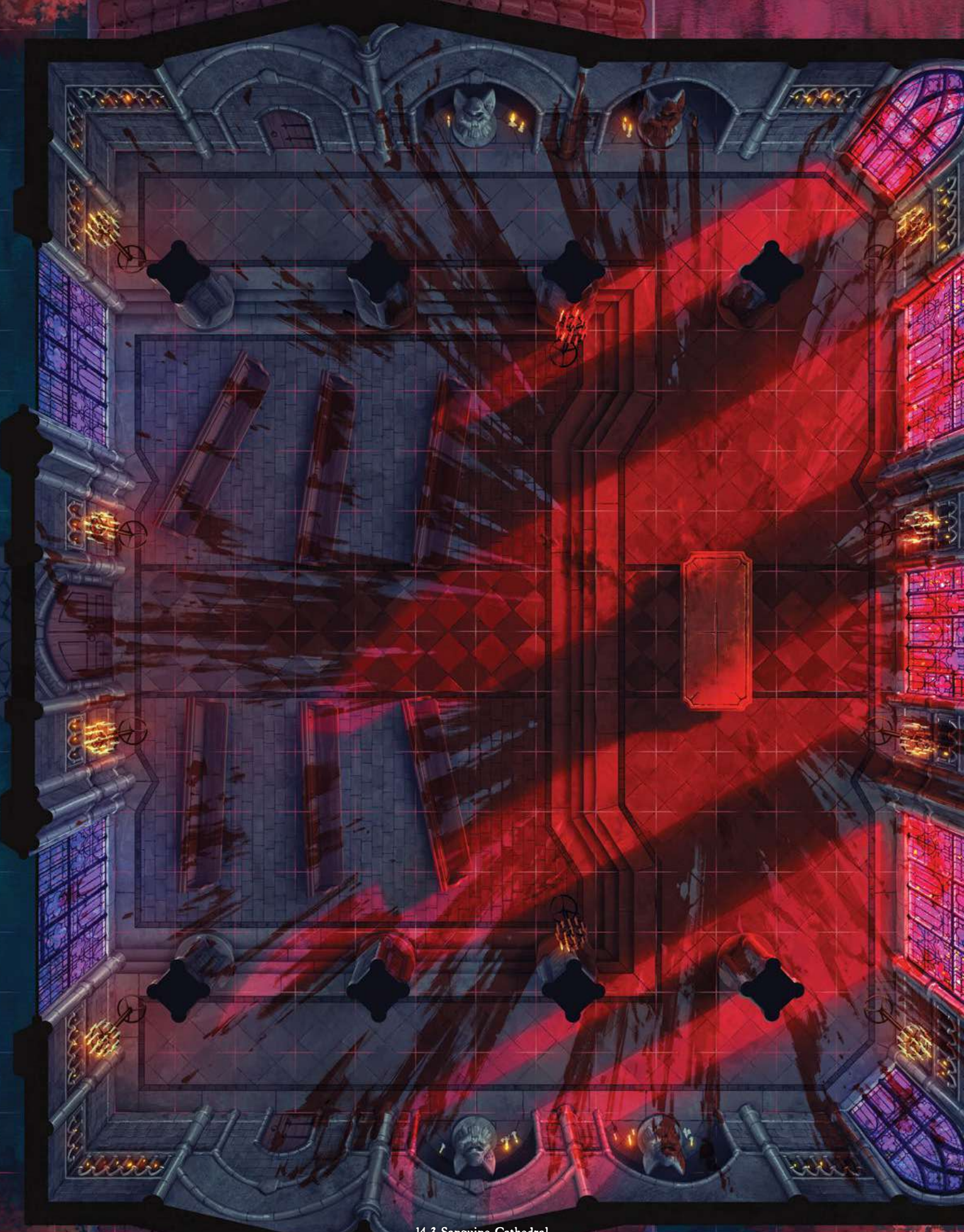
Level Up. The characters reach level 6, if they are still level 5, when they defeat Father Renathyr.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Hierophant* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9 and a character did not accept the gift of Viraxys (see "Accepting Infernal Power" above), the *Sword of the Crimson Abbot* can be pulled from the altar by a character, containing an echo of the devil's power but lacking the overwhelming corruptive influence it once had.

If *The Hierophant* card was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9 but a character accepted Viraxys's gift (see "Accepting Infernal Power" above), the *Sword of the Crimson Abbot* is removed as a possible Fabled Heirloom the characters can claim.

However, you can add another Fabled Heirloom to the adventure if you wish. Later in the adventure when appropriate, Adela Druskenvald can sense that fate has somehow changed. She will offer to perform another tarot reading in Druskenvald Manor for the character who had originally pulled *The Hierophant*. Perform the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9 once more, but remove cards that have already been drawn by characters or connected to artifacts located in chapters that have already been played through.





14.3 Sanguine Cathedral

CONCLUSION: THE BELL TOLLS FOR THEE

When the presence of Viraxys fades from the Crimson Monastery, the Crooked Moon turns back to its familiar white hue, and the blood moon is gone. Following the death of Father Renathyr, the surviving Bloodless scramble to position themselves as Renathyr's successor, preaching piecemeal to nearby congregators. The fate of the Crimson Faithful hinges upon the characters' next choices.

POWER VACUUM

The death of Father Renathyr is only the beginning of the fell tale of the Crimson Monastery if the characters aren't careful to eliminate the cult's leadership. If more than one of Renathyr's priors survive, a schism rages within the cult for a year, leading to many senseless deaths among the faithful until only one leader survives, in this priority:

- Friar Olaf (defeats both rivals due to his influence)
- Inquisitor Cromwell (defeats only Jaeger with strength of arms)
- Houndmaster Jaeger (not capable of defeating either rival)
- Another member of the Bloodless (only if all three priors have been slain)

If only one of the priors survived, they thank the characters for saving them from Renathyr's evil, then swiftly consolidate power before any of the faithful learn that their goddess is, in fact, a devil.

THE CULT DISMANTLED

If the characters declare before the Crimson Faithful that their goddess, the Crimson Rose, is a devil and display proof (such as Father Renathyr's monstrous, bat-like corpse or his journal found in area M16), the Crimson Faithful rebel against the Bloodless. This may happen in one final encounter immediately following the fight with Renathyr or in a longer guerilla battle following a retreat to Dawn's Gate. Either way, the influence of the Crimson Faith is undone by this revelation. In addition, the Crimson Faithful disband if all Bloodless are slain (the number of total Bloodless is up to you).

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

If Gareth was rescued, the Brightsingers celebrate his return. If he was slain, they hold a funeral at the Abandoned Church (area V19), praising him as a martyr. Weston Murdoch even proposes sainthood for him.

If the Crimson Faith is disbanded, many former followers leave Dawn's Gate for Wickermoor Village, eager to begin anew. All three religious groups view this as an ideal opportunity to convert new members.

Phillip Druskenvald is thrilled to hear about the good work that the characters are doing in helping the people of Wickermoor Hollow. He invites the characters to a lavish dinner at the Druskenvald Estate, promising the house won't turn crooked this time. Adela is on a trip to help the people of Foxwillow, so she is not present.





Chapter 15: THE DROWNED CROSSROADS

"Now, don't call me a villain just because I'm a gamblin' man. After all, you came here to roll the dice yourself. No sir, you and I are just a couple of sinners. The only difference between us is that you have nothing, and I have exactly what your heart desires. Now won't you go ahead and shake this humble sinner's hand?"

- Mister Crossroads, the Grinning Sinner -

MURKWATER BEND IS ONE HELL OF A PLACE TO MAKE YOUR FORTUNE. Prosperity and riches of all varieties come easy to the free folk who call the lawless swamp town on stilts home. But the misfortune that follows comes just as easily, the sinister cost of the deals made with Mister Crossroads, the Grinning Sinner—a crocodilian gambler and magician.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

The treacherous swamp known as the Drowned Crossroads sits at the lowest point of Wickermoor Hollow. The people of the stilt-town of Murkwater Bend favor freedom and vice, enjoying the natural separation from the strict laws and social customs that govern the valley's other regions.

Years ago, a sudden strike of prosperity came to Murkwater Bend, with gold flowing freely and luck seemingly being on the side of the swamp-folk. People came from all over Wickermoor Hollow in hopes of finding their own fortune in the bayou.

But luck doesn't hold out forever, and the good times were not meant to last. In recent years, the people of Murkwater Bend have been struck with terrible misfortunes, and some whisper of the whole swamp being jinxed. Instances of accidents, disease, and financial ruin have increased dramatically, with no end to the bad luck in sight.

Even worse, the hex has brought the Drowned Crossroads to unnatural life, with the swamp itself rising up to drag unsuspecting travelers into its murky depths. In the Midnight Hour, haunting brass music can be heard throughout the mire, and the distant lights of a ghastly riverboat drift through the gloom, always just out of reach.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Murkwater Bend is jinxed, and its people are being swindled into bad deals that cost them their very souls. Characters drawn to the town by the Quest Hook later in this chapter have these goals:

- Find a cure for Adela Druskenvald, whose hand is afflicted with a withering hex.
- Discover the source of the town's misfortune by treating with Vander Boone.
- Brave the Drowned Crossroads to find Mister Crossroads, then make a bargain with him or purchase his wares to earn passage aboard the *Dead Man's Hand* riverboat.
- Disrupt the soul-powered boiler in the riverboat's Boiler Room.
- Destroy Mister Crossroads, the Grinning Sinner.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with Mister Crossroads, the key NPC, to weave his sly malevolence throughout. Study the rules to Liar's Dice (see "Test of Luck" later in the chapter) to efficiently oversee tense games of chance. Carefully read through the list of Dark Bargains, Cursed Curios, Paranormal Potions, and Familiars to make the meeting with Mister Crossroads in his Sinner's shack as enticing as possible. Lastly, reviewing the climactic battle, "Bayou Boogie," ensures a thrilling final encounter filled with twists and turns.

This chapter is designed for four level 6 characters.

THE GRINNING SINNER

Captain Briggsy "The Kutlass" Kratch gave up a life of piracy when he lost his crew to the violent waves of Druskenvald's ravenous ocean. The crocodile-folk himself was only able to survive through the fate-bending power of his patron, an ancient death spirit known as Snake Eye Jack. Leaving the sea behind, he found himself bouncing between bounty hunts and other dangerous jobs armed with his patron's jinxcraft and the sigil-etched cutlass that once gave him his piratical moniker.

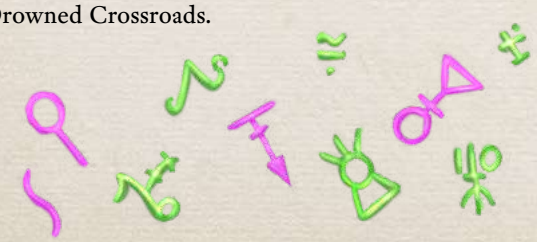
In time, he made a home in the swamp, known as the Drowned Crossroads, feeling at ease around the scoundrels that lurked within. The rogues of the swamp did not care for the crocodile man, and the common folk of the bayou feared his strange magic and garishly hexed sword. They even coined ugly legends about him that claimed he devoured children and stole souls.

Work dried up, attempted cons and thievery failed, and Briggsy found himself penniless, purposeless, and reviled. This potent cocktail of isolation, resentment, and bad luck made him deeply resent his patron, believing that Snake Eye Jack had turned his back on Briggsy despite the years of service. Through the bitterness, the cunning croc-folk came up with a plan.

One night at the Midnight Hour, Briggsy rowed into the bayou and tossed his hexed cutlass overboard at the exact point where the two ancient roads had once crossed centuries ago. This offering summoned Snake Eye Jack, a many-armed man of shadow and bone with serpents' eyes glowing a neon green and pink. Briggsy challenged his patron to a game of dice, making an offer the death spirit could not refuse.

The pair diced all night, and through Briggsy's guile and treachery, he beat Snake Eye Jack and bound him in a hexed coffin. Claiming the full power of his former patron for himself, the croc-folk became a master of misfortune and jinxcraft, conjuring forth a magical blunderbuss with his new abilities. However, the cost was great. His body rotted as if he had been dead for weeks, and his left arm withered to bone.

Briggsy didn't mind. He moved into an abandoned shack on stilts at the heart of the swamp and decided to become what the people of Murkwater Bend believed him to be: the bogeyman of the Drowned Crossroads.





Captain Briggsy Kratch

Mister Crossroads

HEART'S DESIRE

From then on, Briggsy called himself Mister Crossroads, but many of the folk who called upon him for favors and charms dubbed him the Grinning Sinner after his crocodile smile and tricksy magic. People of the swamp come to Mister Crossroads for simple jinxes and curses, but the croc-folk's favorite "associates" are the truly desperate.

He makes deals with these unfortunate souls, whether they're someone trying to escape a hell of their own making or in search of their wildest dreams. Shortly after sealing the pact through a signed contract or a simple handshake, the luck of the new victim would turn around, and they would get exactly what Mister Crossroads promised.

But the Grinning Sinner is clever, and there are always loopholes in every deal. After weeks, months, or even years, the luck runs out, and the joy and fortune granted by the jinxcraft turns to ash. Eventually, each and every one of them experiences a terrible misfortune that costs them their life and grants their soul to Mister Crossroads, which he uses to fuel the soul-binding magic that keeps Snake Eye Jack bound within his hexed coffin. As added insult, their lifeless corpse rises as an Undead thrall to join his crew of the damned.

CAPTAIN OF THE DAMNED

When Mister Crossroads isn't making deals in his swamp shack, he captains the opulent *Dead Man's Hand* riverboat, which thrums with his jinxcraft power. Acquired from a foolish gambler—Elias—the riverboat moves about the Drowned Crossroads, mooring at random locations each night, only able to be found by those who have made a deal with Mister Crossroads.

Keeping the riverboat fueled and Snake Eye Jack bound requires a constant supply of damned souls. His most recent and precious catch is Adela Druskenvald herself, who made a foolish bargain with Mister Crossroads in desperation to avoid her most terrifying visions and prophecies of calamity. The Grinning Sinner's current target and most vexing foe is Vander Boone, the self-proclaimed "Bayou King" of the Drowned Crossroads (described in "NPCs of the Drowned Crossroads" below).

Between Elias's riverboat, Adela's powerful soul, and Vander's large following, Mister Crossroads hopes to stack his crew with hundreds of new corpses and stock up on enough soul-stuff to keep Snake Eye Jack imprisoned forever.

These grand schemes are motivated by fear and doubt. He knows that, should his former patron ever break free, his own doom would come swiftly, and the soul he traded to Snake Eye Jack many years ago would be tormented for all time.

NPCS OF THE DROWNED CROSSROADS

The Drowned Crossroads may be a sinister swamp, but its people are a vibrant tapestry of outsiders. Within Wickermoor Hollow, Crossroaders are often labeled as scoundrels, thieves, or gamblers—and many are—but most swamp-folk are regular fisherfolk, traders, hunters, trappers, and artisans who've learned the secret ways of surviving in the wetlands. Some important swamp-dwelling characters in this adventure are featured below.

ELIAS GREAVES

Elias (eh-LYE-us) Greaves was a gambler from the world of the living who dreamt of wealth and influence far beyond his station. Seemingly blessed by Lady Luck herself, he won big at every gambling hall he visited, eventually growing bored and craving a new challenge. He found a way to board the *Ghostlight Express* and travel to Druskenvald, where he met Phillip and Adela.

Despite his powerful new friends, his luck ran out in the lands of death, and his fortune was quickly spent. Soon, he was stuck playing low stakes games aboard the *Laughlin Lullaby*, a riverboat that traveled up and down the Silverbell River in Wickermoor Hollow. In desperation, he made a deal with Mister Crossroads to turn his luck around.

After shaking the croc-folk's hand, his luck instantly turned around, and he even won ownership of the riverboat in a poker bet. He renamed it *Dead Man's Hand* in reference to the skeletal left hand of his new patron. The gambler enjoyed years of prosperity, but as always, the Grinning Sinner exploited the man's greed and the fine print in the deal, and it all came crashing down.

When Mister Crossroads came to collect, he claimed Elias's soul, his walking corpse, and the fine riverboat, which the trickster turned into his base of operations. He then threw the gambler's spirit into a soulfire boiler to power the hexes that kept Snake Eye Jack imprisoned in the jinxed coffin. Elias was special. As a living soul who traveled aboard the *Ghostlight Express*, his spirit would burn bright and long, keeping the Grinning Sinner's game going for years.



Elias Greaves

Elias's shambling corpse mindlessly serves aboard the *Dead Man's Hand*, but it was recently reawakened when his old friend Adela Druskenvald made a deal with Mister Crossroads. A fragment of his soul stirred in his withered hand, which ripped free from the animated corpse and crawled through the swamp in search of help against the Grinning Sinner.

VANDER BOONE, THE BAYOU KING

Folk often come to Murkwater Bend to trade or scheme, but prize fights draw in the largest crowds. Vander Boone (Chaotic Neutral, human **Bandit Captain**) was one such prize fighter, a brigand-turned-boxer renowned throughout the swamps. He was popular and successful, but he longed for more. He wanted real power, real control, and real respect.

One night, just short of a year ago, Vander met Mister Crossroads and asked for the power to rule the Drowned Crossroads. All would pay tribute to him and seek his approval. But when the Grinning Sinner extended his hand, Vander pulled back, shook his head, and told Mister Crossroads he would do it himself. The flabbergasted croc-folk swore that Boone would regret his decision as he walked away.

Vander has declared himself the Bayou King and named himself the protector of the Drowned Crossroads. He has amassed a small legion of small-time thugs, decked them out in stylish purple-and-black uniforms with his prize money, and created a protection racket in Murkwater Bend. Unlike most bandit captains, however, Vander has proved to be a surprisingly canny leader. He understands the motivations of the countless rogues within the town and strives to keep them in balance.

He was surprised when everyone readily paid his taxes, leaving him with the job of managing the town while maintaining its lawlessness as much as possible. Recently, however, the Grinning Sinner has sent his Undead crew across the swamp to hunt down the Bayou King. Vander's crew clashes with Mr. Crossroads' minions nearly every night, and though the Bayou King has been steadily losing ground and has retreated to his fort in Murkwater Bend, his noble defense of the village has made him more beloved than ever.

LYLA WEBB

A native of the Drowned Crossroads born to a family of fisherfolk, Lyla (LYE-luh) Webb (Chaotic Good, human **Priest**) had dreams that were much bigger than a life of catching catfish. She set off from home at a young age and eventually discovered a community in the swamp that worshipped Snake Eye Jack and held him as a beneficent spirit who made sure that luck was always on their side. She learned their ways and became a skilled jinxcraft practitioner, using her magical abilities to help the people of the bayou as well as aid her work as a trader.

Now an adult, she has become a shrewd and resourceful businesswoman who has numerous contacts throughout the Drowned Crossroads and a knack for fencing stolen goods that the rogues of the swamp bring her. Her skill in business, helpful magic, and wisdom beyond her years have made her widely respected by all the folk of the swamp, and the Bayou King has appointed her as his chief advisor and emissary.



Vander Boone

Lyla Webb



QUEST HOOK

The characters may travel to Murkwater Bend of their own volition, but this adventure starts with Adela Druskenvald seeking the characters' help after her bad deal with Mister Crossroads.

THE WITHERED ARM

Adela Druskenvald visits the characters wherever they are staying during the darkest part of the Witching Hour. Dressed in a black fur coat, wide brimmed hat, and long woolen gloves, she is clearly trying to seem incognito despite just how out of place her outfit is. She speaks in a pleading whisper, asking the characters to have a private meeting.

When Adela is alone with the characters, read or paraphrase the following:

> Adela looks around to make sure there is no one else watching or listening before slowly removing the long woolen glove off her left hand and pulling up the sleeve of her fur coat. The arm underneath is incredibly withered, nearly skeletal, and her fingers are gnarled inward. The skin has turned to a corpse flesh gray all the way to the elbow.
>
> "I made a big mistake..."

Adela then makes her confession. Following the events in Foxwillow, she had offered to join the pilgrims of the Patient Lady to help the townsfolk start rebuilding their lives after the destruction of Raum. However, this was a lie so she could secretly go to the Drowned Crossroads after a terrifying vision and prophecy. She's just returned from her trip after making a deal with Mister Crossroads.

The prophecy stated, "You and your king shall leave this place on ashen winds when the Crooked Moon snarls with rage and not a night before," which shook her to the core. In desperation, she secretly sought out the magician in the swamp after hearing tales from her new confidant Gaston Doray.

Mister Crossroads promised that Phillip's power would return when it was time to leave the valley, and all it cost was her wedding ring. In desperation, she accepted. After leaving the Drowned Crossroads, she had forgotten the path she took to get there, and her entire left arm began withering away. This affliction can only be reversed if her wedding ring is recovered and returned to her finger or if Mr. Crossroads is killed, though Adela doesn't know this..

She pleads with the characters to head to the swamp and find a cure for her arm, offering them 150 GP each in return. She also asks them to keep the arrangement secret and to not tell Phillip, promising an extra 50 GP each for their discretion.

After the characters are finished talking to Adela, she leaves to return to the Druskenvald Estate, telling them that she must keep up appearances so Phillip doesn't worry. The characters are then free to gather supplies and travel to the Drowned Crossroads.

JOURNEY TO THE CROSSROADS

The trek to the Drowned Crossroads takes three nights through treacherous terrain, followed by three nights slogging through the swamp to Murkwater Bend.

INTO THE SWAMP

> The ground beneath you grows sodden and foul-smelling, and before you rises a looming wall of cypress and tupelo trees, their branches reaching out like skeletal fingers, casting long shadows over the murky, stagnant waters beyond.

The path forward is treacherous, choked by overgrown plants, flooded with stretches of black water, and surrounded by the teeming wildlife and lurking monsters that call the swamp home. The characters won't get to Murkwater Bend without a fight. Along the way, the characters face three encounters with opportunities for a Long Rest between each. For these encounters, use map 15.1.

First Night. When the characters are ready to camp, an animated, withered hand approaches the characters, sensing their connection to Phillip and Adela. The hand once belonged to Elias Greaves and bears a fragment of his soul.

Any character who touches the *Withered Hand* automatically becomes attuned to it. If the character is already attuned to three magic items, they must choose one of those to which their Attunement ends. If the characters ignore the hand, it tracks them for two nights, reappearing each time they take a Long Rest. If it fails to make contact before the characters arrive at Murkwater Bend, it returns to the *Dead Man's Hand* to rejoin Elias's body.

An hour after the hand first appears, a **Bayou Beast** shambles out of the mire and attacks the characters, drawn by the jinxcraft of the cursed appendage. A character who examines the remains of the beast and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines that the creature was a manifestation of the swamp, crafted by powerful jinxcraft magic and animated with a hexed wooden mask.

Second Night. While crossing a particularly deep stretch of swamp water, the characters are ambushed by two **Giant Crocodiles** and four **Crocodiles**. A character is surprised unless they succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Jinxcraft glyphs are etched in the hides of the Beasts, and as a Study action, a character who examines the sigils and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines the carved symbols have made the crocodiles larger and more aggressive than normal.

Third Night. The characters come across the remnants of a battle between Undead and surprisingly well-dressed bandits. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check deduces that the slain brigands are the crew of a local kingpin who calls himself the Bayou King.

As the characters investigate, an eerie green fog rolls in, and a group of eight **Ghouls** led by a **Ferryman** emerge from the swamp and attack, claiming that Mister Crossroads will defeat the Bayou King, seemingly mistaking the characters as allied with the gang leader.



15.1 Swamp Encounters

MURKWATER BEND

Once the characters have dealt with the threats and dangers on the trail to Murkwater Bend, it takes just another few hours to get there.

GREETED BY LYLA, THE KING'S EMISSARY

The characters are spotted by a sentry as soon as they enter the town. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly, the thick bayou foliage parts, revealing a town built on stilts that rise up from the murky water and thick, dark mud of the swamp. Amidst the bald cypress trees, a twisted tangle of shacks, huts, and larger structures looms, linked by swaying wooden walkways and frayed rope bridges.
>
> As you enter the town, you spot a wooden fort at its center flying a flag of purple and black. New buildings cluster around the fort, with piles of freshly cut planks strewn across the muddy ground.
>
> Two sharp whistles echo through the air, and the gate creaks open. A young woman in a purple coat festooned with jewelry and charms hails you. "You'll want to be inside, strangers," she says matter-of-factly.

The person calling to them is Lyla Webb. Although she has considered deposing Vander should he prove to be a cruel and foolish leader, her primary goal is the destruction of the Grinning Sinner. She can tell that the characters could be useful allies in the fight against Mister Crossroads and tries to guide them into an audience with the Bayou King.

WHAT LYLA KNOWS

Lyla is an excellent judge of character. She knows that the Bayou King is dangerous, but the Grinning Sinner's magic is worse. She especially loathes that he has imprisoned her patron and twists his power to the croc-folk's own sinister aims.

Lyla knows everything that the Bayou King does (see "What the Bayou King Knows" later in this chapter) but doesn't see it as her duty to explain. If pressed for information, you can use the information below to guide Lyla's conversation with the characters:

- Locals now shelter within the walls of Vander's fort to avoid the rampant spread of shambling dead.
- Lyla scoffs at Vander's self-avowed title, "Bayou King." She once knew him as a destitute pit fighter.
- She only describes her connection with Snake Eye Jack to someone with similar magic or aligned goals.

SEAT OF THE BAYOU KING

The characters are led through the large fort, past plenty of the Bayou King's gang but also common folk seeking shelter from the Undead attacks. This is where Vander Boone oversees his "duties" in Murkwater Bend, primarily in waging the fight against Mister Crossroads.

MEETING THE BAYOU KING

> This throne room is a cramped, dingy hall filled with mismatched but surprisingly plush furniture from across Druskenvald. The hall echoes with the voices of three dozen rogues bickering about what steps to take against the shambling dead rising from the swamp.
>
> A half dozen thugs in weathered leathers and purple-and-black suits stare brutishly at the crowd with hands on their sword hilts.
>
> Presiding over the hall is a hulking figure resting his bulk upon a cushioned chair atop a short, raised dais. The bald head of the figure, adorned with a purple top hat, gazes pensively out a window.
>
> Lyla interrupts the man's reverie. "Vander, I've brought the travelers at the gates. They're armed, and they look like they've fought their way through the Sinner's goons."

This man is Vander Boone, the Bayou King (Chaotic Neutral, human **Bandit Captain**).

The fort currently holds around 30 **Commoners** from around Murkwater Bend and 10 **Bandits** (scoundrels and thieves of the swamplands) who have paid the king tribute in exchange for refuge from the Undead here. Finally, six of the Bayou King's personal enforcers (Chaotic Neutral, human **Toughs**) keep the peace.

WHAT THE BAYOU KING KNOWS

Vander sees the characters as potential allies who might be able to help him with the current problems facing the town. Use the details below to guide the conversation with the Bayou King:

- Murkwater Bend used to prosper until misfortune befell the town.
- Mister Crossroads and his Undead minions assail stragglers in the swamp and cause "freak accidents" outside of the fort.
- That wily and rotten croc-folk can only be destroyed while he is aboard his accursed riverboat.
- To board the *Dead Man's Hand*, you must make a deal with the Grinning Sinner or purchase one of his trinkets.

- The Sinner's shack can be found if you take the north road out of Murkwater Bend—just listen for the music.
- Vander feels responsible for the people of the Drowned Crossroads, so he won't risk getting cursed by making a deal.
- Be friendly to the deceitful deal-maker until you learn his secrets.

TEST OF LUCK

After conversing with the characters, the Bayou King looks them up and down and challenges them to a game of Liar's Dice to test their worth.

> "Any of your gang gamblin' men?" the Bayou King says with a smirk. "I want you to prove me somethin'. That you've got a gambler's stomach. You're going to need it.
>
> "Ya' see, the Grinnin' Sinner's a dicin' fella. He lives in a nasty ship chock fulla his rottin' goons, and every last one of 'em's packin' blades. I don't think there's any way of killin' this croc without taking a big risk.
>
> "So why don't you prove you got a gambler's stomach? Play me. Liar's Dice. Win, I double whatever it is you got paid to come all the way out to the Murk. Lose, you owe it to your king to kill that jinxed crocodile."

VICTORY OR DEFEAT

Resolve the game's outcome quickly to move things along or draw it out with cross talk at the table to increase the tension (see "Liar's Dice Rules" below).

Victory. If one of the characters wins the game, the Bayou King smiles proudly and asks the characters how much they're being paid. If they honestly reply that Adela is paying them 150 GP apiece (200 GP if sworn to secrecy), he scowls at the price but accedes to pay them that upon delivering proof of the Grinning Sinner's demise.

If they lie about the price, they must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check to convince him. Naming a price of 300 GP apiece or higher imposes Disadvantage on this check. On a success, he agrees to pay whatever price they name, up to a maximum of 300 GP.

Defeat. If the Bayou King or Lyla wins, Vander smiles and shakes his head. He admits the characters may not have the luck of a master gambler but believes that they may have enough moxie to muscle through. After all, they owe him now to kill the Grinning Sinner.

Time to Rest. After the game, Vander lets the characters rest in the fort, offering a small room to share with enough bedding for all of them. Before retiring for the evening, he invites the characters to eat and drink with him, providing an opportunity for the characters to learn more about the Bayou King, the Drowned Crossroads, and the Grinning Sinner. The downtime of the dice game and remaining evening are enough for the characters to take a Long Rest.

SCREAMS IN THE NIGHT

After the characters bid goodnight and retire, they're jolted awake by piercing screams echoing through the fort. The Grinning Sinner's Undead thralls have infiltrated Murkwater Bend, scaling the fort walls. When the characters reach the throne room, read or paraphrase the following:

> Outside, shrieks split the night air as the throne room descends into chaos. The Bayou King's scoundrels scramble for weapons, casting fearful glances toward the door. Suddenly, it flies open, and a blood-streaked sentry stumbles in, gasping, "They're here... Over the wall..." before collapsing in a heap.
>
> Vander Boone turns to you, his voice a fierce growl: "Get outta' here! Take the north road and head to the Sinner's shack. Keep running 'til you hear his cursed strings playin' in the swamp. Board his riverboat, cut that grinnin' croc down, and end this nightmare!"

The Bayou King will hear no protest. If the characters enter the village's streets and fight, even against his wishes, you can draw your own map of the streets and challenge them with four **Ghasts** led by a **Ferryman**. Another similar group arrives on Initiative count 20 of the fifth and tenth rounds of combat. Staying to fight is foolish, and Lyla Webb joins the fray to spur them on to defeat Mister Crossroads and free Snake Eye Jack.

Otherwise, the characters flee as the town dissolves into a frenzied melee. Waves of the living dead stagger through the streets, their hollow eyes seeking only to kill. Amid the chaos, the characters slip past the carnage unscathed and take the north road, where wooden walkways give way to a soggy, mud-choked path leading into the stinking mire.



LIAR'S DICE RULES

The rules of Liar's Dice are simple, and Lyla is content to explain them to the characters if they're unfamiliar. The players in this game are Vander, Lyla, and the characters.

- Each player has a set of five 6-sided dice, and each round they roll them in secret and look at their own dice (rolling in cups is recommended).
- 1s are considered wild and can be used as any number. For instance, a player with two 4s and two 1s would actually have four 4s.
- The first player (starting with Vander in round one) makes a bid on how many dice of a certain face were rolled by all players in total. For example, Vander starts by safely bidding "two 2s".
- After each bid, the next player to the left can challenge the bid, and all players reveal their dice. If the challenged player overbid, they lose a die for the rest of the game. For example, if there was only a single 2 showing between all players (unlikely, but possible), Vander would permanently lose a die in all future rounds. If the challenged player did not overbid (if there were two or more 2s for example), the challenging player permanently loses a die for the rest of the game instead. Once the challenge is resolved, players reroll their dice, and the player who lost a die makes the first bid in the new round.
- If the next player to the left doesn't wish to challenge, they must raise either the number of dice ("three 2s"), the face ("two 3s"), or both ("four 4s"). There is no limit to how high either number can be raised in the next bid, other than the natural cap of 6 for the face portion of the bid.
- This process of bidding and challenging continues around clockwise with play always passing to the next player on the left.
- When a player loses all five of their dice, they are eliminated from the game.
- The winner of the game is the last person with any dice remaining.

You will know both Vander and Lyla's dice. That's okay—they know how to communicate under the table to gain an advantage.

Special Rules. Characters with certain skill proficiencies can manipulate the game to their advantage, letting the characters be better gamblers than their players. Show the players the following rules.

If you have proficiency in the listed skill or tool, you can use that special trait on your turn. You can use any combination of these traits up to a total of three times during the game:

HARD READ (INSIGHT). Before you bid or challenge, one opponent of your choice must reveal their dice to you, and only you.

DEFT HANDS (SLEIGHT OF HAND). Before you bid or challenge, you can change one of your dice to any number.

SLY REVEAL (STEALTH). Before you bid or challenge, show your dice to one opponent. They can choose to show you theirs.

POKER FACE (DECEPTION). When an opponent challenges a bid you made this turn, you can succeed on a Charisma (Deception) check against DC 15 or the other player's Wisdom score, whichever is higher, to make them balk and withdraw their challenge.

DARING DICER (GAMING SET: DICE). Immediately after rolling your dice, you may change any number of your dice to the face of your choice.

FATED LUCK (ANY). Before you bid or challenge, you can reroll all of your remaining dice.

VARIANT: QUICK LIAR'S DICE

If you'd prefer an alternative to playing a game of Liar's Dice within your game session, you can leave the game to ability checks using tools.

Using the guidance in the Gaming Set tool, you can call for DC 20 Wisdom checks using proficiency with Dice to determine the winner of the game. Any gambler who fails to meet or exceed 20 loses, and if multiple gamblers succeed on the check, the gambler with the highest total wins.

To add a bit more nuance, you can allow Charisma (Deception) checks using the Dice instead, with Advantage if the player has proficiency with both Dice and the Deception skill.



TO THE SINNER'S SHACK

The north road out of Murkwater Bend winds its way toward the heart of the swamp, becoming soggier and more overgrown with each passing mile. Folk call it the Marshwinder Road, and it's the only way to traverse a far distance through the Drowned Crossroads without a boat.

After traveling through the treacherous muck of the swamp for six hours, only spying the occasional hut, boathouse, or fishing shack, the characters finally hear the musical call of Mister Crossroads.

The winding, soggy road leads deeper into the swamp. The dense canopy swallows the moonlight, and the eyes and sounds of wild creatures follow you, yet you're certain none of the shambling dead pursued you. After a few hours of trudging along the muddy, overgrown path, you suddenly hear the low mournful wails of a stringed instrument sailing across the black water to your left.

As you turn, you see the source of the melancholic tune: a dilapidated one-room shack on stilts stands above the waterline, a ladder hanging down from its porch. Its windows are filled with the warmth of an inviting fire, and pairs of light-filled bottles float atop the swamp's surface to act as glowing buoys that form a path along the water to the shack.

The water here is 4 feet deep and can be waded through, although the thick mud below makes each foot of movement cost 4 feet. If the characters stay between the glowing jars that act as navigational beacons, they arrive at the Grinning Sinner's shack without issue.

If any character leaves the designated pathway lit by the jars, whether through the water or on top of it, the swamp comes to life with the glow of jinxcraft and a **Bayou Beast** attacks.

BETWEEN THE DEALS

At the top of the ladder is a modest porch overlooking the black pool below. A rickety rocking chair creaks with a gentle sway, and a large steel guitar rests on its seat, shifting back and forth with each rock. The windows glow with a warm orange light, yet through the glass, you see only shadows. The door is unlocked. When the characters open the door, read or paraphrase the following:

The door groans open, and the inviting orange light proves to be a cruel illusion. Inside, the shack is cluttered with strange trinkets and knick-knacks, and bottles glow with an eerie neon green and magenta light that emanates from the sigils that adorn them. Against the back, a narrow wooden staircase spirals upward, vanishing into the unseen shadows above.

The vast collection of Mister Crossroads consists of Cursed Curios and Paranormal Potions. In addition, carved idols and woven dolls resembling creatures can conjure Familiars. There is a weathered paper price tag for every item in the shack, each reading "3 CP."

When the characters touch one of the items, call out to **The Grinning Sinner**, or turn to leave the shack, Mister Crossroads himself walks heavily down the stairs.

Heavy footfalls descend the stairs in the back of the shack. A hefty, grumbling belly laugh follows them. "Well, well, well..." says the voice from the stairs. "Just who I was expecting."

The figure steps into view: a broad, built, and corpse-like crocodilian in a simple brown coat over a red vest, with his left hand nothing but bone. A feathered top hat sits atop his head. He flashes a toothy grin. "I'm Mister Crossroads," he drawls. "Have you come to partake in my wares? Or perhaps you'd care to make a deal. Let's have a civil conversation, shall we? I am a gentleman after all."

Parley with the Sinner. In this conversation, the Grinning Sinner is trying to charm and befriend the characters so they don't disrupt his plans with Adela. Use the guidance below to steer the conversation with Mister Crossroads:

- He tries to appear charming and disarming, brushing off threats and insults as a joke.
- If asked about his undead-looking state, he waves it off as a simple skin condition. It is true he is not Undead—he simply has his own withering curse.
- He invites the characters to the *Dead Man's Hand* as guests, promising an endless night of food, drinks, and gambling. He even offers a few free games on the house.
- The Sinner's shack is a place to make quick deals and sell magical trinkets. He has all Dark Bargains on offer, costing a handshake.
- If asked about Adela, he swears he made a fair deal, and she just failed to read the fine print.
- Mention of the *Ghostlight Express* increases Mister Crossroads' interest. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check makes it clear it's a suspicious curiosity.



Mister Crossroads is insistent about the characters taking a deal or trinket in order to get them aboard his riverboat and curse them to stay forever.

Take One. Each character can only choose one item or deal (Dark Bargain, Potion, Curio, or Familiar). Attempts to purchase or shake down for more are refused, and anything stolen after the first trinket turns to swamp water as soon as it leaves the shack.

Making a Deal. If every character accepts a deal or purchases a trinket, he bids them adieu and tells them he'll see them aboard the *Dead Man's Hand*, which is just down the road. He adds that they'll be his honored guests while in the casino (see "Dead Man's Hand" later in the chapter) before disappearing into a burst of magenta fire.

Refusing the Sinner. If the Grinning Sinner's hospitality is outright refused, or if the characters attack him, he shakes his head regretfully before grinning, making his escape, and calling forth his minions (see below).

SWAMP STALKERS

If the characters reject Mister Crossroads or attack him, read or paraphrase the following:

> The croc-folk pulls out a pocket watch with his skeletal hand and examines it. "My, my. Look at the time! It's a shame we couldn't make a deal, but I must retire to the *Dead Man's Hand*. It's just down the road!"
>
> With a snap of his bony fingers, brilliant magenta flame whips up around him, and he's gone in an instant. A moment later, the door of the shack explodes in a hail of splinters as a hulking beast made of interwoven swamp plants and hexed charms lurches into the building. A loud buzzing fills the room as it enters.

This monster is a **Bayou Beast** and is joined by six grotesquely large and jinxed mosquitoes (use the **Stirge** stat block). When defeated, the monsters dissolve into muck.

All of the trinkets remain in the shack, but if a character tries to leave with more than one, all but the first trinket that character took turn to swamp water. Any character who didn't take a Dark Bargain or buy a trinket can steal one now. If they do, 3 CP (or a larger denomination coin or gem if that's all they're carrying) vanishes from the character's possessions or from those of the person closest to them if they're not carrying any money, and the character will be able to gain passage aboard the *Dead Man's Hand*.

BY THE LAGOON

Once each character has earned passage on the *Dead Man's Hand*, nothing stands in their way from finding it and getting aboard. Mister Crossroads was telling the truth—surprisingly—and the riverboat is currently moored in the bayou just a few miles north along the Marshwinder Road. When the characters make the trek, read or paraphrase the following:

> With each step, the muddy path becomes more treacherous and choked with foliage, but you finally hear your destination before you see it. Distant jazzy brass music fills the night air, almost in a greeting as you come to the edge of a mangrove-shrouded lake.
>
> Moored at the center of this bayou is an enormous riverboat, glowing with vibrant neon colors and shimmering with the haunted visage of a ghost ship. Its sigil-etched paddle wheel is motionless, but the tall twin funnels belch magenta flame sporadically.

Any character who hasn't earned passage aboard the *Dead Man's Hand* doesn't hear the music and only sees a wrecked and ruined riverboat split into two pieces, faded letters reading "LAUGH" on the portion of the hull still emerging from the black water. A character must return to the shack and retrieve a trinket to board the boat.

A Friendly **Ferryman** approaches in a coffin boat perfectly sized to fit all the characters. It is dressed as a chauffeur and has copper pieces in its eye sockets and one in the center of his forehead. It greets them on behalf of Mister Crossroads and offers them passage to the *Dead Man's Hand*.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *Wheel of Fortune* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Cutlass of Briggsy Kratch* can be found glowing just below the surface of the bayou.





THE DEAD MAN'S HAND

The haunted riverboat casino drifts between realms, lingering on the shadowed crossroads of Druskenvald and the land of spirits. Here, the hexing power of Snake Eye Jack reaches its peak, with the Grinning's Sinner's former patron still bound within.

As the characters explore, they may encounter the ship's original owner, the now-Undead Elias Greaves, and uncover the tale of the *Dead Man's Hand* and the Grinning Sinner's plan for Adela Druskenvald. Upon entering the Captain's Quarters (area B8), the ship warps into a grand, garish arena—the stage set for a final showdown with Mister Crossroads.

DEAD MAN'S HAND FEATURES

Areas within the riverboat casino have the following features unless its description says otherwise:

LIGHTING. Exterior areas have Dim Light shed by paper lanterns and glowing jinxcraft sigils etched all over the exterior of the riverboat. Interior areas have Bright Light from chandeliers and mirrored walls. All of these lights glow with vibrant neon colors and are fueled by burning soulfire that the Grinning Sinner has collected; a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check realizes this.

MUSIC. Bright and upbeat jazz music plays throughout the entire riverboat, magically projecting from the band that plays in the Gambling Hall (see area B3). It is surprisingly catchy, no matter one's musical tastes. Creatures who can hear the music have Disadvantage on saving throws to maintain Concentration.

JINXCRAFT SIGILS. Every location has glowing jinxcraft sigils etched into the walls, floors, and ceilings that keep Snake Eye Jack imprisoned and use his spectral essence to fuel the operations of the *Dead Man's Hand*. This fills the riverboat with his power over luck, both good and bad. Attack rolls score Critical Hits on a roll of 19 or 20, and they automatically miss on a roll of 1 or 2. This is cumulative with features such as a Champion Fighter's Improved Critical (who would score Critical Hits on a roll of 18, 19, or 20).

GAMBLERS. Dozens of people from across Wickermoor Hollow and the rest of Druskenvald sit at casino tables, playing cards or dice or betting on enchanted horse figurines made to race, or they mingle at the ship's well-stocked bar. They are all cursed—enthralled by the seductive power of the casino. They are Friendly and happily lead characters around and share their favorite games, but they know little about the ship or its campaign and direct them to ask the Undead casino staff (who they seem to think are still living people). Gamblers become Hostile to anyone who interferes in their games.

CURSE OF THE HIGH ROLLER. When a character who isn't yet cursed by the casino finishes a game of chance here, they must succeed on a DC 8 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed and have the Charmed condition (by the Grinning Sinner). While Charmed in this way, they are enthralled and want nothing more but to gamble, drink, flirt with patrons, and otherwise keep enjoying the area of the casino they're currently in. They can repeat this saving throw after 10 minutes, ending the effect on a success. A character who fails two of these repeat saves in a row becomes fully captivated, makes no more saving throws, and has Disadvantage on all D20 Tests made to harm casino patrons or otherwise disrupt the convivial atmosphere of the riverboat while cursed. The curse is then permanent until broken by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic, or if the Grinning Sinner damages the character, forces them to make a saving throw, or dies.

DEAD MAN'S HAND LOCATIONS

The following areas are found on map 15.2.

B1: DEAD MAN'S GANGPLANK

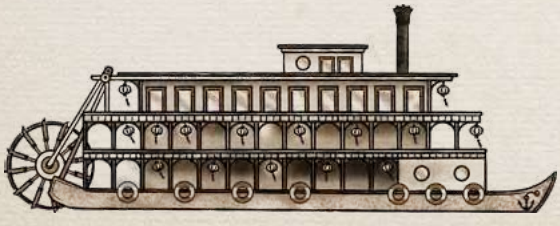
When the characters arrive at the *Dead Man's Hand*, read or paraphrase the following:

> The ghastly riverboat is moored at the center of the bayou with its gangplank lowered onto a small muddy island beside it. Eerily vibrant and colorful light pours from the ship's upper decks, and jaunty music drifts across the water as if the party inside never stops. Two hulking undead bellhops laze about at the top of the gangplank.

The gangplank leads to the upper level of the riverboat. At its top are two **Ogre Zombies** dressed as bellhops poised to take guests' luggage and escort them through the boat.

Honored Guests. If the characters are Mister Crossroads' guests, the bellhops are Friendly toward the characters and escort them to the Gambling Hall (area B3) to wait. See the "Honored Guests" section in that area for more.

Intruders. If the characters defied Mister Crossroads earlier and gained passage through stealing or resorted to violence, these guards are Hostile and attack on sight. They are dull-witted brutes, however, and as an Influence action, a character can convince the zombies to let the characters pass with a successful DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check.



B2: TOP DECK

The Top Deck circles the entire length of the ship.

> The top deck of the riverboat is crowded with well-dressed Druskenvalders from across the land, chatting and sipping from champagne flutes, whiskey tumblers, and rum bottles, savoring the open air beyond the smoky, crowded gambling hall. Doors to the hall are never far away. If not for the Grinning Sinner's ominous influence, the cheerful conversations and the eerie, flickering glow of paper lanterns might almost lure you into their revelry.

Hollow Conversation. The gamblers here are vapid and have nothing to share with the characters, except to urge them to go drink and gamble. A character afflicted by the Curse of the High Roller (see "Dead Man's Hand Features" earlier), however, perceives this conversation as the deepest, most compelling conversation they've ever heard.

The Cursed Gambler. If the characters have the *Withered Hand*, its original owner can sense its presence and seeks them out. After the characters do anything here, such as chatting with a gambler, taking a drink, or investigating for anything out of the ordinary, they are noticed by Elias Greaves (use the **Ghoul** stat block), who shambles his way to them.

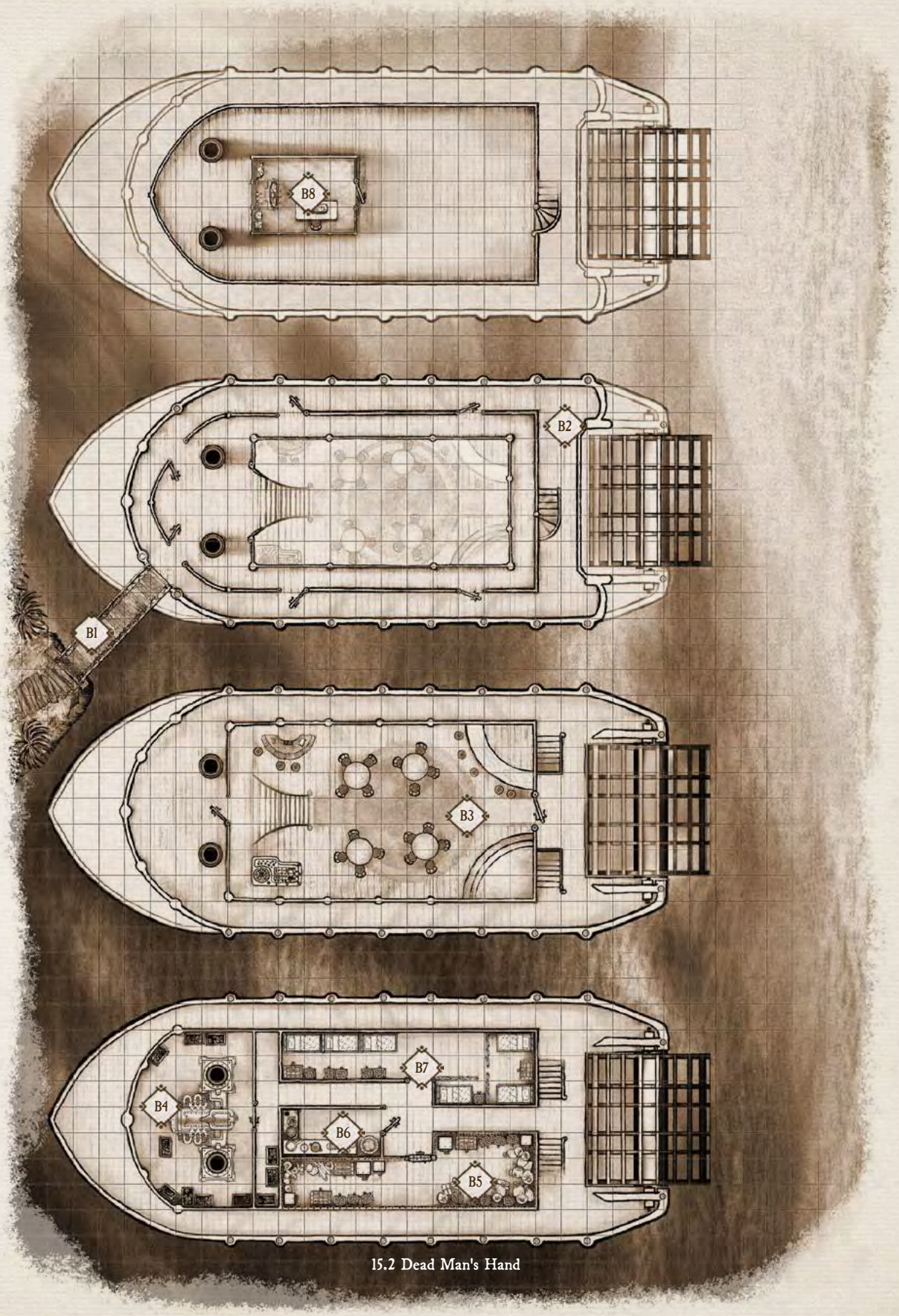
> A gaunt waiter in an ill-fitting suit hobbles across the deck toward you. As he nears, a foul stench fills the air, and you notice the hollow pits where his eyes should be, his skin peeling in strips. This man is long dead, yet his focus is fixed on you. His left arm ends in a stump, which he waves as if to speak, his jaw working uselessly, struggling to form sounds.

What Elias Knows. Elias can't speak. His soul is burning in the Boiler Room (area B4) to power "his ship." If the characters show him the hand, the hand (which has a fragment of Elias's soul in it) reacts and tries to lead them to the Boiler Room. The body does not follow unless the characters move it themselves.

Examining Elias. If the characters roll up the loose sleeve on his left arm and inspect his stump, it is clear that the hand once belonged to Elias—a chilling sign of what could happen to the current bearer of the *Withered Hand*.

B3: GAMBLING HALL

Entering this hall from the Main Deck leads the characters onto a balcony overlooking the main ballroom, which they can descend into from a set of stairs. The guests are living but cursed human **Commoners**, while the dealers and bartenders are all Undead **Ferrymen**. In the corner of the room is a small stage where five **Skeleton** musicians form a jazz band, playing upbeat music on a trumpet, trombone, piano, clarinet, and drum set.



15.2 Dead Man's Hand

Countless gamblers fill this space playing every game of chance imaginable. At any time, the room is filled with 1d12 **Ghoul** waiters and 1d4 **Ogre Zombies** dressed as bellhops. They attack the characters on sight if they weren't invited and even attack invited characters if they disrupt the atmosphere, such as by hassling the guests or breaking a chandelier. If combat breaks out, the guests flee screaming to the Top Deck (area B2) while the crew fights to the death.

Honored Guests. After being led in by the Grinning Sinner's guards, the characters are asked to wait here until their host is ready for them and to enjoy several games on the house. The house covers 100 GP worth of antes, food, and drinks. The food is delicious; see area B6. The drinks are a staggering 5 GP apiece. If the characters wait here for half an hour and haven't all been afflicted by the Curse of the High Roller, Elias finds them (see "The Cursed Gambler" in area B2). If the characters ignore him, after three hours, the bellhops return and escort them to the Captain's Quarters (area B8).

Joining a Game. The characters can play cards or dice with the cursed gamblers. To represent these games, the characters ante between 1 and 20 GP and make a DC 20 Wisdom check with an appropriate Gaming Set, winning double their ante on a success or losing it on a failure. See "Curse of the High Roller" in the "Dead Man's Hand Features" section earlier for the consequences of playing, win or lose.

B4: BOILER ROOM

The Boiler Room pulses with the unnatural power of jinxcraft, its soulfire boiler casting a ghostly magenta glow across the tight, shadow-filled corridors. Undead laborers shuffle about, mending broken pipes, hauling crates, and carrying out the grim tasks required to keep this sinister casino running. Trapped within the boiler lies the tormented soul of Elias Greaves. Freeing him releases Elias from the Grinning Sinner's grip, granting the characters a powerful advantage and cutting off the soul-fueled hexes that bind Snake Eye Jack, signaling Mister Crossroads' inevitable downfall.

However, the disruption immediately alerts the Sinner to the characters' presence (see "Don't Grieve for Greaves" below).

Soulfire Boiler. This coffin-shaped, sigil-etched boiler is tended by a mighty spirit called the Soulfire Engineer (**Wraith**). She serves the Grinning Sinner by incanting jinxcraft hexes that eternally regenerate Elias's soul to keep the magenta soulfire burning. She demands the characters leave if they enter the boiler room and attacks if they remain or retaliate. When Initiative is rolled, the boiler belches forth 5 **Specters** and a **Soulfire Stoker**, and they join the fight.

Blasting Furnace. When combat breaks out here, the flames in the boiler blaze and belch out through the furnace doors and gaps in the plating. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), creatures in the room must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) Fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. The Soulfire Engineer, stoker, and specters are immune to this effect.

Don't Grieve for Greaves. When the last of the spirits is defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

> The fiery spirit wails in fury and flares out, extinguishing the boiler's magenta flames along with it. Behind the steel hatch of the darkened furnace is a floating mote of ashen green light.

The ashen mote is Elias Greaves's soul. When a character opens the boiler, the *Withered Hand* tries to scurry up their body, jump into the boiler, and touch the mote. If it does so, it then runs back to Elias's body, taking the soul with it. Once the soul and the body are reunited, neon light returns to Greaves' eyes, and he can speak once more. If a character is attuned to the hand, this does not break the Attunement.

He runs to meet the characters while they are still in the belly of the ship and wearily thanks the characters for freeing his soul. He answers any questions they may have about who he is, what happened to him, what he knows about Mister Crossroads and Snake Eye Jack, and how the *Dead Man's Hand* came into his possession (see "NPCs of the Drowned Crossroads" earlier in this chapter).

Through the awakening of his hand, he deduced the Grinning Sinner's plan in his deal with Adela Druskenvald. He knows his own soul was able to power the boiler because he traveled aboard the *Ghostlight Express* in life.

With his soul running out of anima to drain for the boiler, his usefulness has been running out. Mister Crossroads plans to swap Adela's soul into the boiler once she succumbs to the withering curse. Such a powerful soul would fuel the *Dead Man's Hand* and Snake Eye Jack's prison for all time.

Elias's Gift. Elias's soul is tattered and weary, and he wishes to depart so he can finally rest. As a parting gift, he casts *Death Ward* on two characters. He apologizes that he can't break the curse on his *Withered Hand* but entrusts it to the accursed character and hopes they can avoid his fate.

He also hands over Adela Druskenvald's wedding ring, which his hand had pickpocketed from Mister Crossroads and hid in Elias's pocket for safekeeping before making its journey to the characters. He hopes that returning it will heal Adela. After a final farewell, the light in his eyes goes out, and his body collapses, finally at rest.

Alerting Mister Crossroads. The Grinning Sinner senses when his ship's boiler goes cold. He gathers his crew and storms the Gambling Hall 10 minutes later, preparing to confront the characters. This causes the following changes to area B3:

- All gamblers and dealers are expelled from the hall. They either crowd around the windows on the Top Deck (area B2) or retire to their quarters (area B7).
- **The Grinning Sinner** is there. See "Roll the Bones," later in this chapter for how he acts.
- He is backed up by 6 **Ferrymen** and 20 **Ghouls**. Fighting him directly in the Gambling Hall is a bad idea.
- He doesn't initially resort to violence and offers to settle their differences with a game of Liar's Dice (see "The Grinning Sinner's Challenge" later in the chapter).

B5: COIN VAULT

The riverboat's cavernous coin vault is a soggy hold filled with sacks full of coins wagered by the casino guests. The room is dimly lit by swinging neon lanterns on the walls.

Iron Cage. The heavy wooden door to this room is locked (DC 15). Beyond the door is an iron cage that encases the whole room, with metal bars 1 foot apart. The door to this cage has a sturdy Lock (DC 20).

Vault Guardians. It's easily the best-guarded room in the riverboat. The Coin Keeper (**Wight**) guards this area with the aid of 4 swamp-covered **Ghasts** and 8 **Ghouls**.

Treasure. Within this room are a sack of gold coins (500 GP), three sacks of silver coins (each one containing 500 SP), and twelve sacks of copper coins (each one containing 500 CP).

B6: GALLEY

The boat's Galley is managed by Undead chefs and waiters. Despite the dead kitchen staff, it's surprisingly well-run, and the food they serve is beautiful and delicious. The drinks are delightful and strong enough to dull the pain of combat, granting the drinker 2d4 Temporary Hit Points.

B7: CREW AND GUEST QUARTERS

The crew quarters, where the riverboat's crew once lived, are now empty. The Undead who now serve the Grinning Sinner have no need for sleep.

The adjacent guest quarters are about half filled at any given time. Amidst the darkness of Wickermoor Hollow, the guests cursed by greed and malaise drift in and out of the Gambling Hall (area B3), resting only when exhaustion overwhelms them. Searching this room reveals nothing of value.

B8: CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The Grinning Sinner is found here if he hasn't been drawn elsewhere, presiding over the particulars of his operation on a huge desk etched with jinxcraft markings. Whether or not the first meeting with Mister Crossroads ended in violence (see "Between the Deals" earlier in this chapter), he welcomes the characters as friends. Even if the characters insulted and attacked him, the prideful magician wants payback, but he sees himself as a gentleman, not a killer. He gives them a good offer, and only attacks in retaliation.

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters arrive here:

> The captain's cabin seems less like a room in a stately riverboat and more like a nautical museum. A black flag with crossed bones and a crocodilian skull hangs on the wall behind Mister Crossroads' desk, surrounded by tattered flags from countless other crews. A ship in a bottle sits on the desk. Hanging proudly on the wall is a huge blunderbuss, etched with sigils that glow neon green and magenta.

If Mister Crossroads is here, also read or paraphrase the following, possibly improvising extra remarks based on the characters' actions within the boat so far:

> The corpse-like crocodile-man sits at his desk and marks your arrival. He stands, putting on his feathered top hat and a winning smile, and clears his throat.
>
> "Welcome to my humble establishment, friends. I do hope you've enjoyed our games of chance and refreshments."

The Grinning Sinner's Challenge. To settle their differences, Mister Crossroads offers them a chance to win fair and square. Best him in a winner-takes-all game of Liar's Dice (see "Test of Luck" earlier in this chapter) between the characters and him.

His wager: the ship and everyone aboard it. Without it, he goes back to being a small-time con. He'll even cure Adela of her withering curse. The characters' wager: their potent souls, primed by their experience aboard the *Ghostlight Express*, to burn in the boiler room until there's nothing left but ash. If they balk at this, he offers them the bribe a second time.

Accepting the Challenge. If the characters accept, he shows them a toothy grin and assembles his crew in the Gambling Hall (see "Roll the Bones" below).

What's His Angle? A character who makes a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell that the Grinning Sinner is not a man of his word. He's selfish, prideful, and a sore loser.

Rejected! If the characters attack the Grinning Sinner or decline his offer despite his insistence, he snarls and vanishes in a burst of magenta fire. He then appears in the Gambling Hall (area B3), transforming it into a glowing neon pocket dimension and prepares for a fight, but not before giving them one last chance to settle their differences with a game of dice (see "Roll the Bones" later in this chapter).

ROLL THE BONES

Mister Crossroads views himself as a refined gentleman and is loath to resort to violence. This encounter with Mister Crossroads has two stages. The first part is a high-stakes game of Liar's Dice (see area B8). If the characters win this game, he loses his composure and attacks them, but the characters gain a boon in the fight. If they lose, they probably won't want to give up their souls without a fight.

This encounter begins when the characters enter the Gambling Hall (area B3) after accepting his challenge in the Captain's Quarters (area B8). It can also occur if they raise his ire by destroying the boiler in the Boiler Room (area B4). In that case, he makes his challenge here but is fully prepared for them to refuse and start a fight.

PART OF THE CREW, PART OF THE SHIP

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters arrive in the Gambling Hall (area B3) and the above conditions are met:

> The gambling hall is completely transformed. The game tables have been rearranged, with one taking center stage—a massive coffin on four legs, carved with glowing sigils and the image of a many-armed skeleton with dice eyes, each showing a single pip.
>
> The room itself has stretched, growing larger and taller than before, with towering, colorful windows set in walls etched with leering skeletal serpents and strange symbols, all bathed in flickering neon hues of green and magenta. Gamblers watch from the balcony and top deck while Mister Crossroads smirks at you from the center. Dozens of his undead thralls stand at his side, his hexed blunderbuss slung over his shoulder.
>
> He grins, teeth gleaming. "They say the saints don't play dice, but we know that sinners do. Liar's Dice. Winner takes all. You know what's at stake, so sit and let's play."

The gambling hall has been transformed into a huge, warped version of its former self, glowing neon and filled with slithering shadows. The dicing table is more than just a place for games—it's the coffin prison of Snake Eye Jack, the true heart of the riverboat's power. If the boiler is disrupted and Elias Greaves' soul set free, the sigils fade over time, and the coffin shudders as Jack stirs, preparing to exact his vengeance.

Any number of characters can join the game, but at least one must play. **The Grinning Sinner** adds a d6 to his dice pool for each character who joins.

SPECIAL RULES

All the Special Rules in the game of Liar's Dice they played against the Bayou King still apply (see "Test of Luck" earlier in this chapter). The game continues until only one player, the winner, remains. Or it would, if it weren't that the moment Mister Crossroads is eliminated, he roars in fury and flips the table, forfeiting the game.

THE GRINNING SINNER'S STRATEGY

Mister Crossroads makes big bets. He starts by bidding the number of his most common die plus 1 (for example, if he has three 4s, he bids four 4s). However, he also begins the game with more dice than the characters, which lets him bid aggressively.

SPIN THE WHEEL

The game ends when either all the characters have lost, and Mister Crossroads draws his blunderbuss to claim their souls for the boiler, or when Mister Crossroads is eliminated, flips the table, and attacks (see "Bayou Boogie" below).



BAYOU BOOGIE



Whether the characters win or lose, and even if they accept a deal, **The Grinning Sinner** doesn't intend for them to leave the *Dead Man's Hand* alive. After warping the gambling hall into a jinxcraft casino, he unleashes the mighty power of Snake Eye Jack and the swamp itself to destroy them so he can claim their souls for the soulfire boiler. Use map 15.3 for both phases of this two-phase battle.

FEATURES OF THE JINXCRAFT CASINO

In addition to the features of the Dead Man's Hand, the transformed gambling hall has the following features:

BALCONY. A large set of stairs leads to a second-floor balcony 20 feet above the gaming floor that wraps around the entire room.

JINXCRAFT DIMENSION. This room is its own demiplane created with the power of Snake Eye Jack. Anything that passes through a broken window emerges from the window directly opposite on the far wall.

LARGER THAN LIFE. The Gambling Hall in this dimension has grown unnaturally. The gaming floor is 60 feet by 90 feet. The ceiling is 60 feet tall, giving Mister Crossroads plenty of room to fly out of reach.

SWAMP WATER. Bayou water floods the gaming floor to a depth of 2 feet, making it Difficult Terrain.

ROLLING SNAKE EYES

If one or more characters beat Mister Crossroads at his game of Liar's Dice, Snake Eye Jack—the croc-folk's former patron—begins to break free to unleash his hexing wrath on the magician that deceived him so long ago. He grants the characters a boon of fortune.

Roll 2 d20s and record each number. During the battle, the players can choose to use one of the recorded numbers when a creature makes a D20 Test. The creature uses the number as if it were rolled on the d20. Each number can be used only once. The boon fades away when the Grinning Sinner or the characters are defeated.

SNAKE EYE JACK'S INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), Snake Eye Jack is forced to cause one of the following effects; Jack can't use the same option two rounds in a row:

FERRYMEN. If there aren't any **Ferrymen** in the battle, three appear to aid the Grinning Sinner. These Undead minions only have 10 HP.

ROTTEN LUCK. One creature within 30 feet of Snake Eye Jack's coffin is cursed until Initiative count 20 on the following round. When the cursed creature makes an attack roll, it must subtract 1d4 from the total.

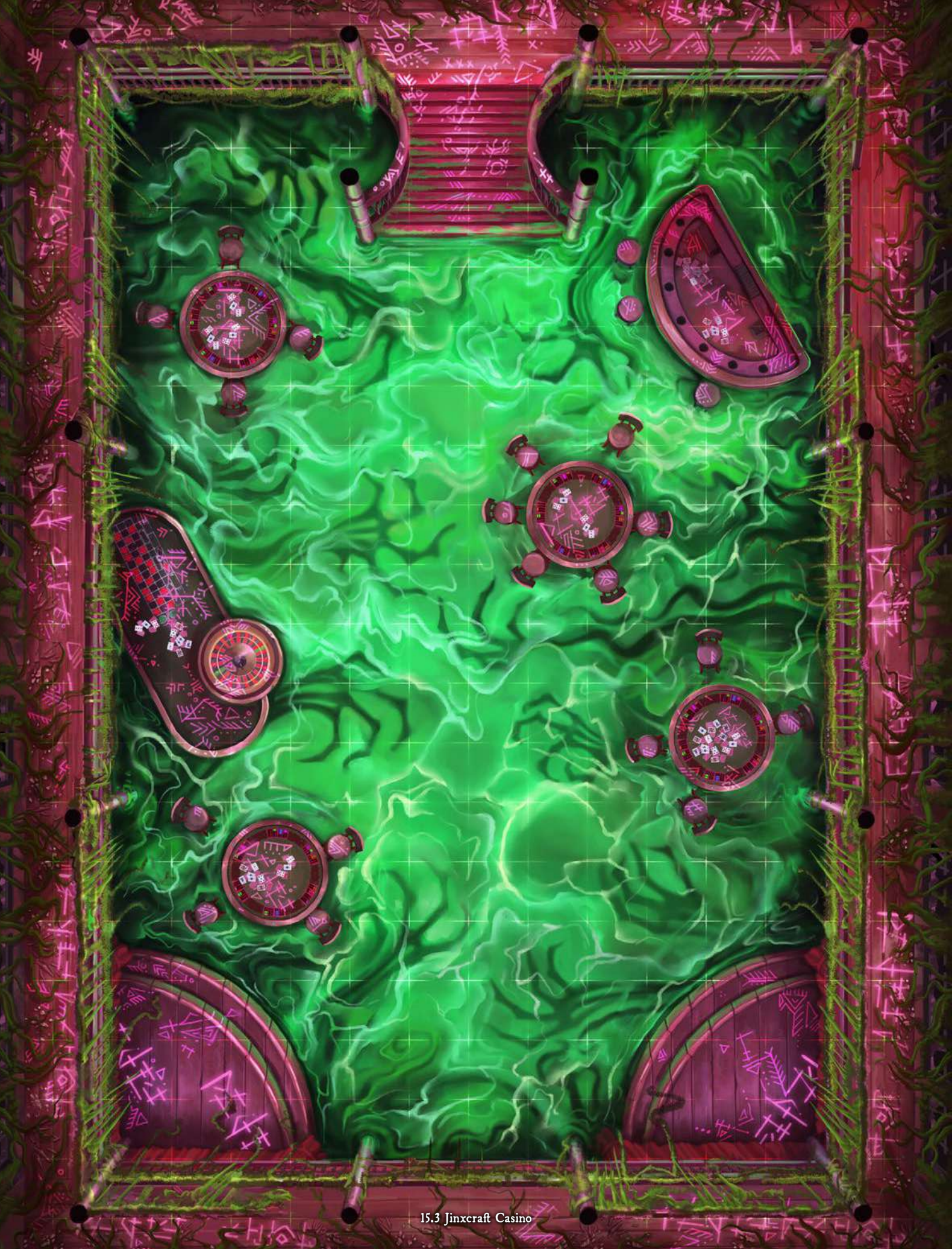
SHACKLING GRASP. Shadowy, skeletal hands stretch out from Snake Eye Jack's coffin. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, up to three creatures within 30 feet of the coffin. *Failure:* The target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15) until Jack uses this option again. A target that fails the save can choose to succeed instead by taking 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage.

PHASE I: ALL IN

Whether the players win or lose the dice game, or if they rejected Mr. Crossroads' offer entirely, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Grinning Sinner stares you down and draws his jinxcraft blunderbuss with his skeletal left hand. His eyes burn and his teeth flash. "Mister Crossroads don't lose. Not with stakes like these. Your souls are mine."
>
> He raises his blunderbuss to the sky, and the jazz music turns ominous and discordant. The room trembles and the tall riverboat windows shatter. The bayou spills in from all sides and begins to flood the gambling hall as creeping swamp plants slither in and spread across the walls.
>
> The crew of the *Dead Man's Hand* wail in agony, falling to their knees. Swirling energy flows from their bodies into his weapon, withering the crew into motionless husks as they return their borrowed life to him. He cackles with glee and smiles a wicked smile. "Come take a chance, my friends!"

The Grinning Sinner attacks and fights to the death. He calls the coffin that serves as the dice table and Snake Eye Jack's prison to him and begins to ride it (see his Coffin Rider trait).



15.3 Jinxcraft Casino

PHASE 2: DOUBLE DOWN

When he's Bloodied, **The Grinning Sinner's** desperation overtakes his good sense.

> Wild desperation fills the eyes of Mister Crossroads as he snarls in frustration, stomping violently on the coffin he rides atop. "Come on, Jack! I know you're holding out on me!"
>
> The sigils on the coffin glow brighter as you somehow feel luck itself start to bend and twist all around you, and slithering shadow snakes and hands wriggle out from beneath the coffin's lid.

He draws deeply on Snake Eye Jack's power, glowing with magenta and green energy. He has Advantage on attack rolls, but attack rolls made against him also have Advantage.

Snake Eye Jack continues to use his influence as in phase 1, but now wisps of shadow that vaguely suggest skeletal hands or snakes leak out from under the coffin lid and reach toward the Grinning Sinner before dissipating.

DEFEATING THE GRINNING SINNER

When **The Grinning Sinner** is reduced to 0 Hit Points, the final strands of jinxcraft binding his patron unravel, and Snake Eye Jack claims his soul.

> Mister Crossroads bellows in despair, tumbling into the waters below. For a brief moment, a magenta shade of the croc-folk rises from his fallen form, eyes wide with terror. The jinxed coffin bursts open, releasing a rumbling laugh as a dozen skeletal arms and shadowy serpents reach out, seizing his soul and dragging it into the unknowable depths within. The lid slams shut, now etched with a crocodile skull and crossbones.
>
> The air fills with the scent of rum and smoke, and as your vision blurs, you find yourself back in the gambling hall of the real *Dead Man's Hand*. The lights have faded, and the casino's manic energy has vanished. Mister Crossroads' corpse lies slumped at the room's center, blunderbuss clutched in his cold hands, his lifeless eyes staring in terror.

With the death of Mister Crossroads, his Undead thralls emit a collective sigh and crumble into dust, and the demiplane collapses, returning anything in it to the true *Dead Man's Hand*. Dozens of confused gamblers, now free from their delirium, seek a way off the riverboat.

Level Up. The characters reach level 7, if they are still level 6, when they defeat the Grinning Sinner.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Emperor* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Blunderbuss of the Grinning Sinner* can be pulled from the cold clutches of Mister Crossroads, still enchanted with jinxcraft and fully functional.

CONCLUSION: OUT OF THE HAZE

The road back to Murkwater Bend is now safe. The crocodilian trickster and his cursed crew are gone, and even the bayou's creatures have returned to their usual, less sinister ways. The gamblers accompany the characters back to town, soon dispersing to find their way home—wherever in Druskenvald that might be.

The Bayou King and Lyla survive, though their crew suffered massive losses to protect them and their town. Vander, somber and reflective, contemplates the true weight of rulership. Lyla believes he'll make a fine king someday—and not just for scoundrels. She reminds him to pay up if he owes the characters, and he urges them to collect their reward from whoever sent them.



BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

With the death of Mr. Crossroads, Adela Druskenvald's withered arm is healed. If the characters return her wedding ring, she gratefully accepts it and pays what she owes, having successfully deceived Phillip and restoring a sense of normalcy to their anxious lives for now. If the characters keep the ring, it's worth 1,000 GP. Yet, Adela's ordeal emboldens the cultists of the Old Ways. They begin manipulating her confidant, Gaston Doray, aiming to sway him to their cause. This perceived weakness also draws the attention of the Vermintoll Coven, whose living members, Stonoga and Golub, double their efforts to corrupt the village's people.

Some of the rescued gamblers without homes settle in Wickermoor Village, bringing games of chance to the Green Queen Inn, where locals soon join in. The Brightsingers preach temperance, sending missionaries to the Drowned Crossroads.



Chapter 16: SKITTERDEEP MINE

"I can't go no further. It's the mines. The hills 'round here are snaked full of tunnels, and she's down in there. I hear her. She was never 'round these parts until the big cave-in 'bout seventy years back. My pa used to tell me about it. Fifty men got trapped down there, and from the twilight hour to the witching hour, the hills were full of her centipedes, big as hounds, all skittering down into that mine. Pa said there was some screaming down there for a while, then nothing. She's a special kind of evil."

- Mrs. Oakum -

A skittering infestation scrapes beneath the soil, burrowing ever deeper into the heart of Wickermoor Hollow and its people. From the depths of what was once Glitterdeep Mine, rich with veins of gold, silver, and iron, the contamination spreads. Seventy years ago, a suspicious cave-in occurred, and the few rescuers who returned spoke of terrors before they condemned the mine, leaving it abandoned.

Now called Skitterdeep Mine after its many-legged inhabitants, it is mentioned only in hushed tones, with wary glances over shoulders in fear of the crawling minions and the hag rumored to have brought ruin upon its darkened tunnels.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

A trio of ancient hags known as the Vermintoll Coven has long wrought their wicked magic upon the fields, forests, and villages of Wickermoor Hollow. Seventy years ago, the centipede hag Stonoga Blackstinger corrupted Skitterdeep Mine—a once thriving source of precious ores.

Using illusion, hearty food, and strong drink, she wormed her way into the miners' trust. Then, she poisoned and twisted them all into grotesque abominations and collapsed the tunnels, trapping the wretched souls within. A cadre of knights attempted a rescue, but they too fell to Stonoga's influence as she warped their flesh to create new minions.

Over the years, fear and superstition shrouded the Skitterdeep Mine. Travelers still vanish near its entrance, taken as material for her pestilent experiments. The infestation has now spread beyond the mine, skittering throughout the walls, beneath the earth, and within the bodies of Wickermoor Village.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Wickermoor Hollow is infested with countless centipedes that devour foodstuffs, spread disease, and even burrow into the bodies of the townsfolk. The source of the infestation is the centipede hag Stonoga Blackstinger, who seeks a new supply of human flesh for her twisted experiments deep within her abandoned mine. With each passing night, the vermin that have taken over town claim more victims and devour more food stores, threatening widespread death and famine. Characters drawn to the mine by the Quest Hooks later in this chapter have these goals:

- Discover and trace the source of the tunneling vermin to Skitterdeep Mine, and face the horrors within.
- Destroy Stonoga Blackstinger and end the Skitter Plague.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with the centipede hag Stonoga Blackstinger, the key NPC. Review the Quest Hooks to provide a compelling reason for the characters to venture to the abandoned mine. Finally, read through the locations of Skitterdeep Mine so you are ready to improvise encounters as the characters explore.

This chapter is designed for four level 7 characters.

THE CENTIPEDE HAG

Stonoga Blackstinger *(stoh-NOH-guh)* commands countless swarms of large, squirming centipedes that skitter throughout the mine. Hideously misshapen miners, knights, and other victims of her fleshcrafting also wander the tunnels and serve their maker without question.

STONOGA BLACKSTINGER

Stonoga Blackstinger (**Centipede Hag** C) is the middle sister of the Vermintoll Coven. Her unnaturally tall and lanky body has morphed over the years to more closely resemble the centipedes she favors, losing her nose and most of her toes and stretching her neck out by several feet.

Just as it was her sister Vessla's role in the coven to twist souls in preparation for sacrifice to the Crooked Queen, Stonoga is tasked with corrupting bodies. She cares not for the matters of mind and spirit, as all life to her is simply meat to be molded beneath her jagged fingers. But despite this, she has a jovial disposition, taking glee in savoring the suffering of her victims.

Unlike her sisters, she prefers to hide away in the deepest, darkest holes in the earth where she can be embraced by the squirming swarms of her beloved centipedes. It is in these places that never see the light of the moon where she conducts her alchemy, witchcraft, and fleshcrafting.

Stonoga has been waiting for the night that her younger sister Vessla is slain, a moment foreseen and deemed a necessary sacrifice by her older sister Golub. The two older hags conspired to allow the weasel hag to be butchered in the Crooked House, but Stonoga has no idea that she herself was deceived. Golub Graygullet believed the middle sister needed to die too, as whispered by the Crooked Queen with the promise of being elevated within the inevitable crooked court of Kehlenn. Golub will aid the characters in hunting down Stonoga if she can.

SLIPPERY OSWALD

Slippery Oswald (**Vermin Familiar** (Centipede) C) is a rough approximation of a centipede the size of a hound, with grotesquely human-like hands at the end of each appendage and an unsettling human grin. The familiar of Stonoga Blackstinger, he shares his mistress's glee in the horrid reshaping of flesh into new forms. He can command the squirming hordes of centipedes that crawl throughout Wickermoor Hollow.

Rather than being a collector of body parts like his weasel counterpart Filthy Jasper, Oswald prefers to create grotesque homes out of his master's victims. He burrows deep into Humanoid carcasses and rearranges the rotting innards to his liking, often lurking within for weeks at a time. Sometimes, he even digs into a healthy person to corrupt and prime their body for flesh shaping while they still live.



Stonoga Blackstinger & Slippery Oswald



QUEST HOOKS

Wickermoor Village is crawling with centipedes as a sudden illness rips through its people. The sick only have a few nights to live before succumbing to the affliction. A solution must be found before it's too late.

INFESTATION

The village is infested with thousands of centipedes sent by Stonoga Blackstinger. These vermin consume food stores, burrow into the flesh of the living, and spread a magical contagion that afflicts those bitten by the creatures (see "Skitter Plague" below).

After the characters finish a Long Rest in Wickermoor Village, four **Skitterswarms** emerge from the walls and floor of wherever they are staying and attack. Creatures hit by the swarms' attacks must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be afflicted with Skitter Plague. Dozens of small mundane centipedes crawl throughout the floorboards as well.

When the characters step out into the streets of Wickermoor Village after dispatching the skitterswarms, many people are gathered here having fled their homes from centipede infestations. When asked about what's going on, the plight is consistent across the townsfolk's stories:

- They awoke with dozens of centipedes crawling in their beds, many having been bitten.
- Their stored food is infested with centipedes, and much of it has been eaten.
- Some larger, more grotesque, and especially vicious centipedes have dug into certain people's skin.
- People quickly started falling ill, coming down with fever, breaking out into mauve-colored pustules, and vomiting black bile.

Over the next few hours, ten more villagers succumb to the unknown malady, all with similar stories. If nothing is done, the Skitter Plague will become an epidemic.

SKITTER PLAGUE

Magical Contagion

Skitter Plague was created by the hag Stonoga Blackstinger, and it spreads through the bites of her grotesque centipedes. A creature bitten by any kind of centipede under Stonoga's control must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer the following effects 1d4 hours after infection:

FEVER. The creature gains 1 Exhaustion level that can't be removed until the contagion ends on the creature.

CRAWLING BLISTERS. Blisters that feel like crawling centipedes form on the creature's skin. When the creature finishes a Long Rest, it takes 2 (1d4) Necrotic damage, and its Hit Point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The creature dies if this effect reduces its Hit Point maximum to 0. The reduction can't be removed until the contagion ends on the creature. A Humanoid that dies from this contagion explodes into a **Skitterswarm** at the next Midnight Hour, the corpse's flesh and bones turning into a malleable putty-like substance that can be split apart and carried by centipedes back to Skitterdeep Mine.

Fighting the Contagion. A *Lesser Restoration* spell suppresses the effect of the contagion for 24 hours. Nightly at the Twilight Hour, an infected creature makes a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. After the creature succeeds on three of these saves, the contagion ends for it.

TRAIL OF CORRUPTION

The characters can investigate the town to find where the centipedes are coming from by succeeding on a group DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check, discovering a sprawling network of tiny tunnels in the earth that seem to be coming from the northwest of Wickermoor Village.

After deducing the direction from which the centipedes are burrowing into town, the characters are approached by Mrs. Oakum (see chapter 11), who works for Siv Harga at the butcher shop. She tells the characters that the centipede infestation perfectly matched stories that her father used to tell her about the old abandoned mine in the wooded hills northwest of Wickermoor Village. Use the details below to guide the conversation with her:

- Her family used to live in a small community of hill-folk that worked in mining, logging, and trapping.
- Decades ago, the old Glitterdeep Mine had a terrible cave-in that trapped dozens of miners within.
- Thousands of huge, monstrous centipedes were seen skittering in the hills and into the mine.
- A large rescue party was organized, but those who went into the mine never returned.
- The rumor among the community was that it was a hag that caused the tragedy.
- Swearing vengeance, a posse of riders was rallied to kill the hag and her minions, but they were never heard from again.
- Fear of vile magic and the loss of work in the mine caused the community to dwindle.
- Folks who know the old story have called the abandoned mine Skitterdeep for years.

Mrs. Oakum offers to guide the characters through the hills but says she won't get too close to the mine, fearing the hag that lurks in the depths. If the characters accept her help, the journey to the mine is the ideal opportunity to have her true identity as a **Werewolf** be revealed through an inadvertent transformation, whether it be through danger that the characters experience or hunger triggered by a forest creature.

If the characters don't take it upon themselves to investigate the mine, Morgan the apothecary (see chapter 11) requests their assistance. They stress that if nothing is done, the sickness will overwhelm the town, and there will not be enough healers to tend to the ill—made worse by the indifference of the de facto surgeon Randall Graham, who believes the situation will resolve itself without taking drastic action. If necessary, Morgan offers the characters a *Potion of Healing* (greater) each to find the cause of the sickness and eliminate it.

Characters who monitor the health of afflicted villagers over the course of the night, or Morgan the apothecary if the characters don't think to, realize that the illness is likely fatal over the course of several nights.

SISTERLY "LOVE"

If the characters are not in Wickermoor Village when you wish to initiate the events of this chapter, a carrier pigeon finds them wherever they are, delivering a letter from postmaster Theodora Mayville. She informs them of the town's infestation and her own suspicion that the centipedes were coming from Skitterdeep Mine.

She claims that she sent out a rider, who normally delivers large parcels, to investigate the mine, but he never returned. Theodora implores the characters to head to the mine themselves and put an end to the infestation, offering 50 GP to each character once the plague is halted.

This is a ruse by Golub Graygullet (see chapter 8) to lure the characters into finding and killing her sister Stonoga as a sacrifice in honor of the Crooked Queen. If the characters follow this quest hook, they are confronted by a lone **Fleshdobbin** when they are three miles out from the mine—the flesh-crafted parcel rider that Theodora had sent to his doom.

SKITTERDEEP MINE

Skitterdeep Mine is about 8 hours of travel away from the village at a Fast pace through the wooded hills northwest of town. It once provided gold, silver, and iron for the people of Wickermoor Village, but has become a place of death and decay. When the characters arrive at the mine, read or paraphrase the following:

> Old, weathered buildings sit beside a large hole dug into the earth, the darkness within an inky black. A wooden beam extends from one of the structures, which holds a heavy chain lowered into the abyss. Not far from the shaft, broken iron minecart rails lead to a lumber-reinforced tunnel entrance built into a wooden ridge. The stench of rotting meat and sweat hangs in the air.

SKITTERDEEP MINE FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, Skitterdeep Mine has the following features:

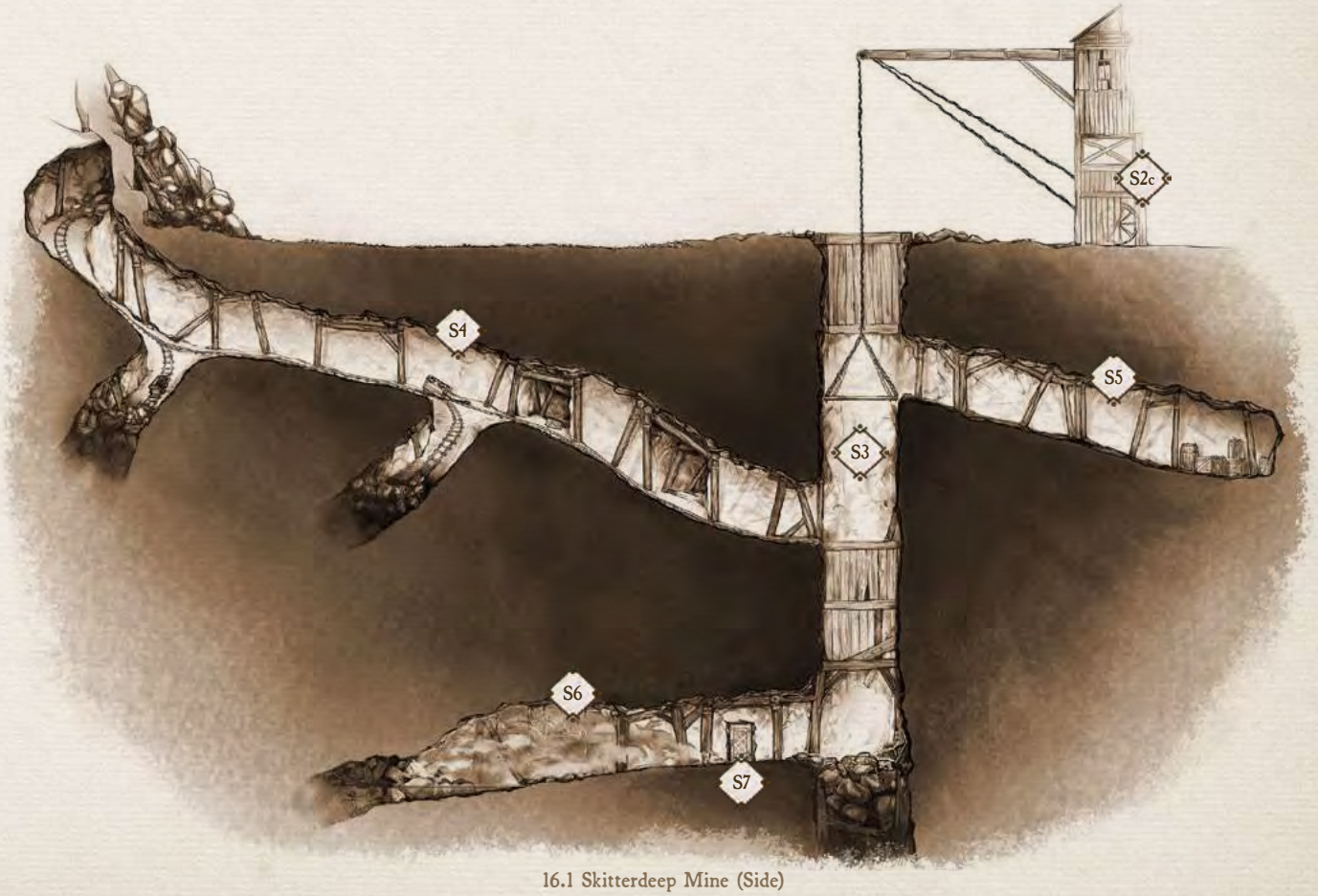
CEILINGS. Ceilings are 10 feet high in mine shafts and tunnels, and 15 feet high in rooms and chambers.

LIGHTING. The mine's interior locations are unlit unless otherwise noted.

HAG MARK. Stonoga has marked all the denizens of the mine (the mark is a cluster of blisters that resembles a centipede), which makes them immune to the Oppressive Gloom feature as well as the Putrid Miasma in areas S6.

OPPRESSIVE GLOOM. Thanks to Stonoga's magical tampering, all light sources have their radius halved. Furthermore, Darkvision's range is reduced to 15 feet. Stonoga and creatures she has marked can see normally.

SKITTER PLAGUE. When a creature in the mine is hit by an attack from a **Giant Centipede** or **Skitterswarm**, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be afflicted with Skitter Plague (see "Skitter Plague" above).



16.1 Skitterdeep Mine (Side)



SKITTERDEEP MINE LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to maps 16.1 through 16.5.

S1: WAREHOUSE

> A broken sign hangs on the door to the warehouse. The faded letters once read "Glitterdeep Mine," but the first two letters have been painted over by a vandal, so it now reads "Skitterdeep Mine" in weathered writing. The door hangs mostly open in the frame, revealing a long aisle filled with damaged shelves and scattered rubble.
>
> The room stinks of sweat and sewage, and a thin, greenish haze hangs in the air. You hear the sound of guttural snoring and wet lip smacking and see their source. Four humanoid figures sleep on sheets of rusted metal, horribly mutated and warped with distended bellies, mole-like claws, huge bulging eyes, and stringy wispy hair.

Broken shelves line the warehouse interior, and debris clutters nearly every possible space.

Debris. The warehouse is Difficult Terrain due to the great piles of detritus.

Creatures. There are four **Deepdrecks** asleep amidst the broken items here at any given time. These flesh-crafted abominations are what remain of the lost miners. Resting deepdrecks have no interest in fighting and will flee to warn Stonoga of intruders if awoken—though they will defend themselves if cornered.

Treasure. A character who spends 10 minutes searching the debris finds two trinkets lost in the rubble, and with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, also finds a metal lockbox. The lock is rusted through and can be opened with light effort. The box contains three citrines (50 GP each) and a *Potion of Healing* (greater) labeled "Emergency."

S2: MACHINE SHOP

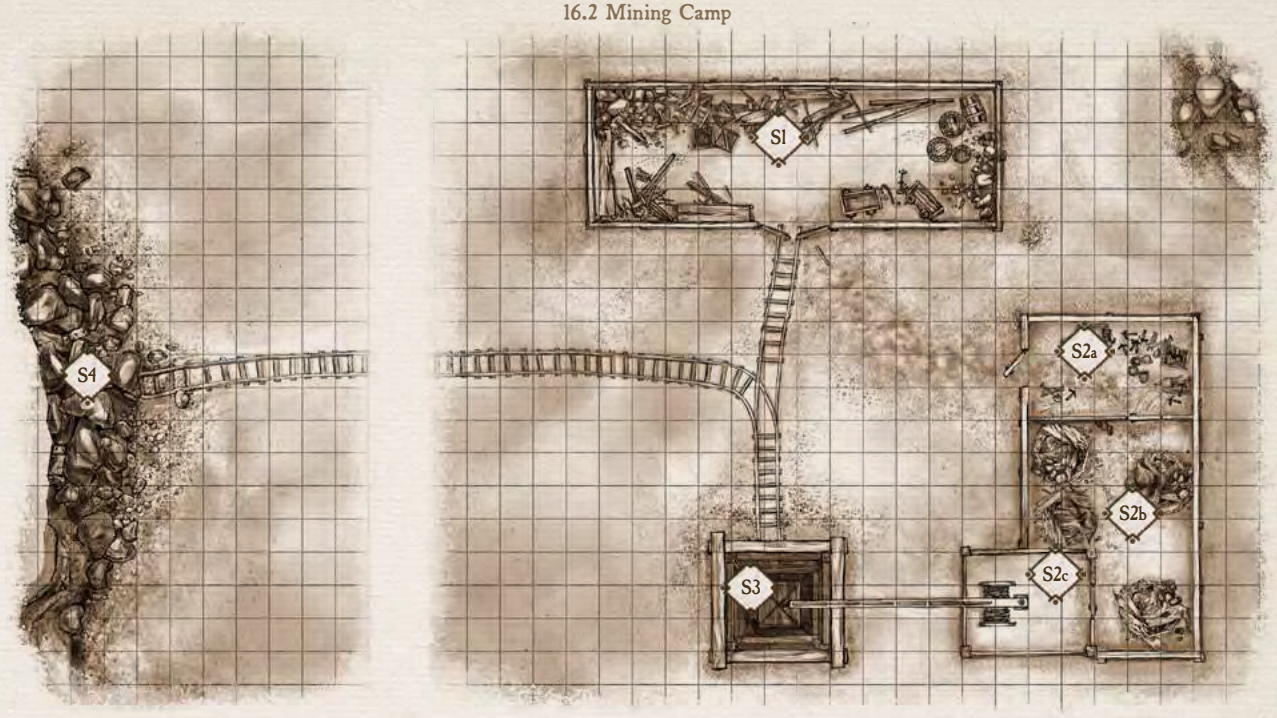
Areas S2a, S2b, and S2c are all part of one larger building. The following description is for the whole shop:

> The smell of oxidized metal emanates from this rusted ramshackle building. Warped gaps in wall planks and molded holes in the roof seem to belch thin green gas. A heavy chain runs from inside the southern portion of the building to a scaffold over a mineshaft before it descends into darkness.

The chain runs from the Winch House (area S2c) and into the Main Shaft (area S3).

Doors. Each of the locked doors in this building can be unlocked with the iron key around the neck of the fleshdobbin on the lift in area S3.

16.2 Mining Camp



S2A: TOOL STORAGE

> This room contains dozens of old mining implements and scattered refuse. Most of the visible floor is covered in smudged, filthy handprints, which have disrupted the dust and dirt that cling to every inch of this area.

The mining implements here are mostly useless, ruined by decades of exposure.

Handprints. As a Search action, a character who examines the area and succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check learns that the handprints lead to and from the door to the southern room (area S2b), as if a creature were walking on its hands. If the characters have already seen a fleshdobbin, they can easily deduce that more such creatures lurk in the next room.

South Door. The south door is locked (DC 15).

Treasure. As a Search action, a character who looks through the debris and succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a Maul, as well as a Dungeoneer's Pack with a flask of Alchemist's Fire and a flask of Oil strapped to the side. A character who spends 5 minutes thoroughly searching succeeds on the check automatically.

S2B: FLESHDOBBIN LAIR

> This filthy room stinks of mold and stale sweat. Four piles of rubbish are draped in rotten blankets and old cloth. You hear a squelching whinny as two large abominable creatures stir. They have the silhouette of horses but seem to have the flesh and loose anatomy of humans. They hobble about the room on four limbs, drooling large drops of putrid saliva onto the stained floor.

The piles are fleshdobbin beds, covered with the horse blankets and rotten wine-red surcoats of the horses and knights these creatures once were.

Creatures. Two **Fleshdobbins** are presently inside the lair. They are Hostile to intruders and attack without hesitation.

Doors. Both doors here are locked (DC 15).

S2C: WINCH HOUSE

The door leading into this room is locked (DC 15).

> A heavy chain winds around a massive winch and runs out through a port in the wall. A control box with a lever stands next to the machinery.

A Small creature can wriggle through the chain port with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, and a Tiny creature can squeeze through the port without a check.

Winch. The controls for the winch are simple enough to operate, but doing so causes it to emit a loud groan and series of shrieks that alert all other creatures in the mine to the presence of intruders. For the next 2 hours, denizens of the mine are alert and watching. Stonoga, Slippery Oswald, and the deepdrecks attempt to hide and set ambushes during that time. fleshdobbins can't be bothered to hide, as they delight in brashness.

The winch can be disabled using Thieves' Tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, and it has AC 17, HP 10, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage.

If the platform is brought up to the ground level, the creatures on the lift of the Main Shaft (see area S3) ride the platform up and investigate, attacking any intruders on sight.

As a Study action, a character who examines the winch and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes the danger of operating it, and that a flask of Oil poured on the mechanism will prevent it from making noise.

S3: MAIN SHAFT

> A rusted chain extends from a ramshackle building to a scaffold over a square mineshaft, then descends into the darkness. The hole in the earth belches a foul-smelling gas of a greenish hue.

The chain runs from the winch mechanism (area S2c) and suspends a lift platform. The shaft is a 15-foot square tunnel cut straight down into the rock. It drops 100 feet from the surface to the rough bottom just below area S6.

Chain. A creature can climb the chain with relative ease (no ability check required).

Creatures. One **Fleshdobbin**, two **Deepdrecks**, and ten **Giant Centipedes** lurk on or around the lift.

Lift. The lift is 30 feet below the surface, at area S5. It's a platform composed of a series of wooden planks bolted to the top of three iron beams, and it is controlled from the winch house (area S2c).

If more than 2,500 pounds of weight is placed on the lift and chain, the winch breaks and spins free, sending the lift, any creatures on it, and the chain hurtling to the bottom of the shaft. If the centipedes are on the lift, they scuttle off onto the walls of the shaft. If the lift falls, it is smashed into splinters and alerts the denizens of the mine as described in area S2c. The winch is destroyed and useless.

Any creatures on the lift when it falls also fall and take damage from the fall if they hit the bottom of the shaft.

Rotting Stench. Characters smell a noxious odor from below, radiating from area S6, where a Putrid Miasma has entirely consumed the tunnels.

Treasure. The fleshdobbin wears an iron key to the doors in the Machine Shop (area S2) on a leather cord around its neck.

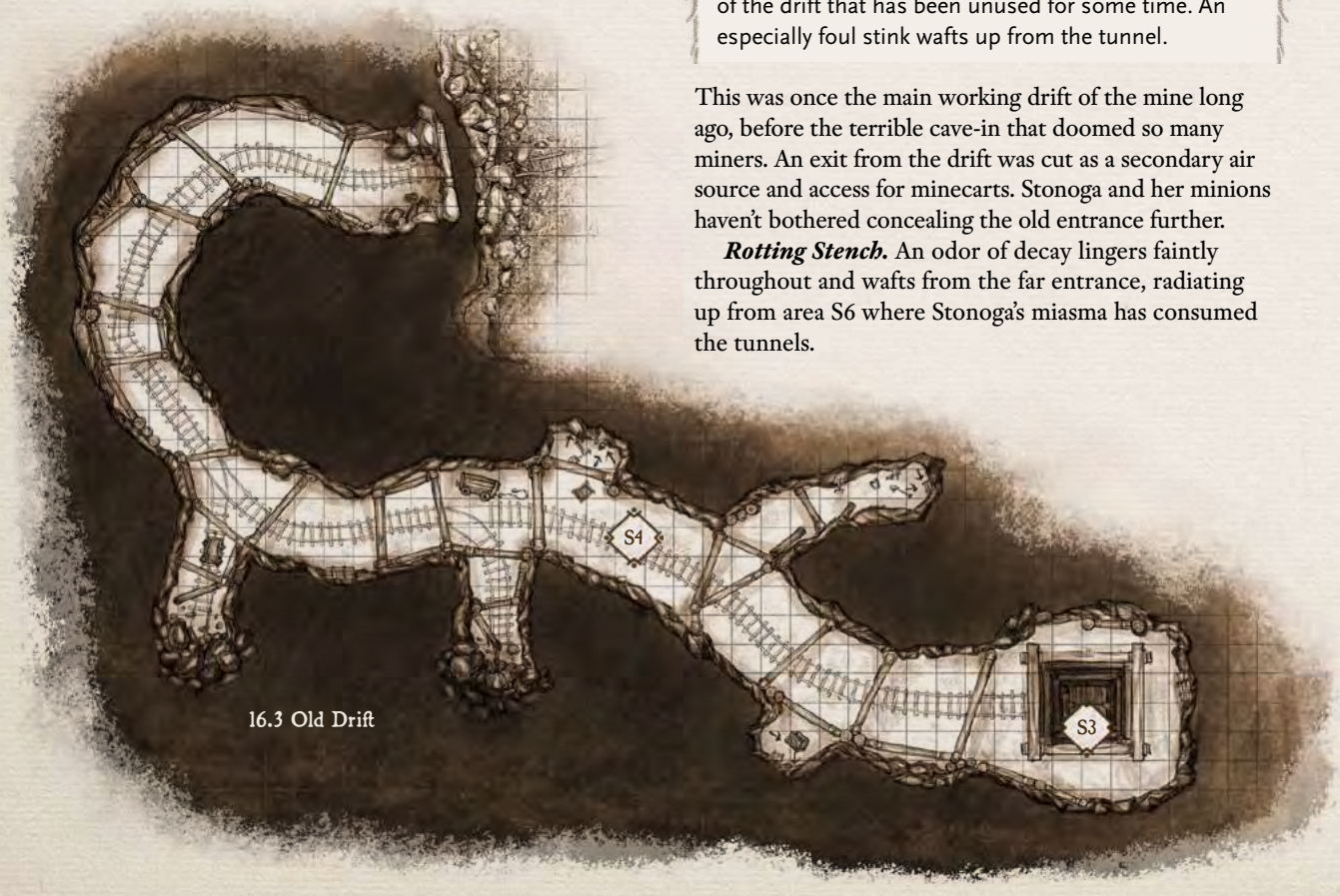
S4: OLD DRIFT

If the characters enter the Old Drift from the surface, read the following:

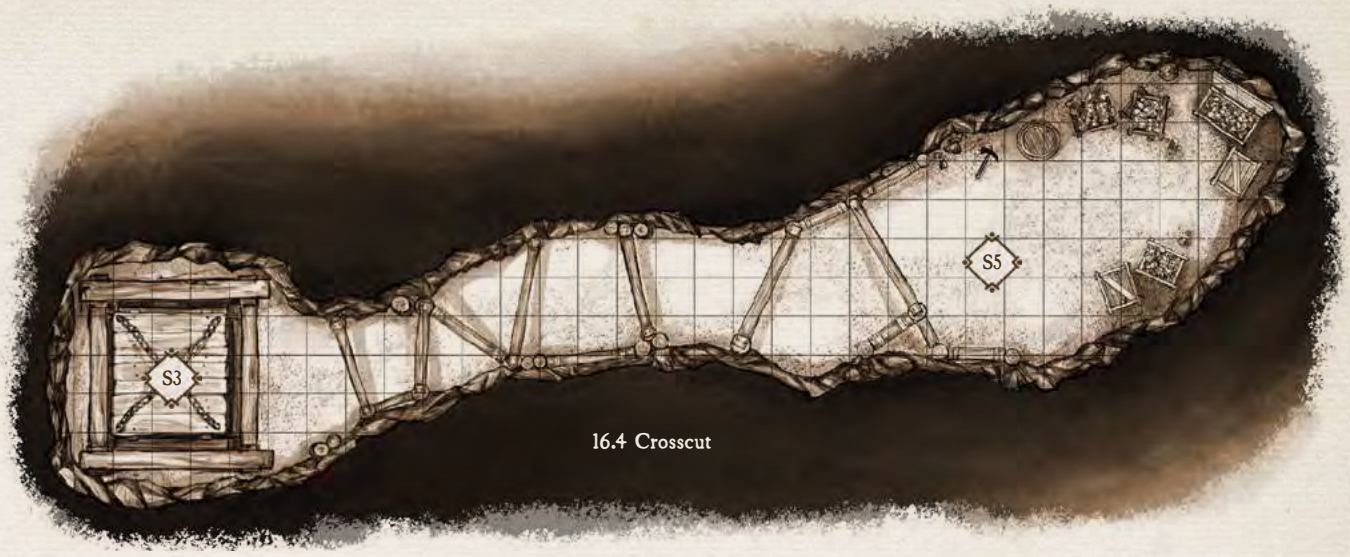
> Overturned minecarts litter the entrance of this tunnel bored into the ridge. The timber scaffolding built around the opening is discolored, rotten, and termite-eaten. Vegetation has grown over much of the start of the drift that has been unused for some time. An especially foul stink wafts up from the tunnel.

This was once the main working drift of the mine long ago, before the terrible cave-in that doomed so many miners. An exit from the drift was cut as a secondary air source and access for minecarts. Stonoga and her minions haven't bothered concealing the old entrance further.

Rotting Stench. An odor of decay lingers faintly throughout and wafts from the far entrance, radiating up from area S6 where Stonoga's miasma has consumed the tunnels.



16.3 Old Drift



16.4 Crosscut

Creatures. Five **Deepdrecks** wander these tunnels, grinding through the stone and dirt, searching for precious metal nuggets to curry favor with Stonoga. Unless they were alerted by the lift moving in area S3, they are utterly immersed in their work and have Disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to notice intruders.

Patrolling Spy. Every 3 (1d6) minutes, a **Giant Centipede**—squeezed into a *Ring of Evasion* it wears around its middle—skitters through the tunnel. If the centipede spots intruders, it scurries off to report their presence to Stonoga in her laboratory (area S7).

Treasure. Removing the centipede's *Ring of Evasion* requires killing it. Scattered along the drift are enough serviceable mining implements to assemble a set of Mason's Tools.

S5: CROSSCUT

> Boxes of large gems and sacks full of glittering nuggets of precious metals line the available space—a massive treasure hoard. Despite the shiny trove of precious stones and metals, this chamber stinks with the smell of rotten meat.

Stonoga stores some of her valuables that have no immediate practical use to her in this tunnel, along with a different type of treasure: rotten flesh and bones she may be able to use in her fleshcraft experiments. To safeguard these "riches," she set her familiar and a magical trap to guard them.

Illusion. The gems and precious metals here are false, save for one box (see "Treasure" below), and are protected by an intangible illusion that makes the eyeballs, tongues, knucklebones, and various organs appear as gemstones, fine silks, coins, gilded chalices, and delicate necklaces. As a Study action, a creature that examines the false treasure and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check can see through the uncanny illusion for what it really is, leaving it as a ghostly apparition to them.

Creature. When he's not at Stonoga's side or tormenting deepdrecks, Slippery Oswald (**Vermin Familiar** (Centipede)) lurks here, burrowed in a lumpy pile of intestines. He knows that he can hide deep within the illusory treasures and remain undisturbed by the deepdrecks and fleshdobbins, who have been trained to avoid this space. While within the hoard, he has the Invisible condition against a creature that has not seen through the illusion. He ambushes the characters if they disturb him and fights without fear, knowing that if he dies, Stonoga can summon him again.

Magical Trap. The entrance to the Crosscut has a single eyeball hanging by its optic nerve above it, noticeable by creatures that take the Search action and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If anyone other than Stonoga or Slippery Oswald takes treasure from the Crosscut past the eyeball, the Main Shaft (area S3) fills with a *Hypnotic Pattern* spell (save DC 15) for 10 minutes, and a mental *Alarm* spell alerts Stonoga, Slippery Oswald, and any remaining fleshdobbins to the presence of intruders.

Stonoga can end or reset the trap's effects at any time (no action required) from anywhere in the mine. The eyeball trap can be disabled with the Utilize action and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a successful *Dispel Magic* spell (DC 15), or it can be broken (AC 13, HP 5, Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage).

Treasure. Amidst the boxes and sacks full of parts is a single real box of gold and silver nuggets worth 450 GP.

S6: DEEP DRIFT

> The shaft ends at a rough floor a few feet below a long tunnel filled with a chartreuse haze. A heavy bronze door nearby is cast in dim, pulsing greenish-purple light that illuminates the mist. The sound of trickling water echoes from farther down the dark tunnel. The stench here is oppressive, stinking like a combination of rotting flesh, sweat, and sewage gas. The walls themselves are slick and seemingly soft to the touch, squirming before your eyes.

The deepest level of the mine, 100 feet below the surface, is the hag Stonoga Blackstinger's lair and laboratory.

Putrid Miasma. When a creature first enters the area, and again every 10 minutes thereafter until it leaves the miasma, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition. While Poisoned in this way, the creature repeats the saving throw every hour. On a failure, it gains 1 Exhaustion level. On a success, the Poisoned condition ends. Denizens of the mine are immune to the miasma (see "Hag Mark" above).

Bronze Door. The unlocked bronze door is 3 inches thick and leads to Stonoga's Laboratory (area S7). It's remarkably difficult to hear sounds through the door, so only impacts on the door itself alert Stonoga to a commotion outside.

Creatures. A **Fleshdobbin** and a **Skitterswarm** keep guard outside the bronze door, and two **Deepdrecks** dwell within the walls near the glowing sigils (see below). If combat breaks out, the deepdrecks roll Initiative and join the fight on the second round. If the fleshdobbin dies, any remaining deepdrecks try to pound on the bronze door to warn Stonoga.

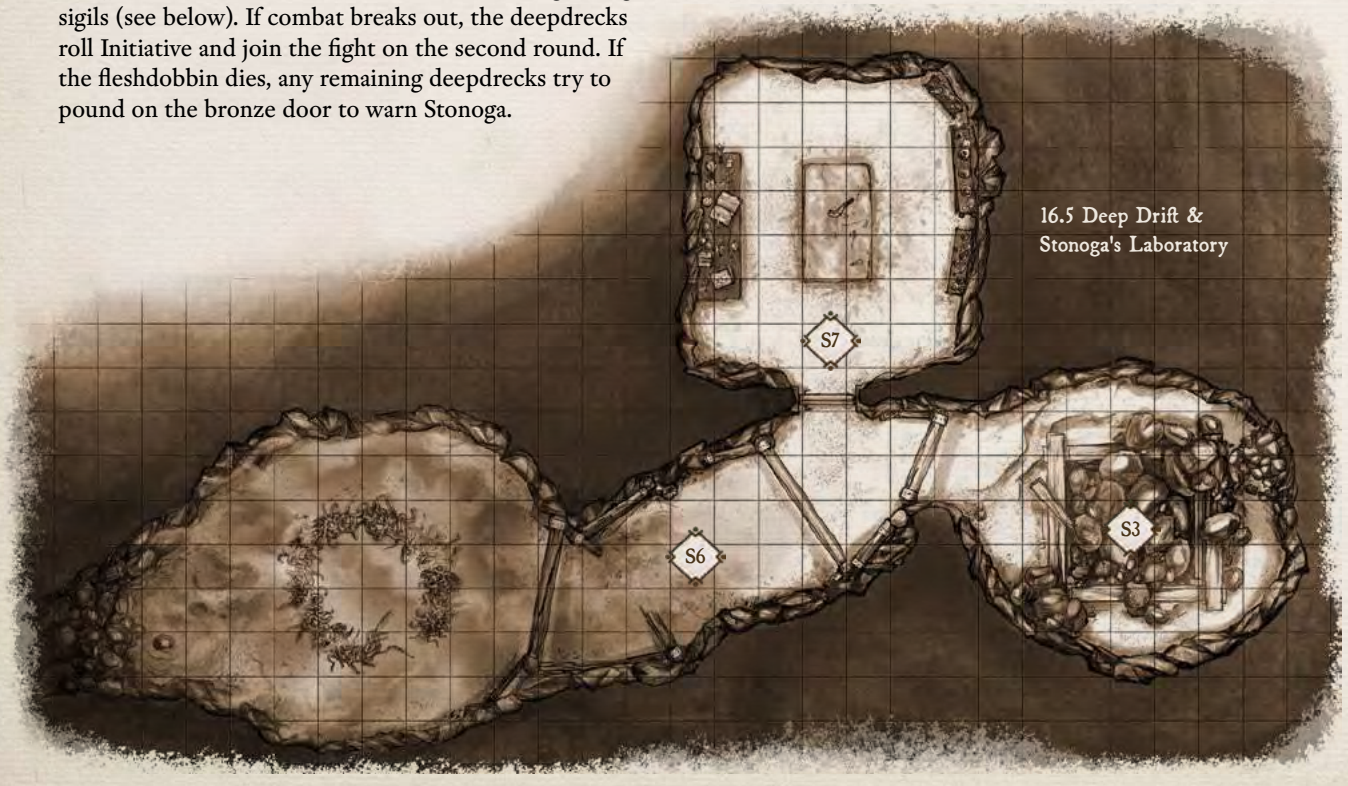
Gruesome Sigils. The tunnel leads to a chamber where connective tissues and entrails have been formed into a rough knotted pattern on the ground. These sigils writhe as if alive, releasing clouds of foul gas that condense like dew on the walls and seeps through the soil. Stonoga crafted the sigils, which are the source of the Putrid Miasma choking the mine and fueling the magical contagion of Skitter Plague.

If the sigils are destroyed (AC 17; HP 30; Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage; Resistance to all other damage except Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Force), the toxic fume dissipates. They can also be destroyed with a successful *Dispel Magic* spell (DC 15) or disabled as a Utilize action with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If she's alive, Stonoga knows when the sigils are destroyed or deactivated.

S7: STONOGA'S LABORATORY

> Behind the heavy bronze door is a filthy laboratory, dimly lit by sickly bruise-colored flames. Shelves line the walls, cluttered with bottles and flasks, and benches are strewn with parchments, soiled blades, and surgical tools. A malformed corpse lies on a table here and is in the process of being dissected and fused with the corpse of a rat-like bipedal figure.

The corpse is Stonoga's latest project to create a better fleshdobbin, using the rat-folk corpse of an unfortunate traveler her minions took from the road (Walder Pye, a plagueborn traveler from Bubonia).



16.5 Deep Drift & Stonoga's Laboratory

Lighting. The lab is lit with Dim Light.

Putrid Miasma. The miasma filling the Deep Drift (area S6) persists here.

Creatures. If she hasn't been alerted to the presence of the characters, the **Centipede Hag** Stonoga Blackstinger is deep in ritual research for her horrid experiments. If she is alerted, or when battle breaks out, three **Skitterswarms** writhe from the walls and floor to join their mistress. If Slippery Oswald (**Vermin Familiar** (Centipede)) is still alive, Stonoga calls to him telepathically, and he joins the battle as well.



She's a putrid creature, delighting in the corruption of living flesh, blighting it with disease and poison, and twisting it into freakish new forms through her foul magic. Despite her revolting mind and morbid appetites, she is unnervingly jovial, savoring lively conversation before choosing to massacre the intruders so that their flesh may be crafted into horrid new designs.

When Stonoga is defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

> With a sickening pop, Stonoga Blackstinger's pitch black eyes pop out of her head, and her grotesquely long neck snaps and curls up like a dead centipede as she collapses to the floor. Her corpse immediately begins losing form as her own flesh turns to a malleable sludge that oozes across the ground.

Treasure. Stonoga wears a *Necklace of Adaptation* in the form of a gold centipede on a cord around her neck. Scattered on her workbench are four *Spell Scrolls*: *Alarm*, *Inflict Wounds*, *Invisibility*, and *Sleep*. Her scrawled notes contain useful information summarized in "Conclusion: Exterminated" below.

The apparatus scattered across the shelves is a set of Alchemist's Supplies and a large glass jar contains a fleshdobbin head preserved in a translucent, cloudy gel. The gel is 4 doses of *Restorative Ointment*.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Star* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the character this card was pulled for gains a feat of their choice for which they qualify after defeating Stonoga Blackstinger.

CONCLUSION: EXTERMINATED

Once Stonoga Blackstinger is slain, Slippery Oswald dies alongside her if he was not killed previously. The poisonous mist (see "Putrid Miasma" in area S6) lingers if they haven't already stopped it, though Stonoga's frantic notes and the noxious miasma rising from the symbols reveal that the sigils in the Deep Drift (area S6) are the source of the magical contagion.

Once the sigils are destroyed or deactivated, the Putrid Miasma dissipates, and the spreading Skitter Plague fades from Wickermoor Village. With the death of Stonoga, the thousands of centipedes skitter off into the wilds, ending the infestation. Those afflicted with Skitter Plague begin to recover over the course of the next hour.

Among Stonoga's notes, the characters discover that she gleefully awaits the death of the younger Vessla Browntooth and delights in the conspiracy she has with the older Golub Graygullet, who she claims hides in disguise among the humans of Wickermoor Village. This leads the characters to their next clue on the final member of the Vermintoll Coven.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

The townsfolk that had fallen ill recover miraculously and are grateful to the characters for saving their lives. Morgan the apothecary is relieved the townsfolk didn't perish and offers the characters potions from their shop that are appropriate for the needs and requests of the characters (see chapter 11).

Phillip Druskenvald, meanwhile, rolls up his sleeves, determined to better help Wickermoor Village now that the hag and her minions have been scoured from the mine. Alongside Mayor Somerton, he eagerly lays plans to re-open Glitterdeep Mine, envisioning a rebirth of prosperity for the town. He sends out word, seeking laborers with iron resolve, skilled artisans, and guards unafraid of the shadowed depths. His promise of generous wages from his own coffers stirs the townsfolk, and soon, hammers and saws ring out in preparation.



Chapter 17: MEMORY'S REST

"Do not tremble. Do not recoil. You are caught between fear and agony. The world has been so unkind, hasn't it? I know. I know exactly how to take care of you. I can take your pain away, and when I am finished, you will be...better..."

- Matron Lethica -

Memory's Rest Sanatorium stands as a monument to grief. To outsiders, it promises solace and a retreat from life's troubles. But behind its iron doors lurks a nightmare. Beneath the polished facade and soft-spoken promises, Matron Lethica pursues her sinister ambition: the Lethic Serum. The concoction claims to cure all ailments—but at a terrible cost. Those who undergo its treatment lose more than their pain; their bodies mutate, their memories fade, and they become hollow vessels for Lethica's cruel vision of salvation.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

Memory's Rest Sanatorium rises from the mists of Moonsong Lake, a sanctuary for those seeking relief from their troubles. Its founder, Matron Lethica, has transformed the Isle of Mourn into a place of healing—or so its reputation would suggest. In truth, the sanatorium's wards are filled with pained silence and the anguished cries of those seduced by this mask.

To perfect her serum, Lethica and her staff—the corrupted nurses, surgeons, and horrors born of her failures—have turned the sanatorium into a prison. Patients vanish often. Those who do not return have succumbed to the mutagenic effects of the Lethic Serum and have transformed into abominations in the image of the true source of the serum.

An eldritch horror known as the White Worm has been imprisoned by the matron in the caverns beneath the sanatorium. This otherworldly being's ichor serves as the base of the Lethic Serum, and its alien mind gives endless inspiration for Lethica's abominable experiments, treatments, and goal of twisting the bodies and minds of everyone. Only through the death of the widow can the people be spared this sickening evolution.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Memory's Rest Sanatorium is a place of suffering, alchemy, and unspeakable transformation. The characters are tasked with uncovering its secrets and ending Lethica's sinister dreams. To prevail, they must navigate the halls of the sanatorium, confront its many horrors, and face the Weeping Widow herself. Characters drawn to the sanatorium by the Quest Hook later in this chapter have several goals:

- Learn what is happening to patients in Memory's Rest Sanatorium.
- Create an antidote to the Lethic Serum
- Find Lethica's secret Laboratory (area L27) and the cavern below.
- Slay Matron Lethica, the Weeping Widow.

Before running this chapter, study its most important NPC, the Weeping Widow, to understand her motivations and methods. Familiarize yourself with the sanatorium's layout, key areas, and inhabitants so you are prepared to run encounters in whatever order the characters explore. Finally, review the climactic battle, "The Chemical Evolution," to ensure a satisfying and epic finale.

This chapter is designed for four level 7 characters.



THE WEEPING WIDOW

Matron Lethica, the Weeping Widow, was once a priestess of night but forsook her faith to pursue twisted science infused with otherworldly power. She seeks to "free" all people from their pain and sorrow, believing that erasing suffering is the only path to peace. She holds all she meets in contempt and disgust, using her seemingly noble purpose to manipulate and recruit a staff that is both loyal and adoring.

TRAGEDY OF THE WIDOW

Long ago, a white-haired elf named Lethica Nightborne was a high priestess of a goddess of evening, peace, and healing who takes the form of a barn owl. Her duty was to heal those sick in body or mind, which she achieved through blessings from her goddess, as well as the brewing of natural remedies. She found joy bringing peace to countless souls, but her life would be made complicated when she encountered her husband-to-be.

After meeting the traveling knight Sir Marius Renathyr, Lethica discovered a happiness greater than she ever thought possible. Their romance was passionate, and their marriage filled Lethica with purpose. Lethica believed she and her chivalrous love would make the world a better place.



Lethica Nightborne

Matron Lethica

Fate had another plan. After her husband bared his vampire fangs and attempted to feed upon her (see chapter 14), he fled in shame. She followed him and uncovered the extent of his wickedness, shocked to learn his soul was damned and pledged to a devil. The knight she knew and loved was dead, and her new life as a widow was one of endless grief.

To ease her suffering, she redoubled her commitment to the restorative pursuit that had once brought her such comfort. She found the Isle of Mourn, drawn by stories of crystalline pools in the caverns beneath the earth said to have miraculous healing powers. The legends were true, and after she verified the water's potency, she began construction of a hospital on that very site, where she vowed she would bring an end to all pain.

Lethica used the waters of the pools to heal the sickly, but her joy did not return. She was hollow and bitter, and she grew resentful of her goddess for failing to prevent her tragedy. Disavowing her goddess and the Nightborne name, she turned toward scientific practices that allowed her to develop more potent medicines as the hospital continued its construction.

EATER OF MEMORY

Lethica discovered she was a natural scientist and that her brilliance was unmatched. However, despite numerous breakthroughs, she could not cure every affliction. In particular, she found that several of her patients suffered from painful memories just as she did. This scientific dead-end troubled her until inspiration struck while she walked the endless caverns beneath the fledgling hospital.

She came across the ruins of a dead civilization that worshiped an eldritch being from beyond the stars who endlessly hungers for memories. For years, she studied the etchings of a forgotten language, learning how to make contact with a being known only as the White Worm. Lethica had finally found the secret that would allow her to unlock the full potential of her medicine.

In the cavern beneath the hospital, she performed a ritual that summoned forth the White Worm. By accepting its parasitic offspring within her form, Lethica appeased the creature and formed a psychic bond with it. Her skin turned pallid, her blood violet, and her tears an inky black that forever ran down her face and stained her cheeks. Then, Lethica activated the trap she had set, using her potent science to imprison the weakened grub and constantly drain its alien gore. This ichor, infused with the water of the enchanted pools, formed the base of the Lethic Serum, her greatest work.



When injected, the serum removed a subject's memories, feeding them to the White Worm to keep it alive. While it remedied physical afflictions, it also warped the body into something wholly alien. Lethica saw this transformation as a cure to suffering and committed to spreading it to everyone, whether they sought it or not. This became the sole purpose of the completed hospital, which she dubbed Memory's Rest Sanatorium.

Despite her proclaimed noble goal of freeing her patients from their pain, Lethica is equally motivated by a hatred that others should enjoy a blissful life when she cannot. Her foul experiments seek to perfect the serum and produce it at such a scale that the waters of Wickermoor Hollow would transform all living things within. She has even created a variety of apparatuses to pump the serum into the pools below the sanatorium.

PARLEY WITH THE WIDOW

Matron Lethica spends her waking hours immersed in her alchemy and overseeing the operations of Memory's Rest Sanatorium. She meets with visitors to offer reassurances, veiled in kindness and empathy, while quietly assessing whether they can be swayed, used, or eliminated. She is most commonly met in the Matron's Office (area L4), presenting herself as a visionary who carries the burden of humanity's pain. She spends the remainder of her time in her quarters (area L19) or her Laboratory (area L27).

Any challenge to her authority or questioning of her methods is met with unwavering confidence. She maintains a calm and composed demeanor, speaking with the precision of a scholar and the gentleness of a healer. Do not be fooled, however; she is cold and ruthless, convinced her work will liberate the world from suffering—no matter the cost.

If the characters meet Lethica and speak with her, these are her answers to some common topics:

WHO ARE YOU? "I am Matron Lethica, steward of this hospital. You may think of me as a healer—one who is unafraid to confront the hardships others dare not face."

WHY DO YOU OPERATE THIS PLACE? "To salve the sorrows of this senseless world. I brew the antidote to pain itself."

WHAT SET YOU ON THIS PATH? "My own loss drives me. My own sorrow. All the memories which I long to forget but mustn't. I cannot be idle until I have erased the pain from others."

WHY DO YOU CRY? "A side effect of my work. Nothing more." A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check determines this to be a lie.

HAVE YOU TRIED LETHIC SERUM YOURSELF? "I must not. I endure so others may heal."

WHAT IS THE LETHIC SERUM? "An alchemical distillation of my own design. It has yet to fail to erase the pain of those who accept its tranquility. It is the key to salvation."

NPCS OF THE SANATORIUM

The sanatorium's staff and inhabitants form a tortuous hierarchy under Matron Lethica's control. Unquestioningly loyal orderlies carry out their duties under the watchful eyes of Nurse Godlee. Doctor Belkin's surgeons operate as a well-oiled machine of experimental horrors. Even Hugo, Lethica's hulking enforcer, bears the scars of her cruel obsession.

HUGO, THE FIRST EXPERIMENT

Hugo is Matron Lethica's ward, bodyguard, and the ultimate proof of her alchemical ambitions. Born of a cursed fomorian bloodline, Hugo's immense strength was overwhelmed by debilitating pain and horrific visions so severe that they harmed those around him and threatened to end his own life. His suffering drove him to Lethica during the earliest days of the hospital, where she promised comfort and relief through her alchemy. She kept her word—quieting the agony of his curse—but at the cost of turning him into a mutated servant entirely dependent on her.

The first step in silencing Hugo's torment was to close his three eyes with needle and thread. In a short time, Hugo's body became riddled with scars from countless surgeries. Metal tubes and implanted reservoirs ensure constant delivery of the alchemical cocktail that suppresses Hugo's pain and emotions, though this was no mercy. Viewing Hugo as the perfect test subject due to his rapidly healing biology and seeming unwillingness to die, Lethica pushed his physical and emotional limits to advance her alchemical mastery. Despite this, Hugo's devotion to Lethica is absolute—she soothed his pain and, in his eyes, everything she does is justified.



Hugo

Meeting Hugo. Accustomed to his own form of veil, Hugo relies on his other senses to navigate the world. He is attuned to the sanatorium and immediately rushes to pacify any commotion within its walls, though he mostly stalks the Second Floor to avoid disturbing new arrivals.

Hugo's Fate. Despite his near-death experience and agonizing transformation, fragments of Hugo's sympathy and kindness survive. If he still lives when Matron Lethica is destroyed, Hugo is left adrift, overwhelmed by the loss. If approached with compassion and empathy, Hugo might abandon his violent ways and seek peace beyond the borders of Wickermoor Hollow, learning to forget the horrors he witnessed and discovering that he no longer needs Lethica to be free.

SARAH GODLEE AND THE ORDERLIES

Nurse Sarah Godlee was one of the first to accept the Lethic Serum and serves as the second-in-command to Matron Lethica. Unlike the other orderlies, she wears no mask, as her form was only mildly contorted by the serum. Freed of the troubles that hindered her former life, she now runs the sanatorium's night-to-night operations as its undisputed enforcer. While Matron Lethica cloaks her methods in gentleness, Godlee prefers intimidation, control, and cruelty.

Godlee thrives on power, both over the orderlies under her command and the patients she claims to care for. She sometimes pilfers valuables from the patients to indulge her sense of authority.

Nurse Godlee deeply admires Matron Lethica to the point of obsession, finding her employer's decades-long grief over her husband a constant source of pain. She wishes for Lethica to let go of her past and forget Marius Renathyr just like the patients of the hospital. She believes removing collected mementos to be the right step, but would never dare cross her matron. However, she will find common cause with the characters if they can convince her they wish to help.

Meeting Nurse Godlee. When the characters first enter the hospital, Nurse Godlee is overseeing the patients' mealtime in the Common Room (area L9) on the First Floor. During waking hours, she retires to her quarters (area L17) to watch over the Airing Grounds (area L10) or tour the sanatorium to instruct Hugo and the other orderlies.

The Veiled Orderlies. All fifteen of the orderlies who now preside over the sanatorium were formerly patients. Each of them wears the same, matching uniform. They also don stark white porcelain masks to conceal the unsightly deformities left by the Lethic Serum. While they are still capable of reasoning, the orderlies obey the commands of Matron Lethica and Nurse Godlee without question.

DOCTOR BELKIN AND THE SURGEONS

Doctor Belkin is the architect of Memory's Rest's most horrifying experiments. When Belkin was first exposed to the Lethic Serum, its effects on him were unique. His mind opened to the White Worm's influence, and he was found the following night in the caverns below the hospital having removed the top of his own skull—a colony of pale, writhing larvae now burrow within, driving his every thought. The White Worm had revealed the "truth": salvation lies not in erasing trauma but in perfect symbiosis with the worm's parasitic gifts.

Belkin is a fierce disciple of Matron Lethica, and he believes in spreading the White Worm's influence to elevate all beings to a higher state of existence. His experiments focus on creating mutated hosts for more worms, ensuring their spread to the wider world. His reverence for his alien deity is immense, and Belkin is always looking for new converts to worship the worm. He will find common cause with the characters if made to believe they are genuinely interested in serving the eldritch entity.

When operating on the first floor of the sanatorium, the doctor hides his exposed brain with a surgery cap, bringing a calming demeanor to his nervous patients. He will treat the characters with kindness, but if he perceives the characters as a threat to the White Worm, he will unleash his experiments and surgeons to eliminate them.

Meeting Doctor Belkin. Doctor Belkin spends most of his time in the Experimental Wing of the Second Floor monitoring his trials and testing subjects he thinks are strong enough to survive his extreme procedures. To maintain appearances, Belkin also conducts medical examinations for new admissions, using these moments to evaluate potential candidates for his operations.

The Wormhost Surgeons. Belkin's six acolytes have survived similar procedures under his scalpel. They are now extensions of his will, hosting their own colonies of parasites. To conceal their deformities, they wear bloodied surgical smocks, masks, and caps, though the faint squish of the larvae beneath their flesh often betrays them.

The surgeons work in chilling synchronization, communicating in low, guttural gurgles. While outwardly loyal to Belkin, their true allegiance lies with the White Worm.



Nurse Sarah Godlee



Doctor Belkin

PATIENTS OF MEMORY'S REST

The patients (Neutral, human noncombatant **Commoners**) of Memory's Rest Sanatorium represent a wide spectrum of suffering from every corner of Wickermoor Hollow. Each has been admitted seeking relief, only to become unwitting subjects in Matron Lethica's experimental pursuits. All patients within Memory's Rest are under the effects of the Lethic Serum, which relieves whatever malady brought them here but erases their memories and identity. The patients in the Patient Register table could be met by the characters during their stay in Memory's Rest, though it is not comprehensive.

You choose where a patient is within Memory's Rest at any given time, whether they are alone or escorted, and what their condition is. Consider also incorporating NPCs the characters already know to raise the stakes, making their presence in Memory's Rest a personal and urgent surprise. You can plan the patients schedules in advance or improvise their behavior in response to the characters' choices and actions.

Patient Register

1d12	Patient Name	Behavior or Condition	1d12	Patient Name	Behavior or Condition
1	Catherine Winthrop	Clings to an arm they feel should be missing, though it isn't.	7	Agnes Thorpe	Dreams of being suspended in a bright cave.
2	Samuel Blake	Fixates on mirrors, his gaze locked as if searching for something.	8	James Pelham	Writes the same name over and over: "Kehlenn."
3	Thomas Adams	Stares endlessly into reflections, mirroring his twin's silent fixation.	9	Geoffrey Barnes	Freezes mid-action and resumes minutes later as if no time has passed.
4	Victor Lane	Claims they feel "tendrils" beneath their skin.	10	Thomas Redding	Insists they are awake even when asleep.
5	Emily Hale	Draws spirals obsessively.	11	Emily Voss	Speaks with their shadow constantly.
6	Wendy Holden	Frequently whispers apologies to unseen figures.	12	Harold Stiles	"Listens" to the lights.

QUEST HOOK

The characters are alerted to the existence of Memory's Rest Sanatorium by a farmer whose relative went to seek treatment and seemingly has become a different person.

ALL IS WELL

While the characters are in Wickermoor Village, they are approached by Amos Dority, a farmer from the outskirts of the town who is drawn to them due to their deeds in Skitterdeep Mine. He tells the story of his cousin, who had long suffered a chronic affliction and sought care at a hospital on the western side of Wickermoor Hollow. This cousin can be any of the patients listed in the Patient Register table (see "Patients of Memory's Rest" above).

Amos became concerned after receiving a letter allegedly penned by his cousin despite it sounding nothing like them and having completely different handwriting. In this correspondence, the cousin said, "Matron Lethica has healed me and given me purpose," claiming they would not be returning home to the farm before assuring Amos that "All is well."

Not trusting this sudden change, he implores the characters to find his cousin to discover the truth. Before parting ways, he hands them a brief pamphlet for "Memory's Rest Sanatorium," which features a peaceful hospital on the beautiful Moonsong Lake that specializes in finding treatments for all known and unknown ailments of body and mind.

MEMORY'S REST SANATORIUM



With the pamphlet for Memory's Rest, the characters have the information they need to set off for the hospital. With this document and the letter from Amos's cousin, by all accounts the place sounds quite peaceful and pleasant.

ACROSS MOONSONG LAKE

The journey from Wickermoor Village to Moonsong Lake is neither quick nor easy. Though the lake is well marked on maps, it takes about three nights to reach from the village due to the boggy terrain. Eventually, the road vanishes, and the characters find an abandoned trail.

> On the side of the road, an overgrown and long-forgotten trail beckons. You press through the thicket of briars, the mud beneath sucking at your feet, dragging you down with each step as you struggle deeper into the mire.
>
> After an hour of fighting through mosquito-ridden marshland, you reach the rocky shores of Moonsong Lake. The fading light on the surface of the water illuminates two things: a rowboat on the shore and a large structure on an island in the center of the lake.

The boat is moored to a simple wooden stake, fits six Medium creatures, and has a pair of oars. It is sturdy and can make the three-mile trip to the island without leaking.

If the characters spend too long on the lake's surface, jump into the water, or throw anything overboard, they draw the attention of a **Lake Dredger**, which attacks if provoked in any way. Should they evade its jaws, the characters arrive, cold and wet, on the banks of the Isle of Mourn.

> The shore that surrounds the Isle of Mourn is a tangle of overgrown reeds, black irises, and algae that gently ripples with the shallows. The grounds themselves are a neglected garden of overgrown willow trees and hedges.
>
> You emerge from your boat onto a small, weathered dock. Four other rowboats rock against the slick pier, making sporadic hollow thuds.
>
> Soft purple light beams from the somber windows of the two-storied brick structure. A fountain lies dormant in the center of a small courtyard, featuring a weathered barn owl statue at its center.
>
> "Memory's Rest: Sanatorium for the Afflicted" is etched in bold, serifed letters above two heavy iron doors at the entrance.

Searching the broken fountain yields a single silver coin.

MEMORY'S REST SANATORIUM FEATURES

Areas within Memory's Rest Sanatorium have the following features unless its description says otherwise:

CEILINGS. Rooms and hallways have 12-foot-high ceilings, though doors and entryways are just 10 feet high with transom windows for ventilation.

LIGHTING. Rooms and hallways are bathed in violet Bright Light that seeps from narrow glass tubes running along the ceilings and walls.

LOCKS. Some doors within the sanatorium are locked and can only be opened with a ward key or picked using Thieves' Tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Lethica and her staff all possess ward keys.

REINFORCED GLASS. Windows and glass within the sanatorium have AC 15, HP 15, a damage threshold of 10, and sound can't pass through them.

EXPLORING THE SANATORIUM

Memory's Rest Sanatorium operates with strict protocols designed to maintain control and secrecy. Newcomers are always escorted by orderlies (**Mutant Nurses**) or other staff and are directed to specific areas on the First Floor only. Patients who have been admitted are permitted to move unaccompanied, but they may not enter Restricted areas like the Nurse Stations (area L5), Elevators (area L6), or the Pharmacy (area L8). Access to the Second Floor is strictly prohibited without being escorted by staff.

Characters who want to explore the sanatorium freely must rely on diplomacy (such as gaining the trust of Nurse Godlee or Doctor Belkin) or avoid detection (through stealth or by donning disguises). Use the guidelines and staff schedules provided in this section to track the staff's attitudes toward the characters as they explore and to inform how encounters unfold.

Hospital Staff. There are sixteen **Mutant Nurses**, including Nurse Sarah Godlee, who support the sanatorium's night-to-night needs. They take shifts every 8 hours. Five orderlies remain stationary in their apartments (areas L14) on the Second Floor at any given time, resting and awaiting their duties. The remaining ten orderlies attend patients on the First Floor in pairs, wait for visitors in Reception (area L1), or assist Lethica when a patient is being treated with Lethic Serum in the Restraining Room (area L15).

There are seven **Wormhost Surgeons**, including Doctor Belkin, who live and work at Memory's Rest. They visit the First Floor to examine new patients and perform surgeries only when necessary, spending most of their nights in the Experiment Lab (area L26).

Visiting Hours. Visitors are welcome from the Twilight Hour through the Nightfall Hour. Sanatorium staff are Indifferent toward guests that don't disturb the placid atmosphere of the hospital. The first time a visitor performs an action that violates the Code of Conduct for Visitors causes staff to issue a stern warning. A second transgression causes staff to become Hostile, and they attempt to subdue the characters with Lethic Serum. This Code of Conduct is displayed prominently on polished wooden plaques along many of the sanatorium walls.

Performing either of the following actions causes the staff to instantly become Hostile, regardless of their previous attitude:

- Attacking sanatorium staff or patients
- Being found in the Elevators (area L6) or on the Second Floor without an escort

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VISITORS

1. **Maintain Tranquility.** Refrain from using bright lights or making loud noises.
2. **Respect the Healing Process.** Avoid mentioning the patient's past. Focus on the present and future.
3. **Follow Staff Orders.** Please comply with any instructions given by sanatorium staff to ensure the safety of our facility.
4. **Observe Restricted Areas.** Unauthorized entry into these areas is prohibited.
5. **Avoid Disruptive Behavior.** Any other actions deemed subversive by our staff may lead to repercussions.

THE LETHIC SERUM

A single vial of this serum—a deep, viscous purple liquid—can be loaded into a syringe or injector as an action or a Bonus Action. When it is injected into a Humanoid as a Utilize action, the target takes 2d6 Poison damage and must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target's Speed becomes 0, it has the Poisoned condition for 8 hours, and it has the Stunned condition while Poisoned in this way. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of every hour, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the target succeeds on the initial save, it has the Incapacitated condition for 1 hour. It repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Success or failure, for the next 24 hours, the target can't remember anything from before it was injected by the serum. Until the target's memories return, it has Disadvantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma checks.

If a Humanoid is injected with the serum again while already Poisoned by it, the target loses all of its memories permanently and suffers a mutation in 1d4 hours as determined by the Serum Effect table below.

Serum Effect

1d6	Mutation
1	The creature's insides transform into wormlike biology, which its body rejects, killing the creature instantly.
2–5	The creature becomes catatonic, gaining the Stunned condition for 1d4 days, after which it dies unless it is modified into a **Hospital Horror** by Doctor Belkin.
6	The creature transforms into a **Mutant Nurse**.

THE SOLUTION

Only an antidote can fully restore memories suppressed or removed by the Lethic Serum. A creature that has transformed into a mutant nurse can also be rejuvenated by the antidote, returning to its former self after a Long Rest.

To concoct the solution, its ingredients must be found and combined in a special alchemical process. Characters can learn of this antidote through clues found in the sanatorium, reading Lethica's serum diagrams in her quarters (area L19), or by succeeding on a DC 21 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) check after spending 1 hour analyzing a creature affected by the Lethic Serum. The antidote requires three ingredients:

MNEMONIC RESIDUE. A silvery lavender ash harvested from the Crematorium (area L18), formed only by the incineration of creatures infused with Lethic Serum

NOETIC EXTRACT. A pale viscous fluid siphoned from brains preserved in Monster Containment (area L22)

UNREFINED ICHOR. An amethyst-purple liquid produced by the White Worm, found in Lethica's Quarters (area L19), the Laboratory (area L27), or the Grotto of Tears

When all ingredients have been gathered, a character can craft the antidote in the Laboratory (area L27) or by using an Herbalism Kit or Alchemist's Supplies. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check or DC 13 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check produces 1 dose per 10 minutes of work and consumes the ingredients. Failure depletes one random ingredient but does not destroy the others.

As an action or a Bonus Action, the antidote can be loaded into a syringe or injector. It can be injected into a creature with a Utilize action.

LOCKDOWN

When Lockdown is triggered, Memory's Rest Sanatorium transforms into a prison designed to contain patients, alchemical secrets, and intruders alike. Lockdown ensures control is maintained and that any threat to Lethica's work is crushed.

At your discretion, Lockdown can be initiated whenever combat breaks out, a patient goes missing, a body is found, or a member of the staff suspects foul play. Covert panels are located every 20 feet along the corridors on both the First and Second Floor, which require a ward key to activate. These panels can be forced open and activated with a successful DC 25 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using Thieves' Tools. Hidden switches are also located in the Matron's Office (area L4) and Nurse Stations (area L5).

Receding Light. The glass tubes that illuminate Memory's Rest don't immediately blink off when Lockdown occurs. As the glowing steam within the tubes vents out of the facility and through the Engineering Room (area L20), its violet light rushes out of rooms over the course of 3 rounds and retreats down hallways as though being chased by the shadows (see "Creeping Dark" below).

Wailing Siren. As the light recedes, an ear-splitting alarm like a pained scream reverberates through the building and is loud enough to be heard across the entire island (see "Engineering Room" later in this chapter). It lasts 5 rounds before fading.

Time-out. When the orderlies hear the siren, unless there is an immediate threat, they prioritize sedating all patients on the First Floor with their Inject action (dealing no damage), rendering them Unconscious. Once this task is complete, they begin a thorough search through the sanatorium to find and eliminate danger and to communicate with senior staff like Nurse Godlee and Matron Lethica.

Doctor Belkin and his surgeons congregate in the Experiment Lab (area L26) and Monster Containment (area L22) to keep their experiments out of danger during Lockdown. Unless the source of danger is obvious, Hugo (**Serum Brute**) patrols the main hallways and is Hostile to any creature that isn't a staff member. Lethica calmly makes her way back to her Laboratory (area L27) in the event of a Lockdown to ensure her research is safe before returning to the sanatorium halls.

During Lockdown, Memory's Rest Sanatorium has the following features:

CREEPING DARK. Magic that suppresses sight fills the hospital, halving the range of all light sources and Darkvision.

SELF-ACTING LOCKS. Closed doors lock themselves, or lock automatically when they are closed. Elevators cease to function.

Only Lethica can authorize the end of Lockdown, which is typically performed by Nurse Godlee in the Engineering Room (area L20).

Subdued and Sedated. If the characters are overwhelmed in combat, they are not killed. They awaken in the Sedation Hall (area L16), revived with 1 Hit Point. Their equipment is replaced with hospital gowns, and they are surrounded by Lethica and her orderlies. This is a disastrous scenario that can mark the end of the campaign without clever negotiation, luck, or external help.

FIRST FLOOR

The First Floor of Memory's Rest Sanatorium serves as a "mask of legitimacy" to outsiders, offering genuine treatment to those who seek it and priming them for the Lethic Serum. The floor is divided into two wings: a Behavioral Ward for mental treatment and Convalescent Ward for physical recovery.

FIRST FLOOR LOCATIONS

The following areas are keyed to map 17.1.

L1: RECEPTION

First Floor

Two orderlies (**Mutant Nurses**) sit behind a desk, awaiting visitors. They pleasantly greet anyone who enters.

> The room is lit by faintly humming glass tubes that glow with pale violet light. A polished desk with a call bell sits in the center of the room, behind which hangs a large, full-length oil portrait of a veiled elf woman. The placard beneath reads "Matron Lethica." Two orderlies sit behind the desk wearing smooth and expressionless porcelain masks.
>
> One orderly stands rigidly, her hands folded neatly in front of her. "Welcome to Memory's Rest Sanatorium. Are you visiting a patient, or are you checking in?"

First Arrival. Characters are prompted to sign in at the front desk and explain their reason for visiting. They are also asked to review the posted Code of Conduct (see "Exploring the Sanatorium" above). If the characters claim to be visiting someone, the orderlies will confirm the named patient in their register before escorting the characters to the Visitation Room (area L2). Characters who claim they are here for treatment are escorted to the Examination Room (area L12).

As an Influence action, a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check can convince the staff they are here to see Matron Lethica and are taken to the Matron's Office (area L4).

L2: VISITATION ROOM

First Floor, Behavioral Ward

> Plush chairs with floral upholstery and low tables are arranged in neat pairs. A barred window faces an interior lawn where gowned patients wander aimlessly.

If the characters are escorted in, two **Mutant Nurses** leave them here and retrieve a named patient that can be found on the First Floor or grounds. They arrive minutes later with a patient in a wheelchair and a tea set with hot chamomile. The orderlies lock the door and stay to observe the interaction if they are Indifferent toward the characters.

Any interaction with a patient in the Visitation Room is the same:

- They gladly accept and drink the chamomile tea (which is harmless).
- The patient claims they are being well taken care of and are happy.
- The patient can remember very few details about their past life, including what brought them here (see "Lethic Serum" earlier in this chapter).
- They speak kindly of Matron Lethica, claiming her medicinal talents are truly miraculous.
- They emphasize often and repeatedly how important peace and quiet is for their health.
- They highly recommend a night's stay for wellness, if only to enjoy the calming and beautiful "moon porches."

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check determines that the patient truly can't remember who they are or how they got here, that they are scared, and that they don't want to upset the peace. A character who succeeds on this check by 5 or more understands the patient has hidden something within the Moon Porch room (area L3).

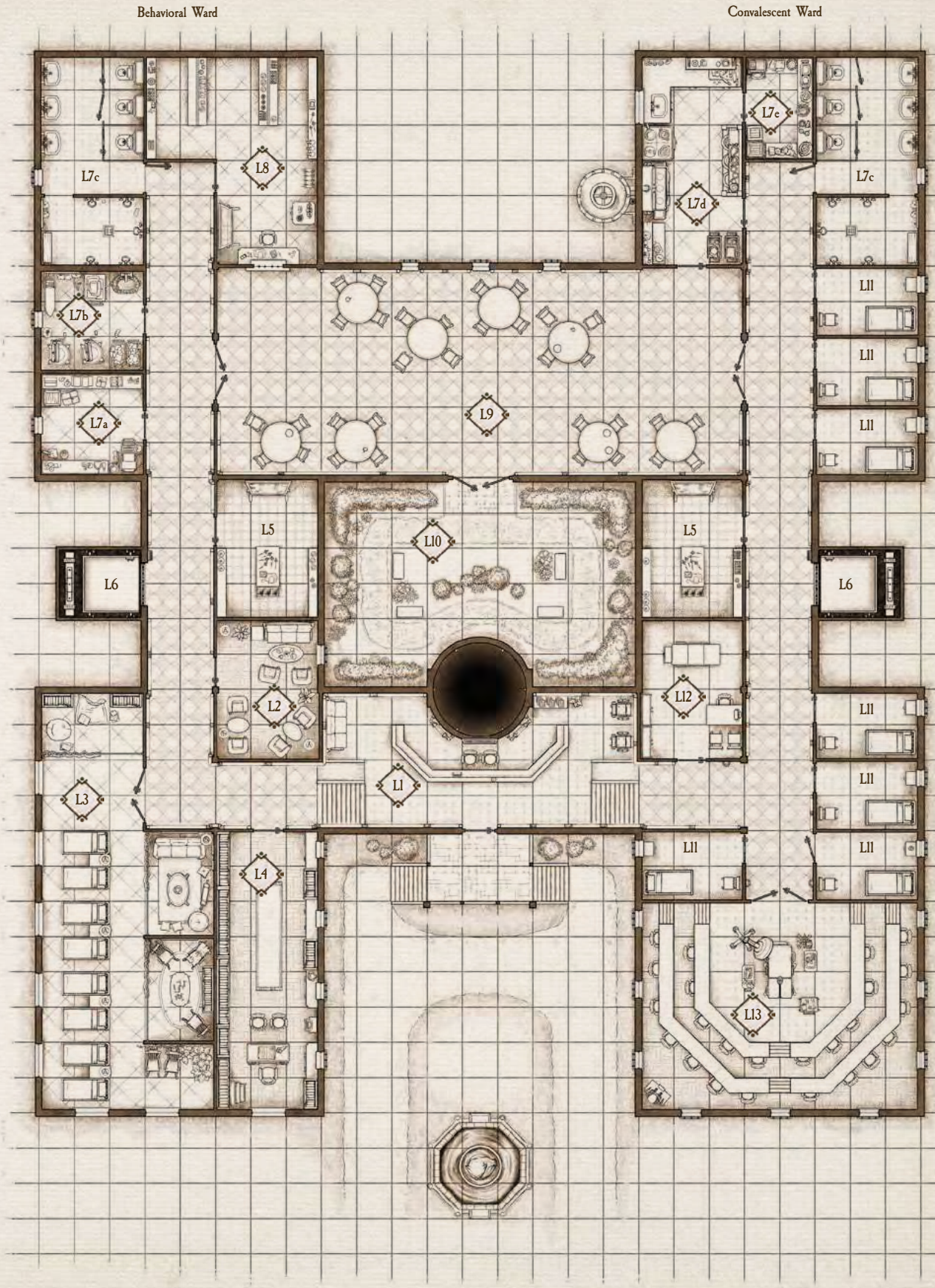
The orderlies interrupt when the patient finishes their tea, after they answer five questions, or if the conversation gets overly excited. They'll depart with the patient and ask the characters to kindly leave the Isle of Mourn or admit themselves (in the Matron's Office, area L4) for treatment if they'd like to stay the night.

L3: MOON PORCH

First Floor, Behavioral Ward

> Padded chairs and settees offer a view of the lake through tall glass panels that stretch from floor to ceiling. Dozens of simple cots are pushed against the walls, in many of which are sleeping patients. Small tables hold scattered picture books and incomplete puzzles as the calming sound of chimes drifts through the air.

This long, spacious room features many of the beds where most of the patients sleep, as well as a variety of amenities with the intended purpose of maximizing tranquility and mental wellbeing:



17.1 Memory's Rest Sanatorium (First Floor)

- Blankets and lap throws
- Aromatherapy candles
- Reading nooks
- Serenity chimes
- Posters featuring idyllic scenes and guided meditation exercises

Despite these amenities, the cluttered furnishings and overcrowded sleeping arrangements give the Moon Porch an air of oppressive claustrophobia despite the expansive view. 3d12 patients linger about the space, most of whom have recently been medicated at the Pharmacy (area L8) or Sedation Hall (area L16).

A Plea for Help. As a Search action, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check locates a note written by one of the patients (at your discretion) hidden within a picture book. In addition to writing their own name over and over, it reads:

> Don't forget. Don't take the meds. Don't let them take you upstairs. Don't forget. Don't let them know. Don't forget. Must get away! Don't forget. There must be an antidote! Find a way. Don't forget.

L4: MATRON'S OFFICE
First Floor, Behavioral Ward

> Every inch of this vast office is meticulously organized, illuminated by the steady glow of a violet-flamed candle. A broad polished desk at the far end dominates the space, lined with wooden shelves filled with records and medical texts. An elegant longcase clock ticks loudly, the only sound in the stifling quiet.

Characters may be escorted here by two **Mutant Nurses** if they've agreed to be admitted to the sanatorium or if they've convinced the staff there is an urgent administrative need only Matron Lethica can address.

Scrawled Note. A written record on the desk reads: "The Lethic Serum is a fragile triumph—efficacy tied to precise ratios and timing. Each patient endures its kiss differently. Refinements must continue."

When Matron Lethica arrives, read or paraphrase the following:

> The door opens soundlessly, and a shrouded woman in an intricate gown of black lace glides into the room. Her face, framed by silken silver hair, is partially obscured by a delicate mourning veil. She approaches the desk with measured steps, her voice low and melodious. "Welcome to Memory's Rest. I am Matron Lethica. It is my solemn honor to guide all who come here toward peace."
>
> Lethica does not sit; instead, she clasps her hands in front of her as if cradling some invisible weight. Her covered gaze tilts toward each of you, concealed yet undeniably aware. Closer now, you see her cheeks appear stained with tears. She speaks steadily and softly, like a secret shared in the dark: "Come now, let us see to your burdens. What brings you to my sanctuary?"

Matron Lethica (**The Weeping Widow**) sees any newcomers as potential new subjects for her experiments. She insists everyone can benefit from her hospitality, even those blessed with good health, and wholeheartedly welcomes any who wish to stay at Memory's Rest or agree to undergo treatment. Use the guidance below to steer the conversation with Matron Lethica:

- Lethica's goal is to get her guests to trust her by making them feel understood and probing for past trauma or grief she can offer to aid.
- She offers the characters a soothing Tonic (see "Pharmacy," area L8), which she is willing to drink herself.
- If asked about her patients' forgetfulness, Lethica explains it is a necessary step in their recovery, allowing them to heal without reliving their suffering.
- If asked about the Lethic Serum, Lethica explains she is hard at work developing many new treatments to help her patients.



The Widow's History. Lethica is willing to talk about her purpose and her past, including her betrothal, though she only refers to Marius Renathyr as "Sir Marius" or "my late husband." If a character mentions the Crimson Abbot or Father Renathyr, she falls silent before stifling a sob and changing the subject. If pressed, she commands her orderlies to enter and escort the characters off the premises. Afterwards, Lethica travels to her quarters (area L19), looking to her mementos for comfort.

Tour the Facility. If Lethica suspects the characters are trying to investigate her operation, she invites them on a guided tour. During the trip, she casually guides them through the Behavioral Ward, Common Room (area L9), and Convalescent Ward, answering any questions politely and succinctly, before leading them to the Recovery Rooms (area L11) where they can rest. She leaves to continue her research and informs Nurse Godlee that the characters must be monitored at all times.

Admitted to the Widow's Ward. Lethica's onboarding process for admitting the characters is as follows:

- She emphasizes that all patients must submit to treatment and to take their medication as instructed.
- She instructs Nurse Godlee or another orderly to escort the characters for examination (area L12) if they have not already been evaluated.
- She asks the characters to wear gowns found in their Recovery Rooms during their stay. Their equipment is to be left in their rooms or with Nurse Godlee.

If Combat Breaks Out. If attacked while in the Matron's Office, Lethica triggers Lockdown (see "Lockdown" earlier in this chapter) from a switch beneath her desk. The longcase clock gongs incessantly to alert nearby staff. Lethica fights if she must, and she attempts to escape to rally reinforcements, leaving the characters to fend for themselves.

L5: NURSE'S STATIONS

First Floor, Restricted Area

> Dim violet light filters through narrow glass tubes lining the ceiling of this compact office. Shelves hold neatly arranged medical supplies and meticulously folded uniforms. A single cabinet is set into a simple wooden desk.

The Nurse's Stations serve as a resting and resupply area for the orderlies, equipped to maintain their efficiency and composure.

Lockdown Preparation. Each Nurse's Station contains a discrete Lockdown switch that can be triggered in the event of an emergency (see "Lockdown" earlier in this chapter).

Orderly Recovery. A **Mutant Nurse** that enters a Nurse's Station on its turn or starts its turn there immediately recharges its Inject and Catalyst actions, and the nurse can take a Bonus Action to regain 1d8 Hit Points.

Notes penned by Lethica can be found in each station:

> "The masks are a kindness; do not remove them. The patients should believe they are cared for, not condemned. Maintain protocol. Stay paired at all times to prevent lapses in composure."

Disguises. Garb and masks worn by the orderlies can be pilfered here (and in areas L7a and L7b) and used as disguises. Characters in orderly disguises who succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check may freely enter any room or floor in the sanatorium without needing to make Dexterity (Stealth) checks to avoid unwanted attention, so long as they explore in pairs.

Treasure. The desk cabinet in each station is locked (DC 15 or ward key). Each contains two *Potions of Healing* and a note reading "1756," the code to the Elevator in the Behavioral Ward (area L6a). Amongst the spare uniforms are 2 Healer's Kits.

L6: ELEVATORS

First Floor, Second Floor, Restricted Area

> Heavy brass doors block the entryway to this metal service elevator. A small keypad beside the door features ten numeric buttons and a call switch. Within, a hand-lever juts out from the paneled interior. A plaque above reads: "Authorized Access Only."

The elevator doors on the First Floor refuse to open until the correct four-digit code has been punched into the keypad. The code for the lift in the Behavioral Ward (area L6a) is 1756, which can be discovered in the Nurse Stations (area L5). The code for the lift in the Convalescent Ward (area L6b) is 9536, which can be learned from a patient in the Common Room (area L9). Lethica and her staff know both codes.

On the Second Floor, no codes are required to open or close the doors to enter and operate the Elevator, though they refuse to function during Lockdown. Neither Elevator reaches the Grotto of Tears below.

The hand-lever can be flipped up or down as a Utilize action, making the Elevator ascend or descend when the doors are closed. It takes 1 minute to reach either floor.

L7: FUNCTIONAL ROOMS

First Floor

These stark, utilitarian rooms serve simple functions within the hospital.

- Area L7a: Storage (nonmedical tools and cleaning supplies)
- Area L7b: Laundry
- Area L7c: Washroom (shower stalls and lavatories)
- Area L7d: Kitchen
- Area L7e: Pantry

Disguises. Garb and masks worn by the orderlies can be pilfered in areas L7a and L7b and used as disguises (see area L5).

L8: PHARMACY
First Floor, Behavioral Ward, Restricted Area

> Shelves of unlabeled brown and green glass bottles and metal tins gleam under the sterile light. A faint, chemical odor pervades the room. Opposite the shelves, a small counter holds a mortar and pestle, a measuring scale, and a rack of four injection needles. A barred dispensary window connects the pharmacy to the common room.

The door to the Pharmacy is always kept locked. It contains multiple pharmaceuticals developed by Lethica, all of which are based on the Lethic Serum. Lethica and her orderlies know the contents of each bottle by sight. Characters who attempt to steal one of these medications find one at random, as determined by rolling on the Unlabeled Medicine table.

Treasure. The Pharmacy is also stocked with six *Potions of Healing* (greater) and two sets of Alchemist's Supplies, which are labelled. The four injection needles contain the same tranquilizer used by the **Mutant Nurses** when they make their Inject attack and has the same effect.

Unlabeled Medicine

1d6	Medicine	Effect
1	Tonic	A creature that ingests this medicine gains the benefit of a *Potion of Heroism* but imperceivably receives the effect of the *Bane* spell instead of *Bless* for the duration (the creature believes it is under the effect of the *Bless* spell until after its next attack roll or saving throw).
2	Sedative	A creature that ingests this medicine rolls its maximum number of Hit Dice. If the total rolled exceeds the creature's maximum Hit Points, it has the Unconscious condition for 1d8 hours, until it takes damage, or until someone uses an action to shake or slap it awake.
3	Hypnotic	A creature that ingests this medicine has the Charmed condition toward all creatures for 1d4 hours, or until it takes damage.
4	Relaxant	A creature that ingests this medicine has Disadvantage on Strength checks and saving throws for 1d4 hours or until it finishes a Short Rest.
5	Suppressant	A creature that ingests this medicine has the Poisoned condition for 1d4 hours, and it can't Concentrate on spells or similar effects while Poisoned in this way.
6	Euphoriant	A creature that ingests this medicine has the Poisoned condition for 1d4 hours, and it can't knowingly speak a lie, as if under the effect of a *Zone of Truth* spell, while Poisoned in this way.

A treatment schedule board hangs adjacent to the dispensary window next to which a file bin contains one of Lethica's records:

> "Godlee—Do not let a patient miss even one dosage. Keep me informed regarding stock amounts and frequency of deliveries from the laboratory."

L9: COMMON ROOM
First Floor

> The spacious common room is clean and orderly. Cushioned chairs and round tables huddle together in neat clusters, each with simple diversions. Patients sit in passive silence, pick at meals that require no cutlery, and line up at a small pharmacy window for their regimen.
>
> Orderlies keep watch and tend to the patients, guiding them to and from the tables, the corridors, or through wide-open doors leading to an inner courtyard.

Characters are free to interact with the patients here in the Common Room so long as they follow the Code of Conduct. The patients exhibit odd behaviors:

- A patient tears up pieces of a picture puzzle, reassembling the people portrayed in its scene into a single jumbled malformation.
- A patient repeats the same numbers over and over, but only when addressed: "6...Go!...9...5...3...6... Go!...9..." (this is the code to the Elevator in the Convalescent Ward, area L6b, which is 9536).
- A patient keeps a cloth napkin over their face and grows irritated if it is removed.

Nurse Godlee. When the characters enter, Nurse Godlee (**Mutant Nurse**) wastes no time introducing herself.

> You are approached by an orderly who has no mask. Instead, she wears a porcelain eyepatch over her left eye, painted with the image of an eye that matches her right. She watches the room with hawk-like precision, and her lips form a tight smile as she speaks with you. "I trust you've read our code of conduct. I am Nurse Godlee, second to Matron Lethica. It is my duty to make sure your stay at Memory's Rest is a pleasant and nourishing one. And you are...?"

Godlee keeps her tone composed and professional, knowing that she can be off-putting to newcomers. She emphasizes strict adherence to the sanatorium's rules and procedures to gauge if the characters are potential assets or threats. If asked about the Lethic Serum or their methods, Godlee deflects by stating that Lethica's treatment is revolutionary and tailored for each specific patient's needs.

Development. The conversation with Nurse Godlee is interrupted when a patient rises unsteadily, clutching a tray of food before pitching the tray against the wall with a loud crash. Godlee maintains her composure, directing a nearby orderly to take care of the mess right away as another orderly rushes to the pharmacy window. She advises the patient that accidents happen and that we must remember to control ourselves.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that Godlee's words are more than a reprimand—they are a warning. Godlee is carefully concealing her true severity in the presence of the characters. When the orderly returns, Godlee offers the patient two pills (a Hypnotic and Relaxant) from the Pharmacy (area L8) and waits until they have taken the medication. Afterwards, she wishes the characters well and excuses herself to log the incident at the Behavioral Ward's Nurse's Station.

L10: AIRING GROUNDS
First Floor

> The common room leads to an open yard, enclosed on all sides by the brick walls of the sanatorium. A circuitous gravel path winds through manicured hedges, stone benches, and flowering plants, made to resemble a palatial garden.

A solitary patient (Neutral, noncombatant human **Commoner**) sits at the far end of the Airing Grounds, facing the southern wall while plotting their means of escape. They have managed to avoid taking their pills and have crushed them into a fine powder. The patient attacks any creature that comes within 5 feet, covering the target in a cloud of pulverized medication. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer the effects of the Sedative, Relaxant, Suppressant, and Euphoriant from the Pharmacy (area L8).

The patient screams and takes an action on each of their turns to Dash in an attempt to flee the sanatorium. Roll Initiative!

Hugo Intervenes. When the patient screams, a louder bellow emanates from the Second Floor. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), Hugo (**Serum Brute**) vaults down into the garden through one of the inward-facing windows. If the patient is beyond Hugo's Blindsight, the other orderlies point the way. If Hugo gets within 10 feet of the patient, he grapples and subdues them easily. "Hugo will help," he sighs.

Hugo promptly carries the patient to a vacant Recovery Room (area L11d, the room with the Secret Entrance) and restrains them. The orderlies rush to calm any other patients who witnessed the incident to restore order, including the characters.

L11: RECOVERY ROOMS
First Floor, Convalescent Ward

> Each suite contains a narrow bed with crisp white sheets, a bedside table, and a metal chair tucked into the corner.

Most of the seven Recovery Rooms are occupied by current patients during sleeping hours. Nurse Godlee discreetly moves patients to the Second Floor Sedation Hall (area L16) if the characters admit themselves.

Patient Logs. File bins adjacent to each Recovery Room door contain written observations regarding each patient. Most of the information is mundane: name, diagnosis, chief complaints, and procedures performed. A character who spends 1 minute reading the logs and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces that the patients are receiving genuine therapies for physical and mental ailments. Succeeding on this check by 5 or more reveals this is only to prepare them for "further treatment" on the Second Floor.

Secret Entrance. One room (area L11d) is noticeably cooler than the others, containing a hidden hatch beneath a bed leading to the Grotto of Tears. A character who spends 1 minute scouring the room and succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a panel of floor that can be pulled up to reveal a magical stone slab marked with strange carvings.

These are eldritch glyphs from the ancient civilization of eel-like entities that lived in the lake and once worshiped the White Worm, now used by

Doctor Belkin to gain easy access to his object of devotion. When the proper incantation is uttered in Deep Speech, the sigils glow violet and the stone depresses, revealing a roughly hewn staircase that leads to the southern tunnel of the Grotto of Tears. This incantation can be learned from Doctor Belkin himself, by studying Belkin's notes in his office (area L23), or by casting *Identify* on the stone.

L12: EXAMINATION ROOM
First Floor, Convalescent Ward

> A single overhead lamp illuminates a metal examination table in the center of the room. Cabinets line the walls, their glass doors safeguarding medical tools and bandages.

When needed, Doctor Belkin (**Wormhost Surgeon**) takes the Elevator (area L6b) down from the Second Floor to provide medical exams to any who seek them out. Before he enters, he consumes a *Potion of Mind Reading* to better assess new potential candidates. He uses *Detect Thoughts* to learn what is in the mind of his subjects but does not probe deep enough to trigger a Wisdom saving throw so as not to raise suspicion.

> A gaunt figure enters the room wearing a blood-streaked smock and protective coverings on his hands and head. His eyes, visible between the scrub cap and fabric mask, stare out with detached curiosity. He folds his hands together and rasps, "Apologies for the mess. My name is Doctor Belkin, and I am pleased to assist with your health assessment."

Medical Assessment. Belkin performs a quick medical examination, speaking in a stately, academic tone. Using hints that he gathers from the surface thoughts of each character, he asks fitting questions. A few queries and their resulting prescription (see below) include:

- "Do you feel your strength waning?" (Tonic)
- "Do you find it difficult to quiet your thoughts? Perhaps trouble sleeping?" (Sedative)
- "Have you struggled with interpersonal interactions lately? Do you ever feel out of place?" (Hypnotic)
- "Have you experienced any tension in your muscles or unexplained fatigue?" (Relaxant)
- "Do you ever feel overwhelmed by your own thoughts or abilities?" (Suppressant)
- "Are you often weighed down by melancholy or negative thoughts?" (Euphoriant)

When each assessment is completed, Belkin offers characters with fewer than their maximum Hit Points a restorative, gesturing to one of a half-dozen syringes resting on a nearby tray. "It is perfectly safe and quite effective." As a Utilize action, the injection restores 2d4 + 2 Hit Points, grants an equal number of Temporary Hit Points, and makes the character slightly lightheaded (Disadvantage on Wisdom checks for 1d4 hours).

Based on the characters' responses, Belkin provides a prescription, instructing them to head to the Pharmacy (area L8) for further treatment. He returns to the Second Floor to continue his experiments when the examinations are completed.

L13: OPERATING THEATER
First Floor, Convalescent Ward

> The operating theater can seat up to twenty-four observers. Two sets of stairs rise to the raked seats surrounding a bright central pit. A pair of physicians watch in silent curiosity as the operating surgeon performs their work on an unconscious patient, narrating their technique as they progress.

When the characters arrive, a **Wormhost Surgeon** operates on an Unconscious patient (Neutral, human **Commoner** with 8 Hit Points) on the surgical table in the center of the room, their veins pulsing a strange violet color. Two additional wormhost surgeons sit in the stands. All three surgeons have caps and smocks that cover their mutations and modifications. The characters are invited to stay to observe the surgery.

Medical Emergency. The demonstrated operation begins successfully, albeit gruesomely, with the surgeons opening up the patient's abdomen to remove a pulsing purple growth. However, the surgery quickly goes wrong as the patient convulses and rapidly mutates, their skin turning pallid violet as a foot and an arm turn wormlike.

The patient lurches from the operating table and attacks the surgeons, who feign helplessness to not reveal their true form and power. This mutated patient uses **Flesh Golem** statistics but is an Aberration, has 50 Hit Points, lacks the Lightning Absorption feature, and its Slam attacks deal an extra 1d4 Psychic damage.

If the characters kill the patient or knock them out, the surgeons apologize for the mishap and wheel them to the elevator to be added to Doctor Belkin's experimental amalgam in the Experiment Lab (area L26). If the characters leave the Operating Theater without dealing with the mutated patient, the surgeons subdue the patient and take them to Monster Containment (area L22).



SECOND FLOOR

The Second Floor of Memory's Rest veils the truth of Matron Lethica's work from the world, where suffering and horrific mutations are ignored in the name of "healing." Like the First Floor, it is divided into two wings: a Processing Wing where the Lethic Serum is tested and an Experimental Wing where those who survive its effects are contained and observed. The entire Second Floor is a Restricted area.

SECOND FLOOR LOCATIONS

The following areas are keyed to map 17.2.

L14: ORDERLIES' APARTMENTS
Second Floor, Processing Wing

The orderlies' apartments are cramped with narrow cots covered in thin blankets. There are no decorations, save for several full-length wall mirrors.

Each apartment houses a single **Mutant Nurse** at a given time. They sit or stand idly until called to their duties or disturbed by intruders. Characters can sneak through the corridor past the orderlies with a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If alerted, they are Hostile toward anyone on the Second Floor who isn't being escorted by a staff member and will attempt to subdue any intruders with Lethic Serum.

L15: RESTRAINING ROOM
Second Floor, Processing Wing

A heavy metal chair with thick leather straps is bolted firmly to the floor of this room. Restraints, nearly wrenched from their iron sockets, dangle ominously. Tables and shelves holding scalpels, rusted calipers, and a sinister-looking corkscrew-shaped tool surround the table.

You can hear the ragged breathing of the patient bound to the chair, their veins faintly glowing violet. They slump in the chair, barely conscious, their head lolling to one side. Their voice, hoarse with strain, cracks the stillness, "Please... stop..."

Serum-Induced Mutation. The patient strapped to the chair is undergoing the effects of a second dose of Lethic Serum (see "The Lethic Serum" earlier in this chapter) and has been left alone and restrained until the transformation is complete. They react to the presence of other creatures in the room. "H-help me... it's in me... burning...!" Their shouting threatens to attract attention from nearby staff unless they are quickly calmed or left alone. If calmed, the patient explains they have no recollection of who they are.

Nearby, a handwritten log reads:

> Godlee—Administered second dose of Lethic Serum. This new compound promises to produce more stable results, but we must be patient to learn its outcome. Heightened emotional states may affect the results. Leave them here alone.
>
> Sidenote—the ash in the cremator has begun to exhibit unusual properties. It resists dispersal, almost as though it retains a memory of the forms it once composed. I suspect the residue may be a result of traces of the serum in the bodies. Collect samples for further study.

A character who examines the patient and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Arcana) check learns exactly how much time remains before the patient transforms. The patient has 1d4 hours remaining. Only the antidote to the Lethic Serum (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter), a *Wish* spell, or the patient's death can halt the transformation.

L16: SEDATION HALL
Second Floor, Processing Wing

> Beds in stark hospital-white sheets line the walls of this wide, pale gray room. Deathly-still patients in hospital gowns breathe shallowly in each bed, separated only by thin curtains. They don't seem to mind the lack of privacy.

Patients. Three of the twelve beds in this room are occupied by a patient (Neutral, human noncombatant **Commoners**). All patients here are suffering the immediate effects of the Lethic Serum and are Stunned until the effects wear off (see "The Lethic Serum" earlier in this chapter). While in this condition, they can only move their heads, their eyes don't focus, and their speech is languid and slurred. They have no desires, no memory of their past, and are perfectly tranquil. They do not resist being moved.

Waking the Afflicted. Not all the patients receive the Lethic Serum at the same time. They are kept in this state until they are ready to be moved back to the First Floor or the next trial is ready (see area L26, Experiment Lab). A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines if a patient is nearing the end of their sedation and can be woken without requiring *Lesser Restoration* or similar magic, at your discretion.

Roll 1d6 if a patient is woken. On a roll of 1 or 2, the patient jerks back into consciousness and begins screaming for help, feebly attacking the characters before they realize what is happening. If the nearby orderlies are not alerted by screaming, the patient can share what they can recall in hushed whispers.

All woken patients understand the danger they are in and wish to leave as soon as possible, though they remain in poor condition from the effects of the Lethic Serum.

L17: GODLEE'S QUARTERS
Second Floor, Processing Wing

> The room is impeccably ordered. Every item is placed deliberately. A narrow desk holds stacked ledgers beside a vase of tidy black irises. A compact bed occupies the corner, its linens tucked with military precision.

Nurse Sarah Godlee (**Mutant Nurse**) lives here in comfort, sleeping on a soft mattress with fine linen sheets. She refreshes her vase of irises every Twilight Hour while reviewing and updating her comprehensive patient registry, which is used as the master ledger in the sanatorium.

If Nurse Godlee sees the characters as useful for attempting to pull Matron Lethica out of her decades-long grief over her lost husband, she'll bring the characters here to speak in private (see "Sarah Godlee and the Orderlies" earlier in this chapter). As an Influence action, a character can earn her trust with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check.

If they do, she'll discreetly instruct the orderlies to look the other way as the characters explore the sanatorium. She also confides that Lethica is easily pained when confronted by mementos of her past, which can be found in Lethica's Quarters (area L19), wishing for them to be destroyed so they no longer torture her employer.

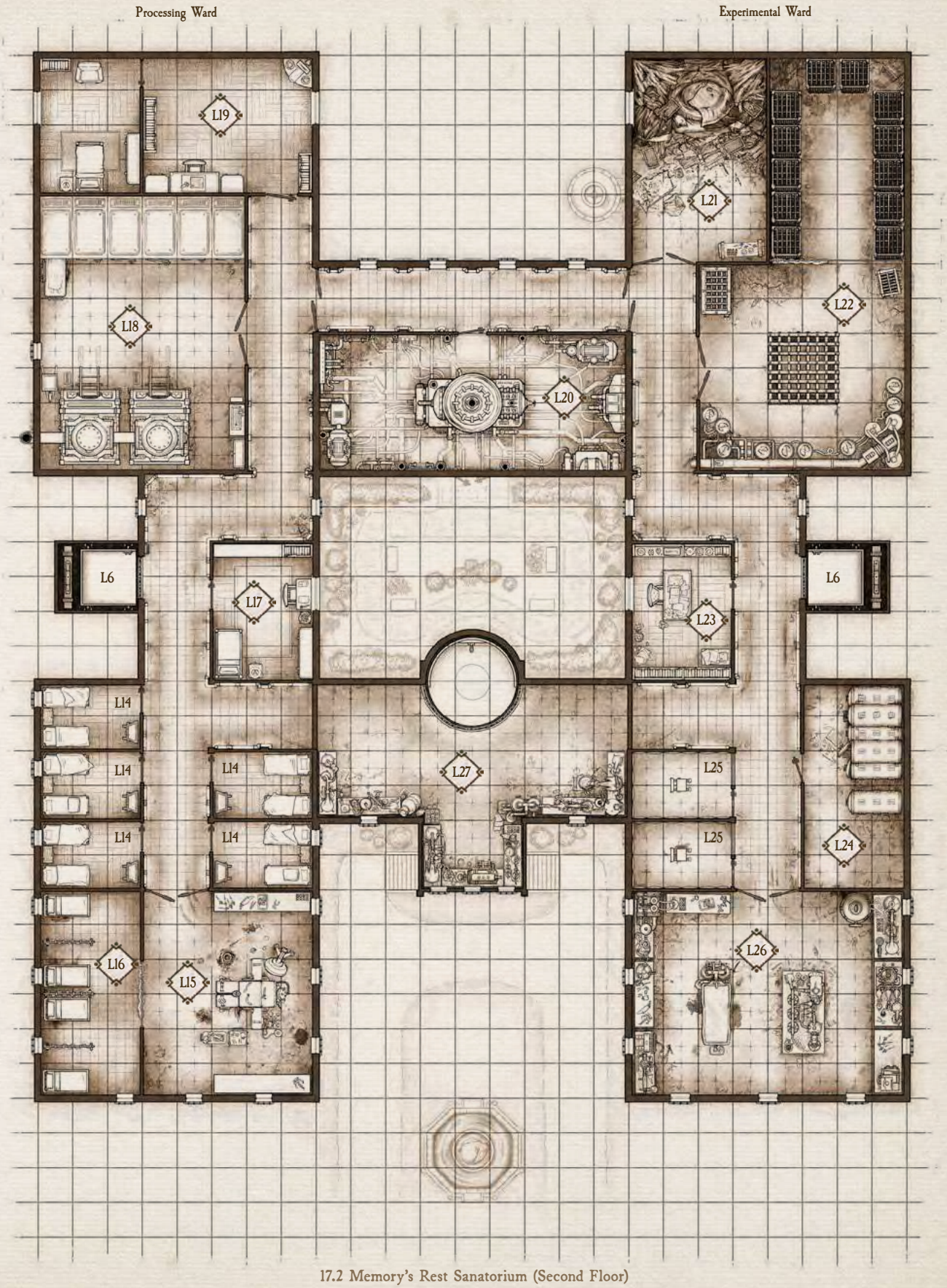
Treasure. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching the room uncovers Godlee's stash of valuables hidden beneath her bed:

- A *Bead of Force*
- A *Wand of Magic Missiles*
- A tarnished brass *Ring of Water Walking*
- A Diplomat's Pack
- A variety of elegant jewelry totaling 250 GP
- A small diary showcasing Godlee's admiration for and obsession with Matron Lethica, revealing that the way to enter her personal Laboratory (area L27) is to inject a dose of Lethic Serum into the eye of the owl painted on the wall of the second floor hallway.

L18: CREMATORIUM
Second Floor, Processing Wing



> Pushing through the doors, you are hit with the scent of smoke and charred remains. One side of this room houses two massive cremators, their brick interiors blackened from frequent use. Opposite, an array of square-doored lockers line the wall.



17.2 Memory's Rest Sanatorium (Second Floor)



Morgue Cabinets. Each of the twelve cabinets contains a corpse in various stages of decay, many with telltale signs of Lethic Serum's influence. Each body burned in the crematorium (which takes 3 hours) produces enough Mnemonic Residue to craft 1 dose of antidote solution (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter). A character who searches the lockers and succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a ward key that was forgotten on the chest of a corpse.

Rekindled Recollections. The gray ashes within the furnace of the crematorium glint with specks of purple. This is Mnemonic Residue, enough to produce 3 antidotes.

To collect the residue, a character can use an appropriate set of tools (such as a spoon from Cook's Utensils) to scoop the delicate powder into a container.

L19: Lethica's Quarters
Second Floor

> A large desk occupies one side of this room, its surface covered with alchemical notes and diagrams. The sparse furnishings suggest a place of work rather than welcome, with no chairs for visitors and shelves lined with neatly ordered books.
>
> Beyond a narrow doorway lies a small, practical bedroom decorated in muted hues of grays, blacks, and purples.

The Weeping Widow spends much of her time in her chambers when she isn't working in her Laboratory (area L27) or below the sanatorium (see "Grotto of Tears" later in this chapter).

Serum Diagrams. A character who spends 1 minute examining the diagrams and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals countless revisions of the Lethic Serum and that it is distilled from the ichor of a being Lethica refers to as the White Worm. If they succeed on the check by 5 or more, the character also deduces how to concoct an antidote that cures a Humanoid of all ill effects of the serum (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter).

Treasured Memories. A shrine in one corner contains melancholic mementos of Lethica's life before she came to Memory's Rest:

- A portrait of Lethica and Marius Renathyr, painted on the night they were wed
- Her silver-and-purple-garnet betrothal ring—a *Ring of Protection*
- A blood-stained knight's tabard bearing heraldry depicting a rising sun
- A weathered parchment bearing a faded sonnet of undying love
- A small phial of Unrefined Ichor (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter)

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The High Priestess* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Mask of Lethica Nightborne* can be found among the mementos in the shrine.

L20: ENGINEERING ROOM
Second Floor

> The engineering room sprawls with metal pipes and violet-glass conduits that extend across the space, reaching the floor, walls, and ceiling. The room hums softly, while a central cylindrical unit hisses and wheezes. Its surface is a jumble of levers, switches, pressure gauges, and valves.

The Engineering Room powers all of the fluorescent lights that run throughout Memory's Rest Sanatorium. The central unit maintains the pressure of condensed steam produced from heating the glowing waters of the Grotto of Tears. Unbeknownst even to Lethica, the tubes behave like alchemical receptacles and have been absorbing painful memories for years.

Reset Protocol. When Lockdown is triggered, the pressurized steam within the sanatorium's bulbs is suddenly released through a vent mounted on the roof which produces a deafening mournful wail like a siren. Violet fog settles over the Isle of Mourn as the sound fades. Restoring light to the sanatorium requires re-engaging the central unit by turning its lever switch to the "ON" position as a Utilize action, which refills the tubes with illumination. The system can also be turned off from here by switching the same lever to "OFF," which triggers Lockdown.

Memory Overflow. Tampering with or breaking the central unit of the Engineering Room makes Lockdown impossible (the steam slowly dissipates over the next 24 hours), but doing so unleashes what has been gestating within; a viscous, violet liquid oozes forth from the machinery to form a **Gibbering Mouther**. The voices of a thousand horrid memories babble from the gurgling sludge, which lurches forward and attempts to absorb the nearest creature. Roll Initiative! On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), and again for 1d4 more rounds thereafter, another gibbering mouther appears in the Engineering Room and attacks any creature other than gibbering mouthers it encounters.

L21: HUGO'S QUARTERS
Second Floor

> At first, this room feels more like the den of an animal than a living space. Nearly a quarter of the area is covered in a wide unkempt woven mat, surrounded by scattered trays bearing scraps of food and empty bowls. A high shelf on one side is crowded with vials and injectors.

Treasure. 8 feet up from the floor, a hardy shelf supports a line of vials alongside oversized syringes, though only three are full. The vials contain supplementary stabilizer compounds to help Hugo (**Serum Brute**) manage symptoms caused by his alchemical infusions:

- Numbing Agent (*Stoneskin*)
- Alkaline Stabilizer (*Protection from Energy*, Acid)
- Adrenal Stimulant (*Enhance Ability*, Strength)

As an action or a Bonus Action, a vial can be loaded into an injector. It can then be injected into a creature with a Utilize action to grant it the effect of the corresponding spell (no Concentration required), which deals 1d4 Piercing damage to the target that can't be reduced or prevented in any way. Attempting to extract or collect the compounds without using an injector destroys a vial's contents.

Experimental Procedure File. A character who explores the room and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a yellowing file folder tucked beneath one side of the woven bed. It includes a detailed record of Hugo's surgeries and transformation (see "Hugo, the First Experiment" earlier in this chapter), including notes describing the nature of his curse and dependency on it.

L22: MONSTER CONTAINMENT
Second Floor, Experimental Wing

> A reinforced glass chamber occupies the center of the room, its walls fogged with condensation. Against a far wall, rows of oversized jars contain floating brains suspended in luminescent fluid. Below the jars is a sign that reads: "Do not disturb." A curtain at the back of the chamber runs the full length of the room, mounted on tracks that allow it to slide open.

Don't Tap the Glass. The reinforced glass chamber holds a fleshy abomination (use **Otyugh** stat block), its misshapen form blurred through the condensation, pacing in restless agitation. It occasionally presses its body against the glass as if testing the containment. A large, empty sipper bottle hangs from the top of the chamber, its nozzle bent and stained with a fluorescent violet residue. A small panel set into the wall beside the chamber holds the mechanism for opening the glass door. The smaller cages concealed by the curtain are empty.

Abnormal Brains. The brains within these jars once belonged to particularly intelligent patients. Doctor Belkin discovered that if he removed the brains of those patients and siphoned the thoughts of their active minds, he was able to collect a pale concentrate, called Noetic Extract, which he uses to nourish horrors like the one in the containment chamber. It is also a key component in producing an antidote to the Lethic Serum (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter).

Each active brain jar produces enough Noetic Extract for 1 dose of the antidote solution in a 24-hour period. These are automatically collected and dispensed in sealed vials by the mechanisms at the base of each jar. 1d6 vials of Noetic Extract are ready to be extracted when the characters arrive.

L23: BELKIN'S OFFICE
Second Floor, Experimental Wing

> Shelves line the walls, crowded with preservation vessels containing specimens suspended in cloudy fluid. A high-backed chair stands behind a broad steel desk, its surface a chaos of open journals, anatomical sketches, and surgical diagrams.

Doctor Belkin (**Wormhost Surgeon**) spends his time here when not experimenting or performing surgeries.

Dormant Larvae. A jar of parasitic worms suspended in fluid rests on the desk. They awaken and attack any nearby living creature if the jar is opened or broken (use the **Swarm of Venomous Snakes** stat block, dealing Psychic damage instead of Poison).

Anatomist's Journal. A character who spends 1 minute studying Belkin's notes and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) check uncovers the following:

- A log entry describing Belkin's frustration that he has been unable to quell the experiments' (**Hospital Horrors**) fear of needles and other sharp implements
- A sketch of the Grotto of Tears, including the White Worm suspended with chains and tubes.
- Exploration logs of the caverns beneath the hospital and the ancient ruins found within, noting that Matron Lethica herself first showed him the secrets of the White Worm there (see "Eater of Memory" earlier in this chapter)
- A sketch of an eel-like entity—noted to have been the species of the ruined civilization that first worshiped the White Worm—and attempts to decipher their language
- The incantation to activate the sigils that opens the secret passage to the Grotto of Tears from one of the Recovery Rooms (area L11d). Characters who can speak Deep Speech can commit it to memory by spending 1 minute reading it. Otherwise, a character must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check to learn it.

L24: SURGEONS' ROOMS
Second Floor, Experimental Wing

> This cramped room is unsettlingly damp and completely unlit. Large, metal pods line every wall, each one slick with a slimy sheen that has a faint, violet hue.

There are six pods total in the room, three of which are occupied by sleeping **Wormhost Surgeons**. They wake up if disturbed by a loud noise or additional source of light.

Vision of the White Worm. Roll 1d4 if an unoccupied pod is searched. On a 1, parasitic worms spill free from the pod and attack any creature that is not a surgeon (use the **Swarm of Venomous Snakes** stat block, which deals Psychic damage instead of Poison). A creature that searches a pod comes in contact with the gel that coats its interior, and for 10 minutes, the creature can also see through the many eyes of the White Worm in the Grotto of Tears below, as per the *Clairvoyance* spell (no Concentration required, sight only).

L25: OBSERVATION CHAMBERS
Second Floor, Experimental Wing

> Two glass-walled chambers stand side by side, their interiors stark and sterile. The first chamber is empty save for a single chair bolted to the tiled floor, gleaming under the violet glow of the tubes overhead. The second chamber's chair is empty, but a patient cowers in the far corner of the room.

Both doors to the chamber are locked, and the walls and doors facing the corridor are reinforced glass.

Chamber One. As a Search action, a character who examines the chamber finds scratches etched into the floor tiles. The markings form a crude warning: "It hungers for memory."

Chamber Two. The cowering patient (Neutral, human noncombatant **Commoner**) is at the precipice of transformation into a **Wormhost Surgeon**; their exposed brain is visibly agitated with parasitic worms. For the next 1d8 hours, the patient has the Stunned condition and their Speed is 0, after which the transformation completes. When another creature enters the chamber, the patient babbles incoherently, accelerating the transformation to 10 minutes.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the parasitic worms can be destroyed without harming the patient by dealing Psychic damage (HP 10, with a damage threshold of 10) or drawn out by injecting Lethic Serum (which also destroys the worms).

If saved, the patient has no recollection of who they once were, but they remembers being selected for this transformation after inadvertently seeing Doctor Belkin use a hidden passage in one of the Recovery Rooms (area L11d).

L26: EXPERIMENT LAB
Second Floor, Experimental Wing

> A heavy metal door conceals a haphazard workshop that reeks of antiseptic and charred flesh. Bloodied instruments and organ jars clutter every surface. At the center of the room, an operating table is shrouded by a stained linen sheet that is malformed by the mass beneath it.

If Doctor Belkin (**Wormhost Surgeon**) is present when the characters enter, he is hunched over a glowing jar on one desk. It contains a unique blend of writhing alien tissues and serums that exhibit properties that fascinate Belkin.

Belkin doesn't immediately consider the characters a threat and is Indifferent toward them. Unless he knows they have endangered his experiments or if Lockdown is in effect, he sees their arrival as an opportunity.

The Experiment. Doctor Belkin is preparing to conduct an experiment to produce his finest creation yet, which he hopes will serve as the next stage of evolution to be closer in nature to the White Worm. The abomination, a fused amalgam of former mutated patients, is concealed beneath a sheet on the operating table. He believes that the characters would serve as an ideal first combat test for this creature—and a satisfactory meal should the abomination destroy them.

Belkin's Offer. Belkin is always in search of new pupils and worshipers of the White Worm. Before unleashing his experiment, he offers them the chance to see truth beyond the reality of Druskenvald and witness the perfection of form. Characters who accept can undergo a 1 hour procedure that transforms them into a **Wormhost Surgeon**.

The Creation Rises. If any characters refuse the offer, attack the doctor, or speak ill of the White Worm, Doctor Belkin flips the switch to bring his horrific creation to life, which attacks the characters until it is destroyed. This vile amalgam of mutant and alien flesh uses the **Chimera** stat block, but it is an Aberration and its Fire Breath deals Psychic damage. Belkin chooses to simply observe, but he joins the battle if attacked or when the creature is Bloodied.

Undulating Tissue. If the contents of the glowing jar that Doctor Belkin was studying is released, it morphs into a **Nameless Thing** familiar and immediately bonds with the first creature that speaks after it emerges.

Treasure. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the following items tucked away in corners and cabinets:

- A canister labelled "pheromones" (a *Philter of Love*)
- Four *Potions of Healing* (greater)
- A sealed vial of Lethic Serum

L27: LABORATORY

Second Floor, Experimental Wing

Both entrances to the Laboratory are concealed behind smooth walls, each bearing a mural depicting a barn owl roosting in a weeping willow. As a Search action, a character who examines one of the murals and succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check spies that one of the owl's eyes has a small hole cut into the wall, ringed in metal. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character notes traces of dried purple fluid (Lethic Serum).

To enter the Laboratory, a full dose of Lethic Serum must be injected into this eye, causing the wall itself to move back on a mechanical arm, revealing the lab beyond. Only Matron Lethica and Nurse Godlee know this fact.

When the characters enter the Laboratory, read or paraphrase the following:

> You enter an alchemical laboratory and are met with a symphony of bubbling, dripping, and hissing. Everywhere you turn, an arcane apparatus can be found: Glass vials filled with glowing liquids twist into each other. Rows of stoppered flasks shimmer near flickering gas flames. A lattice of brass tubing snakes across the ceiling, feeding into various tanks and reservoirs.
>
> A window runs the length of the far wall, offering a partial view of the inner courtyard below. Facing the window is a broad elevator platform, constructed from sturdy metal beams and reinforced wood slats.

Alchemical Chaos. The lab is crowded with workbenches, each covered in an assortment of alchemical experiments and processes. Only Lethica knows how to find exactly what she is looking for in this disorganized space. For each minute spent searching the Laboratory, an item is found as determined by the Laboratory Item table, with a maximum of ten items that can be found.

Laboratory Item

1d4	Item
1	A random medication (see area L8)
2	A jar of dormant larvae (see area L23)
3	A random stabilizer (see area L21)
4	A vial of Lethic Serum (see "The Lethic Serum" earlier in this chapter)

A character looking for a specific item can also make a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check to try and find it within the clutter.

Distilled Memory. Dozens of crystal decanters containing glowing, violet-colored liquid can be found scattered throughout the Laboratory—Unrefined Ichor, harvested directly from the White Worm. Each container is labeled with a date and batch number. The substance is a key component in the antidote solution (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter).

Plunge Platform. The elevator platform on one side of the Laboratory descends to the Grotto of Tears 150 feet below. A lever to activate the lift juts out from the floor adjacent the platform. The descent takes 5 minutes, during which the platform creaks and groans. The shaft is pitch dark, with walls slick from the moisture of the waters below.

The Widow's Wile. In the corner of the Laboratory stands a mesmerizing orb of glass cradled on a pedestal, its surface alive with arcs of purple lightning. A creature that touches the orb experiences no ill effect and finds the orb cannot be moved. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices a subtle foot lever at the bottom of the pedestal. When the foot lever is pressed, all creatures within the Laboratory not touching the orb are immediately teleported to the Grotto of Tears (see below).

If Matron Lethica (**The Weeping Widow**) finds intruders in her Laboratory, she triggers this device the moment she deems them threatening. Once she has sent them below, she retrieves Hugo (**Serum Brute**) and patiently rides the elevator platform down to face them herself.

THE GROTTO OF TEARS

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters arrived by means of the "Widow's Wile" device (area L27), and then read the subsequent description:

> Your vision suddenly blurs. The laboratory dissolves around you as if pulled apart by unseen hands. A rushing sensation fills your ears before clarity returns. You now stand on uneven stone, surrounded by the cold glow of an unfamiliar cavern.

Only read the following if the characters reach the Grotto of Tears by elevator lift or secret passage:

> An indescribable smell fills this grotto that defies the laws of nature, its stone walls ridged and folded like brain matter. A narrow stone bridge extends across the bubbling, phosphorescent waters of subterranean pools, leading to a circular platform glowing in an otherworldly violet hue.
>
> Above the platform hangs an enormous alien creature that can only be described as a pallid, bloated grub suspended by metal chains. Numerous tubes run from its punctured flesh to vats that line the cavern, pumping a grotesque violet substance that oozes unlike any known in the natural world. Globs of this eldritch gore drips onto the stone below.

This chamber is the torturous home of **The White Worm**, a being of unknowable power (see "Eater of Memory" earlier in this chapter). In this weakened state, it can take no actions or Reactions, and its Speed is 0. Matron Lethica's intense, alien psychic bond with the worm protects the lifeform and its restraints from all damage. If attacked or engaged, it lets out a piercing shriek that alerts Lethica to the presence of intruders.

GROTTO OF TEARS FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, the grotto has the following features:

BLOOD OF THE WORM. The violet fluid dripping from the punctured worm is Unrefined Ichor, a key component in the antidote solution (see "The Solution" earlier in this chapter).

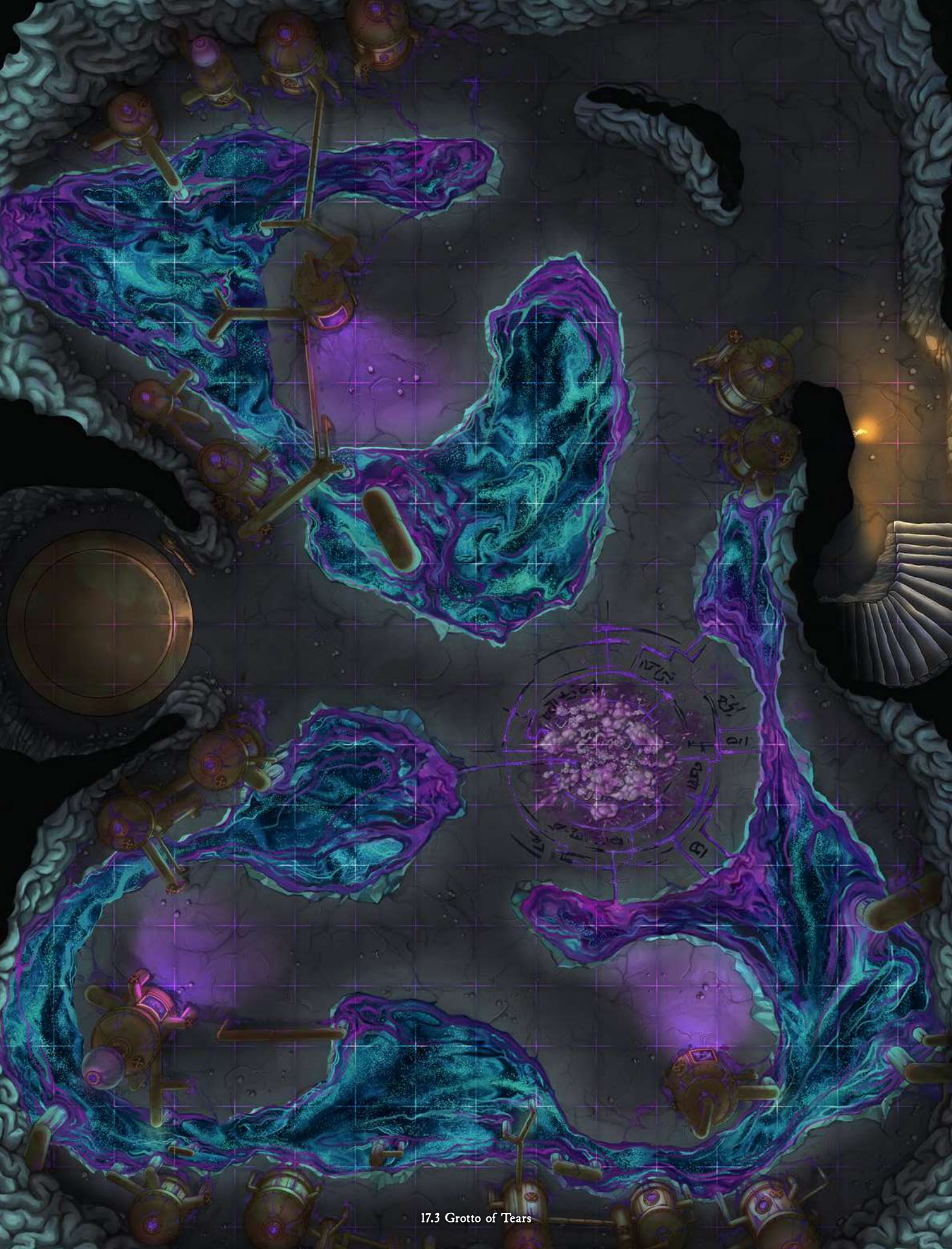
CEILINGS AND WALLS. The cavern ceiling is 40 feet high. The walls of the cavern are natural stone worn to evoke wrinkled gray matter.

LIGHTING. Water in this area glows an ethereal, almost fluorescent purple, flooding the area with Bright Light.

MUTATION TANKS. The most horrifically mutated patients are kept in glass tanks of highly distilled Lethic Serum after undergoing agonizing body modification to turn each of them into a **Hospital Horror**. These enhanced killers can be released by Matron Lethica to aid her in combat (see "The Chemical Evolution" later in this chapter).

PLUNGE PLATFORM. A lever in the room's northern chamber activates the elevator to the Laboratory (area L27). The elevator takes 5 minutes to ascend.

SERUM FERMENTATION VATS. A series of 10-foot-tall, verdigrised copper vats line the walls and are filled with worm organs, blood, tissue, and chemicals. Spidery lengths of copper pipe connect them to distillation boxes, and run into the waters of the grotto. As a Study action, a character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana, Investigation, or Nature) check can deduce that Matron Lethica is seeking to poison the valley's water supply with Lethic Serum. These vats are highly pressurized and can be used in combat (see "The Chemical Evolution" later in this chapter).



17.3 Grotto of Tears

THE CHEMICAL EVOLUTION

This section assumes the characters confront **The Weeping Widow** in the Grotto of Tears (map 17.3).

If Lethica or Hugo are missing any Hit Points at the start of this encounter, they are restored to full Hit Points now. If Hugo was killed earlier during this adventure but not destroyed, he joins Lethica here now, revived by her alchemy.

THE WHITE WORM'S INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the White Worm unleashes one of the following psionic effects; the worm can't use the same option two rounds in a row:

HOMEOSTASIS. One condition or spell of up to level 3 affecting Lethica ends.

METABOLIC RECONSTRUCTION. Lethica gains 10 Temporary Hit Points.

PSIONIC GUIDANCE. Lethica has Advantage on attack rolls until Initiative count 20 on the following round.

PHASE 1: FIRST INCISION

When Matron Lethica ambushes—or is ambushed by—the characters, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Weeping Widow stands beside her hulking ward and quickly loads her syringe.
>
> "You threaten my work. You would put a stop to bringing peaceful bliss to all of Wickermoor Hollow. Enough. You are beyond saving... Hugo. Send these fools into oblivion."

Matron Lethica (**The Weeping Widow**) fights with all her cunning to annihilate her enemies. She and Hugo (**Serum Brute**) act on the same Initiative. At the beginning of combat, Lethica injects Hugo with a serum that increases his size to Huge for 24 hours, then Hugo picks her up and places her on his back. She firmly grips his chain leash throughout the fight.

Under Pressure. Spaces occupied by pipes and vats are Difficult Terrain. A creature in the same space as a pipe or a vat gains two effects:

- It has Half Cover.
- If an attack against the creature misses, the attack targets the pipe or vat instead.

If a copper pipe or vat (AC 13; HP 10; Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage) is destroyed, scalding steam and liquid sprays out. Creatures within a 10-foot Emanation originating from the broken pipe or vat must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) Acid damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Additionally, the area within the Emanation is Heavily Obscured with steam for 1 minute, or until dispersed by a strong wind.

PHASE 2: DESPERATE MEASURES

When Lethica is Bloodied, she despairs and becomes willing to sacrifice her designs to survive. She commands the three **Hospital Horrors** to burst free from their mutation tanks and come to her aid. They act on Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) and attack foes farthest from Lethica.

On her turn, if Hugo has not been Bloodied, Lethica pulls at the leash that tethers her to Hugo, which opens his cursed eyes to the world and activates his Unleashed Eyes trait.

INTO OBLIVION

When Matron Lethica is reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

> Matron Lethica lets out a shuddering wail as thick, black tears run down her face. Her composure breaks, and in her final moments, the widow truly weeps. Her frail form collapses as her violet blood pools beneath her.
>
> A piercing, alien shriek fills the space as the grotto rumbles and the enormous white worm overhead strains against its restraints. With a creaking and crashing, the chains break from the stone, and the colossal creature plunges into the fluorescent waters below, disappearing from sight with supernatural speed.

Alien Unchained. With Lethica's psychic connection to the worm now broken, its reality-bending restraints shatter, and it escapes to the depths of Moonsong Lake to recover from its torture and imprisonment, gaining in strength until it must feed once more (see chapter 26).

Hugo's Redemption. If Hugo still lives, he seeks immediate vengeance against those that destroyed Lethica. His veins pump with alchemical compounds and the sudden grief of losing his matron, but he can still be saved. As an Influence action, a character can attempt to calm Hugo and must make a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check (with Advantage if they deal no damage to Hugo on their turn). On a success, Hugo begins to calm, and the DC for subsequent checks is reduced by 3. After three successful checks, Hugo becomes Indifferent and breaks down into a sobbing mass of profound grief.

Level Up. The characters reach level 8, if they are still level 7, when they defeat Matron Lethica.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *Temperance* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Veil of the Weeping Widow* can be pulled off the cold, lifeless face of Matron Lethica.

CONCLUSION: UNFORGETTABLE HORRORS

Killing Matron Lethica puts an end to her vile experiments for good. Her absence, however, leaves Memory's Rest Sanatorium poised on a fragile edge.

THE WIDOW'S WAKE

Without the presence of Matron Lethica, Nurse Godlee (if she lives) is devastated, but still craves control over all who remain. However, she quickly runs out of Lethic Serum and doesn't know how to brew more. She soon leaves with any living orderlies that still obey her orders, scheming to rebuild her influence.

If Doctor Belkin lives, he becomes obsessed with the White Worm's secrets and refuses to leave the Isle of Mourn. If forced to leave the sanatorium, he escapes with the surgeons to the caves below—leaving no trace of his work—and seeks the White Worm's lair deep within Moonsong Lake.

The surviving patients are left in a delicate condition, their minds dulled by the serum. The characters are free to restore and rescue the living inmates of Memory's Rest Sanatorium and return to Wickermoor Village.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

The people of Wickermoor Village rejoice if any former patients return, especially Amos Dority if his cousin is saved. Families pitch in and pay the characters 25 GP for each patient they saved, and if the characters devised a cure for those that lost their memories from the Lethic Serum, Mayor Wendel Somerton rewards the characters with an heirloom *Amulet of Health* that takes the form of an emerald oak leaf.

Without the White Worm producing more Unrefined Ichor, the number of doses of antidote that can be crafted is limited by what remains of its key components in the sanatorium. Put together, there are fewer doses of antidote than there are those whose memories were stolen by the Lethic Serum (including any orderlies that receive the treatment), leaving the difficult choice of who may be saved in the hands of those who know how to procure and produce the solution.

Optionally, you may determine that Morgan the apothecary can produce an alternative cure with the serum diagrams and alternative alchemical ingredients, producing 1 dose after 8 hours of work.





Chapter 18: HARTSBLIGHT FOREST

"Green is the color of life. It is the color of rot. When you see it creep into your towns, you rip it up. When you see it bloom beneath your skin, you bleed it out. But despite your struggle, it always returns. When your cities, your skin, your bones, and your virtue are gone, all that remains will be green."

- Gorthos, the Beast of Blight -

A creeping rot festers in Wickermoor Hollow. A once-vibrant forest has fallen to a virulent blight that consumes trees, animals, and people alike—threatening to seed all life with rapidly spreading decay. Deep in the heart of the dying woodland, the Beast of Blight nurtures this rot, delivering death laced with the promise of rebirth. Those willing to endure the poisonous reaches of Hartsblight Forest must unearth and purge the source of the blight to put a stop to the spreading menace before it turns all to rot.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

Hartsblight Forest was once a lush and verdant woodland at the edge of Wickermoor Hollow known as the Greenwood, home to a community of antlered, deerlike satyrs that cared for its flora and fauna. Now, it is a rotten place putrefied by Hartsblight, a fungal infection that brings decay to all living things.

The first to surrender to the corruption of the blight was a young satyr named Farryn of the Greenwood, who followed the call of a dead primeval god to the origin of Hartsblight. Driven by the desperation of love, loss, and the hope for rebirth, she embraced the rot and forever changed into a monstrous embodiment of decay.

Discarding the remaining shreds of who she once was, Farryn took the name of Gorthos, the Beast of Blight. This newly formed abomination spread rot through the forest, turning its plants, animals, and peoples to putrefaction. Now, Gorthos turns her attention to the lands beyond Hartsblight Forest, seeking to impart the blight upon all of Wickermoor Hollow.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Infectious fungal spores drift from the tree line of Hartsblight Forest, rapidly spreading through Wickermoor Hollow. The only way to put an end to the advancing disease is to seek out and purge the source of the Hartsblight. Characters drawn to Hartsblight Forest by the Quest Hook later in this chapter have the following goals:

- Follow the trail of fungal spores to Hartsblight Forest.
- Find the source of the disease.
- Destroy Gorthos, the Beast of Blight.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with the motives and history of Gorthos, the Beast of Blight, so that encounters between her and the characters are filled with tension. Understand the features of Hartsblight Forest and the effects of the blight to properly convey the oppressive nature of the diseased forest. Finally, a review of the climactic encounter, "Reign of Decay," will ensure an intense and cathartic conclusion.

This chapter is designed for four level 8 characters.



THE BEAST OF BLIGHT

Gorthos was once a satyr devoted to the mystic rhythms of nature. As the Beast of Blight, she now spreads Hartsblight throughout Wickermoor Hollow. She believes that through death, decay, and the "Emerald Rebirth"—her distant dream where the world returns in its pure, green state—she can bring back her lost love, Gwenna. As the beast wallows in heartache in her den, decay creeps forth with the assistance of her zealous minions, every strained and sickly breath burdened by longing and the slow, relentless promise of entropy.

FARRYN OF THE GREENWOOD

Farryn was raised to follow the Old Ways. In the deep recesses of the Greenwood, her people—a circle of antlered satyr druids—revered the endless cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Knowing she would return to nature's fold in time, Farryn was a devout student, tending to the old and new growth of the woods with boundless joy. She lived by the natural laws, her spirit bright and strong, and joined her kin in sacred songs and worship of the wild.

The druids of the Greenwood believed that personal attachment was unnatural and would only lead tenders of the wild astray in their devotion to the endless cycle. Farryn shared this belief until she met a young human woman named Gwenna, who had traveled into the forest from Wickermoor Village. A worshiper of the Patient Lady, Gwenna held an innocent idealism that Farryn found infectious, believing that nature's harmony could bring an end to the wicked witchcraft that hung over the neighboring Wytchwood.

Although Farryn did not believe such a thing was possible, she offered Gwenna her help in exploring the Greenwood. The pair wove through the trees near the border of the Wytchwood, sharing stories, secrets, and a love that quickly blossomed. Farryn kept her new beloved hidden from her community, knowing that the druids would brand her as an oath breaker. But it mattered not; the young satyr had found a purpose more precious and beautiful than even the natural world.

It was not long until Gwenna would pay for her naïve idealism. Less than a year after their first meeting, Farryn found her love on the forest floor, half eaten by a ravenous wolf monstrosity twisted by the malign power of the Crooked Queen. The druid drove off the beast, but it was too late. Gwenna had fed the creatures of the wood and would return to the earth, as decreed by the natural cycle. However, Farryn refused to accept Gwenna's fate, overwhelmed with the agony of loss. In this moment of defiance and rejection of the natural cycle, she heard the call of Gorthos.



Farryn of the Greenwood

Gorthos

GORTHOS, THE DEAD GOD

The voice of an ancient Fey god reached Farryn, calling her deep into the forgotten heart of the Greenwood with ragged, sickly whispers and the strained bleats of dying deer. She followed, carrying Gwenna's body to a hidden cave overgrown with fungus. Within was the enormous corpse of an ancient stag. These putrid remains would not return to the earth, instead enduring decay without end.

This colossal heap of rotting flesh, fur, and bone was all that remained of Gorthos—a dead Fey god of decay from the forgotten age of the Green Queen. He told Farryn of the lost eons, when Kehlenn was pure and untwisted. A time when her realm was green with renewal. Gorthos was captive in his den, just as the Crooked Queen was captive to her misguided desire for vengeance and unnatural, crooked corruption. But an Emerald Rebirth, he knew, could restore him and the queen as they were before. Gwenna would also be restored, and she and Farryn could spend an eternity together in a vibrant world of green.

Farryn shared the dead god's dream and understood what she must do. Over many weeks, she ate his rotting flesh, taking in his knowledge, his power, his purpose, and his name. As she feasted, she rotted, changed, and grew. Each bite of Gorthos's decaying flesh was added to her own form until the stag was no more, and she had become a huge, putrid abomination.

Farryn then carried Gwenna's deeply decayed body to the Greenwood's sacred wellspring that nourished all living things in the forest. She laid Gwenna in the waters, a final offering to the god she had consumed—the god she had become. As Gwenna's body submerged, the pool spoiled, spewing forth an explosive bloom of spores that would seed all life in the wood with Hartsblight.

As the rot spread, she retreated to her putrid den and became one with the blight, filled with bitter hope that the death and decay of all things, even the Crooked Queen herself, would restart the natural cycle in an Emerald Rebirth. Then and only then might she see Gwenna again.

PARLEY WITH THE BEAST

Gorthos is bound to her den deep within Hartsblight Forest but can speak through creatures that have succumbed to the blight, her voice raspy and thin. She views the characters as potential new hosts of the Hartsblight that can leave the confines of the wood and spread the decay across Druskenvald. She shares her vision of the Emerald Rebirth with emotionless certainty, seeking the characters' acceptance of the blight without threats or aggression. However, Gorthos is prepared to kill the characters and remake them in her image should they ultimately refuse.

Throughout this chapter, there are multiple opportunities for the characters to parley with Gorthos through a dying creature—a rotting stag carcass (area F1), the slain Halden Wreath (area F4), and a blighted gloomwood (area F8). Additionally, Gorthos can project her image to any point in the forest and can approach the characters when they attempt to rest within Hartsblight Forest (see "The Shadowing Beast" later in this chapter).

DRUIDS OF ROT

The deerlike satyrs that once followed the Old Ways in the Greenwood now zealously worship Gorthos, serving as her chief agents in spreading her rot. These druids have been spared the slow and agonizing death and decay of the Hartsblight in exchange for the power to wield it and weave it through the woodland. They perform primeval rituals from eons past to quicken the spread of the sickness and deepen its effect, all united in the pursuit of the Emerald Rebirth.

THE HARTSBLIGHT

The Hartsblight is a rotting fungal disease that decays the body of any plant or creature it infects, spread by the will of Gorthos and her minions. It can also distort the minds of the infected, allowing the Beast of Blight to deliver vivid hallucinations that blur the line between what's real and imagined.

Exposure to the blight increases a creature's Hartsblight level. There is no limit to the number of Hartsblight levels a creature can have, and all effects of the affliction are cumulative. A creature afflicted with Hartsblight suffers the following effects:

CONSUMING ROT. The creature subtracts its Hartsblight level from Constitution saving throws.

FEEBLE FLESH. Hartsblight reduces attack rolls by 1 for each level.

OVERWHELMING AFFLICTION. Each time a creature reaches a Hartsblight level of 6 or higher, its current and maximum Hit Points are halved (to a minimum of 1 HP).

SPOILED HEALING. When the creature regains Hit Points, it subtracts its Hartsblight level from the total (to a minimum of 0).

STUDYING THE BLIGHT

Characters who assess the Hartsblight to understand it or seek a cure can make a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) check after spending 10 minutes examining the body or corpse of any creature or a plant infected by the blight. On a success, they learn the following:

- An infected creature that finishes a Long Rest can make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, reducing its Hartsblight level by a number equal to its Constitution modifier on a successful save or half as much on a failed save (minimum of 1 for either result).
- Effects that remove the Poisoned condition, such as *Protection from Poison* or *Lesser Restoration*, remove 1 Hartsblight level.
- *Greater Restoration*, *Heal*, or similarly powerful magic removes all Hartsblight levels.
- Even creatures who have Immunity to the Poisoned condition or who don't breathe are vulnerable to the spread of Hartsblight, as it seeps into flesh and bone as easily as it withers plants.
- Hartsblight will continue to spread until the source of the blight is destroyed.

> **TRACKING HARTSBLIGHT**
>
> Whenever a character is affected by Hartsblight, the player should track their character's Hartsblight level.

QUEST HOOK

Hartsblight spreads through Wickermoor Hollow, carried in virulent spores that drift on the wind.

A CRUMBLING COMMUNITY

Members of the Fold of the Patient Lady gather for a fellowship meal in the pavilion (area V28) of Wickermoor Village, inviting the characters to join them and share in nature's bounty. When the characters arrive, there is concern that Sister Rain (see chapter 11) has not yet shown up to lead the group in the pre-meal prayer.

These concerns are justified when Sister Rain (Neutral Good, human **Priest**) finally appears toward the end of the gathering, her face strained with deep concern. She has just returned from a visit to a commune north of Moonsong Lake that had been established by fellow members of the Fold of the Patient Lady, announcing that their crops have begun to fail and their livestock have fallen ill.

Sister Rain attempted to assist the commune, but the affliction was beyond her ability to heal. Even worse, while she was treating an ill member of the commune, she experienced a sudden vivid hallucination of sprawling forests with brilliant emerald trees, its boughs filled with countless watching faces. By the time the vision faded, she was already a full night's travel back to Wickermoor Village.

She asks the characters to do what they can to help the commune, as she fears the threat is beyond any of the Patient Lady's faithful. She has no coin to offer but is willing to part with a precious bottle of *Harvest Brew* for each character who answers her plea, which she hands over before they begin their journey. If the characters accept, she gives them directions to the commune and urges their swift departure.

SPOREFALL

The following night, if the characters refused Sister Rain or linger in town, a strange phenomenon comes to Wickermoor Village. A light flurry of what initially appears to be snow begins to fall, but soon the town is coated in fine, powdery spores. This spore cloud persists for 8 hours, and any creature exposed to the spores for more than 10 minutes at a time must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level.

Sickness spreads quickly to people, plants, and animals alike, and fear rises as yet another disease afflicts Wickermoor Village with the threat of famine. To prevent panic, Mayor Wendel Somerton offers the characters 300 GP each if they help put an end to the blight as he prepares to lead rituals of the Old Ways (see chapter 11) to help combat the spreading disease.

PATIENT IS THE NIGHT

The commune of the Patient Lady, just south of the tree line of Hartsblight Forest, is about a four-night journey from Wickermoor Village at a Normal pace. If a spore cloud has already reached Wickermoor Village, an unmistakable carpet of spores hundreds of feet wide marks a winding path to the commune. Otherwise, the characters see the approaching cloud one night into their travels, which leaves a path they can follow.

COMMUNE OF THE PATIENT LADY

A still and silent commune sits before an expansive forest that spreads to the northwestern border of the valley. A longhouse, built from woven branches and clay, is surrounded by humble huts and gardens. Fruit trees form a modest orchard, stretching out from one side of the dwelling in neat rows.

This small community is eerily quiet, having fully succumbed to the Hartsblight. The entire settlement is covered in a layer of spores, and decayed corpses are scattered across the commune.

Spore Layer. The commune is coated in spores of Hartsblight. Any creature that touches the spores with their bare skin or leans in close to examine something covered in spores (such as a body) must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level.

Decayed Bodies. The bodies of eighteen people can be found in and around the various dwellings. Dead chickens, ducks, goats, cows, and horses litter the livestock pen. As an action, a character who examines a body and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine that the corpses are far more decomposed than would be expected given the amount of time that has passed

since death.

Blighted Crops. A small orchard and several vegetable gardens bear clearly blighted crops that appear shriveled and cracked with patches of blackened rot. A creature that consumes any food from the commune gains 1 Hartsblight level.

CIRCLE OF THE HARTSBLIGHT

When the characters have explored a majority of the commune, read or paraphrase the following:

> The sound of distant drums breaks the silence—a growing rhythm accompanied by the call of horns. Your attention is drawn north to the source of the strange music: Six gaunt satyrs with gnarled antlers stand in a line at the edge of the forest, their fur matted and blotted with green growth. Two centaur-like creatures stand at the lead, arms raised toward the commune. Their upper halves match the satyrs, but their lower bodies are those of decomposing stags. they chant, waving staves of withered wood.
>
> A sickly haze rises from the ground all through the commune. Flesh and plants alike begin to erupt with decomposition, sending whirlwinds of spores into the sky.

The minions of Gorthos have emerged from the forest to perform a ritual to spread the Hartsblight. Two **Keepers of the Blight** and six **Rotweavers** stand in a line 300 feet from the commune. The keepers wave their arms in rhythmic motions as the rotweavers pound their drums and blow their horns.

Rotting corpses and blighted plants tremble and burst apart as primal magic surges through them, advancing their decay and casting a huge cloud of spores into the air in a 200-foot-radius Sphere centered on the commune. At the start of each minute spent in the spore clouds, a creature must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level.

The ritual lasts 10 minutes. If the characters do not intervene, wind picks up in the final minute and carries the cloud of spores toward Wickermoor Village.

DEALING WITH THE DRUIDS

If the characters move toward the druids with aggression, roll Initiative! The blighted satyrs don't stop performing the ritual unless it is disrupted by hitting any of the minions of Gorthos with an attack or affecting them with a spell. If the ritual is stopped, a blight keeper calls out:

> "You only delay the inevitable. The Hartsblight spreads with every death. We shall all return to the green in a glorious Emerald Rebirth."

The druids fight to the death, believing that all things must die and decay to be reborn.

Blessed by Blight. Even if the ritual is interrupted, the blight in this area is empowered. Whenever a creature fails a Constitution saving throw triggered by an attack, spell, or trait of a keeper of the blight or rotweaver, it gains 1 Hartsblight level.

Keeper's End. The first time a keeper of the blight dies, its body instantly decays into a heap of rotting flesh and fungus, sending a noxious cloud of green spores into the air. Each creature within 60 feet of the keeper must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level and have the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn as its mind is overwhelmed with a hallucination. Read the following when a character fails this save:

> The world around you decays—the plants, animals, people, everything. It all dies and rots away into nothing. And then, from that nothing, a flash of emerald light erupts, and the world is reborn anew. A beautiful, natural paradise. Pristine. Untouched. Wild. Green.

Motes of Hartsblight drift from the tree line over the druids' bodies. The only path forward to seek the source of the rot is into the woods.





HARTSBLIGHT FOREST

When the characters prepare to enter Hartsblight Forest, read or paraphrase the following:

> The tree line stands before you, a wall of spruce, pine, and fir trees marred with long streaks of blackened rot and choking fungal growths. Motes of greenish-white spore matter drift down as the breeze shakes the sickly branches and wilted leaves, as if welcoming you to Hartsblight Forest.

Hartsblight Forest is vast and trackless. To reach the source of the blight at the Befouled Wellspring (area F10) the characters must venture for miles toward the center of Hartsblight Forest. Map 18.1 shows the sections of the forest and their points of interest.

NAVIGATING THE FOREST

Hartsblight Forest is composed of three stands—distinct regions of increasingly blighted woodland, forming rings around the source of the forest's sickness.

THE BLIGHTED WOOD. The first stand of the forest is diseased but has not fallen to the same level of putrefaction as the deeper woods.

THE FESTERING WILDS. Deeper into the forest the second stand becomes more wild and the blight is more present. Every surface in this part of the woodland is covered in a slimy layer of rot.

THE ROTTEN HEART. The third and final stand is the heart of the forest that has bloomed around the source of the Hartsblight. The trees here have been entirely consumed by rot, the low fungal canopy forms a cavern-like space overwhelmed with large green spores, and the heart of the forest looks like an alien landscape.

The characters must pass through the areas of all three stands to confront the Beast of Blight and put an end to the Hartsblight.

FLEEING THE FOREST

If the characters wish to leave Hartsblight Forest before the Beast of Blight is destroyed, they must pass through the forest's locations in the reverse order that they encountered them, finally exiting the woodland after passing through the Altar of Rot (area F1).

Once Gorthos is defeated and her control over the Hartsblight is eliminated, the characters can leave the forest without incident following a three-night trek.

HARTSBLIGHT FOREST FEATURES

The concentration of the Hartsblight and the potency of its toxic effects grow stronger the closer the characters get to the heart of the forest. Unless otherwise stated, the areas of Hartsblight Forest have the following general features:

CHOKING SPORES. Spores of Hartsblight float through the air and seep into every surface and creature within the forest. Creatures that travel through the woods must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level every time they travel from one area to another. Tying cloth or some other barrier around a creature's face grants Advantage on the save.

EMERALD VISIONS. The Hartsblight has hallucinatory properties and can be used by Gorthos to share visions. Each time a character gains Hartsblight levels, they can receive a vision at your discretion. These hallucinations might showcase the Emerald Rebirth or provide details of the Beast of Blight's story (see "The Beast of Blight" earlier in this chapter).

LURKING BEAST. The projected image of Gorthos stalks the characters relentlessly, drawing near but always staying just out of view. When a creature fails a Wisdom (Perception) check, they see the subtle movement of a huge mass between the trees. It might be a glimpse of cracked antler, rotten flesh, blackened bone, or patchy fur.

NAVIGATION. Moving from one area to the next takes 1d4 hours of trekking through rough and fungus-choked terrain.

ROTTING UNDERGROWTH. The forest floor is overgrown with decomposing underbrush. The entire forest floor is Difficult Terrain and creatures can travel no faster than a Slow pace.

SPOILED PROVISIONS. All forms of food and water not stored within an extradimensional space spoil within minutes. A creature that consumes rotten food or contaminated water within Hartsblight Forest gains 1 Hartsblight level. Creatures that forego eating and drinking risk dehydration and malnutrition.

THE DEAD OF NIGHT

While the characters may be resistant to sleeping in such a treacherous place, the increasingly overwhelming Hartsblight will likely require them to take several Long Rests throughout their travels. While it is wise to rest, dangers are still present in the darkest hours of night.

Below are four optional encounters that can occur when the characters take a Long Rest. When they make camp, roll on the Dead of Night table to determine which event occurs, or choose one that fits based on their choices. Once the characters experience an encounter, it can't be triggered again.

Dead of Night

1d4	Encounter
1	Drums in the Deep Wood
2	The Shadowing Beast
3	Shrieking Death
4	Paradise Lost

DRUMS IN THE DEEP WOOD

The familiar drone of the music of the **Rotweavers** echoes through the forest as another ritual is performed. Once completed, a grotesque mass of sacrificed woodland creatures fuses with the blight to form a new horrid beast.

Investigate. Following the atonal sounds for fifteen minutes leads the characters to a group of four rotweavers conducting their rotting rites with drums and horns. If the rotweavers don't notice the characters' presence and are not interrupted for an additional ten minutes, they will produce a creature of sinew, necrotic mold, and hide that exists only to kill.

Use the **Mammoth** stat block. It is a Plant, has Immunity to Necrotic damage, and creatures hit by its Gore attack must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level.

Ignore. If the characters do nothing, the blighted abomination finds them one hour after they finish a Long Rest and attacks until it is destroyed.

THE SHADOWING BEAST

During a Long Rest, a character awakens and notices a pair of reflective eyes at the center of an enormous black shadow just beyond the campsite. The voice of Gorthos whispers to them: "You put trust in your companions, but you will lose them... Just like you will lose everything you've grown attached to..."

The shadowy image of Gorthos is projected into the forest by the Beast of Blight as she lingers in her den. She speaks to the character more candidly than any previous interaction, hoping that the character will accept the gift of the blight.

WHO IS GWENNA? "Gwenna was life unblemished. She was warmth and innocence, untainted by the truths of this world. Now she waits for me in the green."

IS THERE NO OTHER WAY? "Other ways will fail. Question it if you must, but long after those you know are gone, all that will remain is rot."

If the character acts with hostility, attacks the image of Gorthos, or rouses their companions, the eyes and the shadow vanish into the night. Alternatively, if the character converses with Gorthos for one minute, the beast tells

them: "There is strength in decay." The character must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level and gain Heroic Inspiration.

SHRIEKING DEATH

As the characters are making camp or otherwise settling down for a Long Rest, the terrified and agonized screams of a young man ring out, crying for help. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check can pinpoint the location of the screams' source, a spot in the woods 250 feet from the camp. Characters who succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check realize the screams seem inhuman.

Silent Predator. The true source of the cries is a mated pair of two rotting **Owlbears** infected and changed by the Hartsblight. As they stalk through the forest, the owlbears emit no sound other than the perfectly mimicked voice of their last victim, Halden Wreath (see area F4).

Hunter Ambush. The owlbears lure the characters away from camp. If any creature moves within 10 feet of the owlbears, they attack, surprising creatures that didn't discover the waiting ambush. The owlbears attacks deal an extra 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage on a hit.

PARADISE LOST

As the characters settle down to rest, they hear rustling in a nearby tree. Its brittle branches curl into the shape of a smiling face as a **Dryad** emerges from the pallid bark.

This dryad was once a being of the Greenwood but is now corrupted with Hartsblight, its name and purpose long since rotted away. Even though the dryad harbors a resigned contempt for Gorthos, it is buoyed by the grand Emerald Visions brought on by the blight. It approaches the characters out of curiosity and knows many secrets of the forest. It starts the encounter Indifferent toward the characters.

As an Influence action, a character can attempt to please the dryad with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Performance or Persuasion) check, changing its attitude to Friendly. Additionally, removing one or more Hartsblight levels from the dryad allows it to recognize what has happened to the forest and makes it more willing to help the characters.

Friendly. In exchange for interesting company, the dryad offers guidance that can aid the characters in finding the Befouled Wellspring (area F10), allowing them to skip the next location they travel toward within the Blighted Wood or the Festering Wilds. Additionally, the dryad might share secrets and warnings regarding potential future enemies they may face.

Hostile. The dryad does not tolerate rudeness or animosity, responding to hostility by using its Tree Stride trait to disappear into the woods, leaving behind 1d6 bright red berries that seem as though they were produced by the *Goodberry* spell but are actually mundane fruit infected with Hartsblight (see "Spoiled Provisions" earlier in this chapter). As a Study action, a character who examines the berries and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) check determines they are tainted.



18.1 Hartsblight Forest

THE BLIGHTED WOOD

Although far from the deeply rotten heart of the forest, this region is still afflicted by the Hartsblight. Spores drift beneath the canopy as plants and animals cling to life despite their worsening corruption. When the characters cross the tree line into the Blighted Wood, read or paraphrase the following:

> Barely a glimmer of moonlight seeps through the crowded canopy above. The underbrush is dense and blackened, littered with the decaying remains of small animals. Dry, greenish-white flakes drift through the air all around you. Boughs and bark hang loosely from deteriorating trees.
>
> Then, reality slips away as a vision overtakes you. A young human woman dances between the ancient trees of a healthy forest, laughing with innocent optimism. Another feminine voice calls out from just beside you, "Gwenna!" Just as suddenly, your senses snap back, and you are once again in the blighted woodland.

BLIGHTED WOOD FEATURES

In addition to the features of Hartsblight Forest (see "Hartsblight Forest Features" above), areas of the Blighted Wood have the following general features unless otherwise stated:

CANOPY. Hartsblight Forest is home to tangled clusters of massive birch, fir, pine, and spruce trees. The forest's canopy is 120 feet above the ground.

DISEASED ANIMALS. Sickly woodland creatures cling to life in this region of the forest but act erratically and are riddled with Hartsblight. If *Speak with Animals* is used, the minds of the creatures are befuddled, and they repeatedly extol the incoming "Emerald Rebirth" that will save them all. A creature that consumes the flesh of a forest denizen, cooked or otherwise, gains 1 Hartsblight level.

LIGHTING. Scant moonlight pierces the boughs of the dense forest, shrouding the forest in Darkness.

TRINKETS OF THE LOST. The soil and underbrush of the forest floor are strewn with the personal effects of people who have been lost in the woods or dragged there for sacrifice over the centuries. Characters who succeed on Intelligence (Investigation) checks additionally find 1d6 GP worth of weathered coins, weapons, or adventuring gear among the wood's detritus.

BLIGHTED WOOD LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to map 18.1. For combat encounters in the Blighted Wood, use map 18.2.

When the characters enter Hartsblight Forest, they arrive at the Altar of Rot (area F1) after ten minutes of travel. From there, they must explore the remaining locations of the Blighted Wood before they can proceed to the next region of the forest.

To determine the order that the characters arrive at each location, roll on the Blighted Wood table below or make a determination based on their choices.

Blighted Wood

1d6	Destination
1–2	Pine Barrens (area F2)
3–4	Infested Outcrop (area F3)
5–6	Noxious Hollow (area F4)

F1: ALTAR OF ROT

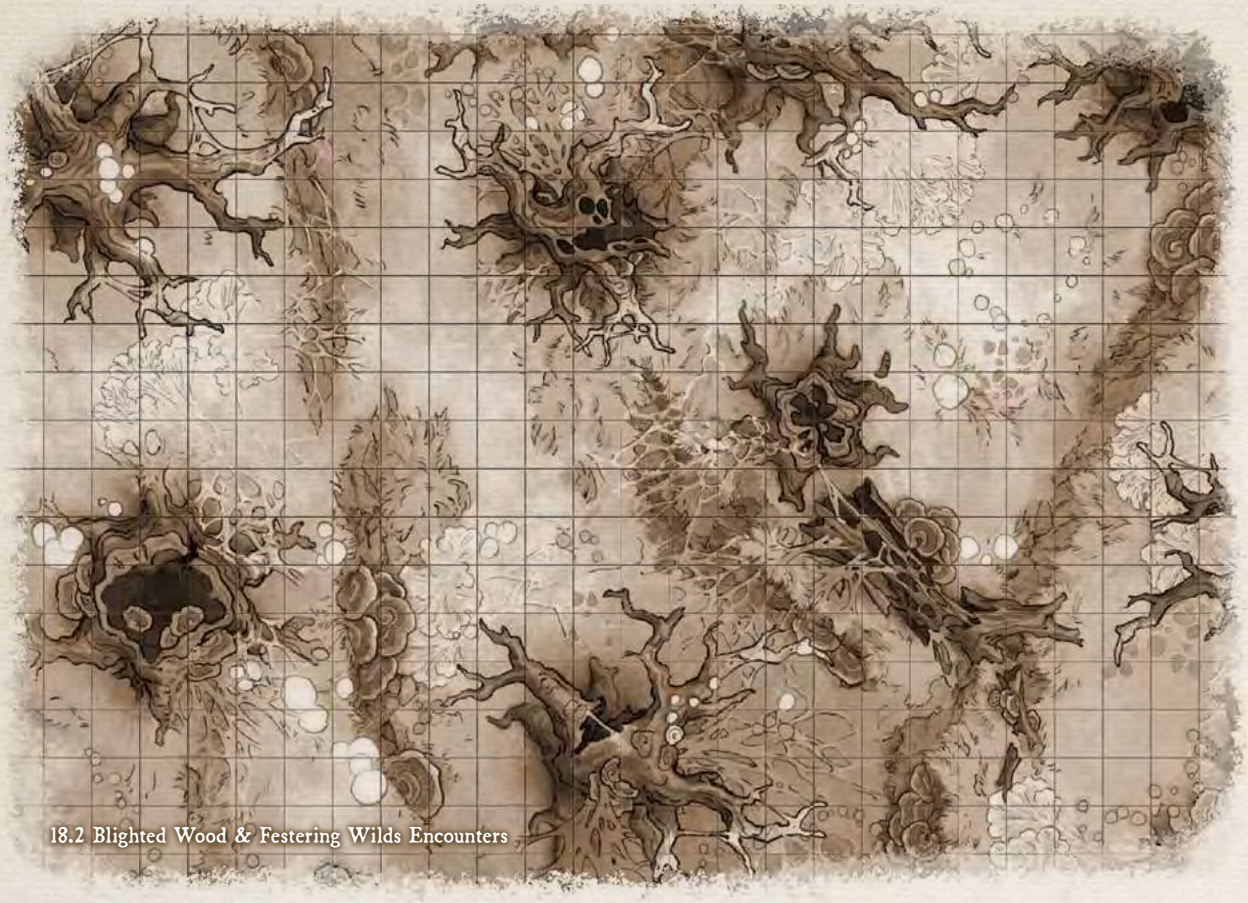
Blighted Wood

> Before you stands a huge, humanlike figure made from intertwined branches, shrubs, and other decaying flora. A hollow, feminine face gazes blankly ahead, draped in sheets of reeking fungus. Branches extend from its head like a mock crown. At its base lies a rotting stag carcass, resting atop a makeshift altar of stacked stones.

The effigy is a representation of who Gwenna once was—one of dozens that can be found throughout Hartsblight Forest. They are grown by the rotweavers to advance the Hartsblight and always face away from the Befouled Wellspring (area F10) to guide its spread.

As a Search action, a character within 5 feet of the figure who examines it and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check notices that spores passing through the hole in the effigy's head quicken, as though riding an invisible wind.

Destroying the Effigy. The effigy has AC 15, HP 30, Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage, and Vulnerability to Fire damage. When it is destroyed, it releases a burst of fungal spores. Any creature within 30 feet of the figure must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level. However, its destruction ends its manipulating effect on the spores, negating the Hartsblight Forest's Choking Spores feature for 8 hours.



18.2 Blighted Wood & Festering Wilds Encounters

Rotting Stag. After the characters destroy the effigy, or before they move on from the location, a thin, monotone voice speaks from the stag carcass: "Nothing you do here can prevent the inevitable. Not even the gods can stop the green." This is the voice of Gorthos, who can speak with the characters.

Parley with the Beast. Gorthos is plain and upfront with the characters, speaking truthfully about the inevitability of decay and its necessity for the Emerald Rebirth. She remains Indifferent toward the characters, even if they destroyed her followers or the effigy of Gwenna. When the conversation ends, the voice simply stops emanating from the carcass, and the stag continues to rot.

WHO—OR WHAT—ARE YOU? "I am a guide and a caretaker. I exist only to return the world to its rightful state. An Emerald Rebirth."

WHY IS THE FOREST DYING? "It is a necessary process. Just as this rotting stag will return to the soil and give birth to new life, so will everything around us. Even you. Even me."

WHY DO YOU LET US WALK IN YOUR WOODS? "Your decay will come, in time. I am patient, unlike the Crooked Queen. She would have you destroyed and twisted into an abomination. I am not her. I am a guide back to the green."

F2: PINE BARRENS

Blighted Wood

> Thin pines stretch up into the dim canopy, their bark peeling and disheveled. A layer of dead tawny needles masks the forest floor, forming a carpet of rotten black and green. Rising up from this putrid detritus are large rib bones, cracked and stained with green. Not far is a large bear skull overgrown with blooms of yellow fungus.

These Pine Barrens were once the favored spot for local hunters and trappers that preyed on the numerous large beasts that roamed the forest. The carpet of needles covers an endless number of scattered, corroded Hunting Traps, many of which are still functional.

Rusted Traps. Creatures that move through the Pine Barrens must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross without triggering a trap. Creatures aware of the traps' presence have Advantage on the check. A creature that fails the check triggers a Hunting Trap. The powerful jaws deal 1d8 Piercing damage instead of the usual 1d4.

As a Search action, creatures that examine the forest floor and succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notice the rusted traps poking through the pine needles and locate a trap that is no longer functional. It is clearly decades old, and the words "Criswell and Paulson Trapping Co." are engraved in the metal.

Hunting Beasts. Eight half-decayed, feral hunting hounds roam this area—a pack that survived the death of their hunter masters years prior. Though afflicted by the Hartsblight, they remain swift, vicious, and hungry. The hounds will sniff out the characters and attack if they linger in the Pine Barrens for 10 minutes or if a character steps into a Hunting Trap.

These hounds use the **Death Dog** stat block, but they each have only one head. A creature that is Poisoned by their Bite attack gains 1 Hartsblight level that vanishes when the Poisoned condition ends.

Treasure. A leather leash is tied around the trunk of one pine, its collar missing. A character who examines the leash and succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a *Devilbone Button* lying on a root of the tree.

F3: INFESTED OUTCROP
Blighted Wood

> You push further into the sickly forest. Swarms of buzzing flies and crawling beetles increasingly plague your journey. Every step teems with their movement, their buzzing an ever-present drone that fills the air.
>
> Ahead, a large rock formation juts from a ring of soft, upturned soil. Atop the rock is a small campsite, with a ring of smoke creeping along the stone and forming a barrier around the camp. The wriggling insects recoil from the smoke as if deterred by its pungent scent.

This is the final campsite of an expedition of botanists that had ventured into the forest to study the Hartsblight. The source of the emanating smoke is an *Eversmoking Bottle*, partially stoppered but lightly fuming at the center of the camp, forming a small sanctuary within a 120-foot-radius Sphere. The bugs are attracted to the foul-smelling corpses of four biologists that can be found within.

Camping Ground. Four canvas Tents, Bedrolls, and Explorer's Packs are arranged neatly, crowding around the *Eversmoking Bottle* near a cold campfire and empty food containers. Four turgid bodies huddle on log seating.

As a Study action, a character who searches the perimeter of the campsite and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds deep gouges and tunnels in the earth, evidence of burrowing creatures. Characters who succeed on the check by 5 or more find further evidence near the perimeter of the smoke where shallow trenches in the ground have been made by an acidic bubbling residue.

Field Journal. One of the corpses clutches a field journal in its rotten hands. Characters who spend one hour reading through the Book and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check decipher the scribbled notes of the lead biologist and glean the following information:

- The Hartsblight is not a naturally occurring blight, and the botanists have deduced it is Fey in origin.
- It appears to have a mind of its own or is driven by a singular will.
- Creatures infected with the Hartsblight can remain alive for years while rotting.
- Signs point to increased blight deeper in the forest.

Treasure. In addition to the *Eversmoking Bottle* and the field journal, characters who search the Tents and packs for 10 minutes find a Healer's Kit, four *Potions of Healing* (greater), and a Handaxe. The bodies also wear matching silver bracelets, each worth 25 GP.

Creatures. Burrowing in the soft earth around the outcrop are 8 giant, acid-spitting carrion beetles (use the **Ankheg** stat block). It was the threat of these creatures that trapped the campers here and prevented their escape. The beetles attack if the *Eversmoking Bottle* is fully stoppered, the smoke is cleared, or when the characters leave to continue their exploration.

F4: NOXIOUS HOLLOW
Blighted Wood

> Weaving through a maze of blighted trees and blackened brambles, you arrive at a mossy hollow in the woods that offers a welcome respite from the cluttered underbrush. This natural resting spot is shaded by a broad beech tree at its center, its branches covered in patches of greenish-white mold.
>
> Slumped against the tree is the partially eaten corpse of a man. Shelf-like fungus grows over half of his shredded face and along what remains of his moldy chest. Carved into the tree above the corpse is a crude, jagged shape that resembles a skeletal stag.

The corpse is that of Halden Wreath, a man who went missing from Wickermoor Village some time ago. Obsessed with tales of archfey, he ventured into Hartsblight Forest seeking the fabled Tall Man (see chapter 26), who had once danced through the Greenwood before it fell to blight. He met his end to a pair of rotting owlbears (see "Shrieking Death" earlier in this chapter) in an unwitting sacrifice to Gorthos.

Shrine to Gorthos. The tree has been marked by druids of the blight as a sacred site to Gorthos. It strengthens the Hartsblight that infects those suffering here and bends magic itself. Using magic to remove Hartsblight from its victims does the opposite: the target of the magic instead gains 1 Hartsblight level.

The Corpse. As an action, a character who examines the corpse and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that the man was killed by large claws and beaks. The fungal growth that covers him seems far too advanced for how long the body has been dead. Shortly after a character investigates the corpse of Halden Wreath, read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly, the fungus-covered corpse shudders as a crack rings out from the tree it is slumped against. His body is instantly covered in vibrant mold that blooms over his arms, neck, and chest as his torso is wrenched free from his lower half with a sickening pop and rises up the tree. His arms dangle limply, and his moldy lower jaw hangs open, unmoving. Yet, you hear a familiar raspy feminine voice speak from the corpse. "Do you not see the beauty in the decay?"

Parley with the Beast. Gorthos speaks with the characters once more. She uses this opportunity to position herself as a force against the Crooked Queen in the hopes that the characters will understand their inevitable deaths and rebirth. She is uncaring toward the death of Halden and does not respond to threats.

WHAT DO YOU WANT? "The land is poisoned with vengeance and trapped in unending death. Only an Emerald Rebirth can put an end to this misery."

WHAT DOES THE 'EMERALD REBIRTH' MEAN? "It is the natural conclusion. This realm shall rise anew in emerald light, but only when all has returned to the earth. It is the only way to prevent Kehlenn's crooked rebirth."

WHAT WILL YOU DO AFTER THIS 'EMERALD REBIRTH'? "Live anew, reborn and beautiful with my dear Gwenna. We shall all live and flourish in the green together, and we will know peace."

THE BLIGHT SHOWS US VISIONS—WHAT ARE THEY? "The blight gives us green dreams with those it readies for rebirth. The green awaits us all, and the visions show us what has been, what is, and what's to come."

When the will of Gorthos departs, the severed torso of Halden comes free from the tree, hitting the ground with a sickening splat.

THE FESTERING WILDS

Layers of decay and fungus are now ever-present. Every surface is encased in a slimy film of slick, soft rot. When the characters move on from the Blighted Wood and enter the Festering Wilds, read or paraphrase the following:

> The gigantic trees in this section of the forest are deeply blighted, covered in impossibly huge growths of fungus. The soil stinks and squelches beneath your feet, and the underbrush is covered in fuzzy mold. The air grows hazy with motes of greenish-white spores that hang in the air.
>
> Then, you are stricken by another hallucination. The young woman who danced in the woods now lies rotting beside you as you eat. The taste is foul, and you realize you are chewing on the slimy flesh of a colossal rotting stag. The vision melts away in green light, then shifts. You are standing beside the young woman, healthy once more, in a beautiful glade surrounded by trees of emerald green. She smiles and says, "Thank you, Farryn." You regain your senses.

FESTERING WILDS FEATURES

In addition to the features of Hartsblight Forest (see "Hartsblight Forest Features" above), areas of the Festering Wilds have the following general features unless otherwise stated:

CANOPY. The forest's canopy is 200 feet above the forest floor and has grown thick with fungus. A creature that tries to break through the canopy must destroy a thick fungal layer (a 5-foot-square patch of canopy has AC 12; HP 25; Immunity to Necrotic, Poison, and Psychic damage; Vulnerability to Fire damage).

LIGHTING. Light can't pierce the fungus-choked canopy, shrouding the forest in Darkness.

SPORE CLOUDS. Dense clouds of floating spores fill the air, reducing visibility to a maximum of 60 feet. In addition, the area farther than 20 feet from a creature is Lightly Obscured.

VIOLENT FUNGI. Sticky layers of mold cover every surface. Attempts to burrow into the forest floor or the trunks of trees draw out 1d6 Hostile **Violet Fungi** that attack until they are destroyed.

FESTERING WILDS LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to map 18.1. For combat encounters in the Festering Wilds, use map 18.2.

After leaving the Blighted Wood, the characters enter this second stand at the Druid Commune (area F5). From there, they must explore the remaining locations of the Festering Wilds before they can proceed to the next stand of the forest.

To determine the order that the characters arrive at each location, roll on the Festering Wilds table below or make a determination based on their choices.

Festering Wilds

1d6	Destination
1–2	Oozing Ravine (area F6)
3–4	Stinking Quagmire (area F7)
5–6	Fungal Grove (area F8)

F5: DRUID COMMUNE

Festering Wilds

> Before you is an open expanse, pocked with burrow entrances at the base of each giant tree. Small windows have been punched out of the moldy trunks to form crude dwellings in some form of a community this deep within the wood.

This woodland commune is home to the druids that comprise the circle of the blight. It is the place where they rest, feed, and worship Gorthos when not out spreading the Hartsblight throughout the forest. Twelve **Rotweavers** and one **Keeper of the Blight** are gathered at the center of the community, sitting in a drum circle and praying to Gorthos in the Sylvan tongue.

The only path deeper into Hartsblight Forest is through this community. Though it is dark, the open space between the trees provides no means for concealment save for the sporadic dwellings that encircle the common area. Characters can dart from dwelling to dwelling, avoiding the druids' attention with a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check. Succeeding on this check three times allows the characters to leave the Druid Commune undetected.

Satyr Dwellings. The druids' quarters are burrowed beneath and into the ancient, blighted trees. The bases of the trees are so overtaken with putrefaction that it is difficult to tell where root and soil ends and the diseased growth begins. Creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw for every 10 minutes they spend inside one of these dwellings or gain 1 Hartsblight level. While exploring the homes, characters find:

- Mold-covered beddings
- Idols carved from antler
- Instruments crafted from gourds, hide, and bones
- Prayer rings that were once full circles, now sundered
- Clothing made of hide, woven plant matter, and bark
- A forgotten jar of *Restorative Ointment* from before the Hartsblight

F6: OOZING RAVINE

Festering Wilds

> The strange landscape narrows, restricting the path ahead to a tightly confined ravine. Every footfall squelches wetly into an underlayer of sloppy fungal jelly. Enormous, sickly trees crowd together on either side. Above, a precarious net of fungal strands suspends large spheres of spore-laden sap.

The winding ravine is 10 feet wide and 120 feet long. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can deduce that disturbing the walls of the ravine or the trees that flank it could upset the hanging slime above and that the safest way to pass through is single file.

Passing Through. Characters can safely navigate the ravine without disturbing the fungus overhead by succeeding on a DC 17 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If the characters do not pass through single file or one at a time, or if they Dash through the ravine, they make this check with Disadvantage.

Slimy Deluge. If a character fails their check moving through the narrow passage, the bulbs of sap above burst and spill down, causing six **Ochre Jellies** to fill the ravine and attack.

Treasure. When the ochre jellies are destroyed, characters can find a *Chunk of Oozing Fungus* in the residue that remains.

F7: STINKING QUAGMIRE

Festering Wilds

> The spongy terrain dips down into a vast waterlogged depression. Stagnant pools of stinking green water are coated with slick algae, with patches of stable ground interspersed between deep, muddy pits. One pool amongst the morass, however, remains clean and clear, its surface showing a perfect reflection of the towering trees and outgrowths that surround the rotting wetland.

The pristine pool is approximately 25 feet on any given side, shallow, and is one of the few bastions of the forest that remains unsullied by Hartsblight.

Cleansing Waters. As a Study action, a character who examines the clear pool and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes the restorative magic of the waters can purge creatures of Hartsblight. A creature that submerges any part of their body in the water loses 1 Hartsblight level, and the crystalline water gets one shade murkier.

Contamination. For each Hartsblight level absorbed by the water, roll 1d6. If the result is equal to or lower than the number of Hartsblight levels that the cleansing pool has absorbed, three rotting **Shambling Mounds** coalesce in the befouled water and emerge from the pool, attacking the two nearest characters. Any Lightning damage listed in the shambling mound's Immunities, traits, or actions is replaced with Necrotic damage.

Treasure. The pool loses its cleansing waters property when the shambling mounds take form. The stinking water drains, revealing the source of its potency lying in the muddy bed—a *Ring of Resistance* (Necrotic) that is made of bone and has the words "All That Remains" etched in Sylvan.

F8: FUNGAL GROVE

Festering Wilds

> You step into a small grove suffused with a soft, pale-green glow. Ten-foot-tall fungal stalks rise up from the rotting forest floor. Stringy tendrils hang down like vines from the canopy above. The ground rumbles as you see a huge figure slowly walking in the grove, a huge, gnarled tree in a roughly humanoid shape covered in brightly colored corpse flowers that sprout from its rotting bark. It strides between the fungal stalks, belching spores from its flowers that cling to the fungi and cause them to grow upward.

The creature is a Hostile **Gloomwood** that tends to the fungal stalks like a blighted shepherd, serving as a guardian of the grove. The eerie emerald glow of the fungus fills the space with Bright Light and makes it difficult to disappear into the shadows. Dexterity (Stealth) checks in the grove are made with Disadvantage.

The gloomwood worships Gorthos and holds the same beliefs as the druids who serve her. It is prepared to destroy any creature it deems a threat to the fungal stalks it tends to, shouting threats and warnings in a booming, crackling voice.

Characters who reveal themselves and are wearing clothing of the druids, which can be found at the Druid Commune (area F5), have Advantage on Charisma checks to influence the gloomwood. A character can convince the gloomwood to let them and their allies pass with two successful DC 20 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion) checks (turning its attitude from Hostile to Indifferent), but only if they accept its blessing—granting each character 1 Hartsblight level.

Doomed Gloomwood. If the characters slay the gloomwood, its body stiffens and Gorthos speaks through its blighted wood. If the characters manage to convince the gloomwood to let them pass, Gorthos instantly kills it with the power of the Hartsblight that infects it, speaking to the characters all the same. Once the gloomwood is dead, read or paraphrase the following:

> As the life leaves the blighted tree, veins of rot shoot across its bark, snaking out in elaborate patterns as the vibrant flowers on its bark wither and die, falling to the forest floor. The stench of its wood grows more pungent, and the familiar voice calls out from the unmoving bark. "You are so close to becoming blessed heralds of blight."

Parley with the Beast. Gorthos speaks through the stinking corpse of the gloomwood. She did not expect the characters to survive so deep in the forest, and now sees them as potential heralds of blight that can move beyond the confines of the forest to spread decay:

WHAT IF WE REFUSE TO ALLOW THIS? "Such a choice does not exist. The blight will claim you, as it has claimed the Greenwood. Even resistance is fuel for rebirth."

DO YOU EVEN CARE ABOUT THOSE YOU HURT? "Care? All things must die to be reborn. If I did not care, I would not seek to bring an end to the cruelty and hate of this realm."

WHY HAVEN'T YOU STOPPED US? "Do you not see it? Do you not accept your role as heralds of blight, bringers of rot to usher in the Emerald Rebirth in distant lands where I could not?"

Treasure. Inside one of the wilted stinking corpse flowers that fell off the dead gloomwood is a large dormant fungal pod, which "hatches" into a **Devil's Glove** familiar after 24 hours, bonded with a creature that carries the pod.



ROTTEN HEART

The center of the forest is the original source of the Hartsblight. The landscapes here are so overgrown with virulent fungus and so overcome with decay that it seems otherworldly. Only Gorthos's most devout followers dare to tread these grounds. When the characters move on from the Festering Wilds and enter the Rotten Heart, read or paraphrase the following:

> You move into the heart of the forest. The trees that surround you are dead husks; their cores have been completely overtaken by fungus that bursts out at every opportunity, making the trees appear mutated and alien. The spores in the air are huge and shimmer with a strange emerald glow. It feels as if you've stepped into another world.
>
> Suddenly, your surroundings melt away as a vision overtakes you. Amidst a deep wood, you see a gnarled oak with a face twisted in bitter hate. A Crooked Queen. In moments, the tree is consumed in blight, rotting away into the soil. A small sprout emerges from the forest floor, and with a flash of green light, a beautiful green woman with elven features hovers before you, wreathed in emerald leaves. A Green Queen. Then, reality returns and you're surrounded by putrid decay.

ROTTEN HEART FEATURES

In addition to the features of Hartsblight Forest (see "Hartsblight Forest Features" above), areas of the Rotten Heart have the following general features unless otherwise stated:

CANOPY. The trees tower to 300 feet but are completely choked by a layer of thick, fleshy fungus that forms an impenetrable cavern-like ceiling 60 feet above the forest floor.

LIGHTING. Eerie green light glows from spores in the air and pustule-like fungal growths that bulge from every tree, illuminating the Rotten Heart with Bright Light.

SPORE CLOUDS. The clouds of spores grow denser, reducing visibility to a maximum of 30 feet. In addition, farther than 5 feet from a creature is Lightly Obscured.

VIRULENT DISEASE. The sickness brought on by the Hartsblight worsens here. Whenever a creature gains a Hartsblight level in the Rotting Heart, it must succeed on DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer an additional symptom of the blight. To determine the effect, roll on the Hartsblight Symptoms table below, rerolling any effect that the creature already has. These effects are cumulative. Creatures lose all of these symptoms when their Hartsblight level is reduced by any amount.

Hartsblight Symptoms

1d6	Effect
1	Pain wracks the creature and its eyes turn milky white. The creature has the Blinded condition, and has it Disadvantage on Wisdom checks and Wisdom saving throws.
2	A raging fever sweeps through the creature's body. It has Disadvantage on D20 Tests made with Strength.
3	The creature's flesh decays. It has Disadvantage on Charisma checks and Vulnerability to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage.
4	The creature's thoughts are addled. It has Disadvantage on Intelligence checks and Intelligence saving throws, and when it rolls Initiative, it must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or act as if affected by the *Confusion* spell.
5	The creature is overcome with shaking. It has Disadvantage on D20 Tests made with Dexterity.
6	The creature bleeds uncontrollably. It has Disadvantage on Constitution checks and Constitution saving throws. In addition, whenever the creature takes damage, it takes an extra 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage.

ROTTEN HEART LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to map 18.1. Combat at the Befouled Wellspring (area F10) uses map 18.3.

As opposed to the previous two stands, progression here is linear. The characters arrive at the Withering River (area F9). From there, they must proceed to the Befouled Wellspring (area F10) before moving on to face the Beast of Blight in the Den of the Blighted One (area F11).

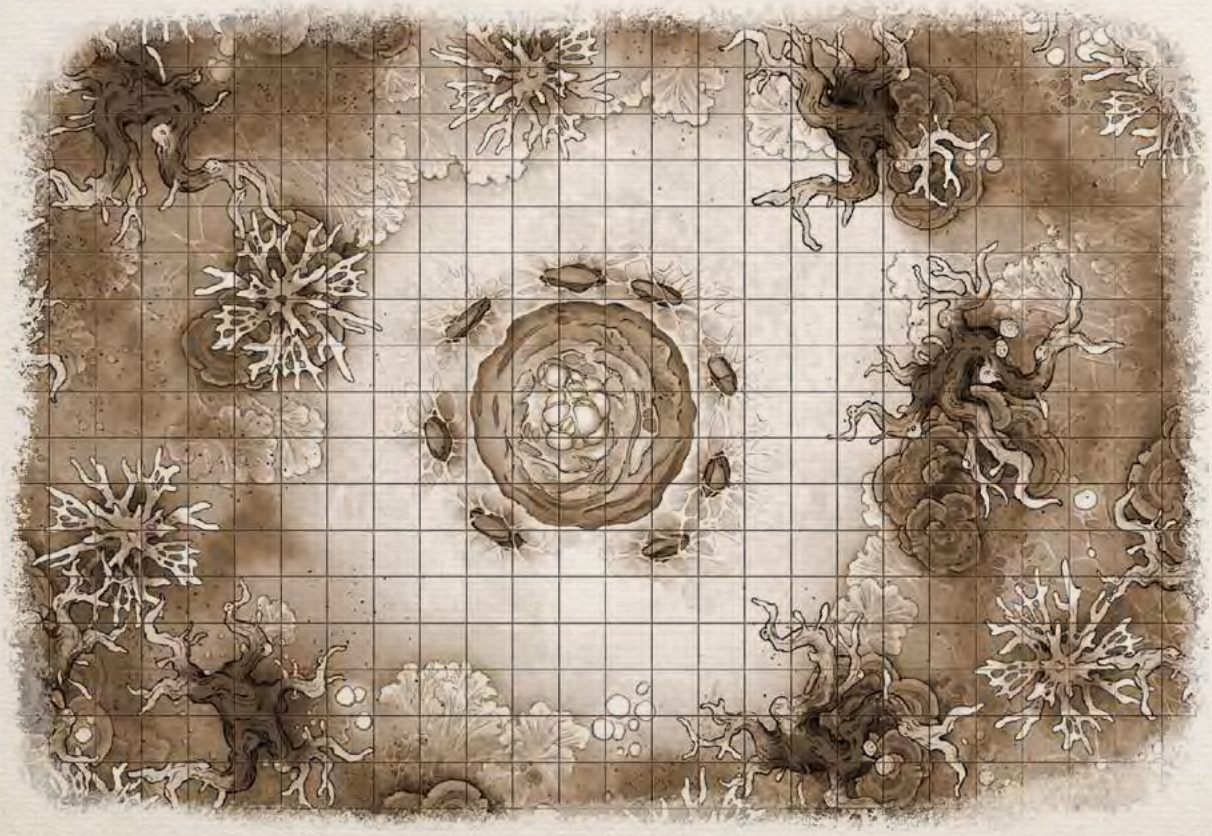
F9: WITHERING RIVER

Rotten Heart

> Before you meanders a sluggish, sallow river. Dead, blackened reeds jut from its stony banks. The water is cloudy and muted, almost motionless, and the smell of peat and old decay hangs in the air.

The river spans 60 feet across and is 3 feet deep.

Tainted Crossing. The river, corrupted by Hartsblight and sharing the subconscious of Gorthos, exacts a toll from creatures who attempt to cross without acting as a carrier of the blight. When a creature crosses the river and arrives on the other side, it takes an amount of Necrotic damage based on its Hartsblight level, as determined in the River Toll table.



18.3 Befouled Wellspring



River Toll

Hartsblight Level	Damage
0	3d8 Necrotic
1–2	2d6 Necrotic
3–4	1d4 Necrotic
5+	0

As a Study action, a character can examine the river and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana, Nature, or Religion) check, discerning the nature of the toll on a success. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character understands that any creature can become exempt from this toll by drinking from the river, which also causes the creature to gain 1 Hartsblight level.

F10: BEFOULED WELLSPRING

Rotten Heart

> Jagged, fungus-covered standing stones form a rough circle within the rotten trees, leaning inward over the tainted pool at its center. The putrid ooze-like water within churns unnaturally in shades of green and yellow. Strange tendrils of fungus shed from the surface of the pool before drifting into the air and breaking up into bright green spores. The pool's thick, fetid surface never stills, instead roiling faster and faster as you approach.

This is the Befouled Wellspring, the heart of the blight, the corrupted reflection of life, death, and rebirth. The clearing is 60 feet across. The mouth of the wellspring is 25 feet wide.

Sacred Stones. As a Study action, a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check learns that these sacred stones are magical and are from the time before the Hartsblight began corrupting the forest. Though they feed the blight's influence, disturbing or destroying the stones will do little to weaken or end the blight.

Thing in the Pool. As a Search action, a character within 30 feet of the wellspring who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check sees that beneath the churning, rotten surface of the pool is a huge mound of flesh and fungus.

The moment a character gets within 5 feet of the wellspring, read or paraphrase the following:

> The stench of decay from the churning, slimy pool is overwhelming. When you approach the edge, putrid ooze spills forth in all directions as a mass of flesh and fungus lurches upward, standing in the horrific approximation of a humanoid shape. Every inch of it wriggles as sheets of decay slough off with each step it makes toward you.

This is what remains of the body of Gwenna, once dead but now corrupted by Hartsblight and granted a horrific, mindless undeath. Her body has distended,

mutated, and merged with fungus over many years submerged in the befouled pool. Nothing remains of the person Gwenna once was. Her flesh has become a living expression of the Hartsblight. In this moment, it is clear that the massive wooden effigy found at the Altar of Rot (area F1) was in the image of Gwenna.

It rises to protect the wellspring, attacking the characters until destroyed. Use the **Festerhulk** stat block.

Beginning of the End. When the abomination is slain, it erupts into a huge cloud of pungent spores that instantly coalesce in the air like a swarm of flies. It surges northward, flying even deeper into the forest and leaving a slimy trail of viscous rot in its wake. This is the source of the Hartsblight rushing back to Gorthos in the Den of the Blighted One (area F11).

When the festerhulk turns into spores, any creatures within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain 2 Hartsblight levels and have the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn as its mind is overwhelmed with a hallucination. Read the following aloud:

> You stand in a pristine pool with crystalline waters, sacred standing stones circling you. You hold the hideous rotting corpse of a human woman. Gwenna. You gently lower her into the water, and in an instant the pool runs foul. Rot erupts from within. All that remains is decay.

With the abomination destroyed, the wellspring lies quiet, containing only a putrid residue that clings to the edges of the pool in foul shades of green and yellow.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Hermit* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Staff of Farryn of the Greenwood* is found embedded in the rotten ground among the standing stones.

Tracking the Beast. The characters can follow the trail of slime left by the surging spores to the Den of the Blighted One, arriving after a two-hour trek.

F11: DEN OF THE BLIGHTED ONE

Rotten Heart

> The oozing, snaking path of corruption through the rotten forest heart leads you to the mouth of a cave that opens at the base of a fungus-covered ridge, half-concealed by the blighted trees that frame it. A putrid stench belches from the void within.

The characters can pass through the cave mouth into a winding, esophageal tunnel that bores deep into the earth. The tunnel is 30 feet wide and slick with oozing rot and fungal blooms. After 1 minute of walking, the characters arrive at Gorthos's den. Read or paraphrase the following:

> You enter a large, reeking den, with strange charms and idols made from bone, flesh, and fur hanging throughout the space. Veins of necrotic, blighted roots cling to the floor and walls like ivy. Fungal nests hug the rocks in stringy congregations, oozing bile-colored pus. Patches of rotten moss are embedded into the ground, swollen with blighted matter. Spores adhere to every surface.
>
> At the far end of the cave, the top half of a humanoid shape dangles from the fungus-covered wall. It is gaunt and skeletal, with long, stringy black hair and elongated bony arms. Its hollow eyes stare at you as it approaches and speaks with the voice of Gorthos. "You put an end to my Gwenna's suffering. You saw the power of the blight she held. It has returned to me, but I cannot leave this den. It is time for you to take my place and spread the blight beyond my forest. Accept my gift—die and be reborn, and become the heralds of the Emerald Rebirth."

The gaunt humanoid torso is all that remains of Farryn. It appears to be dangling from the cavern wall, but in truth it is just a small part of the massive bulk of Gorthos. Most of the creature's body is entirely overgrown in the fungus of the den, hiding it from view. As a Search action, a character who examines the cave-wall and succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check realizes this truth.

While appearing as just the skeletal top-half of a satyr, Gorthos makes a final plea to the characters to help her achieve the Emerald Rebirth by accepting the Hartsblight within them.

Accept the Blight. Should a character accept, it means the end of the character's life and their journey as a protagonist of this story. Gorthos extends a long, bony finger toward the character's forehead. If the character allows the claw to touch them, the Hartsblight that erupted from the corpse of Gwenna surges into the character, killing them instantly. They rot, grow, and rise again three days later as a **Festerhulk** under Gorthos' control.

Reject the Blight. If the characters reject the Hartsblight, Gorthos knows there is nothing left to be done and prepares to kill the characters to turn them into the heralds of the Emerald Rebirth by force.

> The entire cave shakes as the wall of yellowed rot splits open. The fungus tears away as the dangling satyr torso lurches forward, and you see the awful truth. The gaunt shape is attached to a colossal stag-like body made from bone, blighted wood, and fungus. It stomps forward on huge cloven hooves, surging with the awful, blighted power you expunged from the wellspring. This is the Beast of Blight.

REIGN OF DECAY

Gorthos seeks to kill the characters so they may rise as abominable fungal hulks that can leave the forest and spread the Hartsblight throughout Druskenvald. Use map 18.4 for this combat.

HARTSBLIGHT INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the will of the Hartsblight stirs to cause one of the following effects; it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

BLIGHTED SPORES. The den fills with sickly green spores of Hartsblight. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, each enemy of the Beast of Blight in the den. *Failure:* The creature gains 1 Hartsblight level.

STICKY TENDRILS. Sticky, fungal tendrils slither from the walls, floor, and ceiling of the cave, tugging at creatures' limbs. Until Initiative count 20 on the next round, each enemy of the Beast of Blight in the den that makes an attack roll or casts a spell with a Somatic component must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or the attack automatically misses or the spell fails (the spell slot isn't consumed).

WEAVING ROT. If there are fewer than three **Rotweavers** present in the den, one rotweaver appears in an unoccupied space of Gorthos' choice.

PHASE 1: ALL THAT REMAINS

The Beast of Blight does not intend to let the characters leave her den until they are carriers of the Hartsblight. Gorthos prioritizes those that were the least receptive to her belief in the Emerald Rebirth and the mission of using decay to bring it about. She has no sense of self preservation and focuses instead on killing the characters as quickly as possible.

Rotting Minions. Three **Rotweavers** arise from the fungus to defend the Beast of Blight, appearing in unoccupied spaces at the mouth of the den.

Strength in Decay. The Beast of Blight has a damage threshold equal to five times the number of rotweavers alive in the cave at any given time.

When the Beast of Blight is Bloodied, she commands the blight corrupting any remaining bones, fungi, and molds in the cave to bolster her efforts, causing them to burst into blight. All creatures of the Beast of Blight's choice in the cave must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) Necrotic damage, reducing their Hit Point maximum by an amount equal to the damage taken. This event transitions the battle to the next phase.

PHASE 2: DEAD AND GONE

The cave has become a smothering maelstrom of disease and primal bloodshed. Every gasping breath fills the lungs with blighted spores and hot, rancid air.

A Storm of Spores. Huge, acrid plumes of greenish-yellow spores burst from Gorthos's fungal growths in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the Beast of Blight. When a creature not aligned with Gorthos starts its turn within the Emanation, it takes 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level.





18.4 Den of the Blighted One

Harvested Decay. The first time the Beast of Blight is reduced to 0 Hit Points, a surge of Hartsblight fills the cavern in a 120-foot Emanation originating from the Beast of Blight. Each creature within this surge must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Hartsblight level. Any rotweavers that are still alive are also destroyed. The Beast of Blight gains 1d12 Hit Points for each rotweaver slain in this way, and for each Hartsblight level the characters gained in the surge.

When the Beast of Blight is again reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Beast of Blight lets out a strained bellow as the colossal beast of flesh, bone, fungus, and rot collapses to the floor. In a thin, withered voice, Gorthos whispers, "Gwenna... Our dream..."
>
> The creature's corpse rapidly decays before your eyes, changing from shades of green, brown, and yellow until nothing is left but a sludge, which disintegrates into motes that drift into the air and float out of the den.

With the death of Gorthos, all Hartsblight levels that the characters have accrued are removed.

Level Up. The characters reach level 9, if they are still level 8, when they defeat Gorthos, the Beast of Blight.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *Death* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Idol of the Beast of Blight* is found in the beast's den.



CONCLUSION: THE EMERALD DREAM

The concentration of Hartsblight in Wickermoor Hollow drops precipitously. The motes that drifted off the corpse of Gorthos float away to a different province of Druskenvald in hopes of taking root and once more spreading toward the dream of the Emerald Rebirth. The results of such efforts won't be seen for years.

The characters can leave Hartsblight Forest, spending three nights trekking through the wood. They are not disturbed by the druids that had served Gorthos, who are overwhelmed with despair after losing their powers of rot and decay, retreating into the depths of the forest never to be seen again.

The forest remains deeply wounded from the effects of the rot and decay brought by the spread of the blight. However, the disease that affects the woods is no longer magical, and the Greenwood begins to slowly heal.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

Sister Rain is horrified to learn what happened to the commune of the Patient Lady but is pleased to hear of the end of the blight's spread. She recruits a group of missionaries to venture back into Hartsblight Forest in hopes of helping it heal.

The Followers of the Old Ways are pleased to learn of the destruction of Gorthos, who was a fabled enemy of the Green Queen in the stories told among the faithful. A great hunt is held in the woods around Wickermoor Village to seek a stag to be served at a feast in celebration.



Chapter 19: MAIDENMIST CEMETERY

"My friends... I am but one light in the darkness. One soul against the crushing weight of the hate and hunger of death. It is happening. It is inevitable. I will break, and so will the chains around the shrieking dead. My friends... Forgive me... I have failed..."

- Yorgrim, the Gravedigger -

The gates of Maidenmist Cemetery have burst open, and the raging dead rise from their graves to escape. Yorgrim, the necropolis's caretaker, stands alone against a rising tide of undeath, slowly corrupted by the incessant whispers of the malicious, ravening spirits he has sworn to entomb and imprison. Unless aided by the characters, the jailer will break, and a wave of shrieking spirits will crash upon Wickermoor Hollow and devour every living soul within.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

Maidenmist Cemetery sprawls across the fogbound, rolling hills to the southeast of Wickermoor Village, riddled with headstones, crypts, mausoleums, and every other kind of grave marker. It serves as the final resting place for all mortal beings in Wickermoor Hollow and has done so for millennia. None know who first built the cemetery, for it has always been there. It is said that the wrought iron fence that surrounds it inches forward night by night, forever welcoming the endlessly increasing deceased.

For years, a ghostly orc known as Yorgrim has served as the sole gravedigger and sexton of the cemetery. However, he is not just a caretaker for the dead that he buries and for whom he performs the final rites. He also serves as a warden, for the cemetery's true purpose is a prison for thousands of screaming spirits that seek only to corrupt and consume the souls of both the living and the dead.

The cemetery's secret is that it was built upon a tear into the Shroud, which normally serves as an impenetrable barrier around Druskenvald, but here it serves as a gateway for the twisted spirits to cross over into the realm freely. These souls are filled with inhuman wrath for being deprived of a true afterlife; left unchecked, they would spill across the valley and the entire domain beyond, feasting upon the living.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The haunted hills of Maidenmist Cemetery have never been safe for the living, but the warding lights of the necropolis have gone out, and their caretaker slowly succumbs to the corruption of the Shroud. Now, the cemetery is a prison overrun with rioting dead. Only the relighting of the balefire beacons and the sealing of the tear into the Shroud can stop the coming tide of death. Characters who are drawn to Maidenmist Cemetery by the Quest Hook later in this chapter have several goals:

- Find Yorgrim, the Gravedigger.
- Light the five extinguished balefire beacons.
- Discover the source of the dead's corruption within the sepulcher.
- Destroy the Chained Reaper and seal the tear to the Shroud.

Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with Yorgrim, the key NPC, to convincingly convey his grim duty and descent into corruption. Refresh yourself on the stories of the other Fallen (see chapter 8) to provide the characters with inspiration in performing their rites. Review the locations of Maidenmist Cemetery so you are prepared to improvise encounters as the characters explore.

This chapter is designed for four level 9 characters.

THE GRAVEDIGGER

Yorgrim, an orcish spirit bound to an eternity of penance, is the dour sexton that oversees Maidenmist Cemetery, hunched beneath the crushing weight of his duty and the heavy stone chained to his back. Haunted by the failures of his past and the loss of his friends to their respective sins, he goes about his duties with grim determination, never relenting despite the constant cracking of his soul and the chains that bind the spirits he keeps imprisoned.



Yorgrim, the Seer

Yorgrim, the Gravedigger

THE PENITENT PILGRIM

Before coming to Druskenvald, Yorgrim was a seer for his people, the orcs of the Shadestone Clan. He communed with the spirits of the deceased, performing their burial rites and guiding them to the afterlife. However, he was deceived by his chieftain and unwittingly performed a necromantic ritual that slaughtered his entire community and annihilated their souls with unspeakable and forbidden power.

Yorgrim took his vengeance, but it was a hollow victory. His people were dead, and their souls would never find peace. As a self-imposed penance, the seer etched the name of every fallen orc onto a heavy stone that he chained to himself, committing to carrying the weight forever as he sought to wander the land and bring peace to souls that were not yet beyond help.

For years, Yorgrim trudged across the land, a dour pilgrim performing burial rites for countless souls until his body finally gave out beneath the crushing weight of his penance. However, his spirit did not yield, and he arrived in Druskenvald not reborn but instead fated to forever exist as a ghost, still chained to the heavy gravestone even in death.

In this new realm, with so many restless dead in need of peace, Yorgrim wandered Druskenvald, performing rites alone until he finally made connections with five other souls as powerful and burdened as his. Despite his gloomy disposition, Yorgrim developed an affection for and eventual friendship with Ol' Jericho Sticks, Sir Marius Renathyr, Captain Briggsy Kratch, Lethica Nightborne, and Farryn of the Greenwood, regularly visiting each throughout his wayward travels.

THE SHROUD WARDEN

Shortly after meeting his new friends and softening his stony heart, he discovered the mysterious Maidenmist Cemetery in Wickermoor Hollow. Deep within the sepulcher at the center of the necropolis was a small tear into the primordial mists of death called the Shroud (see chapter 1), and the shrieks and whispers of the tortured souls within concerned Yorgrim deeply. He feared an apocalyptic reckoning should the shrouded abominations freely pass into Druskenvald.

Feeling as if he had discovered his true purpose, he bound himself to the cemetery and took up the mantle of its sexton and gravedigger, performing the burial rites for the thousands of dead he found there. His duty was to provide this service for every new death in Wickermoor Hollow. This prevented the spirits of the Shroud from slipping through to possess and reanimate the corpses that lay within the earth of the necropolis.

However, as the years went on, the tear to the Shroud grew larger, and Yorgrim beseeched his friends for aid. All agreed, and each of the six unlikely companions offered a fragment of their soul to kindle great braziers of spectral balefire, the light of which repelled the Shroud and the abominable spirits within.

After parting ways, Yorgrim would never see his friends again; the lighting of the beacons bound him to the cemetery as a jailer and warden of the shrieking spirits and occasionally restless dead within. In his duty, he took up a lantern tethered to the anima of his soul that serves as his primary weapon and tool to keep the unruly spirits chained.

As each of his former friends fell one by one to the sin of the Horned King, the balefire beacons dimmed greatly, and Yorgrim's nightly duties became far more challenging. When the *Ghostlight Express* crashed into Wickermoor Hollow, bringing the ghastly fog of the Shroud with it, the tear in the sepulcher grew immensely. And following the deaths of each of the Fallen, their respective balefire beacons have gone completely dark. Now, Yorgrim expends every measure of his being to keep the riotous and raging dead from spilling forth, his own soul weakening with every passing night.

PARLEY WITH THE GRAVEDIGGER

Yorgrim is dour, grim, and stoic, but he is not cruel. He views the characters as the only hope to relight the balefire beacons and investigate the source of the Shroud. He is not talkative and speaks with few words but doesn't withhold important information that the characters need to know.

These are some responses to common questions the characters may ask of this spectral sextant:

WHO ARE YOU? "I am called Yorgrim. This is my cemetery. I serve the dead here."

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? "The graves of Maidenmist bear the dead of the hollow. Centuries of souls rest here. It was here before me. It will be here after me."

ARE YOU DEAD? "My life ended long ago, but my duty did not. It persists until I atone for my sins and failures. This is my burden to bear."

WHO IS THE DOG? "This is Isolde. She is a grim, a spirit bound in duty to the dead. We are of a kind. She is my sole companion."

WHAT IS THE SHROUD? "The Shroud is an element. Like the air you breathe and the earth you stand upon. It is death incarnate. It should not be here. Not even in an afterlife."

WHAT ARE THE SHROUDED? "Souls once living but devoured and corrupted by the Shroud. They have lost everything they once were in life. Abominations."

YOU WERE FRIENDS? "The monsters you killed were my friends. Before they succumbed to corruption, they had strong wills and good hearts, like you. They fell to their burdens, like you might yet. None are immune to the weight of failure."

WHY WOULD WE PERFORM RITES FOR VILLAINS? "We will not perform the rites for the evil you faced. We do not mourn the Crimson Abbot, the Grinning Sinner, or the rest. I mourn who they were when there was light in their souls. It is for them we perform the rites. It is the only way."



Isolde

ISOLDE, THE GRIM

After isolating himself, Yorgrim found companionship in Isolde (ih-ZOAL-duh), a type of guardian spirit known as a grim. These spectral watchers guard cemeteries, graveyards, and other burial sites and can take the form of any animal. Isolde (Neutral Good **Ghost**) manifests as a black hound with bright white eyes. She is deeply loyal to Yorgrim, and carries in her mouth a Hooded Lantern lit with a spark of the gravedigger's soul.

While Isolde is similarly bound to Maidenmist Cemetery like her master, she is able to exit its cold iron gates and walk beyond its borders. In recent years, she has served as the primary messenger between Yorgrim and Mori Shade, the undertaker of Wickermoor Village. With a supernatural intuition that only a dog can possess, she can sense that Yorgrim is suffering from the gibbering of the Shroud and is close to breaking.

THE SHROUDED

The shrouded are malicious, ravenous spirits entirely stripped of their anima—the soul-stuff that retains an individual spirit's essence and identity. Having lost whoever they might have been in life, the shrouded exist as devouring forces of the primordial element of death itself, filled only with the hunger to corrupt and consume souls that retain their anima, whether they be living or dead. They only feel rage and hate for those who don't share their fate, forever drifting through the Shroud and seeking new prey to corrupt into shrouded themselves.

In Maidenmist Cemetery, numerous shrouded have spilled forth from the tear in the depths of the great sepulcher, and some have even slithered out between the cracks of the ancient tomb. They drift through the ghastly rolling fogbanks or possess the corpses once interred in the earth but now shamble about the necropolis.

QUEST HOOK

Throughout their time in Wickermoor Hollow, the characters may have heard tales of Maidenmist Cemetery and perhaps even attempted to visit if their curiosity was piqued by the mysterious, haunted place. Until now, they would have found the gates closed and heavily chained, only spying the distant flicker of Yorgrim's lantern as he dug a grave or tended to the grounds. Now, the rising tide of the shrouded has smashed the gates open and undeath threatens to spill into Wickermoor Village and the hollow beyond.

> **DOWNTIME**
>
> The remaining chapters of this book are likely to occur in rapid succession, so if the characters have unfinished business or are in need of a reprieve, you can offer them a moment to complete downtime activities. This also serves as the ideal opportunity to tie up subplots and side quests before the swift approach of the story's climax. Nights or even weeks can pass before Yorgrim begins to fall to the pressures introduced by the shrouded.

DUSK OF THE DEAD

Late into the Dusk Hour, screams ring out through Wickermoor Village. Eight **Ghasts** wordlessly shriek as they slaughter any villagers they can find and feast on the slain. Alarm bells toll from the clocktower, and if the characters do not dispatch the Undead, the ghasts are brought down by a rallied militia of armed townsfolk (**Guards**) led by Constable Doris Squire (Lawful Neutral, human **Knight**), suffering heavy losses.

After the ghasts are defeated, as an action, a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check can deduce that the risen corpses had been dead for varying lengths of time, with the oldest ghast having been dead for centuries and the freshest one only several weeks deceased.

Mori Shade (see chapter 11) arrives shortly after the battle and recognizes the most recently deceased corpse as Gregor Bolton, a once-burly workman who died from a fall while repairing the roof of Mayor Somerton's manor. She mentions that she had delivered his body to Maidenmist Cemetery shortly before the characters arrived at Wickermoor Village.

She is deeply concerned by the arrival of Undead creatures in Wickermoor Village, suspecting that something is wrong in Maidenmist Cemetery. She beseeches the characters to investigate to prevent more death and destruction from the walking dead. Use the details below to guide the conversation with Mori:

- The shambling corpses' aggressiveness and shrieking suggests they aren't normal Undead.
- From Yorgrim, she knows the Shroud can turn spirits and corpses into ravening monsters.
- She has not heard from Yorgrim or seen Isolde since her delivery of Gregor Bolton's body to the cemetery.
- A pile of corpses from recent deadly events around town has accumulated near the funeral home.
- She went to Maidenmist Cemetery a week prior to look for Yorgrim, finding the gates chained and the cemetery covered in a dense fog.
- There was no sign of the blazing fires or Yorgrim and Isolde's flickering lantern light, and her calls to them went unanswered.

Mori implores the characters to see if they can find a way into Maidenmist Cemetery and discover what's become of Yorgrim. She then works with the townsfolk to collect the corpses from the battle and the funeral home, piling them on the outskirts of town to burn them, ensuring that they do not rise in undeath. If the characters interrupt the burning, the ghasts rise once more during the Dusk Hour of the following night.

If the characters fail to act, another group of townsfolk volunteers to make the journey to the cemetery. They never return, and can be found shambling among the Endless Gravestones (area Y3) as **Zombies**. Every night of inaction, the village sees more attacks, the number of Undead in the horde doubling with each passing night.





MAIDENMIST CEMETERY

Maidenmist Cemetery sprawls across many miles of hilly land in southeast Wickermoor Hollow. It has existed for centuries, its original builders lost to time. Countless dead rest here through every manner of burial and interment, and each of the thousands of grave markers that cover the land is never more than a few feet away from the next.

THROUGH COLD IRON GATES

It takes approximately half a night's travel southeast at a Normal pace to reach the edge of Maidenmist Cemetery from Wickermoor Village, crossing the Silverbell River by way of an old cobblestone bridge. With each passing mile, the landscape becomes increasingly foggy, and the air grows colder. When the characters arrive at the cemetery, read or paraphrase the following:

> The night is strangely cold and quiet as you arrive at Maidenmist Cemetery. A tall iron fence stretches out on either side of you, with thick, tightly spaced pickets that look like prison bars. The gate, flanked by metal sculptures of hooded reapers, hangs askew, bent as if it had been smashed open from the inside. The landscape before you, dotted with thousands of tombstones, rises in elevation before disappearing into the dense fog that shrouds the hills, wisps of blue-green mist billowing amidst the gray. A faint wail sounds from somewhere in the rolling fog.

A 15-foot-tall iron fence encircles the entirety of Maidenmist Cemetery, its base heavily reinforced with stone. A Tiny creature can pass through the fence's narrow pickets.

As a Study action, a character who examines the bent gate and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a 50-foot Chain in the damp earth, along with several broken links, as if it snapped from a single violent thrust against the inside of the gate.

A cobblestone path leads into the cemetery up the hill, but it disappears into the fog. The blue-green mist is reminiscent of the Shroud, which the characters experienced during their trip aboard the *Ghostlight Express*.

MAIDENMIST CEMETERY FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, Maidenmist Cemetery has the following features:

GHASTLY MIST. Eerie, billowing mist rolls across the landscape. The entire cemetery is Lightly Obscured out to 60 feet, and Heavily Obscured beyond that distance.

LIGHTING. The light of the Crooked Moon is caught and refracted in the mist, bathing the cemetery in Dim Light.

SHROUDED SPIRITS. Corrupted spirits lurk in the mist, searching for souls to devour. Every hour that the characters travel through the mist, three **Shrouded** (one of each variant) attack until they are destroyed.

WAILS OF THE DAMNED. The mist of the cemetery is interwoven with the Shroud, and the shrieking souls within wail incessantly. Constitution saving throws made to maintain Concentration have Disadvantage.

CORRUPTING SHROUD. If a creature that isn't a shrouded dies in the cemetery, it is corrupted by the Shroud and rises 10 minutes later, Hostile toward all creatures that aren't Undead. A non-Undead creature rises as an Undead, as determined on the Restless Dead table below. An Undead creature rises as a **Shrouded** (random variant).

Restless Dead

1d12	Undead	1d12	Undead
1	**Skeleton**	7	**Will-o'-Wisp**
2	**Zombie**	8	**Mummy**
3	**Shadow**	9	**Wight**
4	**Ghoul**	10	**Ghost**
5	**Ghast**	11	**Vampire Spawn**
6	**Specter**	12	**Wraith**

THE PHANTOM GRAVEDIGGER

While Yorgrim clings to his identity and duty, the weight of his penance and the insurmountable struggle against the tide of undeath has taken a toll on the gravedigger. His spirit is weak, tired, and fated to become the malevolent Chained Reaper. Before this transformation takes place in the Tomb of the Shrouded (area Y15), his shade can barely interact with the physical world, with most of his remaining power focused in the spectral lantern he always carries.

Therefore, when Yorgrim (found in area Y2) joins the characters in Maidenmist Cemetery, he doesn't use a stat block, has Immunity to all damage, and can't be affected by spells or other magical effects. His size is Medium, and he has a Speed of 30 feet. He can move through other creatures and can share a space with them.

BALEFIRE LANTERN

Yorgrim carries a spectral azure lantern that is as incorporeal as he is, which sheds Bright Light in a 30-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 30 feet. Once all six balefire beacons are lit, the lantern dims, shedding Bright Light in a 5-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 15 feet.

The lantern has the following features:

AZURE PROTECTION. Creatures in the lantern's Bright Light are immune to the Shrouded Spirits and Corrupting Shroud features (see "Maidenmist Cemetery Features" earlier in this chapter) of the cemetery's mist.

BALEFIRE WARDING. All **Shrouded** cannot enter the lantern's Bright Light. Shrouded in the lantern's light have Disadvantage on D20 Tests.

GRAVEDIGGER ACTIONS

While Yorgrim is generally unable to interact with the physical world, when the characters are in danger, he summons up what little strength he has left to help.

While carrying the balefire lantern, on Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), Yorgrim causes one of the following effects; he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

BALEFIRE BURST. Yorgrim's lantern erupts with balefire. Each creature of Yorgrim's choice within the lantern's Bright Light must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) Fire damage and 4 (1d8) Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

CHAINED PHANTOM. Yorgrim hurls a spectral chain to bind a foe. One creature Yorgrim can see within the lantern's light must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the Restrained condition. The target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

GARISH LIGHT. Yorgrim unleashes a blinding flare from his lantern. Each creature of Yorgrim's choice within the lantern's Bright Light must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the Blinded condition until Initiative count 20 on the following round.

GRAVE RESILIENCE. Yorgrim's lantern imparts vitality. Each creature of Yorgrim's choice within the lantern's light gains 13 (2d12) Temporary Hit Points.

BALEFIRE BEACONS

Six beacons of balefire, each with its own hue, are meant to roar in braziers around the cemetery to ward it from the encroaching Shroud. Five have gone dark and must be reignited to banish the eldritch fog and the vicious spirits within from all outdoor locations of Maidenmist Cemetery. This is the only way to open the doors to the Great Sepulcher (area Y2) so that the characters and Yorgrim can investigate the growing tear in the Shroud deep beneath the cemetery.

The balefire beacons have gone out following the deaths of the Fallen, the powerful beings whose souls were used to spark the flames. To reignite these beacons, the characters must travel across the cemetery to assist Yorgrim in performing each of the Fallen's final rites at their flame's respective brazier. The beacons, their locations, and the Fallen whose souls they were sparked from are as follows:

CRIMSON BEACON. Flame of Sir Marius Renathyr (see chapter 14), found in the Highborn Crypts (area Y4).

VIOLET BEACON. Flame of Lethica Nightborne (see chapter 17), found in the Cremation Gardens (area Y5).

AMBER BEACON. Flame of Ol' Jericho Sticks (see chapter 13), found in the Potter's Field (area Y6).

MAGENTA BEACON. Flame of Captain Briggsy Kratch (see chapter 15), found in the Mausoleum Lanes (area Y7).

EMERALD BEACON. Flame of Farryn of the Greenwood (see chapter 18), found in the Burial Mounds (area Y8).

AZURE BEACON. Flame of Yorgrim, found in the Shadestone Sanctuary (area Y9).

The Azure Beacon is the only one that remains ablaze. When each of the remaining five beacons is lit, its corresponding sconce above the doors of the Great Sepulcher (area Y2) and within the Balefire Chamber (area Y11) lights with the same-colored flame. When all six beacons are lit, the sepulcher's doors unseal.

FINAL RITES

To perform the final rites of the Fallen, a 1-minute ritual led by Yorgrim must be conducted at a balefire brazier. During the ritual, the characters must slay the attacking monsters and succeed on six ability checks. The specific details to complete the ritual are as follows:

SPARK THE FLAME. Special kindling connected to the Fallen, kept entombed at the respective cemetery location, must be placed in the brazier and ignited, beginning the ritual. Roll Initiative! If 1 minute passes without the beacon becoming fully lit, the flame goes out, and a character can offer a fragment of their soul to restore the kindling, gaining 1 Exhaustion level. The characters can then attempt the ritual again.

SACRIFICE A SOUL. The ignition of the flame draws the attention of Hostile cemetery monsters corrupted by the Shroud, committed to preventing the beacon from being lit. These monsters must be slain during the ritual as an offering to the balefire (see "The Beacon is Lit" below).

HOLD BACK THE SHROUD. The ravenous Shroud is drawn to the ritual, kept at bay with immense effort from Yorgrim. It billows around the fringes of the light cast by Yorgrim's lantern (see "Balefire Lantern" earlier in this chapter), waiting for the light to be snuffed out. Everything outside of the lantern's light is Heavily Obscured. Additionally, any character who leaves the light and steps into the Shroud is attacked by three **Shrouded** (one of each variant).



HONOR THE FALLEN. Once the balefire flame is lit, it burns small and must be stoked. As a Magic action, a character can make a contribution to the ceremony that honors who the Fallen were before they fell. The character makes a DC 15 ability check. Each of the Fallen has a list of suggested "resolution proficiencies" that have the best chance of contributing to the ritual. Other checks can work at your discretion, but the DC for such checks rises to 18 unless you feel the justification is especially fitting.

STOKE THE FIRE. Each successful ability check is one step toward finishing a Fallen's final rites (see "The Beacon is Lit" below). With each failure, tormented souls from the Shroud take on mocking shapes of the Fallen and unleash hateful words to torment the gravedigger and the characters. Each creature that can hear this verbal assault must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or take 3 (1d6) Psychic damage and gain the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn. A creature can choose to take an extra 21 (6d6) Psychic damage to avoid the Stunned condition.

THE BEACON IS LIT. After the destruction of the guardian monsters and six successful ability checks, the ritual concludes and the balefire beacon is fully lit, banishing the Shroud from the cemetery location. All shrouded in the beacon's location are destroyed, and the area loses the effects of the Shrouded Spirits, Wails of the Damned, and Corrupting Shroud features (see "Maidenmist Cemetery Features" earlier in this chapter).

BRILLIANT SUCCESS. How well the characters perform the final rites affects the encounter in the Balefire Chamber (area Y11) within the sepulcher. Each ability check during a ritual that succeeds by 5 or more is considered a Brilliant Success. The number of Brilliant Successes achieved during the ritual determines the balefire beacon's intensity, as shown in the Beacon Intensity table below (important in area Y11).

Beacon Intensity

Brilliant Successes	Beacon Intensity
2 or fewer	Glowing Beacon
3–5	Blazing Beacon
6	Roaring Beacon



19.1 Maidenmist Cemetery

MAIDENMIST CEMETERY LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to map 19.1.

Y1: CORPSE ROAD

A long road wide enough that two carriages can pass side by side leads toward a huge sepulcher that sits atop the hill at the center of the cemetery. At the base of the great stone structure, you see small lights flickering a pale blue. The sight of the hill is swallowed by the gloom as the fog rolls in, becoming incredibly dense all around you.

This 20-foot-wide cobblestone road stretches three miles from the cemetery gates to the Great Sepulcher (area Y2), and it once served as the main pathway for hearses and carriages delivering corpses to be buried. The mist is at its most dense around the gates, with the billowing plumes of the Shroud seeking to be free of the confines of the cemetery. Traveling this road without the protection of balefire is dangerous, and new threats emerge after each mile traveled.

First Mile. The shrieking, whispering, and gibbering of the tormented spirits of the Shroud threaten to corrupt the characters' souls and psyche. Any non-Undead in the mist must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) Psychic damage and 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Second Mile. The characters draw the attention of malign spirits. Six **Shrouded** (two of each variant) attack until they are destroyed. This resets the time of the cemetery's Shrouded Spirits feature (see "Maidenmist Cemetery Features" earlier in the chapter).

Third Mile. The oppressiveness of the Shroud becomes overwhelming. Any non-Undead in the mist must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level.

Y2: GREAT SEPULCHER

You step out of the mist into a flickering blue glow as you arrive at the base of a great sepulcher, seemingly ancient with long thin cracks and dense moss covering its surface. The cobblestone road circles around the structure and splits off at several points that lead further into the cemetery.

Before the huge double doors are two spectral figures holding lanterns that radiate with ghastly blue light. One is a bearded orcish spirit, hunched low by a tombstone chained to his back. The other is a shadowy hound with bright white lights for eyes. Both shine their lanterns upon the narrow gap between the doors to burn away the snaking tendrils of ghastly gray and blue-green mist that writhe between the seams in hopes of escape.

Mounted into the stone above the doors are six iron sconces, five of which are unlit. In the sixth sconce on the far right flickers an azure flame that casts the same light as the two lanterns held by the spirits before you.

The two spirits are Yorgrim the gravedigger and Isolde the grim (Neutral Good **Ghost**), who are straining to keep the Shroud from escaping the sepulcher. Yorgrim looks especially hollow and tired, failing to notice the characters' arrival until they announce themselves or Isolde alerts him.

When the characters approach Yorgrim, he is surprised that mortals have made it to the sepulcher alive, but he's relieved that they might be able to set things right in the cemetery and push back the Shroud. Use the details below to guide the conversation with Yorgrim:

- The tear in the Shroud within the sepulcher is growing, as shown by the shrouded trying to escape.
- The balefire beacons that ward against the Shroud have gone out one by one in recent weeks.
- Only one beacon remains lit, and its azure color matches his lantern. Both flames are tethered to his soul.
- His five former friends, similarly tied to the now-unlit beacons, have all been slain.
- The burial rites for the Fallen must be performed at each of the beacons to relight them.
- Undead creatures and other monsters corrupted by the Shroud guard the beacons' unlit braziers.
- Yorgrim is weakened due to battling the spirits but will aid the characters in this task and protect them from the mist.
- Isolde stays to keep her light on the sepulcher doors. She can only last sixteen hours on her own before her spirit's essence is spent and she fades away.
- Once all six balefire beacons are lit, the doors to the sepulcher can be opened to investigate the rift.

Ghost of a Chance. Yorgrim joins the characters in their exploration of Maidenmist Cemetery to protect them from the Shroud (see "The Phantom Gravedigger" earlier in this chapter), share what he knows about the Fallen (see chapter 8), and assist in performing the burial rites for each of his slain friends so that their respective balefire beacons can be lit.

This is a tremendous strain on his spirit. After each challenge his fortitude lessens, his spirit appears more hollow, and the maddening voices of the shrouded affect him more and more, leading toward his inevitable transformation into the Chained Reaper in the Tomb of the Shrouded (area Y15). Once all six balefire beacons are lit, Yorgrim's balefire lantern dims, shedding Bright Light in a 5-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 15 feet.

Loyal Hound. While Yorgrim and the characters explore Maidenmist Cemetery, Isolde is left alone to defend the doors of the sepulcher against the Shroud. She dutifully devotes herself to keep her balefire lantern lit, slowly draining her spectral essence. After 16 hours, Isolde's spirit is spent and she fades away, allowing the ghastly fog of the Shroud to seep out of the door and coalesce around the sepulcher.

Every 15 minutes after Isolde is gone, a **Shrouded** (random variant) escapes its prison and lurks in the gloom, waiting to attack the characters when they return. This effect stops once all six balefire beacons are lit, but the shrouded remain until they are destroyed.

Cemetery Paths. Six paved paths lead from the sepulcher to the locations containing balefire beacons, and a seventh leads to King's Rest (area Y10). Each one is 3 miles long.

Y3: Endless Gravestones

Between the major locations of Maidenmist Cemetery are vast stretches of hilly terrain covered in numerous tombstones that mark the gravesites of Wickermoor Hollow's dead throughout the centuries.

Shortcut. These grave-laden hills can be traversed as a 1-mile shortcut between adjacent outdoor locations of Maidenmist Cemetery (see map 19.1) instead of returning along the path back to the Great Sepulcher (area Y2) before moving to the next location.

Ravenous Dead. The corruption of the Shroud has turned many once-restful corpses into hordes of shambling Undead creatures that seek only to devour the living. Whenever the characters travel across the Endless Gravestones, they are attacked by a group of these ravening dead before arriving at the next location. Roll on the Ravening Hordes table to determine which horrors rise to attack the characters.

Ravening Hordes

1d8	Undead
1	Four **Wights** and four **Warhorse Skeletons**
2	One **Vampire Spawn** and six **Specters**
3	Six **Minotaur Skeletons**
4	Two **Ghasts** and four **Ghouls**
5	One **Wraith** and three **Will-o'-Wisps**
6	Three **Mummies** and three **Shadows**
7	Three **Ogre Zombies** and eight **Zombies**
8	One **Ghost** and twelve **Skeletons**

19.2 Highborn Crypts



Y4: Highborn Crypts

The paved pathway splits into various offshoots that lead to small courtyards, around which stand exquisitely crafted crypts topped with leering gargoyles. These structures, built of polished dark stone, are grand and gaudy, with the family names of the dead chiseled above each crypt's door. The air is filled with the sound of flapping wings and chittering as bats take off into the night sky in gyrating swarms.

Wealthy and noble families of Wickermoor Hollow are entombed within these imposing crypts. They are arranged around small courtyards and circled with wrought iron fences. Yorgrim leads the characters to a courtyard that contains a large metal brazier filled with dull red coals—the site where the final rites must be performed for Sir Marius Renathyr (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter) to light the Crimson Beacon. For battles in this location, use map 19.2.

Blood Tithe. The doors to the crypts are magically sealed and deeply tied to the noble blood of those entombed within. As a Study action, a character who examines a door and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check deduces that to open the door, fresh blood must be shed into a basin built into the crypt. A creature can shed its own blood, taking 6 (1d12) Necrotic damage and unsealing the crypt's door.

Bat-Filled Crypts. The crypts here are large structures, each housing a staircase that leads to an underground chamber with several stone sarcophagi containing the corpses of the once rich and powerful. Bat colonies that don't wish to be disturbed roost in these dark spaces. The first time a crypt's door opens, the bats spill out and into the night sky, biting and shrieking. Each creature within 10 feet of the door must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (4d4) Piercing damage from the bats.

Knight's Tale. While preparing to perform the final rites of Sir Marius Renathyr, the characters may recall what they learned in their exploration of the Crimson Monastery (see chapter 14). Additionally, Yorgrim can share the following details of his old friend:

- Marius was a valiant knight that served a god of the morning and his king Viktor Denathria, who was like a brother to him.
- He was a relentless destroyer of evil and protector of the innocent, riding to quests atop his trusted steed named Dawn.
- The righteous wrath that raged within him could only be soothed by his true love, the elven priestess Lethica Nightborne.

Crimson Kindling. The kindling to light the Crimson Beacon, a dried red rose, is kept in an underground chamber in one of the crypts, but Yorgrim's fragmented memory cannot recall which. As a Study action, a character who observes the crypts and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check determines the correct crypt by noting the imagery of suns and roses etched in the stone.

Crimson Rites. When performing the ritual to light the Crimson Beacon, below are the suggested resolution proficiencies the characters can utilize to perform Marius's final rites:

- **Acrobatics or Athletics:** Replicate great physical feats of heroism from his knightly quests.
- **History or Religion:** Recall the chivalric tenets of his king, his oath, and his god of the morning.
- **Painter's Supplies or Persuasion:** Appeal to the personal connections he had with his love.

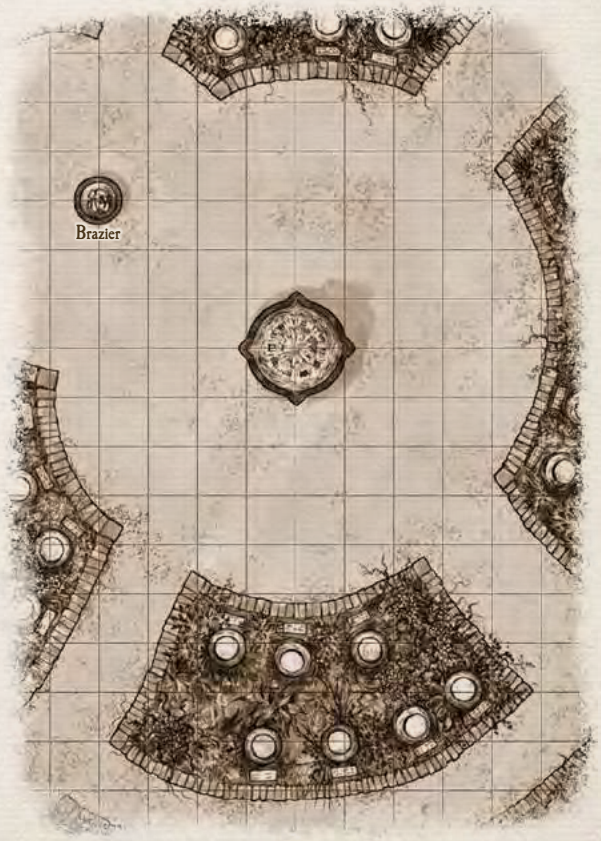
Creatures of the Night. When the ritual to light the Crimson Beacon begins, five **Night Creatures** emerge from nearby crypts and attack until they are destroyed. For each failed check to locate the kindling, a **Ghoul** joins the battle.

Grotesque Gargoyles. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) of each round during the ritual to light the Crimson Beacon, the hideous gargoyles perched atop the crypts pulse with a terrifying aura. Each creature that isn't a Fiend or an Undead in a 60-foot Emanation originating from the brazier must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn. When Frightened in this way, the creature must immediately take a Reaction to move up to its Speed away from the brazier by the safest route possible.

Y5: CREMATION GARDENS

> Roiling dark clouds overhead begin a downpour of rain upon the gardens you walk through, the winding pathway flanked by large clay urns that hold the ashes of the dead. The sound of burbling fountains at the center of each circle of the pathway joins in mournful harmony with the pattering of rainfall, punctuated by the low, monotonous tolling of a bell. Flowers of purple and white grow from the bushes and other vegetation that these memorial walkways cut through.

These melancholically beautiful gardens are where the ashes of those cremated in Wickermoor Hollow are kept amidst the brick-paved pathways intended for mourners to stroll down or ride through in carriages. Yorgrim leads the characters to a circle where a brazier beside a fountain is filled with strangely purple coals. The final rites must be performed here for Lethica Nightborne (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter) to light the Violet Beacon. For battles in this location, use map 19.3.



19.3 Cremation Gardens

Wishing Fountains. Numerous coins rest below the surface of the water of every fountain—6,000 GP worth of coins in total—remnants of lucky offerings from centuries of mourners. As a Study action, a character who examines the fountains and succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check determines that there is a boon for tossing in an offering and a punishment for stealing from the fountain.

Each character who tosses 1 GP worth of coins into a fountain gains the benefits of the *Bless* spell for 1d4 hours. Each time a creature takes a coin from a fountain, it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed for 1d4 hours. While cursed in this way, the creature has Disadvantage on D20 Tests.

Mourning Urns. The urns that line the garden's pathways contain the ashes of the dead and the sorrow of those they left behind. The lids are fastened tightly but can be removed with a Utilize action and a successful DC 13 Strength check. When opened, the urn emits the sound of inconsolable mourning wails. Any creatures within 15 feet of the urn that can hear the wails must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or drop to 0 Hit Points.

Night's Tale. While preparing to perform the final rites of Lethica Nightborne, the characters may recall what they learned in their exploration of Memory's Rest Sanatorium (see chapter 17). Additionally, Yorgrim can share the following details of his old friend:

- Lethica was a devout priestess of the Nightmother, a goddess of night, healing, and motherhood who takes the form of a barn owl.
- The gravely ill traveled from far and wide on pilgrimages to have their ailments cured by her and her acolytes with magic and healing brews.
- She forever wore a mask and hid her face from all until she met Sir Marius Renathyr and experienced true love, finally revealing herself to him.

Violet Kindling. The kindling to light the Violet Beacon, a barn owl feather, is kept in an urn within the garden, but Yorgrim's fragmented memory cannot recall which. As a Study action, a character who observes the urns and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature or Religion) check can find the correct urn by finding the imagery of barn owls and new moons. Opening this urn does not cause mourning wails (see "Mourning Urns" above).

Violet Rites. When performing the ritual to light the Violet Beacon, below are the suggested resolution proficiencies the characters can utilize to perform Lethica's final rites:

- **Brewer's Supplies or Medicine:** Showcase her favored healing techniques, tonics, and salves.
- **Calligrapher's Supplies or Persuasion:** Appeal to the personal connection she had with her love.
- **Performance or Religion:** Sing the hymns and recite the tenets of the Nightmother.

Black Coach. When the ritual to light the Violet Beacon begins, a **Phantom Hearse** rattles down the pathway from deeper into the garden, attacking until it is destroyed.

Death Knell. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) of each round during the ritual to light the Violet Beacon, the tolling of a phantom bell booms out over the garden. Each creature that isn't Undead in a 60-foot Emanation originating from the brazier must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Y6: POTTER'S FIELD

> The path turns from a paved walkway to a dirt road that eventually ends at a sprawling expanse of hills topped with countless simple wooden posts, each marking a nameless grave. The cawing and croaking of carrion birds fills the air as the fog rolls along this potter's field. Within the gloom, many amber-hued lights flicker in the distance.

This rolling potter's field is where the poor and forgotten of Wickermoor Hollow are buried, their final resting place only marked by wordless wooden posts. For battles in this location, use map 19.4.

Finding the Brazier. Yorgrim's fraying memory cannot recall the location of the Amber Beacon amidst the endless expanse of nameless gravesites. The characters must find the orange coals in the gloom, but trickster spirits known as kackles flit about the hills and carry lanterns that glow with the same color in hopes of luring victims to their death.

To travel through the potter's field, the characters can observe the amber lights in the darkness and make a group DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, they arrive at a brazier sitting amidst a scattering of nameless gravesites that's filled with dim orange coals—the site where the final rites must be performed for Ol' Jericho Sticks (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter) to light the Amber Beacon.

On a failure, the characters are deceived and are led to a deep mass grave that appears suddenly out of the gloom. Each character deceived in this way must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature falls into the open grave, has the Prone condition, and has the Restrained condition from dozens of skeletal hands that emerge from the earth. A creature that enters the grave willingly must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the Restrained condition. A Restrained creature repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the condition on itself on a success.

19.4 Potter's Field



While Restrained in this way, a creature takes 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns.

Shallow Graves. Most of the graves marked by the wooden posts are shallow and swarmed with sickly crows, ravens, and vultures that peck at the rotting remains that protrude from the earth. Approaching a grave disturbs the carrion birds, which scatter into the night sky, shedding their pestilence on those below. Each creature in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the grave must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition for 1 hour.

After the carrion birds have fled, the grave can be dug up in 10 minutes using a Shovel or other digging tools, or in 1 hour using bare hands.

Scarecrow's Ballad. While preparing to perform the final rites of Ol' Jericho Sicks, the characters may recall what they learned in their exploration of Foxwillow and the Fields of the Crow (see chapter 13). Additionally, Yorgrim can share the following details of his old friend:

- Jericho was a kindly scarecrow who, at his heart, was a tunesmith, favoring his banjo, whistling, and singing in his warbling timbre.
- He loved to travel from town to town and tell stories and fables to the villagers, especially the children who hung on his every word.
- He was a skilled handyman and craftsman, lending his expertise to build or fix whatever people needed and offering to help tend to the fields.

Amber Kindling. The kindling to light the Amber Beacon, a bundle of straw, is buried in a shallow grave in the potter's field, but Yorgrim does not remember which. As a Search action, a character who walks among the graves and succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Animal Handling or Perception) check notices the correct grave, which is flocked exclusively with crows.

Amber Rites. When performing the ritual to light the Amber Beacon, below are the suggested resolution proficiencies the characters can utilize to perform Jericho's final rites:

- **Musical Instrument or Performance:** Play or sing a folksy song about his travels and good deeds.
- **Disguise Kit or History:** Tell one of his tall tales with a flourish or act out his folktales in costume.
- **Carpenter's Tools or Nature:** Showcase his handy skillset or knowledge of all things farming.

Trickster Spirits. When the ritual begins, two **Kackles** emerge from the gloom and attack until they are destroyed. For each failed check to locate the kindling, a **Specter** joins the battle.

Dancing Lanterns. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) of each round during the ritual, colorful lanterns flit about the fog in hypnotic patterns. Each creature that isn't Undead and that can see the lights must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition. While Charmed in this way, the creature is compelled to move into the fog. The creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Y7: MAUSOLEUM LANES

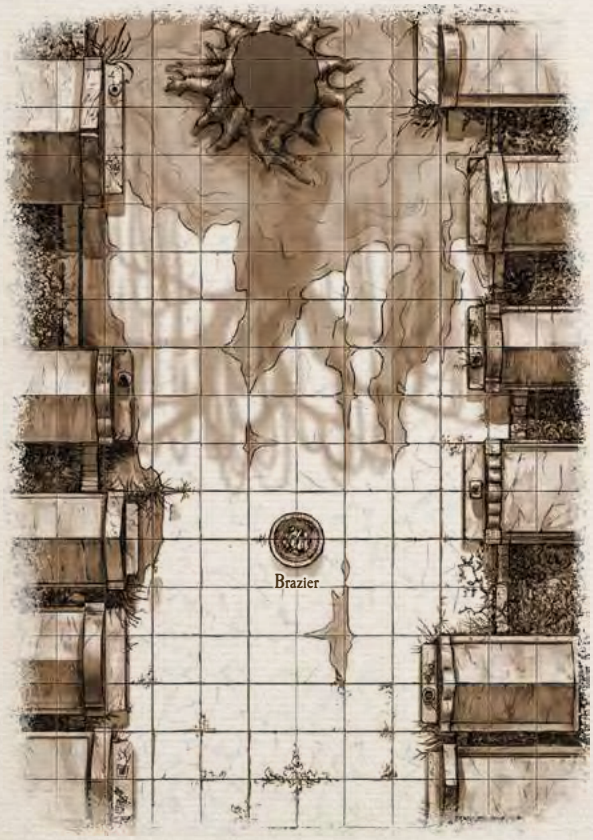
> The landscape around you becomes waterlogged and boggy, with tall, gnarled trees rising up from the fen, draped in hanging moss. The stone path cuts through the swampy terrain and splits into long lanes flanked on either side by tightly packed mausoleums. The modestly sized vaults are overgrown with creeping vines and ivy, while murky water pools in the cracks between the square stone tiles of the pathway before you.

The numerous mausoleums that line the crisscrossing network of paved pathways form a veritable city of the dead in the swampy terrain, where it is too wet to bury bodies beneath the earth. Yorgrim leads the characters to a brazier with eerie pink coals that sits at the end of a sunken lane near a mossy tree. This is the site where the final rites must be performed for Captain Briggsy Kratch (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter) to light the Magenta Beacon. For battles in this location, use map 19.5.

Acrid Muck. The boggy terrain threatens to swallow the tiles that form the paths between the vaults. For every 10 minutes of travel down the mausoleum lanes, each character must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or slip into the muck and have the Restrained condition. A Restrained character takes 5 (1d10) Acid damage at the start of each of its turns. It can take an action to repeat the saving throw, freeing itself on a success.

Hexed Vaults. The mausoleums that house the resting dead are jinxed with powerful magic to ward off would-be graverobbers. The heavy stone doors are tightly sealed and can be opened with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, but any creature that attempts to open the vault must first make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw as the protective hex is activated. On a failed save, the creature takes 11 (2d10) Force damage, is pushed 10 feet away from the door, and gains the effects of the *Bane* spell for 1d4 hours. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage only.

Pirate's Shanty. While preparing to perform the final rites of Captain Briggsy Kratch, the characters may recall what they learned in their exploration of the Drowned Crossroads (see chapter 15). Additionally, Yorgrim can share the following details of his old friend:



19.5 Mausoleum Lanes

- Briggsy was a pirate of fearsome renown but with a heart of gold, sailing the seas into danger and adventure with his loyal crew.
- He was skilled at swordplay, earning the moniker "The Kutlass," but was also infamous for his clever plans and cunning tricks.
- Luck always seemed to be on his side, and he excelled at games of chance, eventually mastering the art of fate-bending sorcery.

Magenta Kindling. The kindling to light the Magenta Beacon, a bottle of rum, is kept in a sealed mausoleum vault, but Yorgrim is foggy as to which it is. As a Study action, a character who observes the mausoleums and succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check deduces the right vault by noting nautical motifs and sorcerous glyphs.

Magenta Rites. When performing the ritual to light the Magenta Beacon, below are the suggested resolution proficiencies the characters can utilize to perform Briggsy's final rites:

- **History or Navigator's Tools:** Recall the daring nautical and piratical exploits of him and his crew.
- **Acrobatics or Deception:** Show off his fancy footwork or his famous cunning ruses.
- **Arcana or Gaming Set:** Highlight his skills in sorcery or his lucky breaks in gambling.

Swamp Thing. When the ritual begins, a **Dream Eater** swoops down from the branches of the moss-shrouded trees—its wings casting a hazy, psychedelic glow across the mausoleums—and attacks until it is destroyed. For each failed check to locate the kindling, two **Mud Mephits** join the battle.

Jinxed Flame. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) of each round during the ritual, the old hexes that linger over the mausoleum lanes react to the stoking pink flame and suffuses it with unpredictable magic. Each character in a 60-foot Emanation originating from the brazier must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be afflicted with a random jinx as determined by the Mausoleum Jinxes table below.

Y8: BURIAL MOUNDS

The pathway turns to grass and widens into a small woodland clustered on an especially hilly portion of the cemetery. You realize that the hills are too round, tall, and tightly packed to be naturally occurring and must instead be burial mounds. You walk deeper into the grove of trees and see strange apples growing from hand-like branches. Jagged faces are embedded in the trunks, as if the trees themselves are watching and beckoning you deeper into the wood.

Mausoleum Jinxes

2d6	Jinx
2	**Snake Eyes.** On the character's next turn, they can only do one of the following: move or take an action or a Bonus Action. If the character takes an Attack or Magic action, they take 7 (2d6) Psychic damage.
3–4	**The Nightmare.** The character has the Frightened condition until the end of their next turn, and they must immediately take a Reaction to move as far as they can away from the brazier, up to their Speed.
5–6	**Whiskey Bottle.** The character drops anything they're holding. Until the end of their next turn, whenever they pick up an object, they must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or immediately drop it.
7	**Cheap Shot.** Until the end of the character's next turn, their Speed is halved, and attack rolls against them have Advantage.
8–9	**Withered Arm.** Until the end of the character's next turn, they have Disadvantage on D20 Tests that rely on Strength or Dexterity.
10–11	**Bad Luck.** Until the end of the character's next turn, whenever they make an attack roll or a saving throw, they must subtract 1d6 from the total.
12	**Dead Man.** If the next attack roll made against the character before Initiative count 20 on the following round hits, the attack is automatically a Critical Hit. If that attack roll misses, it hits instead.

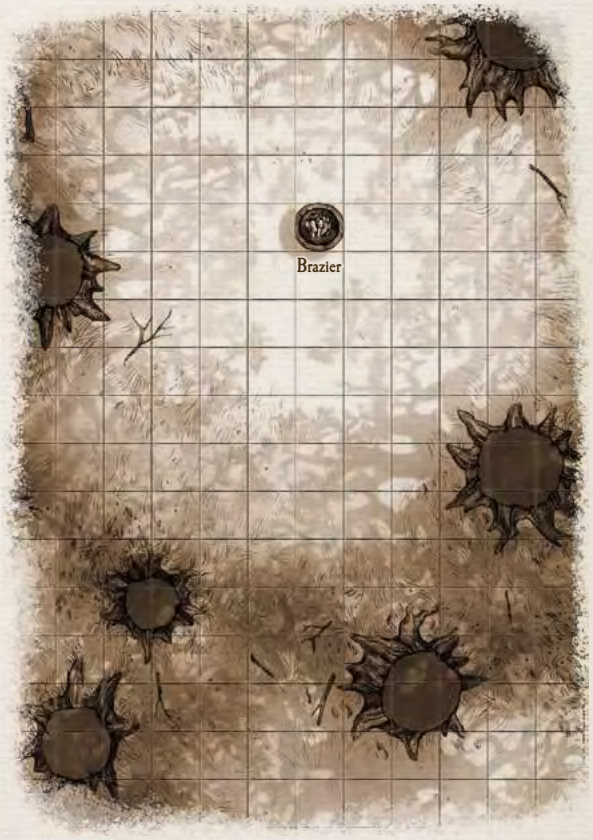
These ancient burial mounds are where the oldest and most wild peoples of Wickermoor Hollow were buried long ago. For battles in this location, use map 19.6.

Finding the Brazier. The trees that have grown up from the mounds of soil rich with decaying dead have twisted into strange and sentient watchers that form an ever-shifting woodland. This, combined with a weakened memory, has caused Yorgrim to lose track of the brazier that holds the Emerald Beacon. The characters must navigate the wooded mounds to find it without getting lost.

To find the brazier, the characters make a group DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, they arrive at a brazier atop a mound filled with eerie green coals—the site where the final rites must be performed for Farryn of the Greenwood (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter) to light the Emerald Beacon.

On a failure, the characters get lost in the woods, wandering for 1 hour before stumbling upon a ring of colorful toadstools growing up from the decay of death. Any creatures that walk into the ring of toadstools must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) Poison damage and gain the Poisoned condition for 1d4 hours as the mushrooms burst with toxic spores.

Forbidden Fruit. Despite the gloomy trees that make up the woodland, the apples that grow from their gnarled branches seem strangely supple and colorful. As a Study action, a creature can examine the apples and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check, determining that they are magical with potential beneficial or harmful effects on a success.



19.6 Burial Mounds

When a creature picks an apple, the twisted tree responds to the theft of its fruit with violence. The jagged face in its trunk shifts to a wrathful expression, and its gnarled branches lash out. Each creature in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the tree must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 6 (1d12) Bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) Necrotic damage and have the Prone condition. As a Bonus Action, a creature can eat an apple to gain a magical effect as determined by the Forbidden Fruit table below.

Forbidden Fruit

1d20	Effect
1	Drop to 0 Hit Points
2–4	Gain 1 Exhaustion level
5–7	Gain the effects of the *Bane* spell for 1 hour
8–10	Take 14 (4d6) Poison damage
11–13	Gain the effects of the *Lesser Restoration* spell
14–16	Regain 14 (4d4 + 4) Hit Points
17–19	Gain the effects of the *Bless* spell for 1 hour
20	Gain Heroic Inspiration

Mounds of the Old Ones. The mounds of the wood have small circular openings leading to the burial chambers within, packed with several feet of dirt. As an action, a character who scours a mound and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check find the opening, which can be dug through in 1 minute with a Shovel or digging tools, or in 10 minutes by hand.

Druid's Lore. While preparing to perform the final rites of Farryn of the Greenwood, the characters may recall what they learned in their exploration of Hartsblight Forest (see chapter 18). Additionally, Yorgrim can share the following details of his old friend:

- Farryn was a member of a druid circle of antlered satyrs that followed the Old Ways and adhered to the tenets of the Green Queen.
- She had a deep affinity for all creatures of the forest, from beasts to birds to Fey beings, and was committed to the flourishing of plant life.
- The one thing she loved more than the wilds was an optimistic human woman named Gwenna, who worshiped the Patient Lady.

Emerald Kindling. The kindling to light the Emerald Beacon, an oak branch, is buried within a burial mound, but Yorgrim cannot recall which. As a Search action, a character who walks through the mounds and succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check identifies the correct mound, from which a tree marked with the face of the Green Queen grows.

Emerald Rites. When performing the ritual, below are the suggested resolution proficiencies the characters can utilize to perform Farryn's final rites:

- **Nature or Religion:** Extol the tenets of her druid circle, the Old Ways, or the Green Queen.
- **Animal Handling or Herbalism Kit:** Showcase her affinity for the forest's flora and fauna.
- **Persuasion or Woodcarver's Tools:** Appeal to the flowering love and passion she had for Gwenna.

Twisted Treant. When the ritual begins, a nearby tree uproots with oaken legs, and a **Gloomwood** attacks until it is destroyed. For each failed check to locate the kindling, two **Violet Fungi** join the battle.

Corpse Roots. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) of each round during the ritual, the roots intertwined with the dead of the burial mounds grow restless and erupt around the ritual. Each creature in a 60-foot Emanation originating from the brazier must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the Restrained condition (escape DC 12) until the end of its next turn.

Y9: Shadestone Sanctuary

> A strange sense of calm and peace washes over you as you approach a gathering of tall, chiseled stones that stand before a small ziggurat made of stacked stone blocks. A brazier at the top of the structure holds a blazing blue flame that casts an azure light over the area.

This small sanctuary was erected by Yorgrim when he first arrived at Maidenmist Cemetery. The standing stones and ziggurat bear the markings of his orcish Shadestone Clan.

Azure Beacon. The beacon of azure balefire, sparked from Yorgrim's soul, still burns here. However, the flame has shrunk as Yorgrim's spectral essence has been depleted over time. The sanctuary does not have Maidenmist Cemetery's Wails of the Damned, Shrouded Spirits, and Corrupting Shroud features (see "Maidenmist Cemetery Features" earlier in this chapter).

Clan Stones. The tall, carved stones standing throughout the sanctuary are etched with countless names written in Orc. As a Study action, a character

who examines the stones and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (History or Investigation) check determines these are the names of orcs. If the characters ask Yorgrim about the names, he tells them that they are the names of his clan members who have died. He might share the story of his time before coming to Druskenvald (see "The Penitent Pilgrim" earlier in this chapter).

Chamber of Rest. At the top of the ziggurat's steps is an open chamber that contains ten stone slabs. Yorgrim recommends that the characters rest here if they are tired or wounded. A sense of peace washes over any character who steps within. Short Rests taken in this chamber take 10 minutes and Long Rests take 1 hour.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *Strength* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Shovel of Yorgrim* rests on one of the stone slabs within the Chamber of Rest.

Y10: KING'S REST

> In the distance, the sound of battle rages from the roiling fog that hangs over an enormous palatial barrow. A great stone statue of a heavily armored, kingly figure stands tall on the mound, its sword piercing through the gloom. Through the green and gray wisps of mist, you see numerous undead soldiers battling against hordes of twisted shrouded spirits before the huge stone doors of the barrow.

This is the most ancient of all the sites in the cemetery, even older than the Great Sepulcher and the chambers beneath it. The circumstances of its construction are lost to time, but Yorgrim knows that it is the resting place of a long-dead and incredibly powerful monarch. The ruler's name has long been forgotten, and he is now only known as **The Barrow King** (see chapter 26).

War of the Dead. Before the stone doors of the enormous barrow are fifty **Wights** forever locked in a clash with fifty **Shrouded** (random variants). The Shroud seeks to overtake King's Rest so it may corrupt the Barrow King and dominate him to its will, and the army of wights relentlessly protect their monarch, aided by the ancient wards placed on the tomb. Yorgrim will gravely caution against approaching, as it would be certain death for the characters.

Protective Runes. Two huge stone doors to the barrow are covered in ancient runes that protect it. The substance of the barrow is immutable, the space within can't be entered with teleportation magic and is lined with a *Wall of Force*, and the doors are sealed with *Arcane Lock*.

Additionally, four prominent runes etched on the doors are four different glyphs created with the *Symbol* spell (Death, Fear, Pain, and Stunning), triggered when any non-Undead creature touches the door.

King's Arms. In the unlikely event that the characters enter the burial chamber of the Barrow King alive, a huge, impenetrable stone sarcophagus is topped with a set of *Armor of Invulnerability* and a *Luck Blade*.

SEPULCHER OF THE SHROUD

Once all six balefire beacons are lit, the door to the Great Sepulcher (area Y2) can be opened, and the characters can proceed into the heart of the necropolis. When the characters approach the sepulcher after they've lit all the beacons, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you return to the sepulcher, you see the flickering multi-colored lights of balefire dancing across its great entrance. Crimson, violet, amber, magenta, emerald, and azure flames burn in the sconces affixed to the stone, and not a sliver of the Shroud can be seen escaping from the crack between the doors.

The tremendous strain on Yorgrim's spirit has weakened him greatly, and his ghostly form is visibly more faint and hollow. His fading essence has caused his lantern to dim, which now only sheds Bright Light in a 5-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 15 feet (see "Balefire Lantern" and "Gravedigger Actions" earlier in this chapter).

As his mind continues to unravel, he is clearly more affected by the gibbering of the shrouded, and he becomes less aware of the characters, directly engaging them in conversation less and less as they proceed. Despite this, he is determined to discover why the surge of the Shroud is increasing, and he won't turn back.

If Isolde has not been destroyed, Yorgrim commands her to stay behind and guard the door to the sepulcher and ensure that no Undead follow the characters inside. In truth, Yorgrim does not believe he will return from the depths and wants to ensure Isolde can help guide the next caretaker of the cemetery.

SEPULCHER FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the sepulcher's interior has the following features in addition to Maidenmist Cemetery's Corrupting Shroud feature (see "Maidenmist Cemetery Features" earlier in this chapter):

ELDRITCH GLOOM. The Shroud itself spills forth into the sepulcher, making all interior locations Lightly Obscured.

LIGHTING. The chambers inside the sepulcher and beneath the earth never see the light of the Crooked Moon and are shrouded in Darkness.

PASSAGEWAYS. Stone passageways between chambers, stairwells, and catacombs are 10 feet wide with 10-foot-high ceilings.

SHRIEKS OF THE DAMNED. The screams of the tormented souls within the Shroud echo through the chamber even louder. Whenever a creature makes a Constitution saving throw to maintain Concentration, it must subtract 1d4 from the roll.

SEPULCHER LOCATIONS

Death reigns in the chambers within the Sepulcher of the Shroud, always threatening to escape.

Y11: BALEFIRE CHAMBER

> This stone chamber is bathed in the flickering, multi-colored hues of the balefire emanating from the sconces embedded into the walls at even intervals. The light rises upward to the ceiling towering sixty feet overhead. In contrast, the far end of the room is shrouded in a gray and blue-green mist, billowing up from a ruined passage flanked by crumbled walls with shattered sconces. In the fog, the otherworldly gibbers of twisted spirits call out from the malformed shapes within.

This entrance chamber within the sepulcher is lined with sconces of balefire to prevent the Shroud from escaping into Wickermoor Hollow. The recent snuffing out of the balefire beacons allowed the Shroud to gain power and collapse a portion of the walls and passage to the undercroft that once shed warding light. The chamber is filled with Dim Light.

Roaring Shrouded. Throughout the roiling mist, ten **Shrouded** (random variants) spill up from the undercroft and attack. However, a number of them are obliterated as they enter the light cast by the balefires in the sconces. The intensity of the flame in the sconces and the number of shrouded obliterated is determined by how successful the characters were in performing the final rites rituals to light the balefire beacons (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter):

- For each Roaring Beacon, two shrouded are destroyed.
- For each Blazing Beacon, one shrouded is destroyed.

Rubble. The far end of the chamber is collapsed with rubble from the crumbled sepulcher walls. To clear the pathway, the characters can take 10 minutes and make a group DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, removing the blockage to the undercroft on a success. On a failure, it takes 1 hour to clear the rubble.

Y12: UNDERCROFT CATACOMBS

> You walk down the steps into the labyrinthine catacombs beneath the sepulcher. Rows of skulls line the earthen walls, and a thin layer of mist pools along the ground, streaked with eerie blue-green mist. Each step is uneven, and you feel the floor tremble unsteadily as you navigate the twisting tunnels.

These catacombs run like a maze through the sepulcher's undercroft and are the only passage to the stairs that leads to the tear in the Shroud. It is easy to get lost here, and the journey is treacherous, as cracks grow in the earthen floor, threatening to crumble away into the depths below.

Catacomb Maze. The characters must use their wits and tread lightly to navigate the catacombs. For every 10 minutes of travel, the characters must make a group DC 15 Intelligence check. On a success, the characters make it closer to their destination. After three successful checks, they arrive at the Stygian Descent (area Y14).

After each failure, the characters arrive at a dead end where the floor beneath them is especially fragile and cracked. Each character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or break through a 5-foot breach in the floor and plummet 60 feet into the Necropolis Depths (area Y13).

Y13: NECROPOLIS DEPTHS

> The stench of death and damp earth fills this massive, naturally occurring cavern, but it is clear that its size has been expanded even further by huge, burrowing claws. Several wide tunnels burrowed into the walls of the chamber have collapsed, each one lined with corpses in varying stages of decay, all coated in a layer of eerie, pallid slime. Several pockets of ooze glow with the ghastly blue-green and gray of the Shroud.

This is the lair of a spirit-devouring **Necrolisk**, which burrowed into the cavern to trap and consume the shrouded spilling forth from the tear to the Shroud. The unfortunate shrouded that occasionally squirm into this space through cracks in the stone wall of the Stygian Descent (area Y14) become a succulent meal for

the monster. The draconic creature lurks in one of its burrows toward the top of the cavern, and it ambushes any creatures that enter its lair.

Necrolisk Slime. The burrows dug into the walls of the cavern are lined with twelve blobs of foul, shimmering slime created by the saliva of the necrolisk, each containing a corpse or the dissolved remnants of a shrouded. As a Study action, a character who examines the slime and succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check determines that it has the properties to restrain and break down shrouded, and it can potentially be harvested and used against the twisted spirits.

A character who spends 1 minute collecting a blob of slime and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check gains one use of Necrolisk Slime. As a Utilize action, a character can throw the slime up to 30 feet at a shrouded, which must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be Restrained for 1 minute (escape DC 12). While Restrained in this way, the shrouded takes 5 (1d10) Force damage at the start of each of its turns.

Cave Formations. The cavern floor is covered in rough and strangely shaped rock formations, making it Difficult Terrain for Large or smaller creatures.

Cracked Wall. As a Search action, a character who observes the walls of the cavern and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices wisps of the Shroud entering the cavern from cracks along a weakened wall. A character can smash through this wall with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, creating a 5-foot-wide opening that leads to the landing of the Stygian Descent (area Y14).

Y14: STYGIAN DESCENT

> You arrive at the top of a stone spiral staircase that plunges deep into the earth. Its walls are etched with thousands of gaunt, skeletal faces wailing in agony. Huge plumes of shrieking mist billow up from the depths below. Sconces hold flickering balefire that glows with a color you have seen far too often: the ghastly blue-green of the Shroud. Yorgrim lets out a deep sigh filled with concern.
>
> "Impossible... The balefire itself... Corrupted by the Shroud... We must hurry..."

The balefire that once warded this staircase has turned from azure to the ghastly hues of the Shroud, filling the area with Bright Light that eliminates the effects of Yorgrim's lantern (see "Balefire Lantern" earlier in this chapter). These sconces can't be extinguished until the tear to the Shroud is sealed.

The Descent. Yorgrim and the characters must make the final descent down the stairs and through the ghastly mist of the Shroud. The voices within scream out to Yorgrim in Common and Orc, blaming him for their deaths and condemning him to their fate. When the characters have descended into the mist, they must each succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level.

Tomb Door. Once the characters finish descending the steps, a long hallway carved with the faces of wailing souls leads to large stone doors engraved with the shape of a hooded woman holding a lantern. Spectral mist spills from between the cracks of the doors, slithering along the sides of the hallway. Only Yorgrim can open the door. Before he does, he asks the characters, "Are you prepared to face what's within?" When the characters tell him they are ready, he opens the door to the Tomb of the Shrouded (area Y15).

Y15: TOMB OF THE SHROUDED

> Ghastly blue-green light fills this cavernous tomb, cast from braziers of corrupted balefire that sit upon two stone platforms—one raised up from the chamber floor, and one hanging above, suspended by immense, iron chains. Billowing plumes of eldritch mist roil throughout the room, spilling forth from a huge gyrating tear in reality that hovers near the tomb's ceiling. The Shroud itself spills forth, heralded by the shrieking of tormented souls.
>
> The door slams shut behind you, and Yorgrim stares up at the tear into the Shroud, his spectral face filled with despair. "No... It was the size of a headstone only one month ago... I must close this tear once and for all... It must be me..."

This chamber has imprisoned the tear into the Shroud for centuries, but the crash of the *Ghostlight Express* into Wickermoor Hollow and the deaths of the Fallen have allowed the Shroud to corrupt even the balefire that had once kept it at bay. It is here where the Shroud is at its strongest, allowing it to finally defeat its jailer. Stone coffins sit on all three levels of the chamber.

Platforms. A three-pronged platform rises from the main floor of the tomb, accessible by three separate sets of stairs. A second three-pronged platform hangs 20 feet above the first, held aloft by enormous chains, accessible by three sets of stairs on the first platform.

Shrouded Tear. 20 feet above the second platform and 10 feet below the tomb's ceiling is a 20-foot wide oblong-shaped tear into the Shroud, which rapidly spills forth blue-green and gray mist, causing the whole chamber to be Lightly Obscured.

Corrupted Balefire. Eerie blue-green light of the Shroud emanates from eight braziers throughout the tomb, filling the space with Bright Light. This corruptive light is so powerful that it renders Yorgrim powerless, eliminating the features of his lantern and preventing any actions (see "Gravedigger Actions" and "Balefire Lantern" earlier in this chapter).

THE HARROWING

After many years of strain, toil, and penance, the resilient Yorgrim finally breaks, and the Shroud claims him. However, he makes one act of defiance in his despair, as he ascends to the second platform beneath the shrouded tear. When he proceeds to the center of the second platform, read or paraphrase the following:

> The faded spectral form of Yorgrim, now nearly translucent, holds his lantern toward the yawning, shrieking portal above him that spills forth with oscillating mist. In one last act of defiance, he shines his azure light into the dark fog and bellows, "Be gone, abominations! Return to the gloom! These souls are not for you to feast upon!"
>
> Despite his determination, the gravedigger is too hollow and too weak. The azure lantern flickers and dims, and Yorgrim's will breaks. His face falls and he lets out an exhausted whisper. "The voices spoke true. I have failed."
>
> In an instant, a shrieking tendril of the Shroud bursts forth from the tear and crashes into Yorgrim's spirit. It billows around him until the final glimmer of azure is enveloped in mist, a plume that grows to an enormous size amidst the cacophony of shrieking spirits and rattling chains.
>
> With a burst of blue-green flame, the fog is expunged, and before you floats a colossal avatar of death. Yorgrim, still burdened by his gravestone, heaves a scythe of corrupted balefire and glares at you through skeletal eye sockets. Yorgrim calls out, a thousand voices in one: "He's broken, and now we will feed!"

The last of the Fallen falls, and Yorgrim has been transformed into **The Chained Reaper**, now little more than a manifestation of death itself and the hunger of the Shroud. If the characters do not slay him, he will destroy the sepulcher and cold iron gates of the cemetery, unleashing a tide of ravenous dead upon Wickermoor Hollow and beyond. Use map 19.7 for this combat.

SHROUD INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the will of the Shroud causes one of the following effects; it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

ABOMINABLE SPIRITS. Three **Shrouded** (one of each variant) appear in an unoccupied space within the tomb (GM's choice). They act immediately and on Initiative count 20 on subsequent rounds. The shrouded vanish when they die, when this effect happens again, or when the Shroud tear is sealed.

OPPRESSIVE GLOOM. Dense blue-green mist spills forth from the tear and fills the room, making the tomb Heavily Obscured until Initiative count 20 on the following round.

TIDE OF DEATH. Waves of shrieking fog burst forth from the malevolent souls. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, each enemy of **The Chained Reaper** within a 5-foot Emanation originating from the reaper and any Shrouded. *Failure:* The target is pushed up to 15 feet straight away from the source.

PHASE 1: COLD IRON

The countless chains that rattle from **The Chained Reaper** slither out like tentacles, seeking to make his foes experience the burden and imprisonment he's suffered. Three **Shrouded** (one of each variant) appear in unoccupied spaces within the tomb and attack with the Chained Reaper.

The Jailer. Once per turn, whenever the Chained Reaper is hit by a melee or ranged attack roll, a chain shoots out toward the attacker. The attacker must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the Grappled condition (escape DC 13) until the end of the attacker's next turn.

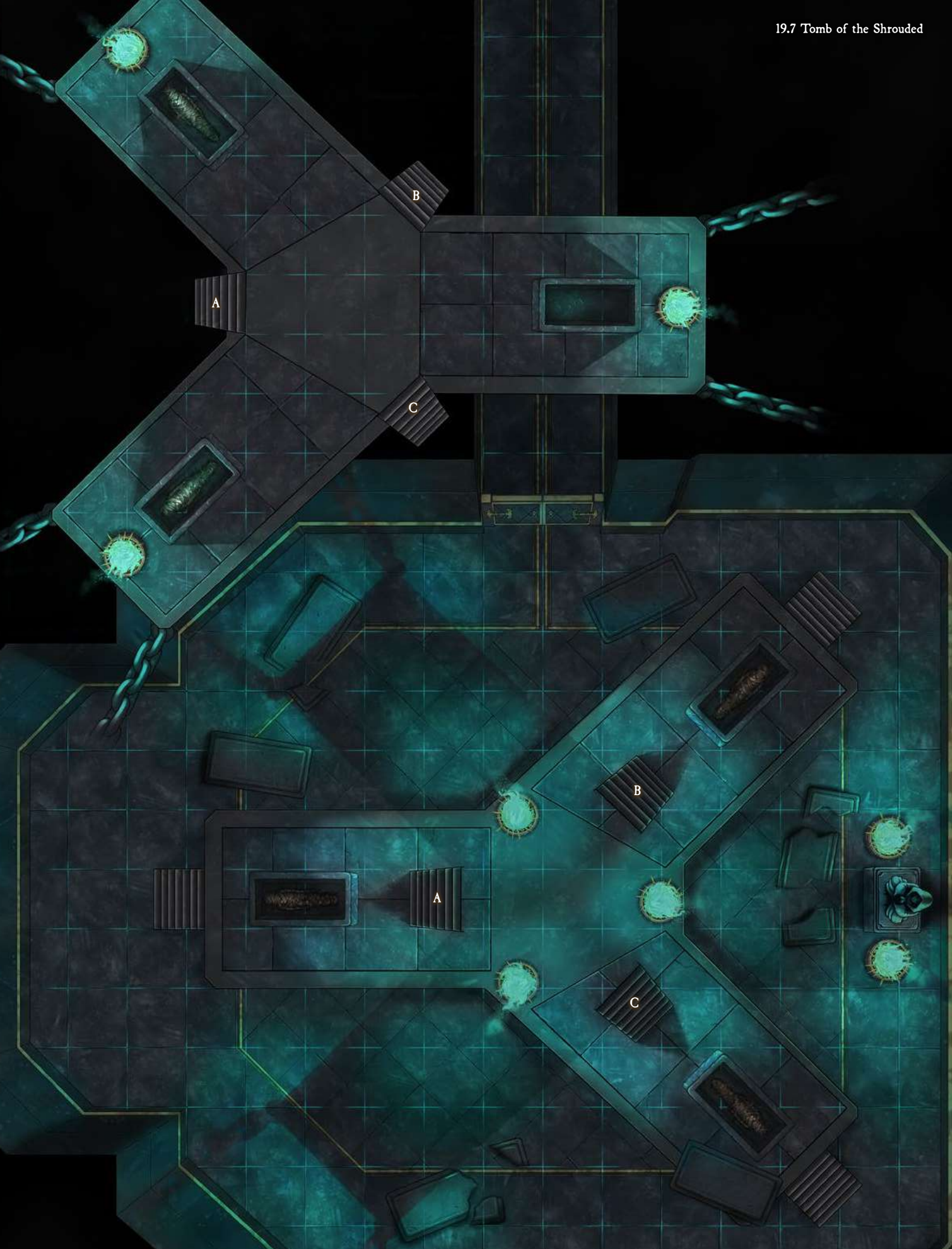
Corrupted Braziers. Corrupted balefire roars in eight braziers in the tomb, radiating with the soul-sapping power of the Shroud. A creature that passes through the fire must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. A creature makes this save only once during a turn.

Azure Defiance. When the Chained Reaper is Bloodied, faint wisps of Yorgrim's azure light flit through his form as the hold of the Shroud on his soul lessens, causing the malevolent eldritch mist to lash out. The voices within the Shroud let out sickening shrieks in unison. Each character must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or gain the Stunned condition until the end of their next turn. This transitions the battle to Phase 2.

PHASE 2: COLD FIRE

> Cold, corrupted balefire rages all around you as the scythe of the Chained Reaper explodes into an inferno and the lantern rages into a fiery beacon. Yorgrim's voice booms out with the chorus of wailing souls. "You will break... They all break..."

Corrupted Beacons. The braziers' corrupted balefire rages brighter. The saving throw DC of the braziers increases to 15, and a creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of a brazier must make the save.


B
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Fallen Effigies. Six stone coffins rest upon the tomb's platforms, five of which contain simple adult-sized effigies of the other Fallen. The sixth is empty. As Yorgrim's azure hue returns to The Chained Reaper (see "Azure Defiance" above), these effigies begin to glow with their respective balefire colors. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check realize the effigies can serve as kindling and be used to cleanse the corrupted balefire braziers.

As a Utilize action, a character can pick up one of the effigies and place it into the brazier while standing within 5 feet of it, cleansing the brazier and removing the effects of "Corrupted Beacons" from it. The calming and kind voice of Yorgrim's friend calls out to him as the effigy burns, dealing 10 Psychic damage to the Chained Reaper.

Additionally, the flame turns the color of the Fallen effigy that was used to purify it (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter), shedding warding light in a 20-foot radius around the brazier. If the Chained Reaper or any shrouded are fully within the light of this cleansed balefire, they have Disadvantage on D20 Tests.

Devouring Balefire. The Shroud and its corruptive balefire seeks to devour the souls of all who oppose it. *Constitution saving throw:* DC 15, a creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the Chained Reaper. *Failure:* 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

When **The Chained Reaper** is reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

> The colossal reaper before you gyrates violently, not able to maintain its form. Its chains break, its tombstone crumbles, its scythe snaps, and the ghastly gray and blue-green mist bursts from within in an explosion of azure light. Thousands of shrieking voices scream out and are silenced until one remains—Yorgrim's—emanating from the huge, ornate lantern before you, now flickering with azure flame. "Perform my rites... Seal the tear..."

The Chained Reaper is destroyed, but the tear in the Shroud is still open and must be sealed to put an end to the invasion of the shrieking dead once and for all. Any character who considers Yorgrim's words, observes the lantern left behind from the reaper's scythe, and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check can deduce that Yorgrim is the final Fallen whose final rites must be performed.

Azure Rites. Despite the destruction of the Chained Reaper, the battle for the fate of Maidenmist Cemetery is not over, Initiative order is maintained, and the Shroud still acts against the characters (see "Shroud

Influence" earlier in this chapter). Yorgrim's final rites must be performed by fulfilling the "Honor the Fallen" step of the 1-minute ritual (see "Balefire Beacons" earlier in this chapter). Below are the suggested resolution proficiencies the characters can utilize to perform Yorgrim's final rites:

- **Arcana or Mason's Tools:** Showcase his abilities in tending to the dead, performing burial rites, or communing with the spirit world.
- **History or Religion:** Recall his dutiful commitment to the Shadestone Clan and the performance of his ritualistic duties.
- **Performance or Persuasion:** Perform a funeral dirge and extol the bond he had with his people, his friends, or his hound Isolde.

After six successful checks, read or paraphrase the following:

> The azure balefire rages within the lantern, and you hear Yorgrim's faint, distant voice. "Thank you." A moment later, the lantern erupts into a blaze of soothing balefire, filling the tomb with light that becomes so bright it blinds you. Hissing shrieks of tormented and twisted souls ring out for a moment before sizzling into nothing. When your vision returns, the tear into the Shroud is gone.

The tear has been sealed forever, and the Shroud now remains just beyond the borders of Druskenvald. The balefire flames within the sepulcher's depths have returned to their soothing azure hue. The dead of Maidenmist Cemetery finally rest once more. Any remaining shrouded are destroyed.

Level Up. The characters reach level 10, if they are still level 9, when they seal the tear into the Shroud.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *Judgement* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Lantern of the Chained Reaper* remains on the stone floor of the tomb.

CONCLUSION: DON'T FEAR THE REAPER

Peace returns to Maidenmist Cemetery, and the six balefire beacons remain lit as a final reminder of the six wayward souls who once bore good intentions but fell to the wickedness that lingers and lurks within every mortal heart.

If Isolde was not destroyed by the Shroud, she mourns the loss of Yorgrim but continues her eternal duty bound to Maidenmist Cemetery. She awaits the next soul brave enough to take up the mantle of the cemetery's sexton. As the characters leave the sepulcher, she approaches them and gives them thankful licks, attempting to guide them to the Shadestone Sanctuary (area Y9) for a Long Rest before leaving the cemetery.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

The nightly assaults of the shambling dead cease, and uneasy quiet returns to Wickermoor Village. When Mori Shade discovers the news about the loss of Yorgrim, she grieves in her own stoic way but goes about seeking a new caretaker for Maidenmist Cemetery. She considers taking up the role herself if she cannot find a suitable volunteer or apprentice.

Adela Druskenvald approaches the characters with a look of relief and tells them that she had seen a vision of a massive swarm of spirits tearing through Wickermoor Village, and she incorrectly guesses that this was a future that was stopped with the defeat of the Chained Reaper.

With all of the Fallen destroyed, Golub Graygullet prepares to make her move if her disguise as Theodora Mayville has not yet been exposed. The pigeons of Theodora Mayville roost all over the village now, having grown extremely aggressive against the songbirds drawn to the newly erected chapel of the Brightsingers. Dozens of songbirds are found dead every night, and Weston Murdoch tries to put an end to the avian war.





Chapter 20: THE ROVING ROOKERY

"Mother always said that my lilac eyes were bad luck. That I was born bewitched and would be led to wickedness. But Miss Mayville says they're blessed and a sign that greatness is in my future. She loves my eyes. She hired me because of my eyes, you know."

- Geneva Fairchild -

Evil nests in Wickermoor Village. Folk go about their daily routines, and the pigeon hag watches and waits for the return of the Crooked Queen. She hides in plain sight amongst them, learning everything they know and guiding what they believe. Golub Graygullet, disguised as Postmaster Theodora Mayville, subtly controls the flow of information and manipulates the minds of the people so that they fall in place when the time is right to free Kehlenn. Until then, she bides her time and pulls the strings, every moment filled with haughty contempt.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

A master plan is in the works, hatched by Golub Graygullet, who arrived in town seventy years ago with her dovecote that can secretly walk about the valley on pigeon legs. After the characters arrived in Druskenvald, she knew the time for sacrifice had arrived. Pulling the strings of the people of Wickermoor Village like a puppet master, she has helped guide the townsfolk's interactions with the characters every step of the way through news carried by the pigeons she commands.

Believing herself to be the true mastermind behind the Crooked Queen's return, she sought the destruction of the Fallen and even betrayed her two sisters, understanding their deaths to be critical sacrifices to return her mistress to power. However, Golub herself has been deceived. Kehlenn promised the pigeon hag that she would serve at her left hand as a grandmother hag of legendary power, but this was a lie.

The fabled prophecy and sacrificial ritual require one final conjuring from Golub before she herself is slain in sacrifice. Soon, she will be reborn with her sisters as a horrific abomination in the bowels of the Crooked House (see chapter 22). The minds of the townsfolk, so subtly influenced for years, must be made perfectly malleable for the revelry of the coming Lord of Fools (see chapter 21) and celebration at the feet of the Wicker Man atop Rowan's Rise (see chapter 23).

One final bewitching enchantment is brewing to cause a mass hysteria whipped up by a sudden murder in town. It is through the violent urges of the agitated mob that Golub plans on finally disposing of the characters, whom she views as pawns that have outgrown their usefulness.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A shocking murder blamed on the characters whips the people of Wickermoor Village into a frenzied mob but was, in truth, caused by a bewitching enchantment cast by the pigeon hag, Golub Graygullet. Once the town descends into mass hysteria, she escapes in her Walking Dovecote, sending mind-broken monsters to wreak even more havoc. Before the village burns and its townsfolk tear each other apart, the Walking Dovecote must be found, and Golub must be killed. Characters spurred to seek out the dovecote by the Quest Hooks later in this chapter have these goals:

- Escape unjust imprisonment by the people of Wickermoor Village.
- Uncover the true identity of Golub Graygullet.
- Track down the Walking Dovecote and destroy Golub Graygullet.

This chapter is designed for four level 10 characters.

THE PIGEON HAG



Golub Graygullet & Peeping Albert

Golub Graygullet whispers to the numerous pigeons that flock about her, spreading them throughout Wickermoor Hollow and beyond to deliver and receive letters. Her whispers and enchanting spells also manipulate people of all variety to her cause, and she even possesses the power to make mighty monsters her minions.

GOLUB GRAYGULLET

Golub Graygullet (**Pigeon Hag** CE) is the leader of the Vermintoll Coven, as well as the eldest and most powerful of the three hags. Her short and stout body resembles the pigeons she adores, with taloned fingers, a beak-like nose, a puffed-up neck, and mauve skin.

Just as it was her sisters' roles to corrupt the soul and body of sacrifices to the Crooked Queen, Golub corrupts her victims' minds through the control of information and magical enchantments she weaves. A malignantly proud creature, Golub views every mortal as merely a pawn, tool, or puppet to help advance her own aims, viewing her tactics of seeking, manipulating, and distributing information as far more tasteful than the more uncouth methods favored by her sisters.

Golub is obsessed with not merely acquiring information, which she primarily gathers through the eyes and ears of her pigeon spies, but in controlling its flow. Every written communication in Wickermoor Village passes through her hands, and she alone decides what is passed on, withheld, or altered. She listens, watches, and whispers from her perch in the Walking Dovecote, choosing whether to deliver truths or lies that aid in her grand designs, even among the Vermintoll Coven and cult of the Crooked Queen.

Preferring the comforts of town and leveraging the close proximity to the victims of her mental corruption, Golub lives among the people of Wickermoor Village disguised as Theodora Mayville, the postmaster (see chapter 11). To ensure a more reliable and long-term disguise, she wears the skin of the person she impersonates, needing to change bodies every decade or so to avoid drawing suspicion. The one thing she cannot change between personas is the vibrant lilac eyes cast by her bewitching enchantment. When Golub uses a victim's skin, the disguise is flawless and can't be perceived as false, even through magical means, which detect her as a Humanoid. Golub also has Advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks while in this disguise.

PEEPING ALBERT

Peeping Albert (**Vermin Familiar** (Pigeon) CE) is Golub's pigeon familiar, a pudgy bird that eerily resembles a person, with a wrinkled bald head, human-like ears, and hands instead of talons. He serves as Golub's most precious child and her chief spy. Albert gains a sick satisfaction from peeping on the townsfolk of Wickermoor Village and listening in on their conversations, eagerly awaiting the praise he'll receive when he reports back to his mother.

Sharing Golub's distaste for the weasel hag and centipede hag, Albert has a puffed-up superiority complex and looks down on his counterparts Filthy Jasper and Slippery Oswald. When the vile pigeon familiar is not spying on the villagers, he is always seeking new young women with lilac eyes so that Golub can prepare her next disguise.

GENEVA FAIRCHILD

Geneva Fairchild (Lawful Good, human **Commoner**) had a difficult upbringing in a superstitious household that believed her lilac eyes were an ill omen. Despite the strained relationship with her parents, Geneva grew into a compassionate and hardworking young woman in large part due to the tutelage of her mentor Theodora Mayville.

Theodora, who had lilac eyes herself, instilled in Geneva a pride for her unique feature that some in Wickermoor Village saw as a sign of malign witchcraft. The young apprentice to the postmaster learned everything she could about mail, freight, and even river shipping, eventually becoming an invaluable assistant in the post office's day to day business.

However, Geneva's true role in assisting Theodora is serving as the unwitting next form of Golub Graygullet. The pigeon hag had not been planning on making the change to a new disguise for several years, but the characters' arrival in Wickermoor Hollow has hastened her timeline. If the characters do not expose Theodora before the last of the Fallen has been destroyed, young Geneva is killed, her skin worn by Golub as a younger and more unassuming disguise.

QUEST HOOKS

Whether or not the characters discover Theodora Mayville's true identity throughout the adventure, Golub Graygullet makes her move, turning the townsfolk against them and attempting to escape in her Walking Dovecote. The primary quest hook, "A Murder Most Fowl" below, occurs sometime after the defeat of the Chained Reaper (see chapter 19). If the characters uncover the true identity of Theodora Mayville before the Chained Reaper is defeated, see "Postmaster Exposed" later in this chapter.

A MURDER MOST FOWL

While the characters are in Wickermoor Village, they are approached by Geneva Fairchild, who is in a blubbering panic. She tells them that she found Theodora Mayville murdered in the post office and is scared to go to the constable's station because of Constable Squire's callous nature and previous distrust for Geneva's lilac eyes. She fears that because she was the last person seen with Theodora, she will be blamed for the murder, so she asks the characters to help her investigate the scene.

In truth, Geneva Fairchild is dead, and her skin is being worn by Golub Graygullet the **Pigeon Hag** (as detailed in "Golub Graygullet" previously). The false Geneva takes the characters to the post office (see area V20 in chapter 11), which has been locked (DC 15). A large "Closed" sign hanging over the door. Within, the stench of death is heavy in the air, and the corpse of Theodora Mayville is sprawled out on the floor, both of her eye sockets empty. As an action, a character who examines the corpse and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that, while the corpse maintains a normal form, it has no bones or internal organs. In truth, this "second skin" is all that remains of Golub's former disguise.

THE MASTER STROKE

This is a deception to turn the townsfolk against the characters. Before seeking them out, Golub sent a letter to the constable's station from Theodora Mayville, accusing the characters of threatening her and Geneva with violence and claiming that the pair feared for their lives. A posse of townsfolk led by Constable Squire and Deputy Butterman make their way to the post office while the characters investigate.

Geneva lingers by the door of the post office, never moving deeper into the room. When the characters discover that Theodora's corpse has no bones or organs, if they accuse Geneva of foul play, or if enough time has passed for the posse to get close, read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly, Geneva lets out a bloodcurdling shriek.
>
> "They killed her! They ripped out her eyes! They're coming for me! Please help!" She then looks at you with a sinister smirk before her body contorts with a sickening pop. A burst of pigeon feathers erupts around her, and she collapses to the floor, her empty eye sockets staring blankly.
>
> A cacophonous creaking draws your attention to the window that looks out the north side of the post office. Down the road, the town's dovecote lurches back and forth, then suddenly rises into the air, held up by enormous, grotesque pigeon legs that protrude from its underside. Gray, feathery wings erupt from its shingled roof as the legs begin to strut away from Wickermoor Village, hopping through the air as its wings flap rapidly.
>
> From the direction of the Founder's Round, you hear the agitated shouting of at least a dozen angry voices.

Golub casts *Word of Recall* to teleport to the Pigeon Roost (area R2) of her Walking Dovecote, commanding it to use its Dash action to flee from Wickermoor Village (see "Walking Dovecote Features" later in this chapter), heading northward through the moors. It is unlikely that the characters can catch up to the dovecote at this time, but if they do, see "Walking Dovecote" later in this chapter.

The corpse of Geneva Fairchild remains on the floor of the post office, her eyes removed. Characters who examine the remains can determine that there are no bones or organs in the same manner as Theodora Mayville's body.

The posse of townsfolk consists of twelve **Toughs**, led by Constable Doris Squire (Lawful Neutral, human **Knight**) and Deputy Howie Butterman (Neutral Evil, human **Spy**). They have been bewitched to be Hostile toward the characters, and fail to notice the escaping dovecote. If the characters confront the mob, Constable Squire produces the letter from Postmaster Mayville containing the accusations of threats.

As a Search action, a character who observes the crowd and succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check can discern that they have been Charmed with magic. The characters may be able to talk their way out of the situation, but if any of the posse see the corpses of Theodora Mayville or Geneva Fairchild, they attack and attempt to apprehend the characters to face trial for murder.

POSTMASTER EXPOSED

If the characters confront Postmaster Theodora Mayville—who is actually the **Pigeon Hag** Golub Graygullet in disguise—before she kills Geneva, she attempts to dissuade the characters from their accusation and alleviate suspicion. In truth, Theodora is dead and her skin is being worn for a flawless shapeshifted form (as detailed in "Golub Graygullet" previously).

If the characters persist in their accusations of villainy or attack Theodora, Golub is forced to act. She lets out a sinister cackle and casts *Word of Recall* to teleport to the Pigeon Roost (area R2) of her dovecote, which she commands to rise on its pigeon feet and flee Wickermoor Village. The corpse of Theodora Mayville is left behind, its eye sockets empty.

A character who inspects the body and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers that while the corpse keeps its form, it has no bones or internal organs. It is up to the characters to decide how they deal with the corpse and the postmaster's disappearance.

In her employer's absence and following the shocking disappearance of the dovecote, Geneva Fairchild attempts to take over as the town's new postmaster, swapping to mail delivery by rider on horseback. This persists while the characters continue their adventures and defeat the Fallen. On their travels, they might see the transformed dovecote walking far off in the distance, but never drawing near until the time is right.

Once the Chained Reaper is destroyed, Golub makes her move and bewitches the town with a charm. Geneva accuses the characters of plotting to assassinate Mayor Somerton and whips the town into a violent mob.

THE MOB RULES

The people of Wickermoor Village have been bewitched by Golub Graygullet and now believe the characters to be murderers and assassins, following the events of either of the two main Quest Hooks of this chapter (see "A Murder Most Fowl" and "Postmaster Exposed" above).

MASS HYSTERIA

Wickermoor Village's townsfolk have had mixed opinions about the characters since they arrived, with many unsure what to make of the newcomers who seemingly brought so much bad luck and death to the valley. However, spurred on by the accusations of murder and the enchantments of Golub Graygullet, they are now united in blaming the characters for their ills.

Until Golub Graygullet is destroyed, all of Wickermoor Village's inhabitants are Hostile toward the characters. The streets are patrolled by groups of people at all hours of the night seeking the "murderers" that brought misfortune to their home. Each angry mob that wanders throughout the town consists of twelve **Toughs** led by three **Veterans**, which attack the characters on sight and cannot be reasoned with. They will initially attempt to knock the characters Unconscious for imprisonment to stand trial, but if any villagers are slain by the characters, they fight to the death.

As a Study action, a character who observes the villagers and succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check deduces that the mob is bewitched by an enchantment. The charm is powerful, but the use of *Dispel Magic* or *Remove Curse* is enough to suppress the effects of the enchantment for one hour. Once the hour has passed, the villager loses their sense once more and is whipped up into a frenzy against the characters.

THE STEALTHY APPROACH

Although the village is crawling with angry townsfolk at all times, the characters can attempt to sneak through town. For every 10 minutes spent in Wickermoor Village, the characters must succeed on a group DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check or be detected by a wandering mob (see "Mass Hysteria" above). The DC lowers to 10 if they hide within a building or similar structure to allow these mobs to pass, though nearly every door and window has been locked.

If the characters are staying at the Green Queen Inn, any possessions left in their rooms are removed and kept in the inn's storage room. The door to the room is locked but can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using Thieves' Tools.

THE BIRDS

Although the dovecote has walked off from Wickermoor Village, numerous pigeons roost on the roofs of every building in town. Golub can speak through them, regularly taunting the characters as they stealthily navigate town. Characters who attempt to climb on the roofs of any building or spend more than one hour outside in the open are attacked by four **Squabswarms**.

Peeping Albert (**Vermin Familiar** (Pigeon)) remains in town as long as the characters are there, attempting to spy on them and commanding the mundane pigeons in service of their mistress. He can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check and flees if attacked.

POWDER KEG

The charm on the people of Wickermoor Village continues to increase in its potency as long as Golub Graygullet lives. While the town is united in its vitriol against the characters, it won't be long until they turn on each other as accusations fly regarding the aiding and harboring of the characters.

If the charm persists for one week after first afflicting the townsfolk, tensions boil over and violence breaks out. Four townsfolk, including one named NPC (see chapter 11) are killed in the conflict. Three homes and one named location (see chapter 11) are burned beyond repair. For every subsequent week that passes, the number of people killed and buildings destroyed doubles.

HUNTING THE HAG

Golub Graygullet's Walking Dovecote strides across Wickermoor Hollow, occasionally settling down and moving on once more. The hag weaves her spells and bides her time until the characters are destroyed and Wickermoor Village is overwhelmed with mass hysteria.

THE ROOKERY ROVES

After making its escape, the Walking Dovecote settles down in a new location so that Golub can devote her focus to her ritualistic work corrupting the townsfolk's minds. The range of the hag's spellcasting is not limitless, so the dovecote never strays too far from Wickermoor Village. It is always a three-night journey away from town traveling at a Normal pace, favoring areas not far from human settlements so that Golub always has access to new minds to corrupt.

To determine where the dovecote has settled, roll on the Rookery Roost table below. It stays in that location for three nights before moving on once more, its next destination determined by the Rookery Roost table, rerolling the result of its previous location.

Rookery Roost

1d4	Destination	1d4	Destination
1	Rolling Prairie	3	Barren Foothills
2	Murky Swamp	4	Stormy Lakeshore



WILD PIGEON CHASE

Characters can watch the skies for pigeons to track down the elusive Walking Dovecote. The birds follow distinct routes across Wickermoor Hollow, forming patterns that can be followed directly to Golub Graygullet. Characters keeping their eyes skyward and actively looking for Golub's pigeons can roll 1d6 every hour, spotting one on a 6. Characters who observe the pigeon can discern the location of the dovecote with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check.

If the characters hope to catch Golub unawares, they must avoid the watchful eyes of Peeping Albert (**Vermin Familiar** (Pigeon)). Every night of travel, the characters must succeed on a group DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check or be spotted by the pigeon familiar. Characters who keep their eyes to the sky and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notice Peeping Albert flying 250 feet away. He will attempt to flee and warn Golub, and if he is not killed, the Walking Dovecote moves onto its next destination early (see "The Rookery Roves" above), uprooting itself and moving on that very night. The characters can see the dovecote walking in the far distance and must track it to its new location once more.

While Golub weaves her sinister spells and continues to twist the minds of the townsfolk of Wickermoor Village, she also dominates the minds of monsters and communities near the Walking Dovecote's present location and sends them into the wilds to harry the characters' travel. Every night that the characters travel while seeking Golub Graygullet, there is a 50 percent chance that the hag's minions find them and attack. The creatures that can attack are determined by the dovecote's location.

ROLLING PRAIRIE

The Walking Dovecote rests in the rolling grasslands past Foxwillow and close to the border of Wickermoor Hollow. If the characters are attacked while the dovecote is here, roll on the Prairie Creatures table below to determine what attacks.

Prairie Creatures

1d6	Encounter	1d6	Encounter
1	Three **Fire Elementals**	4	Two **Shield Guardians**
2	Four **Ettins**	5	Five **Nightmares**
3	Ten **Dire Wolves**	6	Six **Bandit Captains**

MURKY SWAMP

The Walking Dovecote lurks just within the Drowned Crossroads, sitting right on the murky water far from prying eyes. If the characters are attacked while the dovecote is here, roll on the Swamp Creatures table below to determine what attacks.

Swamp Creatures

1d6	Encounter	1d6	Encounter
1	Two **Mages**	4	**Clay Golem**
2	Three **Trolls**	5	**Hydra**
3	Two **Giant Crocodiles**	6	Three **Water Elementals**

BARREN FOOTHILLS

The Walking Dovecote looms high in the chilled air of the foothills at the base of the Howlers, not far from Dawn's Gate. If the characters are attacked while the dovecote is here, roll on the Foothill Creatures table below to determine what attacks.

Foothill Creatures

1d6	Encounter	1d6	Encounter
1	**Stone Golem**	4	Three **Earth Elementals**
2	Six **Ogres**	5	Two **Wyverns**
3	Ten **Giant Vultures**	6	Five **Knights**

STORMY LAKESHORE

The Walking Dovecote sits on the rainy northern shore of Moonsong Lake, a short distance from the tree line of Hartsblight Forest. If the characters are attacked while the dovecote is here, roll on the Lakeshore Creatures table below to determine what attacks.

Lakeshore Creatures

1d6	Encounter	1d6	Encounter
1	Three **Air Elementals**	4	Two **Flesh Golems**
2	Two **Oni**	5	Three **Chuul**
3	Ten **Giant Spiders**	6	**Assassin**



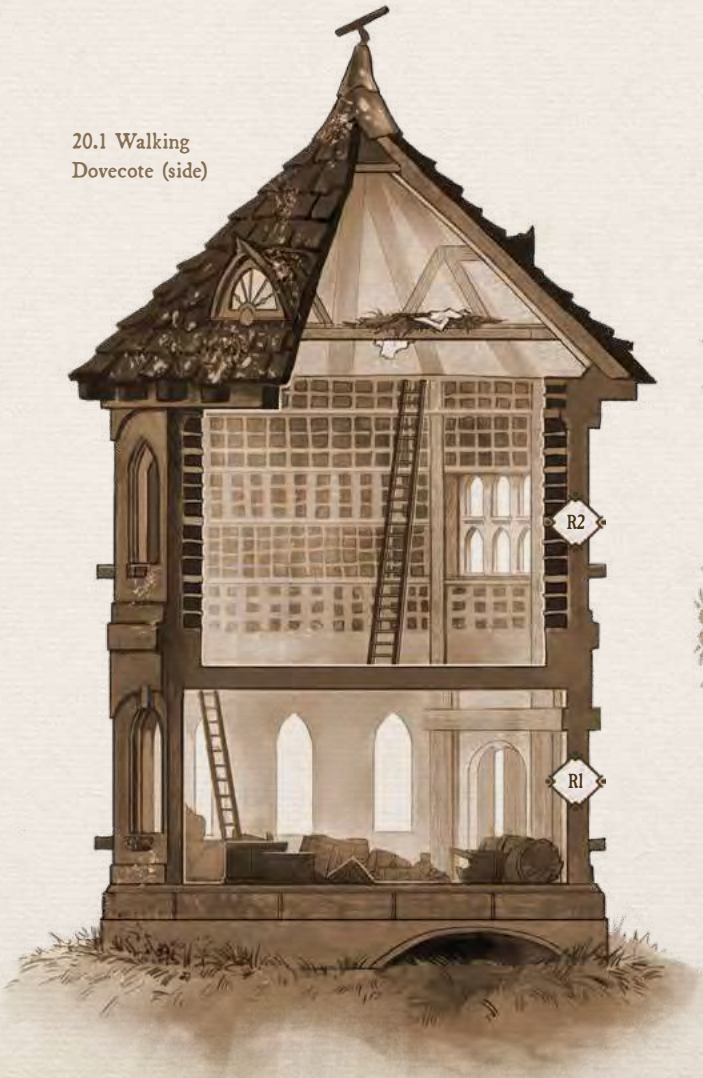
WALKING DOVECOTE

When the characters complete the journey to the Walking Dovecote before it moves on and without being detected by Peeping Albert (**Vermin Familiar** (Pigeon)), they find the structure on the ground of whatever setting it has settled in.

> You've finally arrived at the dovecote of Golub Graygullet, its shingled walls and thatched roof marked by the droppings of the numerous pigeons that flutter around the tall, circular structure. Despite having been on the run, it now sits motionless.

The circular building has a thatched roof, and its external walls are clad in wooden shingles. It spans 40 feet across and 40 feet tall, but it rises to 50 feet in height once it stands on its birdlike legs.

If the characters attack Golub within the dovecote, it animates and begins running and flying during the battle (see the "Animated Building" feature below).



20.1 Walking Dovecote (side)

WALKING DOVECOTE FEATURES

The Walking Dovecote has the following features:

LIGHTING. The dovecote is illuminated by Dim Light from grimy lanterns.

ANIMATED BUILDING. The dovecote is an animated building that responds to Golub's commands (no action required by her). When she wakes it, it stands up on giant pigeon legs that lift the lowest floor 10 feet off the ground, and it unfurls stubby pigeon wings from its roof. It has a Speed of 50 feet and a Fly Speed of 100 feet, but it must land at the end of its turn. It moves during Golub's turn as she directs it. Golub can give the dovecote simple commands it follows without her being present to oversee it. The dovecote settles when commanded or if it has no other instructions from Golub. A creature underneath it when it lands or settles must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (5d10) Bludgeoning damage and have the Prone condition. The cramped crawlspace under the dovecote is sized for Small creatures. If Golub dies, the dovecote settles down where it is and permanently de-animates.

VIOLENT LURCHES. If the characters are inside the dovecote while it animates, such as if they attack Golub here, on Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties) any creature other than Golub, Peeping Albert, or any squabswarms (see "Creatures" below) must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or have the Prone condition.

WALKING DOVECOTE LOCATIONS

The following locations are keyed to map 20.1 and 20.2.

R1: PARCEL STORAGE

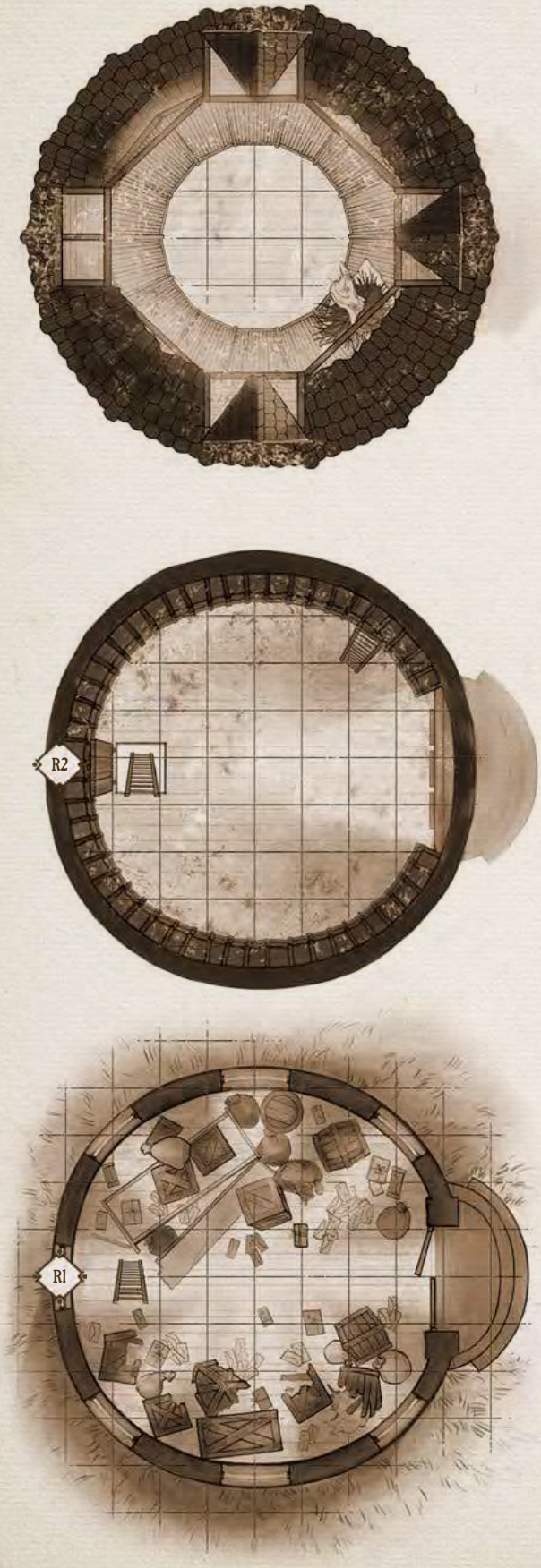
> You enter what once was a storage room for the post office of Wickermoor Village. Countless letters scatter the ground amidst a jumble of crates and parcels that have been jostled about by the lurching steps of the dovecote. Open windows shed moonlight across the room.

The ground floor of the dovecote serves primarily as storage for extraneous supplies from the post office—letters and packages that lingered unclaimed long enough to be forgotten—and supplies for the carrier pigeons.

Difficult Terrain. The floor is Difficult Terrain due to the haphazard supply piles and the occasional slippery patch of pigeon droppings.

Floor Access. A single ladder leads to the second floor.

20.2 Walking Dovecote



Creatures. Golub's familiar, Peeping Albert (**Vermin Familiar** (Pigeon)), likes to nest among the abandoned parcels and letters. He lurks here and attacks the characters when they intrude in his home, terrified of what his mistress will do if he allows interlopers to disturb her after failing to spot their approach. He calls forth three **Squabswarms** to assist him.

Treasure. The room contains sacks of seed, spools of thin leather cord, straw, wire mesh, and a set of Carpenter's Tools for upkeeping the rookery. The Mysterious Packages table offers some examples of what the packages and crates contain.

Mysterious Packages

1d8	Contents
1	A set of Fine Clothes and a gold pocket watch worth 150 GP
2	4 cannisters that each contain the following seasonings: salt (5 CP each); ginger (1 GP each); cinnamon (2 GP each); pepper (2 GP each); cloves (3 GP each); saffron (15 GP each)
3	A bag of trinkets: three raven feathers bound by silver thread, a cracked hand mirror etched with the initials E.A.P., and a glass bottle containing a miniature sailing ship
4	A crate of 12 bottles of fiery spirits (20 GP each). Two of the bottles are poisoned, each one acting as a *Potion of Poison*
5	A set of Alchemist's Supplies, an Herbalism Kit, a Healer's Kit, and two *Potions of Healing*
6	An assortment of small taxidermy animals: a giant rat, a weasel, a skunk, and a black cat
7	A large box of moldy straw, containing three **Swarms of Spiders**
8	A *Toy Riverboat*

R2: PIGEON ROOST

The floor is scattered with straw, birdseed, and pigeon droppings. The low, constant cooing of pigeons fills the space with an unsettling lullaby. Numerous cubbyholes where the birds roost are built into the walls of this tall chamber, reaching all the way up to a circular wooden walkway that rests on the rafters. A tall ladder against the wall is locked into a track that allows it to swivel around the circular room and provide access to each roost cubby.

This level serves as the rookery for the carrier pigeons, with roosts and cages lining the perimeter of the space. Constant squeaking can be heard over the rustling of feathers from the cages containing small rodents, which are kept as treats for the birds.

Rafter Roost. Tucked up in the rafters is a wooden platform covered in old straw and cloth. This is Golub's roost, where she rests, performs her bewitching magic, and bides much of her time. Four large windows look out from the roost, which allows Golub to spot intruders. However, she prefers to focus on her witchcraft and leave the sentry duties to Peeping Albert.

Stashed Secrets. Numerous cubbies on this level have been cleared of their roosting materials and instead are stuffed with the letters, journals, and other documents that Golub secreted away in her quest to acquire information on every inhabitant in Wickermoor Village.

Creatures. This is where Golub Graygullet (**Pigeon Hag**) spent her time while not performing the postmaster duties of Theodora Mayville. Now, it is her personal sanctum, and the sanctuary for her *Word of Recall* spell. The pigeons in the roosts, out on the roof, and flying near the dovecote comprise three **Squabswarms** that amass and rush to Golub's defense if she's threatened. If Peeping Albert is still alive when combat begins, he joins the fight as well. Battle here prompts the cottage to stand up and run or fly (see "Dovecote Cottage Features" above).

When combat begins, read or paraphrase the following:

> A shrill and haughty cackle reverberates through the dovecote as numerous pigeons take wing, turning the inside of the dovecote into a storm of feathers. A sudden lurch causes the entire structure to shake as the building is lifted into the air on enormous pigeon feet. The wrinkled, bloated face of Golub Graygullet leers at you with utter contempt as she takes to the air and cries, "Your minds are such fragile little things! They will be broken! They will be mine!"

Golub fights viciously in her home, delighting in paralyzing foes with *Hold Person* and then tossing them out of the windows, possibly while the dovecote soars through the air high above the ground.

Treasure. Tucked away in Golub's roost are a gold birdcage worth 500 GP, a chest of gold nuggets from Skitterdeep Mine worth 1,000 GP, a diary detailing the locations of homes or businesses for most of the inhabitants of Wickermoor Hollow, a crystal ball worth 1,000 GP (suitable for casting *Scrying*), and a vial with one dose of Midnight Tears poison. Stashed in the cubbies are a great collection of secrets about many of the citizens of Wickermoor Village, ranging from minor embarrassments to damning sins—including the various cults and factions to which they belong (see chapters 8 and 11).

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Sun* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the character who pulled this card increases one of their ability scores by 2 after defeating Golub Graygullet. The score can't exceed 24.

CONCLUSION: HOME TO ROOST

When Golub is slain, the dovecote immediately settles down wherever it is, the pigeon legs and wings withdraw into its frame, and it becomes a mundane building never to move again. If Peeping Albert is alive when his mistress is slain, he joins her in death.

With Golub defeated, her influence on the people of Wickermoor Hollow immediately fades, leaving folks in stunned confusion and with little memory of any wrongdoings. The villagers try to piece together what has happened but feel befuddled by the nights spent in their bewitched fervor. This has left their minds ripe to be manipulated once more—next time by the Lord of Fools himself.



BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

Many of the mundane pigeons that had once been controlled by Golub return to Wickermoor Village, roosting on the roofs around town, allowing an enterprising new postmaster to attempt to reestablish mail delivery. If Geneva still lives, she is up to the task.

Phillip and Adela Druskenvald, who had avoided the worst of the mob violence due to the townsfolks' fear of the Crooked House, which persisted even under Golub's charm, offer to help fund the repairs to anything damaged during the mass hysteria.

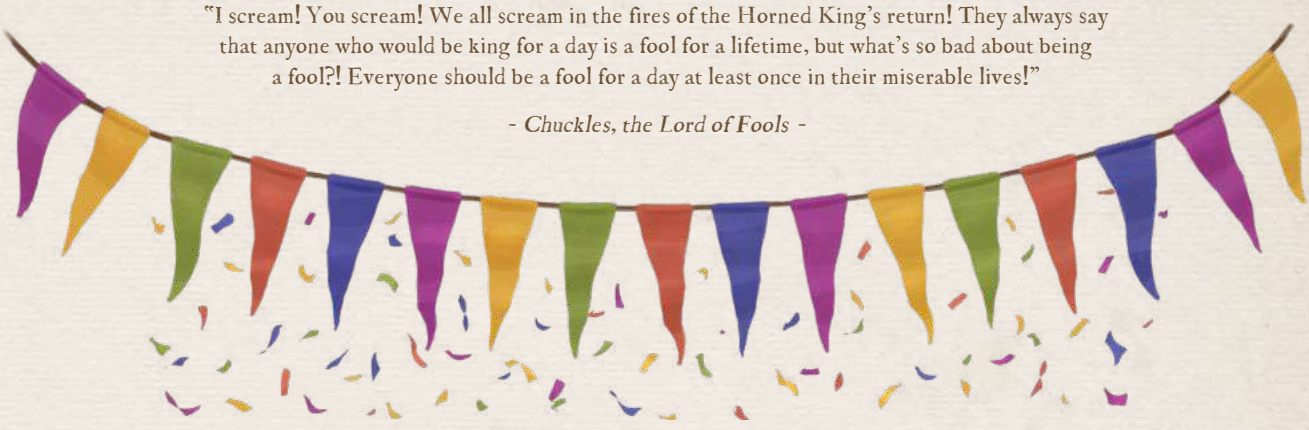
The townsfolk realize that the beloved Festival of Fools is about to come to town, perfect timing in light of the recent misery and wrath. Preparations start to be made, costumes are pulled from dusty chests, and decorating begins; the people of Wickermoor Village eagerly await the mirth and revelry.



Chapter 21: FOOL'S DAY

"I scream! You scream! We all scream in the fires of the Horned King's return! They always say that anyone who would be king for a day is a fool for a lifetime, but what's so bad about being a fool?! Everyone should be a fool for a day at least once in their miserable lives!"

- Chuckles, the Lord of Fools -



WHAT JOY THERE IS WHEN A CLOWN COMES TO TOWN! THOUGH Wickermoor Hollow is draped in shadow and fear, the lights of the Fool's Day Festival pierce the gloom. Of all the celebrations in Wickermoor Village, none is more cherished—rife with costumed revelers, dancing bears, grand feasts, and lamplight dances.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

Ignore the sinister fact that people vanish each festival night. Fix your gaze on the brilliant, many-colored lanterns and the ever-grinning Chuckles the Clown! Those cries in the night? Simply howls of delight, nothing more. The Fallen are defeated! The Fool's Day Festival will be happy. It must be happy. The parade is coming, and you will be so, *soooo* happy.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Fool's Day Festival consumes Wickermoor Village, led by Chuckles, Lord of Fools. This wicked clown has a perverse death wish and seeks to goad the characters into slaying him as his own ritual sacrifice. While he brings joy to the townsfolk, Chuckles delights in mocking the characters, belittling their previous exploits, and even attacking villagers they care about, so long as it brings them one step closer to killing him. The characters' goals are:

- Play carnival games to earn tickets.
- Rescue the forced revelers through tickets or combat or by severing their enchantments.
- Free Phillip and Adela Druskenvald from their forced revelry.
- Destroy Chuckles, the Lord of Fools.

Before running this chapter, you should review Wickermoor Hollow's townsfolk (see "Forced Revelers" below) to decide the most compelling NPCs to include in this chapter. Read through the festival events (see "Festival of Fools Locations" below) so you can smoothly run games for the characters. Finally, study the climactic battle, "Parade of Fools," to fill the encounter with menace and hilarity.

This chapter is designed for four level 10 characters.

THE LORD OF FOOLS

Chuckles, Lord of Fools, is an evil spirit in clownish guise. He dances and cavorts as the malevolent jester of the Horned King, tormenting mortals for his master's vile amusement. Chuckles's true form is a grotesque balloon with a leering clown's face, draped in multicolored ribbons, usually resting atop a maypole. This totem projects a puppet-like jester illusion that calls itself Chuckles, luring victims into a false sense of security.

TEARS OF A CLOWN

Once, long ago, a troupe of performers roamed the lands of Druskenvald. Each had their role: Bjorn the Horned Bear, Apia the Queen Bee, Chateau the Dancing Manor, Libro the Singing Tome, Cloche the Chiming Bell, and Cicogna the Stilted Stork. Leading them all was Chuckles the Great Fool.

Though Chuckles played the merry fool on stage, his heart was heavy, for his troupe, though beloved, was starving and impoverished. Clowning brought little coin. His tears caught the attention of the woman with a crooked smile, who whispered of a wonderful king who could erase his troubles if he would become his jester.

Desperate, Chuckles followed the Crooked Queen into the Wytchwood and communed with the Horned King, whose power grew each year. Chuckles, driven by despair, would do anything for his troupe.

"Anything?" asked the Horned King.

"Anything," said Chuckles, foolishly.

"Forever?" asked the Horned King.

"Forever," said Chuckles, sealing his doom.

Chuckles is now nothing more than a spirit dancing futilely at the right hand of the Horned King, yearning for death's sweet release. If Chuckles frees his king, he too is set free. For ages, he has danced, waiting for the Fallen to be sacrificed. Now, he has arranged to be the final sacrifice for the Horned King, just as Adela Druskenvald will be for the Crooked Queen.

This masterstroke will prepare the Horned King's spirit for incarnation through Phillip Druskenvald (see chapter 8), releasing Chuckles from his cursed servitude and letting him dance into the night one last time.

PARLEY WITH THE FOOL

The Lord of Fools views life as a cruel, endless joke, trapped in a wretched role as the Horned King's jester. He craves not just the characters' participation in his games but their hatred. Their wrath and other deadly sins are the true feast for the Horned King.

These are some responses to common questions the characters may ask of this wicked clown:

WHO ARE YOU? "Sweet sweeties, I'm Chuckles the Great Fool! There isn't a person alive who doesn't love my japes 'n jokes. So if you don't... then you must already be dead!"

HOW DO YOU KNOW US? "Why wouldn't we know who you are? You're known far and wide as the heroes who are finally cleaning up Wickymoor Hollow!" (Chuckles is an agent of the Horned King and has been using *Scrying* to observe the characters.)

WHY ARE YOU HAPPY TO SEE US? "I'm a kooky-crazy clown, sillies! And it's festy-val time! Can't I enjoy my own party?" (The characters are his only hope of escaping his torturous existence as the Horned King's jester!)

WHAT IS THIS FESTIVAL? "Fool's Day is a way to escape the sad-sad-suffering of this sad-sad-world. Don't you want people to be happy? Besides, this year's festy-val is speci-all." (Fool's Day is an age-old tradition, but this one is special.)

SPECIAL, HUH? "Because of you, my hip-hip-heroes! You're the guests of honor! The cream of the crop! The slayers of the fabulous Fallen! We've never had killers like you in our midst!" (This is the unvarnished truth. Even if it's omitting the bit about the ritual.)



Chuckles



REVELERS OF THE FESTIVAL

Something is wrong in Wickermoor Village. When the characters arrive back in town from their last adventure, the Fool's Day Festival will begin soon or is already in progress, as determined by you (see "A Puckish Dream" below). The Lord of Fools plans to ruthlessly antagonize the characters, turning their former friends from Wickermoor Village into their enemies.

FORCED REVELERS

This chapter works best if the characters have become close with some NPCs in Wickermoor Village.

These NPCs have become bewitched by the Lord of Fools, forced to don garish costumes and party endlessly. The forced revelers:

- Have the Charmed condition
- Are Friendly and are delighted to be a part of the festival in their mesmerized state
- Don't become Hostile or attack unless attacked or forced to make a saving throw

Characters are able to free a charmed reveler by:

- Cashing in tickets at the Prize Counter (area C3)
- Reducing a reveler to 0 Hit Points
- Any effect that ends the Charmed condition
- Bringing them to the Silent Church (area C5)

Select twelve NPCs from the Forced Revelers table or use NPCs that the characters have formed bonds with. These are the forced revelers.

SEEKING OUT THE REVELERS

Hundreds of festivalgoers swarm Wickermoor Village, but only a few wear costumes like those of Chuckles's old troupe, as described in "Tears of a Clown," earlier in this chapter. If the characters search for these figures instead of playing Chuckles's ridiculous games, they can ask around the festival for clues. After spending 1 hour searching, any participating characters make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check. Compare the check's total to the "Carnival Cavalcade" table. The characters learn everything up to their total.

When the characters follow these clues, they find all the forced revelers of that type in that area.

Forced Revelers

Revelers	Stat Block	NPCs
Bear	**Reveler of Stories** (Great Beast)	*Choose two:* Randall Graham, Solomon Roderick, Siv Harga, Hilda Brom
Flag	**Herald of Fools**	*Choose one:* Alda Farnum, Wendel Somerton, Jean Myriel, Gaston Doray
Knight	**Reveler of Stories** (Hero)	*Choose two:* Marianna Grey, Finneas Trout, Oswick Frey, Eleanor Heyling
Bull	**Reveler of Song** (Bell)	*Choose two:* Doris Squire, Beatrice Wells, Weston Murdoch
Hut	**Reveler of Stories** (Witch)	*Choose one:* Thomasin Ardor, Holly Aster
Hive	**Reveler of Song** (Drone)	*Choose two:* Baltus Tolliver, Morgan, Howie Butterman, Jeremiah Stover
Stork	**Reveler of Song** (Drum)	*Choose two:* Old Rusty, Sister Rain



Carnival Cavalcade

Total	Information
Less than 5	The Festival of Fools is a yearly festival that brings uncharacteristic revelry and delirium to the people of Wickermoor Village.
5	Chuckles the Clown was the famous leader of a traveling troupe of clowns long ago. He was a dance master who carried a large flag and led six other clowns with their own unique costumes. Revelers with flags were watching the puppet show (area C2g).
10	The second-most famous clown in Chuckles's troupe was Bjorn the Horned Bear *(BYORN)*. You saw someone in that costume near the test of strength (area C2e).
14	Who could forget Apia the Queen Bee *(AY-pee-uh)*, who dressed like a leggy beehive. There was definitely someone like that in the shooting gallery (area C2a).
16	A niche star of the act was Chateau the Dancing Manor *(sha-TOE)*, a bizarre house on legs. Someone like that was lurking around the drinking contest (area C2f).
18	Cloche the Chiming Bell *(KLOESH)* was never a popular member of the act, but there was someone dressed like that near the memory game (area C2b).
20	Perhaps the strangest member of the troupe was Libro the Singing Tome *(LEE-bro)*, who pranced around on a pony while singing old rhymes. There was a book-and-pony act in the town square (area C2c).
22	Easily the most hated member of the troupe was Cicogna the Stilted Stork *(chee-KOHN-yuh)*—far too creepy for anyone's liking. There were some storks lurking about the rhythm game (area C2d).

QUEST HOOKS

The festival arrives in Wickermoor Village after the sixth Fallen is defeated and the Vermintoll Coven is destroyed. The events of this adventure take place once the characters arrive back in town. While the characters may not need prompting to return to the village, you can use the following hook to guide them there.

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID

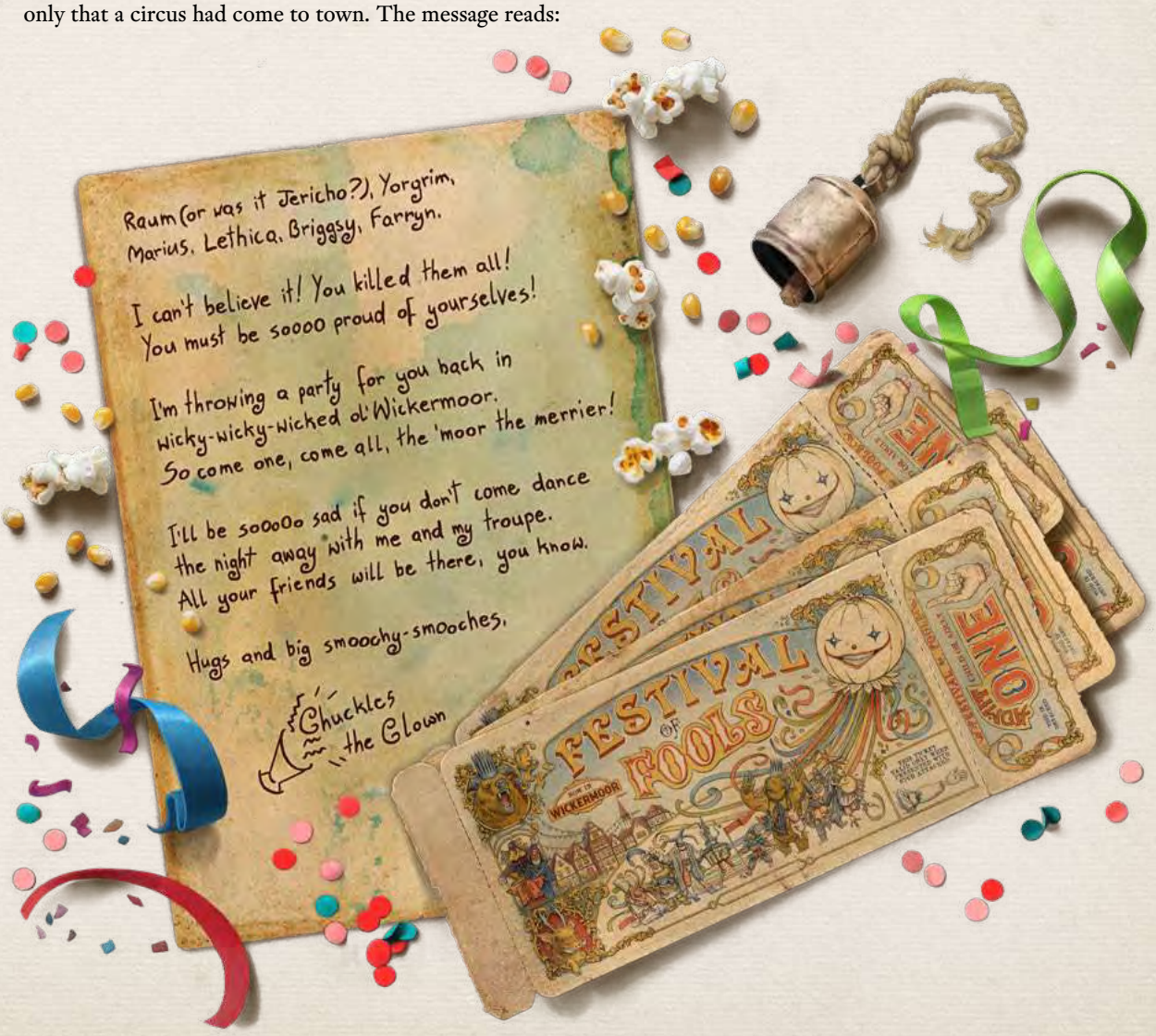
At the end of their last adventure, a **Reveler of Song** (Bell) in full costume finds the characters wherever they are.

She jingles, "Ring-a-ding-ding, you're all so mighty! I have a message, don't be flighty!" She hands them a wax-sealed scroll, lets out a horrible wail as she collapses, and dies. Removing her costume reveals a familiar face from the Green Queen Inn. If the characters use magic to restore her to life, she recalls nothing of the costume, only that a circus had come to town. The message reads:

A PUCKISH DREAM

You can determine when the festival arrives in Wickermoor Hollow. To get right into the action, the festival is in full swing by the time the characters return to town after their last adventure, and most of the villagers are already in revelers' costumes that disguise their identities. No one is behaving like themselves.

If you wish to allow the characters some downtime in the village before the festival arrives, they can fall into wild, feverish dreams the night before the festival begins. They see the land of Druskenvald bathed in the light of day, but the sun is the face of a horrific clown. It laughs until blood spurts from its nose and then crashes down onto Wickermoor Hollow, setting the valley ablaze. They awake with a jolt, hearing the festival outside. When they investigate, they are unable to return to the place where they slept (see "Festival of Fools Features" below).





FESTIVAL OF FOOLS

Wickermoor Village has succumbed to the invasion of the Festival of Fools! Not only is it decorated with countless streamers and ribbons stretching from roof to roof, but the town itself has transformed! The streets are impossibly massive and filled with revelers, and the Founder's Round has gone square! Stalls for food, games, and prizes have been set up throughout. And none are free from the joy this festival brings.

FESTIVAL OF FOOLS FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, the Festival of Fools has the following general features:

DISAPPEARING ACT. Homes and buildings are missing from where they would normally be. In their place, stalls, stages, and booths have been set up for a festival. When the festival ends, they are once again in their original locations.

FINGER FOOD FLOOD. All buildings are filled to their ceilings with scotch eggs and hand pies, blocking and preventing entry.

HARD TO NAVIGATE. Roads and walkways leading away from the festival are treated as Difficult Terrain (see area C4). Characters attempting to leave for the first time arrive at the Silent Church (area C5). Any further attempts to leave the village require a success on a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check to reach the village limits (see area C4). On a failure, they find themselves traveling back into the square.

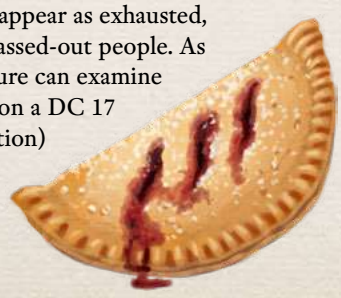
PARTY HARD

All who partake in the festival, willingly or not, are bound by magic and compelled to revel until the Twilight Hour, which won't come until Chuckles wills it (or dies). Festivalgoers push beyond their natural limitations, even to their own detriment. Creatures within Wickermoor Village during the festival have the following benefits:

LIFE IS A PARTY. Creatures have Advantage on D20 Tests to resist any spell or effect that would influence them to stop partying. Likewise, creatures have Advantage on D20 Tests to push, shove, or drag creatures back into the festival should they try to leave it before it ends.

NO WICKED REST. Creatures inside the Festival of Fools can't sleep (and magic can't put them to sleep) and can't be affected by the Exhaustion condition until the end of the festival. All creatures in Wickermoor Village instantly gain 1 Exhaustion level when the festival ends.

TAPPED OUT. Corpses appear as exhausted, drunk, or otherwise passed-out people. As a Study action, a creature can examine the body and succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see through the illusion.



FESTIVAL LOCATIONS

The following areas are keyed to map 21.1.

C1: ABSURD STREETS

> The town is illuminated like never before. The air is thick with the scents of food and sounds of carnival music. A shrill, manic laughter cuts through the noise and bustle.
>
> As you step into the streets of the village, something feels wrong. The roads seem longer, the buildings more numerous, stretched and twisted as if the town itself has swelled to two or three times its normal size. Familiar streets now appear endlessly duplicated, forming a maze of dreamlike corridors. The townsfolk are replaced by costumed festivalgoers, their numbers growing as you press deeper into the celebrations.

The streets of Wickermoor Village have changed! They are 30 feet wide and twist and turn so there's never more than a 60-foot-long sightline. Throngs of revelers in costume dance and cartwheel, coming closer and closer to the characters. They start pushing, shoving, and urging the characters to meet the "Great Fool" at the center of town. The entire area feels like a claustrophobic fever dream.

Follow, Follow! If the characters don't follow the revelers urging them to head to the center of town, their cajoling becomes violent. First, a **Reveler of Stories** (Great Beast) attacks, bellowing, "Follow! Follow! To the square!" He ceases his attack as soon as the characters obey (or flee). Each round the characters stay in this area, another reveler joins the brawl on Initiative count 20, as indicated on the Brawl Rounds table.

Brawl Rounds

Round	Reveler
Round 2	**Reveler of Song** (Drone)
Round 3	**Reveler of Stories** (Hero)
Round 4	**Reveler of Song** (Drum)
Round 5	**Reveler of Stories** (Witch)
Round 6	**Reveler of Song** (Bell)
Round 7 and Onward	**Herald of Fools**

Any characters reduced to 0 Hit Points by the revelers are knocked Unconscious—Chuckles needs them alive and participating, after all, even if they're a bit bruised.



21.1 Festival of Fools

C2: FESTIVAL SQUARE

This part of town is nearly unrecognizable, swallowed by outrageous festival banners and blazing bonfires. Ribbons of green, red, and gold stretch between rooftops, and the streets overflow with costumed revelers.

Stalls host games of skill and chance, and children dart from booth to booth, clutching tickets to exchange for prizes. At the far end of the festival, atop a maypole, a great clown-faced balloon leers over the festivities while dozens dance around the base, winding colorful streamers.

Balancing precariously atop the balloon, performing gaudy flips and dances, is a child-sized wooden marionette in the shape of a jester.

This central square contains the bulk of the festival's activities, from food stalls to games to performances. Characters who examine the area and succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check know that while this used to be the town center, some buildings are outright missing to make room for all the festival pavilions.

Meeting Chuckles. The first time the characters arrive here, Chuckles enthusiastically greets them, wanting to welcome them personally to the festival itself. When they first enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

When the jester puppet catches you watching, he backflips into a net and lands before you with a honk of his red nose.

"Bravissimo, me!" he squeaks, striking an exaggerated pose. "The Great Fool, Chuckles the Clown!" He reaches for your hands and shakes them wildly.

"Welcome! Welcome! And welcome my hip-hip-hoorah-heroes! How goodie-good it is to finally meet you! We've heard a great deal about you, here among the revelry! I'm sure you're flush with questions about my ultimate party."

Chuckles actively engages with the characters but answers any direct questions with misdirection or ignorance (see "Parley with Chuckles" earlier in this chapter).

After Chuckles describes why the characters are his honored guests or when the conversation reaches a lull, read or paraphrase the following:

"As I said, I've made this year's Fool's Day super-special for our guests of honor. Your friends? They're all dressed up for a game of hide-and-seek unlike any you've seen.

"Play the games, win tickets—I'll cash their lives in as prizes! Maybe you'll even hunt for them yourselves!" Chuckles's wide grin warps into a sinister sneer. "But if you stop playing, or stop making merry, I'll think you aren't enjoying my festival. And then your costumed friends will lead the parade themselves."

The clown honks his nose, then leaps into the air, bursting into a flurry of ribbons that drift away on the wind.

With his challenge made, Chuckles uses his Ribbon Step Bonus Action to disappear into the crowd. From here, the characters choose where to go within the fair.

Festival Games. The following games are found within the festival square:

- A beehive-themed darts game (area C2a)
- A bell-themed cup-and-ball game (area C2b)
- A book-themed riddling game (area C2c)
- A stork-themed drumming game (area C2d)
- A bear-themed test of strength (area C2e)
- A dollhouse-themed drinking game (area C2f)
- A merry puppet show (area C2g)

These games are operated by revelers not local to Wickermoor Village, doubtless minions of the Great Fool. If defeated, no body can be found within the costume.

C2A: APIARY AIM

A festival worker dressed like a beekeeper in a wicker mask stands next to half a dozen dart boards in cabinets. The stall is painted green, and colorful ribbons adorn its sides. The stall worker waves you over to play. A sign says three darts for a copper piece, but before you can pay, the worker holds out three darts to you.





This is a game of accuracy operated by a **Reveler of Song** (Drone) . Characters playing this game throw three Darts at a target, earning more points based on how high their ranged attack roll against it is, consulting the table below.

After the third Dart toss, they receive a ticket for every five points they earned, with a minimum of one ticket.

Should the hive reveler be killed, no one seems to notice the fighting or pay any attention to the "snoring" reveler on the ground, and a new reveler shows up to take their place running the game.

Attack Roll	Result
14 and lower	Miss (0 points)
15 to 19	Outer Ring (3 points)
20 to 24	Inner Ring (5 points)
25 and higher	Bullseye (10 points)

C2B: Bell and Ball

A festival worker wearing a suit decorated with dozens of tiny bells jingles around a circular table that is, itself, covered in large bells.

This is a game of memory operated by a **Reveler of Song** (Bell) . Anyone playing this game must keep track of which ball is under which bell as the festival worker begins sliding it alongside other bells, attempting to confuse the characters. Those playing who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check keep track of the ball and win two tickets!

C2C: Riddles and Rhymes

A horse and rider stand before prop bookshelves and books, addressing the audience before him, expecting an answer. A book is propped on the horse, which has blinders on, and the rider is dressed as a knight. When the rider catches your eye, he beckons you over, inviting you to participate.

This is a game of cleverness operated by a **Reveler of Stories** (Hero) . Characters must bet one ticket, after which they are asked a riddle by the operator. If they answer the riddle correctly, they win three tickets. The players can answer the riddle if they puzzle it out, or the character can figure out the solution with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check. Failing to answer the riddle correctly loses them their bet.

Characters can request a harder riddle if they bet two tickets. The DC rises to 18, and answering it awards seven tickets.

Asking the Right Questions

As an alternative to two set DCs for riddles, you could also prepare your own set of riddles and assign both ability check DCs and ticket rewards for each one.



Riddles

DC	Riddle	Answer
15	I wear a cap to keep me dry. When eaten, I'm a real fun guy! What am I?	Mushroom
15	I have an ear, yet I cannot hear. I stalk for days, so beware my maze. What am I?	Corn
15	I run hot and I run cold. I'm bright when new, and I'm dark when old. What am I?	Blood
18	I cube and mince when I'm with a friend. When I'm alone, I meet my end. What am I?	Die / Dice
18	I wear a hood but have no head. Through bovine eyes, a glare is shed. What am I?	Lantern
18	I sag with sadness, I beam with glee. I let them choose who they want to be. What am I?	Mask

C2D: RHYTHM HERO

The reveler running this game appears as a spindly, upright bird, reminiscent of a stork, wearing a set of traveler's clothes and a large drum around its neck. On the counters in front of it are drums and drumsticks matching its own, and to each festivalgoer, it drums a small sequence, waiting for them to play it back.





This game is one of musical ability and skill operated by a **Reveler of Song** (Drum) . Participants must repeat a musical pattern back to the operator. Characters participating must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check or a DC 15 Charisma check using a Musical Instrument to repeat a pattern successfully.

Those who succeed on three checks before failing three win five tickets.

C2E: STRONGARM

This game setup is simple. Across from the table sits a reveler in a large, horned bear costume, adorned with macabre offerings. He sits, elbow on the table, ready to begin arm wrestling with any challengers.

This is a simple game of strength operated by a **Reveler of Stories** (Great Beast) . Characters who participate in this game must succeed on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to win an arm-wrestling contest against the operator and earn one ticket.

For those looking for a greater challenge, the bear reveler offers a wrestling match. Characters who accept make a DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, they win the match and earn ten tickets.

C2F: WRETCHED DRINK

A prop dollhouse standing on carved chicken legs is perched on a table. From its door it produces cup after cup of dour and unpleasant looking drinks, whose consumers make sounds of revile, regret, and disgust.

This is a vile game of fortitude operated by a **Reveler of Stories** (Witch) . Anyone who participates in this game is given a mysterious drink to consume,

designed to taste horrible. Upon drinking it, they must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw in order not to cough, utter disgust, or otherwise exclaim its unpleasantness; characters who succeed are awarded two tickets. If a saving throw exceeds the DC by 5 or more, they remain utterly stone faced despite the awful taste and are awarded three tickets instead.

Anyone who consumes three or more drinks has the Poisoned condition for one hour.

C2G: PUPPET THEATER

This stall is a tall and slim box, decorated in all kinds of fantastical paintings and cloth. From below a large opening and in front of a colorful backdrop, half a dozen hands rise, covered in varying puppetry.

As you watch, it's clear that you are the heroes of this story. One by one, puppets dressed to look like you butcher puppets representing the Fallen, and huge spurts of red ribbons fly everywhere.

This gaudy puppet theater is operated by a **Herald of Fools**. Anyone who sits to watch one of the puppet shows sees that it is portraying the defeat of one of the Fallen at the hands of the characters. Though exaggerated, the details are curiously specific, as if whoever staged the play had been there watching.

The macabre puppet master encourages audience participation in exchange for a reward! Roll on the "Fates of the Fallen" table below to determine which show is performed. Characters can choose to participate in the puppet show from the audience, making the associated ability check. This check is DC 20, but it can be lowered to DC 15 if the characters share something personal as defined in the table. On a success, the character wins three tickets.





Fates of the Fallen

1d6	Fallen	Skill	Participation
1	Harvest Terror	Arcana	Share a secret
2	Crimson Abbot	Religion	Share a guilt
3	Grinning Sinner	Deception	Share a desire
4	Weeping Widow	Insight	Share a sad memory
5	Beast of Blight	Nature	Share a favorite animal
6	Chained Reaper	History	Share a ghost story

C3: PRIZE COUNTER

A stall with paintings of treasure troves, grinning suns, and crowns stands tall, with shelves displaying prizes that festivalgoers claim with tickets. Chuckles mans the booth, giggling as he hands out carved crows, stuffed dragons, and jester outfits. He claps his hands and coos as you approach. "The chippy-chippy-champions, here to save their friends!"

Festivalgoers can exchange their tickets here for toys, trinkets, and tokens on the Prize Counter table.

Prize Counter

Ticket Cost	Prize
1	Plush of an angry crow
1	Wooden toy sword painted to be bloody
1	A pair of crocodile skin shoes
1	Porcelain doll dressed head to toe in black lace and cloth
1	Sealed jar of glue. The glue takes 10 minutes to dry after being applied, after which time breaking glued items apart requires a Utilize action and a successful DC 10 Strength check.
1	Shovel and pail sized for a child
2	A single card from a *Deck of Illusions*
2	*Potion of Healing* (greater)
2	*Bag of Tricks* (rust) that only produces goats
3	*Revelry Suit*
3	A random Paranormal Potion
5	A random Cursed Curio
6	A *Spell Scroll* of *Resurrection*
Varies	Free a reveler (see "Exchange Rate" below)

There's only one of each magic item available. But the real point of the booth is for the characters to exchange their tickets for the lives of their twelve friends from Wickermoor Village who have been brainwashed and stuffed into revelers' outfits (see "Forced Revelers" earlier in this chapter).

Exchange Rate. Chuckles frees the first reveler for a measly one ticket. But the second costs two tickets, then the third costs three, and so on. This mounting cost is part of Chuckles's plan to spur the characters to hate and murder him.

Obeying the Clown's Orders. Once all twelve of the NPCs who have been trapped in suits have been rescued, Chuckles begins the parade as planned (see "Parade of Fools" later in this chapter).

Rebelling Against the Clown. If the characters attack Chuckles before they've rescued all twelve villagers, Chuckles smugly asks, "Are you really sure you want your friends to play in the parade? You must really hate me a lot. Is that tooty-too-true?"

If someone makes it clear that they hate Chuckles, he cackles in glee and teleports to his proper place for the parade, which begins immediately (see "Parade of Fools" later in this chapter).

C4: THE ROADS OUT

The roads of Wickermoor Village are twisted and curved by the nightmarish magic of this carnival. The first time a character tries to escape the village, they somehow find themselves at the Silent Church (area C5). On future attempts, they are misdirected back to the Festival Square (area C2) unless they succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, they flee Wickermoor Village, leaving it in Chuckles's wretched clutches until they return.

If they fail this check three times, they're redirected back to the Prize Counter (area C3) instead, where Chuckles asks them if they're tired of playing. "Has happy-happy-hunting for your friends made you hate me and my games? Should I take us straight to the pippy-parade?" he asks. If they answer yes, see "Parade of Fools" below.

C5: SILENT CHURCH

Only one place in Wickermoor Hollow is safe from Chuckles's sinister manipulations: the abandoned church. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter:

> The distant sounds of the festival vanish as you step inside the abandoned church. The party's light does not breach its darkened windows.
>
> Before the humble altar stands a towering statue of a knight, carved from marble and nearly eight feet tall. His stony face is twisted into a scornful grimace. Suddenly, a voice whispers in your mind, echoing through the silence:
>
> "The jester of the Horned King holds no power here, so long as my stone stands. Interlopers, speak truth—who are you, and what purpose brings you?"

This is the Man in Marble, a mythical protector carved in a long-lost, brighter age. Unbeknownst to Weston Murdoch, the church keeper, the Man in Marble channels holy power and has awakened to defend Wickermoor Village. It uses the **Stone Golem** stat block, except it speaks Common and has an Intelligence score of 14.

The Man in Marble explains that the evil in the village is too strong for him to leave the church, but he protects any villagers that are delivered to him. Bringing forced revelers (see "Forced Revelers" earlier in the chapter) to the church suppresses the evil magic that compels them to make merry so long as they remain inside.

Resting. This church is a safe place for the characters to rest. They can even take a Long Rest here. When they emerge, it's as if no time has passed; everyone is tirelessly partying just as before.

PARADE OF FOOLS

This climactic event begins once all twelve forced revelers (see "Forced Revelers" earlier in this chapter) have been freed or once someone tells Chuckles to his face that they hate him. Use map 21.2 for this battle. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The ground trembles as countless partiers stomp to the chaotic rhythm of a devilish calliope playing on an unseen organ. The partiers abandon their revelry, melding into a throng that snakes through the streets. A torrent of dancers, tumblers, and acrobats surges toward you, led by a color guard hoisting effigies on high poles: a scarecrow, a knight, a pirate, a priestess, a satyr, and a gravedigger.
>
> As the parade sweeps through town, two revelers wielding vicious halberds break away, cartwheeling toward you in a whirl of deadly steel!

Roll Initiative! This fight against two masked **Heralds of Fools** likely begins in the Festival Square or by the Prize Counter (areas C2 and C3).

After these two revelers are defeated, their porcelain harlequin masks shatter, revealing Phillip and Adela beneath. They stand, despite their mortal wounds, and cheerily thank the characters for saving them. A successful DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that these two are without a doubt Phillip and Adela, but the way they act like nothing is amiss is unsettling; it's as if the wounds and blood are nothing more than stage makeup, and it is clear that the Druskenvalds are in a state of delirium.

Before the characters investigate further, Chuckles cartwheels in. Read or paraphrase the following:

> "Whoops!" Chuckles chuckles. "Can't have you seeing these two lovelies before their cue. Exit super-duper-stage-right, please! His Majesty has a bigger role for you!" With a touch, Phillip and Adela burst into streamers, vanishing. "Follow, follow!" he says, pointing toward the maypole.

Chuckles dances toward the center of the festival. Once the characters return to the Festival Square (area C2), read or paraphrase the following:

> The parade has halted in the center of the festival grounds, and countless revelers form an ominous circle around the square. The stalls are gone. Only the maypole remains, its leering clown face perched above.
>
> Chuckles sits atop the grotesque balloon, but it's not his squeaky voice you hear. Instead, the maypole booms in a deep, growling baritone: "And now, our grand finale. We trust you've come to hate us, since we tailored our pranks and pratfalls just for you! Isn't that right, everyone?" The crowd cheers.
>
> "Yes! Three cheers for the heroes whose murders have primed the Horned King's grand entrance! All that's left is to kill you... or me. Either way, what an entrance."

At least three revelers dance around the maypole. When this fight begins, check how many of the captured villagers (see "Forced Revelers" earlier in this chapter) were not saved. They are present here and are magically compelled to dance around the maypole with their masks removed, screaming for help. These minions, whether compelled captives or not, use the **Herald of Fools** stat block, except they have 30 HP and lack the Multiattack action.

Any townsfolk here as forced revelers only break away from the maypole and attack if the characters harm them first. Otherwise, they continue dancing until Chuckles is defeated.

FESTIVAL INFLUENCE

The frantic energy of the revelry peaks as the battle is joined and takes on a life of its own. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the revelry causes one of the following effects; it can't choose the same effect two rounds in a row:

JOIN THE DANCE. If there are fewer than three heralds of fools in the battle, one herald of fools (using the adjustments noted above) dances out of the crowd and joins the fight. It acts on the same Initiative count as the other heralds, or if there are none, on Initiative count 20.

RIBBON BIND. Ribbons, streamers, or pennants animate and bind victims. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, up to two creatures in the town square. *Failure:* The target's Speed is 0. The target repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The effect ends early if the revelry uses this option again.

SNACK PELTING. Carnival foods fling from the crowd and pelt a creature in the square. The creature has a −2 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws to maintain Concentration until Initiative count 20 on the next round.



21.2 Ring of Fools

PHASE 1: FOOL FOR A DAY

The bloated clown balloon with its ribbon tentacles is the true body of **The Lord of Fools**; the puppet jester form the characters have interacted with so far is a projection of his power and personality. As the battle begins, Chuckles is content to let the characters think the jester image is him and fights with his Joy Buzzer action as much as possible. A character who interacts with the image by attacking, touching, or casting spells on it makes a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, they rationalize the impossible interaction, perceiving an attack to miss, a spell to be resisted, or even to think it was successful. On a successful save, the character realizes the jester is an insubstantial image.

A character who perceives the image for what it is, or one who takes the Study action to examine the area and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, discerns the balloon is the true villain.

When Chuckles is Bloodied, the battle enters phase 2.

PHASE 2: CARNIVAL OF CHAOS

The huge balloon painted with the garish face of a clown swells and lifts into the air, ripping its pole from the ground. The mouth moves and speaks with Chuckles's voice as it grotesquely floats and bounces across the festival grounds. "All right, chums, let's do this! It's time for you all to be fools for a day!"

Maniacal Bounding. Chuckles grows increasingly agitated and aggressive. At the start of each of his turns, he can jump up to his Speed to an unoccupied space without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

NO FUN TO DIE

When Chuckles reaches 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

The head of the jester pops off as if he's been beheaded, letting out a wild, howling wail as the illusion fades, and a headless marionette clatters to the ground. The head of the maypole balloon swells to an enormous size, as if it's being overfilled with air, until it eventually pops off the pole and whizzes high into the sky. It grows smaller and smaller as it soars higher and higher until it explodes in an enormous firework, accompanied by deep, ominous laughter. The outline of a leering clown face formed from glowing motes is visible for just a moment.

Level Up. The characters reach level 11, if they are still level 10, when they defeat Chuckles.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Magician* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Marotte of the Lord of Fools* is found in the wooden hands of the lifeless marionette.

CONCLUSION: SHOW'S OVER!

Confetti rains down over Wickermoor Village as the town's streets revert to their normal size and arrangement. Nobody notices the change as Chuckles's enchantments gradually fade away. The townsfolk have a pleasant memory of seeing the festival pack up their wagons and roll out of town, with Chuckles the Great Fool waving goodbye and his whole troupe singing a merry song as they went on their way.

The revelers, the decorations, and all other things that were part of the festivities go up in smoke and glitter. Chuckles is gone forever, finally freed from his obligation to the Horned King.



BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

The characters and the NPCs rescued during the festival are the only ones who remember the wicked bacchanale. They collapse into well-deserved rest (they suffer 1 Exhaustion level). Upon waking, the NPCs gather with the characters to piece together the horrors of the recent nights.

Unbeknownst to the characters, Phillip and Adela have been captured by the Crooked Man and are in the Crooked House, which has reawakened through Kehlenn's ancient power and the rebirth of the Vermintoll Coven.

With the Lord of Fools sacrificed, the Followers of the Old Ways know Adela's time has come. Those loyal to the Crooked Queen vanish from town, moving to the moors north of Wickermoor Village to construct the Wicker Man for the final sacrifice.



Chapter 22: THE CROOKED NIGHTMARE

"Oh Phillip, I had such a terrible dream! I saw this shining, beautiful world we've built turned to ash and smoke. I've had so many nightmares lately. It's this awful house. I just know it!"

- Adela Druskenvald -

Nightmares stir anew in the Crooked House. Though slain one by one, the Vermintoll Coven has returned, reborn with the malignant power of Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen. Despite their hatred for one another, the three vile hags have been fused together as one horrific abomination. They now twist the potent dreams of the clairvoyant Adela Druskenvald to fulfill her foretold fate. The house cannot be cleansed and must be destroyed along with the coven to bring the terrors to an end.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

With the destruction of the Fallen and the sacrifice of the Lord of Fools, the next step of the prophesized ritual to turn the Horned King to flesh and free the Crooked Queen from her prison is the sacrifice of Adela Druskenvald. However, her inevitable burning in the Wicker Man atop Rowan's Rise can only occur once her body, mind, and soul have been prepared.

These preparations were the wicked purpose of the Vermintoll Coven before they were slaughtered. However, their malefic spirits lingered, and Kehlenn returned them to abominable life to utilize their twisted magic one last time. Now, they have pulled Adela Druskenvald's prophetic dreams into the Crooked House, weaving them with Kehlenn's primeval power deep in the earth below to turn the entire home into a waking nightmare that has shattered reality itself.

After watching the characters throughout their trials and tribulations in Wickermoor Hollow, the Crooked Man waits for them inside his old home in hopes of adding more sacrifices to the pyre. He knows he will be given a new body just like his Horned King. The night has come for him to incarnate as the Wicker Man, and he only need delay the would-be heroes a little longer.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Crooked House has reawakened with the rebirth of the Vermintoll Coven in their new amalgamative form. The Crooked Man has trapped the Druskenvalds—once again—and the Jenkins within the house. Characters who enter the nightmare have these goals:

- Approach Druskenvald Manor and ensure the safety of Dani Jenkin.
- Enter the Crooked House, confront the Crooked Man, and witness it shatter into the Crooked Nightmare.
- Venture through the horrific dreamscapes, rescuing Walter Jenkin, Gilly Jenkin, and Phillip Druskenvald along the way.
- Confront the hags of the Vermintoll Coven in the attic of the Crooked House and destroy the Coven Abomination.

Before running this chapter, refresh yourself on the major NPCs, all of which the characters have previously encountered: the Druskenvalds, the Jenkin family, the Vermintoll Coven, and the Crooked Man. Read through the locations and dreamscapes of the Crooked Nightmare to better improvise each encounter.

This chapter is designed for four level 11 characters.

QUEST HOOKS

After the characters deal with the chaos of the Festival of Fools, they may choose to check in on Phillip and Adela at Druskenvald Manor. Otherwise, follow the Quest Hook below.

PRODIGAL SON

The characters are approached by Old Rusty while they're in Wickermoor Village, hoping to catch them on the edge of town or on the Founder's Round. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The groundskeeper Old Rusty stands before you as if he's been waiting for you. His eyes are wide with terror, but there is a hint of lucidity. He speaks in a voice that seems more present and controlled than normal for him.
>
> "I saw him. The man who chopped down my father and mother. He took them. The goat and the lamb. The lord and the lady. The house on the hill dreams. The vermin scurry once more. They are brewing the end of things."

Old Rusty is not fully lucid, but it is clear he is telling the truth. If the characters have not figured out that he is Francis, the son of Joseph and Gail Patrini, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History or Investigation) check allows them to connect the dots.

If the name Patrini is mentioned around him, Old Rusty nods vigorously. The characters then feel a warmth within and hear a distant harpsichord as they fulfill the final request of Joseph Patrini, gaining the effects of the *Bless* spell for 1d4 hours (see "H3: Parlor" in chapter 12).

RETURN OF THE CROOKED HOUSE

When the characters ascend the hill and enter through the gates of the Druskenvald Estate, read or paraphrase the following:

> The state of Druskenvald Manor has changed. The last time you saw it, the supernatural trappings and weird angles of the house had been banished. Now, it is crooked once more.
>
> Screams emanate from the building. Garish red lights shine from windows but then wink out into darkness. The walls leak a slick purple substance.
>
> Striding boldly toward the porch is Dani Jenkin. But before she can move up the undulating steps, her dog, Shuck, leaps out of some writhing bushes and knocks her to the ground.

If the characters try to gauge the dog's behavior or assess the situation, a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling or Insight) check realizes the animal isn't trying to hurt Dani. In fact, it's trying to stop her from entering the house, for the dog is the reincarnated spirit of Sally Lockwood, who knows that the evil spirits and creatures within will overwhelm the young girl.

TALKING WITH DANI

Shuck holds Dani back until the characters arrive. Then, the dog lets Dani go, pushing her with its nose toward the characters.

Use the bullet points here to guide a conversation between the characters and Dani. Shuck can also make whatever gestures he can to communicate with the characters. If they cast a spell that lets them talk to animals, use the conversation at the end of this chapter when Sally's spirit is released to guide conversations with Sally via Shuck (see "Conclusion: Dreaming No More" later in this chapter).

- Dani's parents went into the manor house when they heard Phillip and Adela screaming. Right after they went in, the house changed.
- Many voices from inside the house are calling for Dani to come into the house to be with her parents. She asks, "Can't you hear the voices?" The characters can't hear the voices unless they succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check, in which case the voices are terrifying and unfamiliar.

- She can sense the hags are inside and knows they must die, as there is no other hope for the lost souls within. If the characters won't let Dani go in, she begs them to go in and find out what is happening with her parents and the Druskenvalds.
- Dani can sense Adela's fear and the nightmares she's having within. She knows that her parents and Phillip are lost in the dream.
- She tells the characters that if they can free everyone inside, she can guide them out of Adela's nightmares. She doesn't know how, but she knows she can do it.

When the conversation ends, Dani does whatever the characters instruct her to do, assuming they go into the house to deal with the hags.



INTO THE NIGHTMARE

The characters leave Dani and Shuck behind and enter the horrifying Crooked House to put an end to its evil once and for all.

CROOKED NIGHTMARE FEATURES

Unless otherwise stated, the areas of the Crooked Nightmare have the following general features:

INFINITE DREAMS. The dreamscapes within the Crooked Nightmare defy reality, regardless of the location they seem to take place in. If a creature attempts to leave a location, it finds itself moving back into the location, no matter how far or in what direction it travels.

CROOKED DOORS. Crooked doors appear throughout the nightmare generally in impossible places. These doors invitingly open to a swirling reddish glow, which a character can step into and disappear, waiting in limbo. Once all characters have stepped through, they arrive at the next area together.

NO ESCAPE. The Crooked Nightmare is a demiplane. Spells cast for the purpose of leaving it fail, as do effects that banish a creature to another plane of existence.

VERMIN. The Crooked Nightmare is infested with the vermin favored by the Vermintoll Coven. Whenever a character fails a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, rather than spotting or finding nothing, they discover a weasel, centipede, or pigeon.

PROPHECY. Spells that contact creatures or beings on other planes of existence instead return a feverish prophecy from Adela Druskenvald.

CROOKED NIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

The following locations are different dreamscapes within the nightmare, following the encounter flowchart on map 22.1.

N1: CROOKED PIT

When the characters enter the Crooked House, read or paraphrase the following:

> The door closes behind you as you enter the foyer and find it pristine and comfortable, much to your surprise. Then, the false beauty shatters with a loud thud as the Crooked Man drops in from overhead, a noose around his neck. The moment he smacks against the tiled floor, the entire Crooked House shatters apart in a nightmare dreamscape.
>
> A sudden cacophony fills the air as the broken pieces of the house swirl around you. Fragments of wall, floor, and ceiling, as well as furnishings, decorations, and everything else that once filled the ruined manor fly through the space within the house's outer walls.
>
> A chorus of wicked cackling echoes from above, and you see the floorboards of the attic seemingly hundreds of feet away through the debris. The Crooked Man joins in the laughter, and the floor crumbles away. You begin to plummet into darkness.



22.1 Nightmare Encounter Flowchart

The **Crooked Man** attacks while he and the characters plummet through a seemingly endless pit into the depths below the Crooked House. He cackles and gleefully extols the power of the Crooked Queen that thrives below the house he called home. This fight has the following features:

FREE FALL. While falling, the characters and the Crooked Man remain on the same horizontal plane relative to the walls, regardless of their movement. Characters can move on this plane up to their Speed. Any attempts at flight, gliding, levitation, slow falling, or teleportation fail.

SLICK WALLS. The earthen walls of the bottomless pit ooze a viscous substance that resembles rotten blood. Any attempts to climb, grab onto, or attach to the walls fail, as do any attempts to slow the falling.

CROOKED DEBRIS. Debris from the Crooked House falls amidst the battle. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), one of the pieces of debris flies toward a random character, who must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or suffer the effect rolled on the Crooked Debris table.

Crooked Debris

1d6	Debris	Effect
1	**Clawfoot Bathtub**	The target takes 21 (6d6) Bludgeoning damage from the impact.
2	**Bergamot Tree**	The roots of the tree wrap around the target. The target takes 11 (2d10) Bludgeoning damage and has the Grappled condition (escape DC 17), and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.
3	**Family Portrait**	The painting sucks the target into it. The target is Stunned, on another plane of existence, and can't be targeted by attacks, spells, or other magical effects until the end of its next turn.
4	**Stuffed Moose Head**	The target takes 21 (6d6) Piercing damage from the antlers.
5	**Grandfather Clock**	The clock chimes cacophonously. The target takes 11 (2d10) Thunder damage and has the Deafened condition for 1 minute.
6	**Chandelier**	The target takes 11 (2d10) Fire damage and starts burning.

When the Crooked Man is reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

> The rope tied around the neck of the Crooked Man finally runs out of slack. He jolts with a sickening snap, and you plummet past him, continuing to fall. As his form gets smaller, he lets out a sickening laugh. He calls out above you, his voice echoing in the pit.
>
> "Enjoy the nightmare, friends! If you'll excuse me, I've got to retrieve our little dreamer from the attic and prepare her to be the star of the show in the final act!"

The Crooked Man vanishes as the characters and debris continue to fall. He teleports to the attic, where Adela is sleeping. He aims to take her to the Wicker Man which has finished its construction atop Rowan's Rise in the moors north of Wickermoor Village. Meanwhile, the characters harmlessly land in the middle of a dark woodland (area N2).



N2: DARK WOOD

> You land onto the damp floor of a foreboding forest, and despite having fallen what felt like forever, you feel no pain. Feeling the breeze of an autumn night and surrounded by trees of beech, ash, and hickory, you look up and see a full moon with no grinning witch face. You then hear the terrified whimpering of a little girl who calls out seemingly from all directions. "Please help me! I'm lost!"

The child's voice rings out around the characters. As a Search action, a character who tries to follow the voice and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check can determine the direction where the voice is loudest.

Handprints. Following the sound leads to a tree that is covered in white, child-sized handprints from its roots to a height of three feet up its trunk. Every fifteen feet is a similar tree, forming a path that leads deeper into the woods. Following the trail of trees for 10 minutes leads to a clearing, with the child's voice crying and begging along the way.

> You arrive at a small clearing illuminated by the light of the full moon and see a little girl in a white dress. Despite never having seen her before, the girl is hauntingly familiar. Her brown hair falls to her shoulders in curls, and she stares at you with large gray-blue eyes filled with tears while clutching a stuffed toy of a strange creature. "Frederick says he's going to gobble you up..."





22.2 Dark Wood



The little girl (Neutral, human noncombatant **Commoner**) is fearful of what her imaginary friend Frederick has been telling her. She explains that Frederick, her doll, is a toy version of a one-eyed beast that looks like a mix between a turkey and dinosaur.

She becomes increasingly nervous if the characters approach, telling them that Frederick is very hungry and wants to devour their flesh. She whispers that Frederick will devour her flesh if she lets go of him. She is scared and doesn't know what to do. Use map 22.2 for combat in this area.

Little Adela. The mole on the girl's right cheek seems familiar. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces this must be Adela Druskenvald as a child.

Frederick. When a character moves within 5 feet of Adela's stuffed creature, it instantly transforms into a **Gobblegeist** and attacks the characters. When the gobblegeist is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it reverts to a stuffed toy.

After Frederick is defeated, little Adela apologizes for her imaginary friend and blames the "Bad Bug Lady." At this mention, the cackling voice of Stonoga Blackstinger fills the clearing. Little Adela's eyes go wide, and in an instant, she is dragged screaming by an invisible force into the woods.

Crooked Door. When the characters follow the direction little Adela is dragged, they find a strange, crooked door standing on the forest floor, covered in child-sized white handprints. Any attempt to leave the area around the door triggers the Crooked Nightmare's Infinite Dreams feature. The door opens, beckoning to the characters; it leads to area N3.

Treasure. When little Adela is whisked away, she drops her stuffed Frederick. The toy acts as a **Corn Dolly** familiar.

N3: CROOKED OVEN

> Oppressive heat blasts you as you step into an enormous room-sized oven, reminiscent of an oversized version of the one in the kitchen of the Crooked House. Flames roar up in the back of the space, roasting a huge reptilian turkey beast on a spit fastened to the brick walls.
>
> Chained to a second iron spit in the chamber is Gilly Jenkin, her face flushed red as she screams in pain while being slowly cooked alive. To the side of the chamber, turning a large crank that spins the spits, is Stonoga Blackstinger in an obscene mockery of a chef's outfit.

This vision of Stonoga Blackstinger (**Centipede Hag**) cackles with glee, saying there is an art to preparing a body for sacrifice and that Phillip's precious wife will get a more thorough roasting than the turkey they just killed. The hag disappears if she takes any damage.

Saving Gilly. Gilly Jenkin is secured to the spit by three heavy, locked chains. Even if the characters don't attack Stonoga, roll Initiative! All three chains must be removed within 10 rounds or Gilly succumbs to fatal burns.

The chains have AC 17, HP 1, a damage threshold of 40, and Immunity to Bludgeoning, Piercing, Poison, Psychic, and Slashing damage. While trapped by the chains, Gilly can't be targeted by spells or other magical effects.

A chain can be unlocked, broken, slipped, or otherwise escaped with any of the following DC 20 ability checks made as a Utilize action:

- Strength (Athletics) check to break a chain
- Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using Thieves' Tools to pick a lock
- Intelligence (Investigation) check to find a weak link in a chain that can be easily pried or broken
- Other appropriate checks at your discretion

Each round on Initiative counts 20 and 10 (losing Initiative ties), the oven's inferno sends forth a burst of fire that randomly targets a character or Gilly. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) Fire damage. If Gilly is targeted, the number of rounds she can survive decreases by 1. These bursts continue until all characters have left the area or died.

When all three chains are removed, Gilly falls free from the spit. If she is alive, she is terrified and in pain. She reacts as if hearing a voice that the characters can't. She calls out to her daughter Dani, who pulls her out of the dream in a swirl of blue mist.

Roast Gobblegeist. The roasting beast on the spit is the monstrous form of the creature that little Adela had called Frederick. Dealing 10 Slashing damage to the roast slices off a portion of delectable meat. As a Utilize action, a character can eat a piece of meat and regain 9 (2d8) Hit Points. Only the first three portions of meat carved off have healing properties.

Crooked Door. After Gilly Jenkin escapes or dies, a crooked door appears in the flames of the oven, leading to area N4. Creatures that pass through the door must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level from the heat. A creature with Resistance or Immunity to Fire damage automatically succeeds on the save.

N4: SMOKING CRATER

> You step out into a cool summer night, a gleaming half-moon above with no trace of crookedness. In the distance. across a small bay, you see the twinkling lights of a sprawling metropolis, its skyline rising high in the night sky. Just up ahead is a massive crater in the countryside, still smoking from whatever formed it. On the ridge of the crater, a strange, colorful glow illuminates a human silhouette that stands and stares at what's within before jumping in and disappearing from view.

When the characters approach the crater, they see a huge, smoking meteorite within, pulsing with every color imaginable—and even impossible ones. A teenage girl slowly approaches the falling star, calling up to the characters without turning to them. "Don't you hear the whispers?! They're calling us home!" Use map 22.3 for combat in this area.

Teenage Adela. The voice clearly belongs to Adela Druskenvald (Neutral, human noncombatant **Commoner**), though a decade older than her form in the forest. When she arrives at the pulsing meteorite, she stares at it with awe and beckons the characters to join her so they can all travel beyond the stars together. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check makes it clear that she is enchanted by the fallen star. She is currently Charmed by the Whispers from Beyond.

Whispers from Beyond. When a creature steps over the ridge and into the sloping crater, they hear gibbering, incomprehensible whispers and must make a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, the creature has the Charmed condition, and while Charmed in this way, it must use as much of its movement as possible each round to move toward the meteorite. On a success, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. A Charmed creature can repeat the saving throw whenever it takes damage, or at the start of its turns while it can't see the meteorite, ending the effect on a success.



Characters who speak Deep Speech can puzzle out that the whispers are inviting them on a trip through the stars to realms beyond comprehension, but such a voyage requires leaving their bodies behind. Only their minds can make the trip.

Space Invaders. The first time a character moves within 5 feet of the meteorite, it cracks and an **Invader Out of Space** rises from within, attacking the characters until it's destroyed. Any Disrupting Touch attacks that hit creatures Charmed by Whispers From Beyond are Critical Hits. Creatures killed from damage in this way are turned to dust except for their brain or equivalent organ responsible for thought.

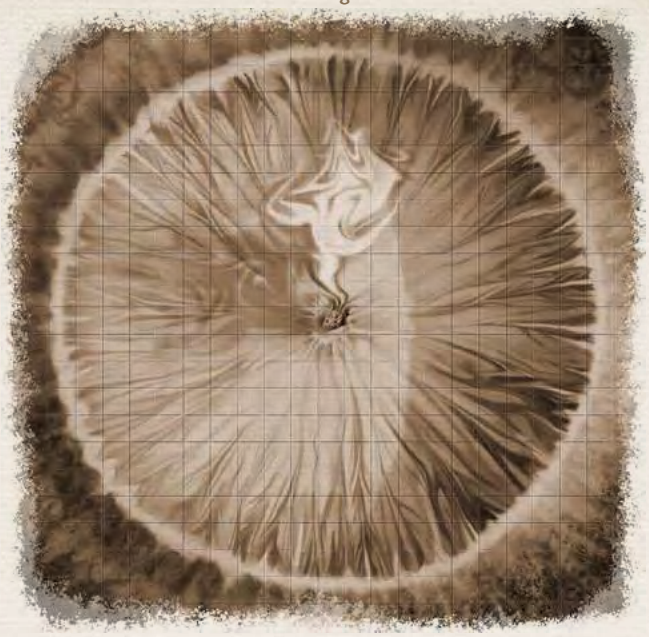
Fallen Star. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the cracked meteorite pulses with its strange, alien colors. Creatures within 60 feet of the fallen star that can see the colors must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or roll on the Fallen Star table to determine the alien experience and its effect. Aberrations succeed on the save automatically.

Fallen Star

1d6	Experience and Effect
1	The target's mind temporarily travels beyond the stars; it has the Incapacitated condition until the end of its next turn.
2	Incomprehensible whispers gibber in the target's mind. On the target's next turn, it can only take an action or a Bonus Action, or it can move.
3	The target sees glimpses of alien landscapes and has the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn.
4	The target's psyche begins to fragment in the face of cosmic infinity. Until the end of its next turn, it has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls.
5	Shrieking otherworldly voices rip through the target's mind. It takes 21 (6d6) Psychic damage.
6	The indescribable colors linger in the target's eyes. It has the Blinded condition until the end of its next turn.

When the invader is destroyed, teenage Adela comes to her senses and rubs her eyes as she tries to shake off her stupor, saying that she followed a weird pigeon to get here. At this mention, the shrill screech of Golub Graygullet fills the air, and Adela rockets upward into the night sky, shrieking as she disappears into a twinkling star.

22.3 Smoking Crater



Crooked Door. Once Adela disappears, a crooked door rises from the crack in the fallen star. The characters must climb up the 7-foot-tall meteorite to reach the door, which leads to area N5. A creature that passes through it must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or take 11 (2d10) Psychic damage.

Treasure. When the door emerges from the meteorite, a glowing chunk of stone chips off and lands at the characters' feet. The fragment is an *Ioun Stone* (reserve).

N5: CROOKED BOOKSHELF

You step out onto an enormous bookshelf as you realize that you've seemingly been shrunk down to a tiny size. You recognize the huge room beyond the opening in the shelf as the library of the Crooked House. Suddenly, the huge, leering face of a monstrous cat blocks the view, its colossal paws clutching the wooden plank you stand upon. The transformed creature you know as Wisp grins at you with razor-sharp teeth.

On the shelf with you is a massive glass decanter. Walter Jenkin is trapped within, terrified. He pounds on the glass and screams voicelessly while standing in waist-deep liquor. Shrieking, bitter voices fill the air, spewing vitriolic hate toward Walter. The chorus is joined by Golub Graygullet, who perches atop the glass stopper of the decanter dressed in an absurd parody of a schoolteacher's outfit. She cackles as she calls out in a mocking tone.

"Poor Walter was such a 'good man.' The most loyal human I've had the displeasure of knowing! But all it takes is a few well-placed lies to make someone forget themselves and become a prisoner of their own making! Can you remind him of his loyalty?!"

The vision of Golub Graygullet (**Pigeon Hag**) leers at the characters and crows about the perfected process of preparing a mind for sacrifice, aided by deceitful words and stupefying substances. She gloats that Adela never learned how to control the powerful mind that she didn't deserve, and it has led to her doom. The hag disappears if she takes any damage. Even if the characters don't attack Golub, roll Initiative!

Decanter. The glass decanter has Immunity to all damage and can't be moved. Its stopper can't be removed by any means from outside, but it can easily be pressed up from within if Walter chooses to escape. However, the mental torture that he is suffering makes him unaware of this solution and unable to do anything but impotently bang on the glass in agonized desperation.

Wisp. Even if the characters previously killed the malicious ketgrinn during the events of the Crooked House (see chapter 12), this nightmare version of Wisp has stolen Walter's voice once more. Now colossal, Wisp grins and speaks with not just the voice of Walter, but also Gilly, Dani, Mayor Somerton, and other townsfolk as you see fit. He spews vicious words to keep the man paralyzed in self-loathing.

Wisp looks into the bookshelf with only his head and paws visible, attacking the characters as he wraps Walter in despair. He uses the **Sphinx of Lore** stat block with the following changes: his alignment is Chaotic Evil, his size is Gargantuan, his creature type is Fey, and his Claw attacks deal Psychic damage. Wisp vanishes with a yowl if reduced to 0 Hit Points.

Saving Walter. The liquor level continually rises in the great decanter imprisoning Walter. He is terrified and clutches his head in agony. On Initiative count 0 (losing Initiative ties) on the 10th round, Walter drowns in the liquor.

Only Walter can save himself, but he can't do it alone. He can be snapped out of his nightmare-induced powerlessness by appealing to the most defining aspect of his personality: his sense of loyalty. This can be accomplished through encouragement or by him seeing those he cares about in grave danger. He starts with loyalty 0, and he gains loyalty when any of the following occur:

RALLY (GAIN 1 LOYALTY). An attack made against Wisp scores a Critical Hit.

RESOLVE (GAIN 1 LOYALTY). An attack against a character scores a Critical Hit, or a character fails a saving throw Wisp forced.

VICTORY (GAIN 3 LOYALTY). Wisp is reduced to 0 Hit Points.

ENCOURAGE (GAIN 1 LOYALTY). As an Influence action, a character succeeds on a DC 20 ability check using one of these approaches, or any other that you deem appropriate:



- Charisma (Deception) to distract Wisp from unleashing more mental torture.
- Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) to inspire him to block out the verbal abuse or to pull himself together.
- Intelligence (History or Nature) to use logic to help Walter realize that the nightmare is full of lies.

When his loyalty reaches 6, Walter snaps himself out of his tortured inaction. He pushes the glass stopper out of the decanter and climbs out, horrifically shaken and scarred but alive. He reacts as if hearing a voice only he can hear and calls out to his daughter Dani, who pulls him from the nightmare in a burst of blue mist.

Crooked Door. After Walter Jenkin escapes or dies, a crooked door appears in an image of Wisp's enormous grin of sharp teeth. To pass through, characters must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) Slashing damage. This door leads to area N6.

N6: WEDDING FEAST

> You step into the darkness of a moonless night, the faint silhouette of a new moon hanging in the sky above. The scent of springtime flowers drifts through the air along with jubilant music and cheerful voices. Before you lies a wedding feast in the middle of a meadow, filled with a throng of dancing guests dressed in all manner of strange costume, each one bearing an animal mask.
>
> Past the long tables laden with lavish food and drink and the grassy dance ring is a raised dais with the bride and groom. Adela Druskenvald sits in a cumbersome dress and crown of roses in brilliant shades of red, orange, and yellow, only her face visible through the flowers. Beside her, tethered to the raised platform, stands the groom, a simple black goat with a leather collar, complete with a dangling bell.

Twenty wedding guests (human **Commoners**) immediately invite the characters to join them in the dance to celebrate the beautiful union in which the bride and groom have pledged their souls to each other. Characters who agree and dance along with the guests are welcome to move about freely. Characters who refuse must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition for 1 minute. While Charmed in this way, the character must join the throng in their dance. Use map 22.4 for combat in this area.

Bride Adela. Now a fully grown adult, Adela Druskenvald (Neutral, human noncombatant **Noble**) is smiling unnaturally with wide, maddened eyes. She laughs gleefully and calls to the characters, exclaiming, "What a joy it is to give your soul to another!" She invites them to the dais to help her celebrate the wedding by offering her and the goat well wishes and a kiss on the hand and hoof.

Black Goat. Adela's immeasurable joy is a direct contrast to the anxious fear radiating from the **Goat** beside her. It struggles against the rope that tethers it to the dais, trying to get away frantically as its bell jingles. Each character must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. The check has Disadvantage if the character is Charmed. On a success, a character notes that the animal is reacting to something moving through the crowd of wedding guests, as if a predator is stalking near. On a failure, the character is surprised by the imminent attack.

Last Dance. When the characters get within five feet of the dais, a **Drakkenhob** emerges from the throng and devours the black goat before attacking the characters. All the guests step aside and form a ring around the battle, watching on with joy and cheering with every blow and death.

Wedding Song. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the wedding guests add their music to the song of battle that affects the very soul. All characters must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or suffer the effect of a random instrument from the Wedding Song table.

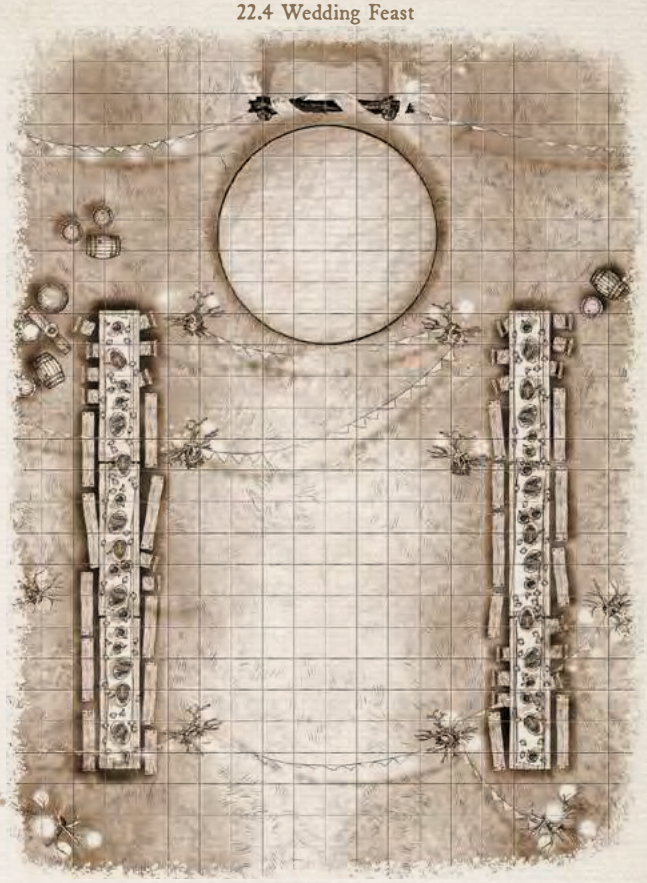
Wedding Song

1d6	Instrument
1	**Drum.** The target takes 13 (2d12) Thunder damage.
2	**Hurdy Gurdy.** The target has the Restrained condition until the end of its next turn.
3	**Flute.** The target can't make melee or ranged weapon attacks until the end of its next turn.
4	**Fiddle.** The target has Disadvantage on saving throws until the end of its next turn.
5	**Jaw Harp.** The target has Disadvantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.
6	**Bells.** The target can't cast spells until the end of its next turn.

When the drakkenhob is destroyed, Adela's smile fades, and she takes in the garish display before her. She asks where Phillip is and then realizes that she's in the Crooked House. At this mention, the sneering hiss of Vessla Browntooth rips apart the wedding guests in a bloody massacre, and the form of Adela immediately ignites into flame, burning up with her flower gown in an instant while screaming in agony.

Crooked Door. Once Adela disappears, a crooked door, which leads to area N7, rises from the feast table that is now covered in the gore of the slaughtered wedding guests. Passing through the putrid carnage, characters who enter the door must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition for 1 hour.

22.4 Wedding Feast



N7: CROOKED THRONE

You step into a frigid, ancient basement you don't recognize, where the ruined, crumbling stone floors and walls are all remarkably crooked and caked with ice. Swarms of wailing souls surge throughout the space like a raging snowstorm. Through the blizzard of spirits, you see Phillip Druskenvald sitting on a throne made of gnarled roots that intertwine all over his body, binding him to his seat. A crooked crown of woven brambles rests atop his head, sending streams of trickling blood down his face. In his right hand, he clasps a burning torch, and in his left, an apple.

Amidst the frigid moans of the damned are the vicious sneers of Vessla Browntooth, who prods and pokes Phillip with a flaming golden sword while dressed like a grotesque mockery of an angel. "You wished to have my home, and now you have it! It's yours, oh great King of All! The lamb... the bride of the King... the clairvoyant is finally ready for the ritual to be ushered in!"

This vision of Vessla Browntooth (**Weasel Hag**) snarls at the characters as they enter the frozen basement, spurning her sisters and claiming they know nothing about properly preparing a soul for sacrifice. The hag disappears if she takes any damage, leaving the sword to clatter to the ground.



Saving Phillip. While Phillip Druskenvald (Neutral, human noncombatant **Noble**) is nearly catatonic and bloodied while encased in choking roots, he is not in true imminent danger. His flesh is needed to usher in the Horned King. Even if the characters don't attack Vessla, roll Initiative! The quicker the characters can free Phillip, the less they will be worn down ahead of the climactic battle in the next area.

As a Utilize action, a character can remove a root from Phillip by succeeding on one of the following DC 20 ability checks:

- Strength (Athletics) check to rip a root apart
- Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to slip the root free
- Intelligence (Investigation) check to find the right knots in the roots to easily undo one
- Other appropriate checks at your discretion

King of All

1d6	Effect	Damage Type
1–2	The Illuminating Torch burns the characters when they get too close.	Fire
3–4	The Poisonous Apple spreads its venom to the characters on a touch.	Poison
5–6	The Thorned Crown pierces the characters' skin when they reach into the roots.	Piercing

On a failed check, a character slips and takes 14 (4d6) damage of a type depending on the implement that injures the character, determined by rolling on the King of All table. The torch, apple, and crown cannot be removed from Phillip by any means until he is freed.

After six successful checks, Phillip is freed and his crown, apple, and torch fall to the ground. He regains his senses and immediately asks for Adela with growing panic, exclaiming that she had just been there. He protests against a voice only he can hear before disappearing into blue mist, pulled from the nightmare by Dani Jenkin.

Frozen Throne. On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the icy basement gets more frigid. Creatures other than Phillip Druskenvald must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) Cold damage and gain 1 Exhaustion level. A creature with Resistance or Immunity to Cold damage automatically succeeds on the save.

Souls of the Damned. On Initiative count 10 (losing Initiative ties), the storm of souls targets a random character and attempts to possess them. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the spirits for 1 minute. A possessed character is compelled to attack their allies with their most powerful spells or abilities. The character can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the possession on a success. A character who succeeds on the save is immune to this effect.

Crooked Door. Once Phillip disappears, a crooked door rises from the icy gnarled roots, leading to the final section: Toil and Trouble.

Treasure. The sword dropped by Vessla Browntooth is a *Flame Tongue* (Longsword).

TOIL AND TROUBLE

This crooked door is the last the characters step through, leading them to the heart of the nightmare.

> You step into the attic of the Crooked House, but it has warped into an even more horrific version of itself. It's considerably larger and cluttered with the putrid remnants of all manner of vile ritual. The room's walls are covered in thousands of vermin that undulate in a single mass. At the center of the chamber is a huge bubbling cauldron with clawed feet standing over a fire that licks the iron. A moment later, you hear the cackling voices of all three hags of the Vermintoll Coven.
>
> In an instant, the brew in the cauldron bubbles up and spills over, slithering into a new form as an enormous, squirming monstrosity is birthed from the goo—an amalgamation of Vessla Browntooth, Stonoga Blackstinger, and Golub Graygullet with body parts resembling those of weasels, centipedes, and pigeons. The three-headed abomination sneers at you, and the cauldron begins to walk.

There's no time for the characters to make any preparations once they arrive in the crooked attic. Roll Initiative! Use map 22.5 for combat in this area.



PHASE 1: SING YE VERMIN

The revolting remnant of the Vermintoll hags, **The Vermintoll Abomination** attacks. All three heads extol the greatness of the Crooked Queen and taunt the characters for their inability to save the doomed Adela Druskenvald. The hags' favored vermin swarm throughout the room, writhing and crawling over the floor and walls. The hags' precious familiars are reborn over and over from these pests and arise as three **Vermin Infestations**.

Squirming Walls. Any creature other than the Vermintoll Abomination and vermin infestations that is within 5 feet of the walls has its Speed halved by the teeming vermin while the creature remains that close.

Verminsong. As the Vermintoll Abomination fights, the three heads of Vessla, Stonoga, and Golub sing together in a vile incantation that fuels their magic. The lyrics are as follows:

> *Answer us, ye messengers who scrape beneath the soil.*
> *Where mortal dreams are choked by roots, and shrivel, shrink, and spoil.*
> *Come out now, your mothers yield, our softened hands with kindness.*
> *Shake off your blind and wretched sleep and wriggle forth from darkness.*
> *Sing, ye vermin, sing! What pleasures have you seen?*
> *Scream, ye vermin, scream! Release what you have gleaned!*
> *And in the soup, your steaming death shall lend a nice aroma!*

PHASE 2: SCREAM YE VERMIN

When the Vermintoll Abomination is Bloodied, the amalgamation shrieks, driving the teeming vermin into a frenzy. They spread across all the surfaces of the attic, causing the following effects.

Difficult Terrain. The floor, walls, and ceiling are Difficult Terrain for any creature other than the Vermintoll Abomination and vermin infestations.

Endless Bites. When a creature other than the Vermintoll Abomination or a vermin infestation starts its turn, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) Piercing damage and have the Poisoned condition until the end of its turn.

Level Up. The characters reach level 12, if they are still level 11, when they destroy the Vermintoll Abomination.

22.5 Crooked Attic





CONCLUSION: DREAMING NO MORE

After the characters have defeated the Vermintoll abomination, read or paraphrase the following:

> With the last blow struck, the house trembles not in anger but in fear. Reality shatters as the nightmare around you breaks. Loud cracking noises erupt all around you, and the floor gives way under your feet. You roll and tumble, falling from floor to floor as the Crooked House collapses.
>
> You land, finally, amid a heap of wood, plaster, and dust under a cloudless night sky. Dani Jenkin and Shuck stare down at you. Spirits and ghostly forms of countless varieties swirl around the collapsed house like wasps around a destroyed hive. Some fly into and out of Dani, who stands calmly within the ghost-fueled maelstrom.
>
> The girl speaks in a distant, resigned tone: "They don't know where to go. They've been trapped here so long. They'll find peace now."

The Crooked House has been destroyed, and the spirits are finally free. Amidst the cacophony of swarming souls, the spirit of Joseph Patrini appears before the characters briefly to give them a thankful nod before flying off to join the spirit throng once more.

If the characters saved either Walter, Gilly, or both, they will be with Dani and Shuck amidst the ruins of the Crooked House. However, they say that Phillip Druskenvald immediately bolted and took off in search of Adela as soon as he was pulled from the nightmare.

As the characters regain their footing, the Jenkins share a family hug, but there is more to share. Use the information below to guide a conversation:

- The spirit of Sally Lockwood is released from Shuck, who becomes a normal dog. Sally shares the story of her family's demise (see chapter 12) and how she's tried but failed to keep the horror from repeating itself.
- Dani knows that the spirits are restless because they can feel a terrible power growing out on the moorlands. That's where Phillip and Adela Druskenvald are right now. She can feel their presence there.
- If the characters saved both her parents, the joy and relief in Dani's soul cannot be contained. The characters gain the benefits of a Long Rest. If they saved only one parent, this is a Short Rest.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Empress* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Cauldron of the Vermintoll Coven* is found among the rubble of the Crooked House.

BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

Wickermoor Village is in chaos. The scheming cultists among the Followers of the Old Ways have made their move and initiated the ritual to sacrifice Adela Druskenvald and countless more innocents atop Rowan's Rise, the highest hill in the moors north of Wickermoor Village.

Once the construction of the Wicker Man was complete, cult members from across the valley donned uncanny animal masks and descended upon Wickermoor Village, kidnapping victims from the streets and their homes and dragging them out into the moors. Which NPCs have turned evil and joined the cultists and which are at risk of being sacrificed are up to you to escalate the dramatic tension of forthcoming events (see chapter 23).



Chapter 23: WICKER'S VIGIL

"Run, run, don't shrink and cower, and join us at the witching hour.
We'll skip and sing in thrashing light, to smother the shrieks of endless night.
Dance beneath the Crooked Moon! Round rising rapture, hand in hand!
From pale decay and empty gloom, we'll comfort you.
May our light embrace you too, and pierce the edge of midnight soon.
Through wicker's blaze and ashen plume, the Crooked Moon!"

- Invocation of the Old Ways -

The song of the Old Ways fills the air, carried high by enraptured voices and intertwined with embers that hiss and crack as they die. Their breath slows, drawn to a halt, until all that remains of the sacrificed is ash. Atop the highest hill in the gloomy moorland stands a titan made of wicker, casting its crooked shadow over a throng of devotees that sing praises to the Crooked Queen.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

A prophecy (see chapter 8) has been whispered among the Followers of the Old Ways since Kehlenn first stirred within her prison in the Crooked Tree. Following the deaths of the Fallen, the bloody revelries brought forth by the Lord of Fools, and the preparations for sacrifice conducted by the Vermintoll Coven, the final piece of the prophecy is put into place with the capture of Adela Druskenvald.

Adela's sacrifice is all that remains to free the Crooked Queen and unleash her twisted, vengeful power upon Phillip Druskenvald and the domain he dared to steal. No fewer than thirteen souls must be consumed by flames within an enormous wicker effigy shaped into the form of the humanity that Kehlenn loathes so much. Among those doomed to burn is the beloved bride of her eons-old foe.

With the ritual set in motion and the ancient prophecy poised to come to fruition, the Followers of the Old Ways have erected a Wicker Man atop the highest hill in the moors north of Wickermoor Village. This sacred site, known as Rowan's Rise, is where the Crooked Man makes his final play, drawing forth his ancient power.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Leaving the collapsed remains of the Crooked House behind, the characters follow the massive swarm of spirits—their ethereal cries now mingled with gleeful screams of dying victims—out into the moors toward Rowan's Rise. Characters have these goals:

- Journey across the moors, saving innocent townsfolk from the monsters of the Crooked Queen.
- Disrupt the ritualistic magic at the standing stones atop Rowan's Rise.
- Destroy the animated Wicker Man and annihilate the Crooked Man.

Before running this chapter, review the NPCs of Wickermoor Village (see chapter 11) and decide who will be cultists and who will be captives based on the characters' connections for the most dramatic climax. Read through the encounters across the moors so you can better improvise the innocents' reactions to the horrors around them. Finally, familiarize yourself with the climactic battle, "Shadow of the Wicker Man," so that you can deliver a satisfying ending to the Crooked Man's story arc.

This chapter is designed for four level 12 characters.



ACROSS THE MOORS

The characters see the swarming mass of spirits from the Crooked House rushing across the darkened landscape toward the highest hill in the moors—Rowan's Rise. This sacred place draws the freed souls to it before they fly off in all directions and fade in an attempt to find rest. Now is the time to save the still-living souls.

THE LEGEND OF ROWAN

Many years ago, a young woman named Rowan became enchanted by the moon that forever gazes upon Druskenvald, its gentle light a soft invitation from the heavens. She followed its beckoning glow from her bedroom in Wickermoor Village and disappeared into the moors. When she did not return home, a search party scoured the highlands all night before finding the last trace anyone would ever find of her. Her precious silver locket lay abandoned at the center of a ring of ancient standing stones, the portrait of her beloved sister within replaced by the image of an antlered hare.

The story told for generations was that Rowan soared into the night sky, flying higher and higher until she could sit upon the Crooked Moon, watching over the people of Wickermoor Hollow forever more. From then on, that great crowned hill was known as Rowan's Rise.

Beneath the tale lies the truth… that Rowan became the first human sacrifice to Kehlenn when she first reawakened her power. And so, it is at this sacred site that the Followers of the Old Ways perform the final rites to release the Crooked Queen so that she can reclaim her usurped domain.

SACRIFICES

Each encounter in this section places innocent villagers in peril. Every villager that dies loses their soul to the ongoing sacrificial ritual and feeds the Wicker Man atop the hill. This is made obvious to the characters when, after each death of an innocent, a mote of blue-green light rises from the corpse and is whisked toward the Wicker Man. Keep track of how many villagers perish in the encounters, up to a maximum number noted in each encounter. The total determines how much stronger the Wicker Man becomes in the final confrontation.

Should the characters fare poorly while moving across the moors or falter in protecting the innocents, they may find themselves overwhelmed. If they retreat, dozens of townsfolk will be sacrificed, and the Wicker Man will achieve its full power, turning its wrath toward Wickermoor Village and the valley beyond until all has turned to ash.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Before parting ways with the Jenkin family at the ruins of the Crooked House, Dani tells the characters that she senses that both Phillip and Adela Druskenvald are on the moors. Adela is trapped in a prison of wicker surrounded by terrified innocents and animals. She can sense Phillip desperately searching the moors but does not know where he is.

CROOKED CHAOS

When the characters arrive at the moors, read or paraphrase the following:

> The moors outside of Wickermoor Village are treacherous even in the best of times. But now, a violent storm batters the highlands, and rain floods the sodden grounds.
>
> Townsfolk scatter in a frenzy, some fleeing toward the village, others vanishing into the depths of the moors. The ground is strewn with bodies, cut down by gleeful hands, their blood mingling with the mud.
>
> On a distant hill, a towering bonfire roars, its light dancing wildly in the storm. Above, the clouds churn, forming a grinning face with hollow eyes. The voice of the Crooked Man bellows from the sky, dripping with twisted merriment.
>
> "Welcome, dear friends, to the exaltation!" the disembodied voice lilts. "The hollow rejoices, and all have come to witness my blazing incarnation. Like lambs to the slaughter, each little sacrifice adds to the pyre of our beloved queen's power. Do you think you can save them all? Remember, there are no heroes here."
>
> The face of the Crooked Man is replaced by roiling storm clouds, leaving the scattered people to scream in even greater terror.

The Crooked Man has incited mass panic and calls forth the minions of the Crooked Queen to descend upon the numerous potential sacrifices.

If the characters attempt to get clarity regarding the situation by asking one of the people in their vicinity, choose an NPC who they've dealt with in the past and whom they trust. Use the event details here to decide what the NPC saw to guide that conversation.

- Some of the villagers in animal masks started attacking others, knocking them Unconscious, and dragging them out into the moorland.
- Strange monsters swarmed out from the moorlands into the village. These creatures seemed to be helping the violent villagers in their kidnapping efforts.
- The mayor immediately disappeared, and the constable was the first person snatched, causing a lack of planning in the defense of the village.
- In addition to the monsters from the moors, some strangers from Foxwillow, Dawn's Gate, and Murkwater Bend arrived and joined the kidnapping effort. Some of them brought captives of their own.
- The captives and the kidnappers appeared to have gone deep into the moor, and now there is a raging fire atop Rowan's Rise.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE MOORS

The servants of the Crooked Queen place obstacles in front of the characters as they rush across the moors and ascend Rowan's Rise. Use map 23.1 for combat in this area.

ENCOUNTER 1: DEATH FROM ABOVE

When the characters strike out toward Rowan's Rise, read or paraphrase the following:

> The distant blaze continues to rage far across the moors, its fires not dampened by the downpour. Billowing smoke joins with the roiling clouds to form a dense gloom above you.
>
> With a loud and guttural shriek, six gaunt and bent vulture-like creatures swoop down upon you, extending sharp, grasping talons toward potential victims that may soon be new carrion to feast upon.

The first of the Crooked Queen's minions assails the characters once they have begun the treacherous trek across the moors.

Creatures. Six **Boneflayers** swoop down into the characters' path. Two of them grab onto an innocent civilian nearby, and the other four attack the characters.

Sacrifices. On the boneflayers' turns, the two grappling a villager carry their prey 50 feet into the air and drop them, likely to their death unless the characters have some method to intervene, such as the *Feather Fall* spell. The boneflayers then take the Dash action to swoop down and grapple another for their next turn.

A maximum of five villagers can perish in this encounter. If the characters skip the boneflayers' assault entirely, add five to the total number of innocent villagers killed (see "Sacrifices" above).

Treasure. If at most one villager dies from the monster attacks, a fleeing villager in the area gives the characters their thanks and provides them with two *Potions of Healing* (greater).

ENCOUNTER 2: DEATH FROM BELOW

As the characters move closer to Rowan's Rise, read or paraphrase the following:

> The thunderstorm and rain have ceased, but the ground is a waterlogged mess. Some townsfolk have become stuck in the mire, beginning to panic as they desperately try to escape.
>
> The mud begins to shift and churn as three enormous and twisted serpent-like creatures burst out of the quagmire. Massive, crooked jaws unhinge hungrily as the serpents lurch toward the innocents.

The marshy ground in this area is Difficult Terrain.

Creatures. Three **Wellwyrms** emerge to devour the helpless, offer up more souls to the Crooked Queen, and slay any who stand in their way. The wellwyrms use their Burrow Speed to ignore the Difficult Terrain.

Sacrifices. If the characters haven't freed any villagers since the wellwyrms' last turn, a wellwyrm devours one of the trapped people on its turn. Freeing a villager causes the wellwyrms to turn their attention on the characters during that round. As an action, a character frees a trapped villager and sends them running to safety by succeeding on a DC 15 ability check. Methods of rescue and required ability checks are listed below:

BRAWN. Strength (Athletics) to bodily haul a villager free. The villager must be in reach, or the character must use Rope, a 10-foot Pole, or a similar tool.

CUNNING. Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) to talk a villager through how to get unstuck and point out solid footholds.

LEADERSHIP. Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) to encourage the villager with reassurance or to motivate them with a terrible picture of the fate that awaits if they don't escape.

If all the wellwyrms are defeated, three more emerge from the quagmire until a total of six villagers have been saved or slain, in any combination.

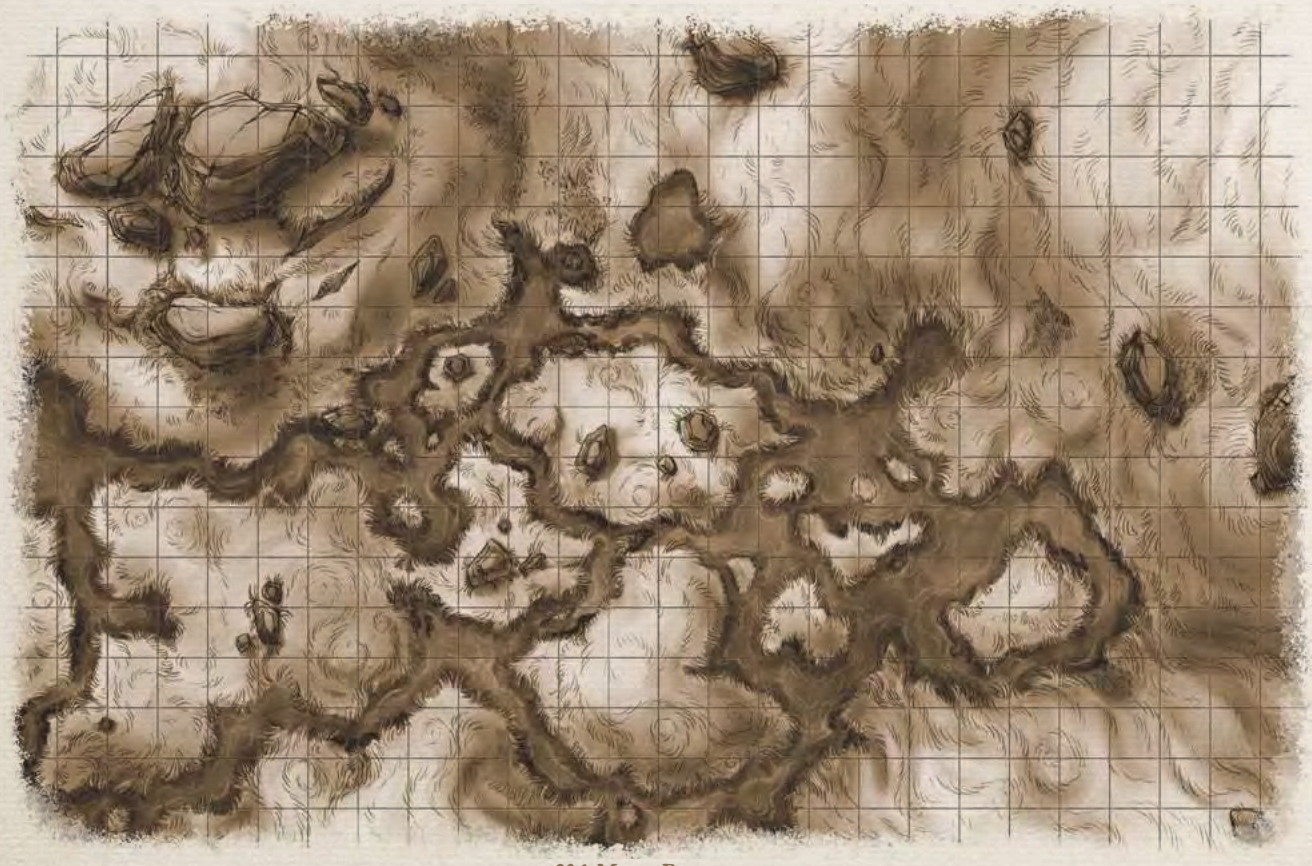
A maximum of six villagers can be killed here. If the characters bypass this encounter completely, add six to the total number of innocent villagers killed (see "Sacrifices" above).

Treasure. If the characters save four or more innocents from the wellwyrms, one of the survivors is a wandering priestess of the Brightsinger. She offers to cast *Cure Wounds* three times and speaks a benediction that grants each character Heroic Inspiration.

ENCOUNTER 3: DEATH FROM WITHIN

After the characters leave the wyrm-infested quagmire behind, read or paraphrase the following:

> The ground hardens beneath your feet as you break free from the muck. Ahead, four people from Foxwillow stumble past, their desperate flight toward the village cut short. They collapse, writhing in agony, their bodies convulsing as if possessed by the land itself.
>
> Their skin and muscles swell, rippling unnaturally, until gnarled roots and twisted branches burst forth through their flesh, sprouting like cursed saplings. These masses of plants coil and grow into grotesque approximations of the humans from whom they spawned. These new beings, now puppets of the rooted ground, reach for rusted sickles and pitchforks scattered nearby, their wooden limbs ready to harvest.



23.1 Moors Encounters

This gruesome process then happens to the characters, who must each make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a character takes 11 (2d10) Necrotic damage as a similar creature grows and rips free from their body, appearing in the nearest unoccupied space.

Creatures. The four grotesque creatures are **Woodwarped**, and they turn their attention to the villagers that spawned them, intent on slaying their progenitors. Any that spawned from the characters who failed the save move to attack the characters.

Sacrifices. On the woodwarpeds' turns, the four that spawned from the villagers surround one of the hapless townsfolk and attack. Any of the four woodwarped that were attacked or took damage instead turn their attention to whatever creature harmed them for that turn.

A maximum of four villagers can be lost here. If the characters leave the villagers to their fates, add four to the total number of innocent villagers killed (see "Sacrifices" above).

ROWAN'S RISE

With the threats of the moors behind them, the characters now stand at the base of Rowan's Rise, a towering hill topped with a jagged stone circle. Looming beyond the circle is a colossal Wicker Man. Use map 23.2 for combat in this area.

ENCOUNTER 4: CULT OF THE CROOKED QUEEN

When the characters move past the battle with the woodwarped and reach Rowan's Rise, read or paraphrase the following:

> You arrive at the base of Rowan's Rise, its looming hilltop thrumming with revelry. Atop the hill is a ring of ancient standing stones, a bonfire blazing within. Throughout the stones, dozens of people clad in animal masks are singing, dancing, and writhing, their laughter rising with the crackle of the flames. Their hands, torches, and sickles are raised skyward in hypnotic and jubilant rapture.
>
> Unrestrained anthems of praise fill the air in melodies that are equal parts joyous and disturbing. Beyond the ring of stones stands a colossal wicker effigy, its woven limbs bathed in the thrashing light of the conflagration.
>
> Amidst the ecstatic throng, six terrified townsfolk are chained to the stones, dressed in ritualistic garments. Their cries are swallowed by the roaring flame and deafening chorus of celebration.

The six chained townsfolk are being prepared for sacrifice and will be consumed by fire if the characters do not quickly find a way to disrupt the stones and free them. Dancing around the circle of stones are twenty-four Chaotic Evil human **Cultists**. They greet the characters hospitably, beckoning them to join in the chorus to complete the happy ritual for the Crooked Queen. If the characters attempt to free the captives or fight the cultists, the cultists become Hostile and attack.

If the characters ask to learn the song, they are taught its words:

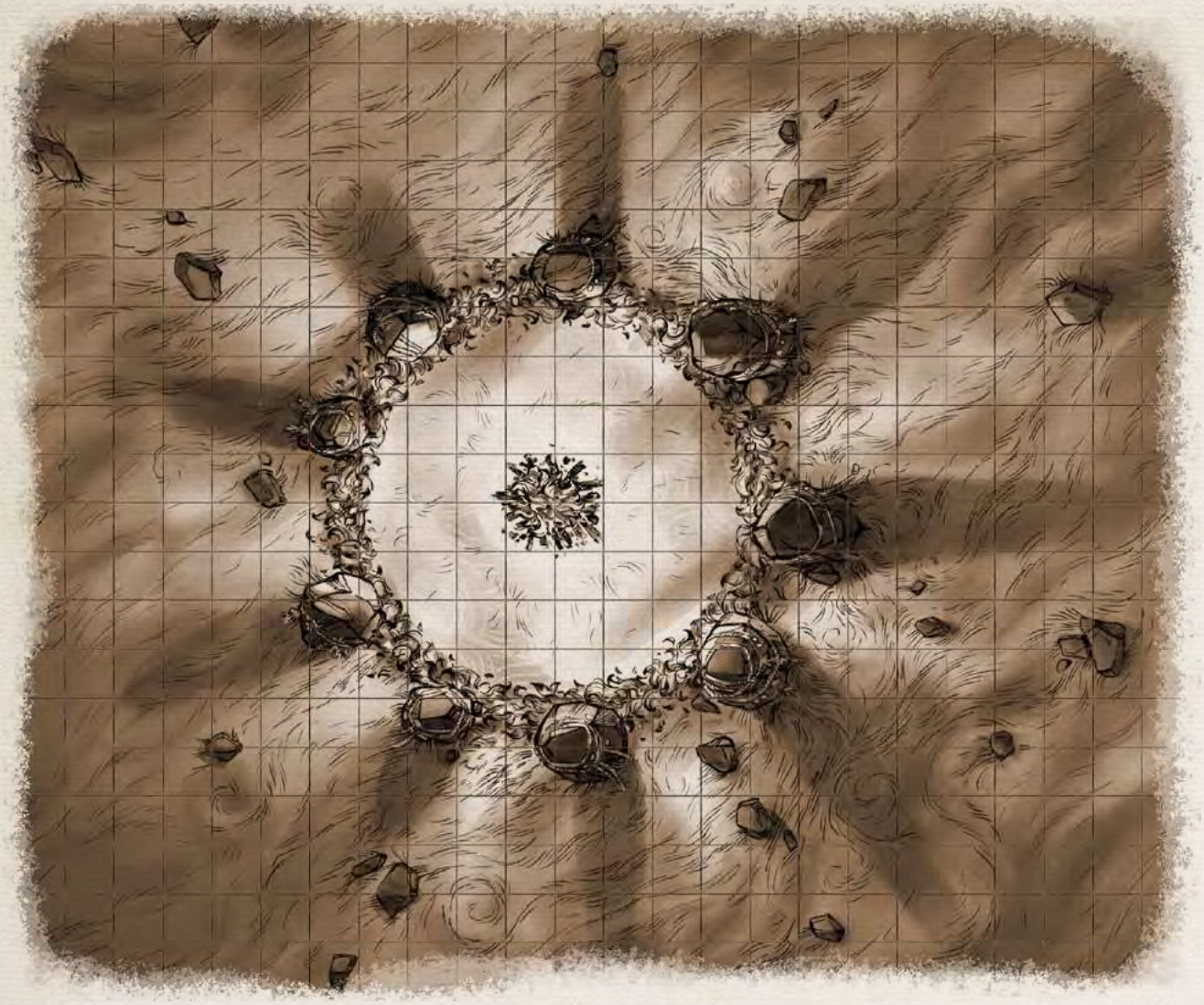
> *Fire rising, wrest our breath away!*
> *Fill the skies with the songs we've borrowed!*
> *Flesh and senses born of clay!*
> *Fill the field where your bounty lays!*

This is the climactic showdown with the cult ahead of the Wicker Man battle, and familiar NPCs from Wickermoor Village are among the cultists and captives. Select which NPCs to include from the options below based on the experiences the characters have had throughout the adventure.

Optionally, instead of using the cultist alignment and stat block for the NPCs below, you may replace them with the alignments and stat blocks for the NPCs as listed in chapter 11.

Possible Captives	Possible Cultists
Beatrice Wells	Alda Farnum
Eleanor Heyling	Baltus Tolliver
Doris Squire	Gaston Doray
Finneas Trout	Hilda Brom
Jean Myriel	Holly Aster
Marianna Grey	Howie Butterman
Sister Rain	Jeremiah Stover
Siv Harga	Randall Graham
Solomon Roderick	Thomasin Ardor
Weston Murdoch	Wendel Somerton

23.2 Rowan's Rise



Once all the characters enter the stone circle, have three rounds of conversation with the cultists, or when a fight breaks out, read or paraphrase the following:

> The bonfire roars hotter as flames suddenly erupt around you, and all within the circle are trapped inside a ring of fire that rages around the stone circle. The stones gleam with burning runes and glyphs, their energy feeding the blaze. The chained captives scream in panic as the wall of flames threatens to consume them.

If the cultists are Hostile, they attack the characters. Otherwise, they continue their jubilant singing.

Ring of Fire. This malign ritual completely encircles the standing stones in a ring of fire. The ring is a *Wall of Force* that deals 22 (5d8) Fire damage to a creature that touches it. Unlike a normal wall, creatures can pass through it from the outside to the inside, though they still take Fire damage.

The ring of fire can be brought down by deactivating or destroying four of the nine standing stones. A stone has AC 17, HP 30, and Immunity to Fire, Poison, and Psychic damage. A stone can be deactivated with a successful *Dispel Magic* (DC 15), or by taking a Utilize action and succeeding on an ability check using one of the following methods (or another at your discretion):

- DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) to forcefully or precisely expose a weakened area on the stone.
- DC 15 Intelligence (Nature or Religion) to alter a rune and prevent it from drawing on the Crooked Queen's power.
- DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) to find and break a natural flaw in the stone.
- DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) to undo the magic flow at the point of weakness.

Each time a character damages one of the stones or fails an ability check made with the Utilize action to disable a stone, the character is targeted by a burst of flame as described in "Sacrifices" below.

Sacrifices. The captives are chained to the stones, but the chains are melded into the rock and have no lock or latch to open. The chains have AC 17, HP 20, and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage.

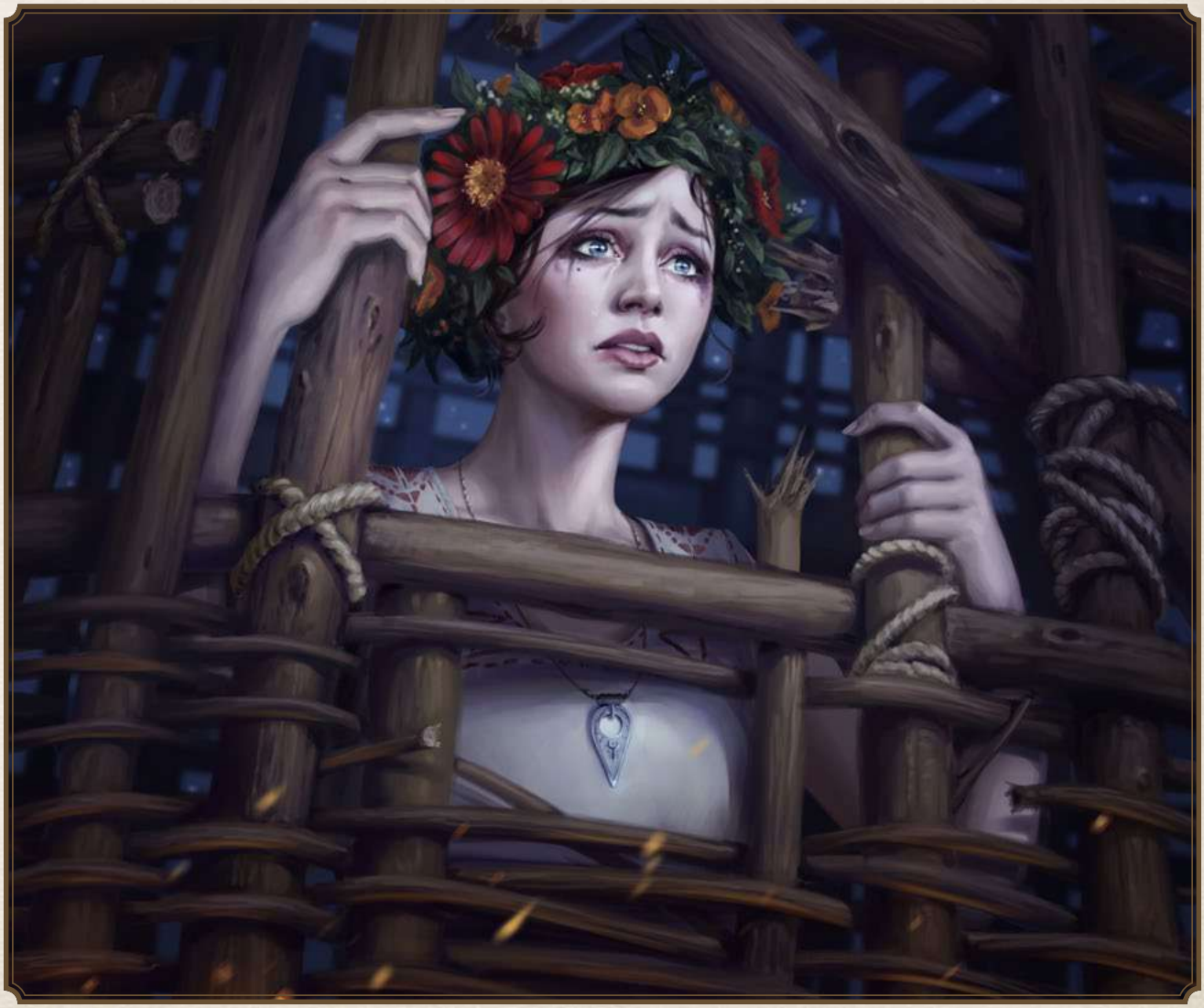
While the ring of fire exists, on Initiative count 0 (losing Initiative ties), the center bonfire flares and belches a gout of flame at one of the captives, killing them. A character can intercept the flames and save the captive by taking a Reaction to move up to their Speed to within 5 feet of the prisoner. The character becomes the target of the flames and must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) Fire damage on a failure or half as much damage on a success.

A maximum of six villagers can be lost to this fire. If the characters bypass this encounter in some way, add six to the total number of innocent villagers killed.

Treasure. If the characters extinguish the ring of fire and only two or fewer innocent lives are lost, residual energies from the ritual infuse a rune-marked fragment of a standing stone, turning it into an *Elemental Gem* (yellow diamond).

When the glyphs on the stones have been deactivated and the innocents have been saved, read or paraphrase the following:

> Before you looms the wicker titan, casting its shadow across the moors as the Crooked Moon leers bright and large overhead. Within its woven construction, more than a dozen people squirm and cry out, crammed in along with bleating farm animals and hundreds of pounds of crops. Within the chest of the enormous human effigy, you see the tiny shape of Adela Druskenvald peering out at the valley below, her face filled with sorrow but without a hint of fear.





SHADOW OF THE WICKER MAN

After dealing with the standing stones, the characters have run the gauntlet of the Crooked Queen's interference. They are now ready to deal with the Wicker Man.

Add up the total number of innocent souls that the characters failed to save in each of the encounters (see "Sacrifices" above) and compare it to the Soul Motes table below, noting how many Soul Motes the Wicker Man gains, in addition to the 3 it starts with. Once you have determined that number, continue to "Phase 1: The Final Sacrifice" below.

Soul Motes

Deaths	Soul Motes Available
0	0
1–3	1
4–6	2
7–9	3
10–12	4
13+	5

The Wicker Man that looks over Rowan's Rise ignites, and Adela Druskenvald is sacrificed alongside more innocents. The Crooked Man possesses the blazing titan and tries to put an end to the characters in the name of the Crooked Queen. They must destroy the Wicker Man to annihilate the spirit of the Crooked Man once and for all. Use map 23.3 for combat in this area.

OLD WAYS INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the ancient power behind the cult manifests one of the following effects; it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

BOLSTERING JUBILATION. Any surviving **Old Ways Chosen** on the hilltop gain 10 Temporary Hit Points.

ENDLESS SONG. Echoes of the cult's hymns haunt the faithless. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, each non-cultist on the hilltop. *Failure:* The target must subtract 1d4 from attack rolls until Initiative count 20 on the following round.

WRATHFUL BLAZE. The bonfires flare balefully. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, one burning creature on the hilltop. *Failure:* The creature takes 5 (1d10) Fire damage.



23.3 Wicker's Vigil



PHASE 1: THE FINAL SACRIFICE

When the characters leave the standing stones and proceed even higher to the Wicker Man, read or paraphrase the following:

> The Wicker Man erupts into an inferno as more masked cultists dance, caper, chant, and sing in delight around it.
>
> From within the hollow confines of the effigy, agonized screams bellow. Sacrifices of crops, livestock, and people burn together. Adela Druskenvald stares through a gap in the woven wicker at the land below as a single tear rolls down her cheek. She is sorrowful yet serene as her flesh melts away. Her spirit is absorbed into the blazing heart of the conflagration.
>
> A wild, cackling voice echoes from the head of the blazing titan as the Wicker Man lurches forward, its massive limbs moving with cacophonous creaking. It turns toward you, its flaming eyes filled with equal parts joy and hate. The voice of the Crooked Man booms, "Now all is ready for my queen. Bow before me and let your souls join the feast of her return!"

Creatures. **The Wicker Man** is attended by three **Old Ways Chosen**. The cultists sing jubilantly, some through ecstatic tears. Sparks of ruddy light rise from them and pour into the Wicker Man, stoking its hunger for souls. The Wicker Man attacks, intent on slaughtering the characters and devouring their souls.

Doomed Sacrifices. The sacrificial victims inside the burning Wicker Man can't be targeted or affected by magic from outside the Wicker Man. The soul of a creature that dies within the Wicker Man is trapped within the Crooked Tree (see chapter 24) and can't be returned to life by any means until its soul is freed.

Blazing Ardor. The Wicker Man has a damage threshold equal to 10 times the number of Old Ways chosen currently alive.

Bonfires. Scattered bonfires burn throughout the ritual circles marking the hilltop. The Wicker Man delights in pushing foes into the flames with its attacks. A creature pushed into a bonfire takes 10 (3d6) Fire damage and begins burning.

PHASE 2: DYING EMBERS

The agonized and ecstatic shrieks of rapture are snuffed out as the final cultist of the Old Ways drops to the scorched earth, each one of their souls being ripped from their bodies and consumed in the growing conflagration of the blazing wicker titan. The bellowing voice of the Crooked Man booms out around you.

"Their souls burn with the rest! Soon shall yours! Soon shall Wickermoor Village! Soon shall all the hollow! Fear not, there is purity and salvation in the ash!"

When the last Old Ways chosen dies, the Wicker Man absorbs their souls like sparks from a fire and gains 1 Soul Mote for each cultist. If any of the cultists are at 0 Hit Points but alive—such as if a character chose to knock one out instead of killing it—the Wicker Man turns all its attention to killing any such cultists itself.

When the characters defeat the Wicker Man, read or paraphrase the following:

As the final blow against the wicker giant is struck, the entire construct collapses in on itself, a crumbling mass of flames and wicker ash. The surviving cultists shriek in agony as the pouring motes of flame surround and consume them, leaving behind only ash.

From the smoldering remains, a twisted figure emerges. The Crooked Man, no longer a man but a charred and shriveled specter, wails with fury, sorrow, and disbelief.

"Lies! I served my queen with my very soul, and yet, she has forsaken me. I've naught to show... but... pain..." His final words choke from his lips as he collapses, consumed by his own despair.

Quiet finally comes to Rowan's Rise as the sky opens up once more, and a gentle rain falls upon Wickermoor Hollow. Any nearby innocents or spared cultists of the Old Ways slowly limp off into the night in hopes of escape. The glowing embers in the ruins of the Wicker Man are put out by the rain, and the remains turn to a pile of smoking ash. Phillip Druskenvald, who had been deceived, turned around, and led deeper into the moors away from Rowan's Rise, finally arrives.

An agonized wail fills the air as Phillip Druskenvald sprints toward the remains of the Wicker Man, out of breath and covered in wounds and minor burns. He begins rummaging through the ash and smoking wreckage, tossing aside bone fragments and charred wicker while screaming, "Adela!" over and over again.

Finally, he lifts charred skeletal remains wearing the blackened remnants of Adela's planchette necklace.

"No... My Love. We had so much more time..." The words come out as a broken whisper. "We were supposed to..."

The words leave him, and all he can do is sob as he collapses into the pile of ash, clutching all that remains of his beloved.

Level Up. The characters reach level 13, if they are still level 12, when they destroy the Wicker Man.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Tower* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the *Visage of the Old Ways* is found covering the face of a slain Old Ways chosen.

CONCLUSION: ASHES TO ASHES

Phillip's loss is the final blow. He has broken and is doomed. He will do anything to bring Adela back, and the Crooked Queen will manipulate that desperation to sink her claws into him. He leaves the characters to give his slain wife a proper burial—privately—now entirely indifferent to what's become of Wickermoor Village.



BACK IN WICKERMOOR VILLAGE

Wickermoor Village is a veritable ghost town. A large percentage of its inhabitants were either sacrificed innocents or slain as cultists. The changes to the village depend on who survived this chapter. Roles that were filled by various slain townsfolk are either taken up by family or apprentices, or they go unserved for the rest of the adventure.

With the Druskenvald Estate destroyed, Phillip takes up a room in the Green Queen Inn as he grieves and plans his next steps.



Chapter 24: THE CROOKED TREE

"I once knew the kiss of the sun, the song of the mourning dove, the caress of leaf and branch. I ruled a world of green, and my subjects were of the forest, from the smallest hare to the greatest elk. Now, the cycle is shattered, and all that remains is sin. Even my own soul is sin. All that's left to be done is disintegration. All that remains is annihilation."

- Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen -

The Wytchwood bows to the Crooked Queen. At its heart stands a Crooked Tree, a barren oak that thirsts for revenge. The deposed queen need only wait a little longer. Her patience wears thin, and her old wounds still fester. It is in this dark wood that desperate bargains and sacrifices will be made, and only fate can tell the true cost.

Now, Phillip Druskenvald, once the most powerful being in all the land, moves toward his sealed fate and certain doom. The final reckoning of Druskenvald is at hand, and the land itself holds its breath.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

The end is coming to Druskenvald. With the sacrifices of the Fallen and the Lord of Fools, the Horned King is primed for his hellish birth, his influence now spreading beyond the tree line of the Wytchwood. At the gnarled forest's heart, the Crooked Queen calls Phillip Druskenvald to her barrow so she may exact her vengeance and bring about the annihilation she has craved for millennia.

The blazing ritual and massacre atop Rowan's Rise have caused great turmoil within Wickermoor Village. With so many lost, townsfolk are looking for salvation. This is especially true of Phillip Druskenvald, who lost the love of his life to the burning Wicker Man and is now desperate to return her to life. He does not yet know that Adela's soul is bound to Kehlenn as the final sacrifice needed for her escape from her tomb and prison.

In his grief, Phillip has sequestered himself away in the Green Queen Inn. Now out of options, he desperately hopes to use the primeval magic of the Old Ways to bring his beloved back to him. This is doomed to fail, and the lord of the land will be utterly powerless. In his lowest moment, Phillip will finally hear Kehlenn's call and will answer.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The time for the final confrontation with Kehlenn has come. Her vengeful designs have all worked toward this moment to ensnare Phillip within the Crooked Tree and transform him into the Horned King. Unless the characters stop the ritual, her consort will ascend to godhood, the Crooked Queen will be free, and all of Druskenvald will be annihilated and experience a horrid, crooked rebirth. Characters who enter the Wytchwood following the Quest Hooks later in the chapter have several goals:

- Search the forest for Phillip Druskenvald.
- Defeat the Horned King, and prevent the Crooked Queen from returning.
- Perform a sacrificial ritual to sever Kehlenn's bonds with Druskenvald forever.

Before running this chapter, consider the wants, goals, and connections of the characters to present them with the most alluring offers from the Horned King. Reviewing the final battle, "Born King," will help create a climactic and terrifying final encounter. Finally, refreshing yourself on the details of the setting and history of Druskenvald, as well as the key NPCs of the adventure, particularly Kehlenn and Phillip Druskenvald (see chapters 1 and 8), will ensure a satisfying and cathartic finale for *The Crooked Moon* campaign.

This chapter is designed for four level 13 characters.

A CLASH OF KINGS AND QUEENS

Only three pivotal figures remain in this final climax: Kehlenn, the Horned King, and Phillip Druskenvald. Each represents a key fury in the characters' journey through Wickermoor Hollow, their fates intertwined in the struggle for Druskenvald's soul.

KEHLENN, THE CROOKED QUEEN

In ages past, Kehlenn once ruled the domain now known as Druskenvald as an archfey goddess called the Green Queen. Her world of rebirth allowed for no sapient life, and reborn souls existed only in the wild flora and fauna. This new life was always brutal, short, and filled with terror, but wholly natural as she saw it.

This untouched world of green changed forever when Phillip Druskenvald arrived. How he found her and where he received the power to depose her, she never learned, but it was not long before she was reduced to a pile of bones in a barrow and a weakened fey spirit bound to a single tree.

As Phillip remade the domain in his image, Kehlenn remained. As Phillip forgot the violent conflict that usurped her, Kehlenn remembered. And with each passing year, her slow recovery from the crushing defeat brought greater awareness of the hubris of the man who named her domain after himself.

She powerlessly witnessed the vile desecration of her once-green world with the introduction of sapient life using her stolen power. The resulting hatred consumed her entire being, and over the millennia, she was twisted into the Crooked Queen, a moniker she now bears with spiteful pride.



Kehlenn, The Crooked Queen

The moment she has waited eons for has finally arrived. The sacrifices required to bring an end to Phillip Druskenvald and reclaim the power he stole from her have come to fruition, one after the other, just as she had planned for so long. All that remains is for Phillip to kneel, and she will remake him just like he remade her precious domain.

ALL WILL BE CROOKED

Kehlenn's freedom is nothing short of apocalyptic. She seeks not only to reclaim Druskenvald but to reshape it in her twisted image. Her eons of solitude and imprisonment have spoiled her once-green nature and transformed her into vengeance incarnate.

While she once sought to restore the natural cycle of life, death, and rebirth, she now only seeks the total annihilation of Druskenvald. Her ultimate goal is the corruption and disintegration of every sapient being, returning them to nature as she now defines it. She plans to rebirth them into crooked mockeries of what they once were—to live a terrifying, painful, and short life before perishing and being reborn to experience their horrible existence over and over again for eternity.

Now that the final stages of the Crooked Queen's plan are in motion, there is no need for subterfuge, and Kehlenn has no interest in hiding her intentions. She will be honest with the characters, offering up her tale to persuade them to see her side of the story and turn them against Phillip in his final agonizing moments as a parting knife in the back.

THE HORNED KING

The Horned King is Kehlenn's cruel and powerful creation, made from sin itself. Through temptation and desire, he seeks to corrupt souls and bring about her vengeance. He is a monstrous shade of Phillip Druskenvald himself, woven from fragments of his very soul. This terrible entity intends to replace the lord of the land and sit at the right hand of his Crooked Queen.

The Horned King remains bound within the Wytchwood, his incorporeal form unable to cross its borders. Yet with the sacrifice of the Lord of Fools, his influence has begun to creep into the lands beyond. He bides his time, stalking the forest and whispering temptations throughout Wickermoor Hollow, slowly ensnaring its inhabitants.

The Horned King is subtle in his methods. His greatest pleasure lies in softly seducing the most disciplined and pious souls—those who believe themselves above vice—into giving in to their hidden desires. His whispers are a constant pressure, a slow unraveling of restraint. The more they resist, the deeper his influence burrows, until

even the most virtuous souls find themselves standing before their own corruptive acts.

At the command of his Crooked Queen, the Horned King seeks to achieve physical form through the possession and metamorphosis of Phillip Druskenvald. After consuming Phillip's soul and becoming corporeal, he plans to leave Wickermoor Hollow and siphon the energies of all of Druskenvald. If not stopped, he will use this immense power to finally free his queen from her prison to remake the domain in her crooked image.

PHILLIP DRUSKENVALD

Phillip Druskenvald is a broken man at his lowest point. He is consumed by guilt, desperation, and the agonizing pain of loss following the death of Adela. Despite having fallen for Kehlenn's trap and acting as the architect of his own downfall, he is still filled with the misguided belief that he can somehow control or undo what he has set in motion.

This mindset is what has led him to seek the power of the Old Ways. His forward-thinking obsession with progress and the future has brought him nothing but destruction, so his last hope lies with the primeval powers that existed before he brought civilization to the domain. However, his attempts to harness this power to resurrect Adela in the Green Queen Inn have failed, shattering him further.

This humbled husk of a man is whom Kehlenn calls out to once the ritual fails, her whispers laced with the promises to return Adela's soul and her life. With no further options before him, Phillip set off into the Wytchwood to seek the Crooked Queen in the desperate hope he can finally make things right. Like a sacrificial lamb, he is oblivious to his imminent slaughter and the ritualistic power his death will provide.

QUEST HOOKS

Following the events of Wicker's Vigil (see chapter 23), the characters can take their time surveying the extent of the damage done to Wickermoor Village and its community. However, knowing that Phillip vanished after discovering Adela's charred remains within the Wicker Man—hearing from villagers that he has locked himself away within the Green Queen Inn—may prompt them to seek him out.

THE LAST HOPE

Wickermoor Village has been thrown into chaos in the aftermath of the massacre on the moors. The revelation that many townsfolk were behind the dreadful events has left the village divided and in disarray. Unrest simmers and power structures unravel. Some cling to old superstitions, while others look for new leadership, each with their own interpretation of what has happened and what must be done to make things right.

If Mayor Somerton survived the events on Rowan's Rise and did not fall in league with the nefarious cultists of the Old Ways, the panicked townsfolk blame him for everything that has happened and swiftly turn on him, imprisoning or even killing him. If Constable Doris Squire still lives, she is powerless to bring order to the chaos, disheartened by the evident betrayal of Deputy Howie Butterman.

The characters may find themselves drawn into this turmoil, as various people vie for their favor or assistance. But nothing is more pressing than discovering the fate of Phillip Druskenvald. Some want him captured and punished for bringing suffering and death to Wickermoor Hollow. Others want him rescued, viewing him as the only possible authority figure that can prevent Wickermoor Village from falling to anarchy. Both sides implore the characters to investigate.

After a brief inquiry, some townsfolk claim to have seen Phillip Druskenvald stumbling into the Green Queen Inn—his face pale and his eyes haunted.

CHAOS REIGNS

If the characters choose to delay or ignore the rising threat of the Crooked Queen, time becomes their greatest enemy. The longer they wait, the stronger the Horned King's influence grows. One by one, villagers begin to fall to their vices. Pure bedlam and pandemonium are but a few short nights away as even the most disciplined, chastened, and restrained people give in to their basest desires.

The townsfolk that the characters confront discover the evil impulses that had once lain dormant in the corrupted villagers' hearts. They also learn that the common thread among them was that all of them heard the seductive whispers of a three-eyed beast that stalks the dark woods. Those who confess and admit their transgressions, deeply shamed, plead with the characters to discover what is happening and put an end to it.

THE GREEN QUEEN INN

Regardless of whether Alda Farnum's allegiance to the nefarious sect of the Followers of the Old Ways was revealed, she did not survive the events atop Rowan's Rise and is nowhere to be found following the burning of the Wicker Man. With no family, heirs, or apparent last will and testament, the future of the Green Queen Inn remains uncertain.

The nearly empty tavern on the first floor is unnervingly silent. At the bar sit Jean Myriel and Siv Harga, mourning Holly Aster. This could also be another NPC familiar to the characters, at your discretion. Either way, those in the tavern are aware that Phillip Druskenvald suddenly arrived at the Green Queen Inn after returning from the moors, looking haggard. He then sequestered himself in one of the suites upstairs. Nobody has seen or heard anything since.

The door to the suite is locked and can be opened with a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check using Thieves' Tools. Alternatively, a spare key for the suite can be found on the first floor of the inn behind the bar with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

THE MASTER SUITE

> The air in this master suite stinks of charred flesh. The bed and furnishings have been pushed against the walls. At the center of the room, a large runic circle of glyphs has been etched into the floorboards, ringed with candles that have long since burned down. Inside the ritual circle rests charred human remains.

The master suite is the largest and grandest room at the Green Queen Inn.

Adela's Remains. The burned bones are the physical remains of Adela Druskenvald. Among the bones is Adela's scorched planchette necklace. All attempts to resurrect Adela fail.

Treasure. This room, now tarnished by the failed ritual, bears the remnants of innkeeper Alda Farnum's former life:

- A desk, cluttered with writing implements and personal letters, which holds a set of Calligrapher's Supplies
- A well-worn ledger tracking favors and debts owed by various residents and travelers
- A simple, elegant jewelry box with a pair of silver earrings shaped like hares, worth 15 GP, and 3 silver and copper rings, each worth 5 GP
- A dresser filled with finely stitched yet worn dresses and neatly folded clothes—in one drawer, a locked strongbox (DC 20) contains 242 GP and a will stating that Alda's inn and belongings are to be left to Marianna Grey in the event of her death

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Lovers* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, Adela's necklace among the charred remains is the *Planchette of Adela Druskenvald*.

GRIMOIRE OF THE OLD WAYS

An open book lies next to the ritual circle, its pages yellowed and brittle from use. The ritual laid out on the wooden planks is reflected within the revealed pages. A loose parchment, crumpled and stained with tears, rests beside the book.

> It is obvious that Phillip was attempting some form of resurrection ritual, and the book in your hands confirms this. The ritual before you matches the illustrations in the book to every detail.
>
> The loose parchment tells a different story. It shows a crude but unmistakable drawing of a twisted, gnarled tree. Beneath it, a simple mound of earth. Words are scratched into the parchment: *"The Crooked Queen holds her soul. She waits in the Wytchwood."*

Ritual Tome. Bound in cracked, aged leather, this tome bears embossed sigils. In the margins, scrawled notes read:

- *Blood—always fresh. Old blood spoils the circle.*
- *Hold steady. One wrong breath and the sigils crack.*
- *Failed again here. Must find something stronger. Something that can bring life.*

Phillip's Failed Hope. With his powers diminished in Wickermoor Hollow, Phillip has turned to a rite of the Old Ways kept in the book found in Alda Farnum's quarters. While the innkeeper was alive, she had been too forthcoming with Phillip to get on his good side and hinted at a powerful tome. After Adela's death, this tome became his last hope.

Even with his shattered psyche, Phillip correctly deduced the location of the ancient book and performed the terrible rite within. The endeavor failed and opened the door to Phillip's mind, welcoming Kehlenn in. Following the botched resurrection, the Crooked Queen sent a vision that implied the possession of Adela's soul and the willingness to return her if he would only find her in the Wytchwood. Phillip immediately left the inn to find Kehlenn's resting place beneath the Crooked Tree.



THE WYTCHWOOD

The Wytchwood is an ancient forest of pines and firs that has been truly wild for eons, with only beasts of the wood as its inhabitants. There have been few visitors that have dared to walk among the primeval trees since the forgotten times when the forest was young. Only a small collection of trophies buried beneath the Crooked Tree serve as evidence of those doomed souls' existence. For the unwary, the Wytchwood is a place of endless misdirection and a tomb for all those who become lost within.

FEATURES OF THE WYTCHWOOD

There are no clear paths in this untouched wilderness—only beasts tread here. Unless otherwise stated, the Wytchwood has the following features:

CANOPY. The forest's canopy is 60 feet above the ground.

FITFUL REST. Creatures that finish a Long Rest take 10 (3d6) Psychic damage after regaining Hit Points for the rest. They also find their belongings moved about and arranged on the ground in strange patterns, with no evidence of how or when it happened.

LIGHTING. The light of the Crooked Moon passes through the sparse tree cover and sends shadows dancing about the forest floor. The entire forest is Lightly Obscured.

A QUIET PLACE. Dense needles on low-hanging branches dampen sounds that fail to echo through the wood. Sounds can't be heard beyond 120 feet from their source, even if shouted or magically produced (such as with the *Knock* spell).

ENTERING THE WYTCHWOOD EARLY

If the characters want to explore the Wytchwood before the events of this chapter, Kehlenn wraps the wood in an impenetrable glamour. Until Phillip Druskenvald heeds the Crooked Queen's call in the wake of the Wicker Man's burning, the Wytchwood has the following features:

TWISTING PATHS. No matter how long a visitor explores or what methods they employ to find or mark their way, travelers in the wood find themselves trekking back toward the edge of the forest where they entered.

HUNTED. Travelers in the Wytchwood are at the mercy of Kehlenn's creatures. Every night that characters explore the wood during the Witching Hour, roll 1d12. On a roll of 2 or higher, a **Hypnovulfen** attacks the characters before the hour is up.

INTO THE DARK WOODS

The Wytchwood is a two-night trek from Wickermoor Village across the moors to the north. In his grief-stricken journey, Phillip has left an unmasked trail, not caring who might follow. The characters venture into the forest with one goal: to find the Crooked Tree, where Phillip has gone to confront the Crooked Queen.

When the characters enter the Wytchwood, read or paraphrase the following:

> The moment you step into the wood, darkness and quiet surround you. The pine and fir trees before you bend subtly at odd angles in an endless expanse that feels truly ancient.

TRACKING PHILLIP

The characters can follow the messy trail left by Phillip with relative ease. Upon first entering the Wytchwood and after each encounter until the characters arrive at the Crooked Tree, a character can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check to find muddy footprints, crushed pine needles, and snapped branches, which lead to the next encounter after an hour of travel. A character has Advantage on this check after an encounter if any of the characters successfully found Phillip's Clue (see "Wytchwood Encounters" later in this chapter). Characters will always experience the encounters in order, and they always are at least one hour of travel through the wood apart.

If the check fails, the characters lose the trail and wander for one hour until they are attacked by monstrous denizens of the forest. Roll on the Hungry Woods table to determine what creatures attack.

Hungry Woods

1d6	Monster Attack
1	One **Hypnovulfen**
2	One **Wellwyrm**
3	Two **Ketgrinn**
4	One **Dream Eater**
5	Three **Boneflayer**
6	One **Gobblegeist**

After the characters defeat the attacking creatures, they may repeat the check to continue tracking Phillip. On a success, they proceed to the next encounter after an hour of travel. On a failure, they wander for another hour and are attacked by the monsters of the Wytchwood once more.

ON CLOVEN HOOF

The Horned King stalks the Wytchwood, an incorporeal spirit unable to take physical form until his unholy union with Phillip Druskenvald. His arrival is signaled by the snapping of branches under an enormous bulk, the rumbling of earth from heavy footfalls, and the hot, putrid breath of a huge panting beast.

His form is that of a massive black goat with three ruby-red eyes. While stalking the characters, he never fully reveals himself, always keeping just beyond sight. The characters might catch glimpses of a bloody eye, some shaggy black hair, or a jagged gray horn between the trees.

WITHIN TEMPTATION

While the characters are traveling between encounters (see "Wytchwood Encounters" later in this chapter), the Horned King will make his presence known and call out in a low, rumbling, and seductive voice. His goal is to pry into the characters' hearts to determine what they truly desire, erode confidence in their mission, plant seeds of doubt in their allies, and elicit curiosity for what he can truly offer them. To properly persuade the characters, have the Horned King visit them two or more times before Encounter 4.

As a Study action, a character can gauge the intentions behind the Horned King's words with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check. They sense that, while his words are carefully measured, he is earnest about learning their true desires and offering them what they want, but for a clearly ulterior purpose.

The Horned King never answers the characters' questions outright and continues to steer the conversation to the things they crave most, especially vices. Those who demand gifts or bargains are denied until he makes his final offer (see "Live Deliciously" later in this chapter).

Impotent Wrath. Any attempts to engage the Horned King in combat are futile, but he won't vanish simply because of an attempted ranged attack or spell. Any character who attempts to initiate combat with the Horned King before the final confrontation (see "Born King" later in this chapter) must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be Frightened for one minute. While Frightened in this way, the character must drop whatever they're holding, use their action to Dash, and use their movement to run away from the Horned King after being filled with the dread of what lurks in the hearts of mortals.

CONFERRING WITH THE HORNED KING

The Horned King thrives on sin and desire, with the power to turn mortals toward corruption (see "The Horned King" earlier in this chapter). He initiates conversations with questions that play into the characters' wants, fears, and struggles in hopes to tempt them. Some example responses include:

- "Why do you carry such a heavy burden alone? There are easier paths."
- "Do you wish to suffer forever? The pain can end with a spoken word."
- "Do you truly believe you have all the answers? There are many secrets yet to discover."
- "Why do you rush toward your fate? There is peace in letting time pass you by."
- "Why do you struggle against the inevitable? Lay down your weary head and rest."
- "Would you like to live deliciously? Life need not be filled with tragedy and loss."

If asked questions by the characters, his answers are cryptic and always drive toward temptation. Use the following to guide responses if the characters speak with the Horned King:

WHO ARE YOU? I am he who stalks the deepest woods and darkest hearts. I am in the heart of every mortal. I am the very thing you desire most. I am the Horned King, consort of she who watches from the Crooked Tree.

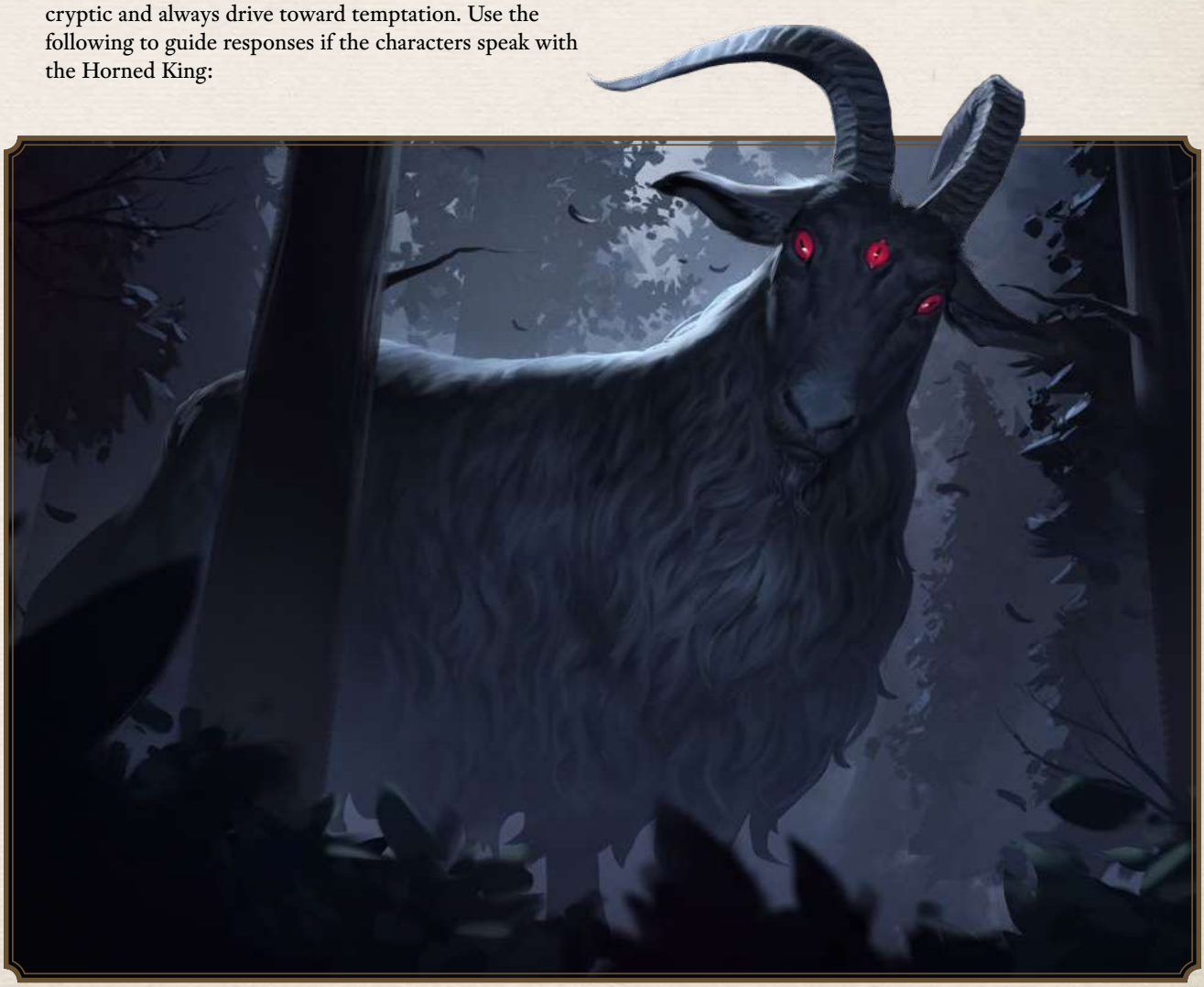
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US? I ask for nothing besides friendship and loyalty. And in exchange, I offer you the means to live deliciously. You come to my woods burdened, and I offer to alleviate that which weighs down your soul.

WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU? Trust? You need not trust me to see the truth in my words. You need only walk the path I tender.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE CROOKED QUEEN? She is the first, and she shall be the last. There is nothing but the forest. There is nothing but my queen.

WHAT OF PHILLIP? He is an honored guest in these woods and has been given safe passage.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE REFUSE YOU? It is your choice, but not one to be made lightly. Refuse, and nothing will protect you from what is to come. Accept, and you may find comfort and succor.



WYTCHWOOD ENCOUNTERS

The Wytchwood is not just a physical space but also a manifestation of the Crooked Queen's will. Instead of a traditional map, an encounter flowchart is provided on map 24.1. For combat encounters in the Wytchwood, use map 24.2.



24.1 Wytchwood Encounter Flowchart

ENCOUNTER 1: A FAMILIAR PRESENCE

> The sound of running water fills the quiet forest air as a twisted creek snakes through the wood before you, filled with dark water that seems to run too quickly and babbles with the sound of snapping bones.

The creek is 40 feet wide and 5 feet deep. Crossing is especially treacherous in this malicious forest, but there are several ways to cross, including across a fallen log, over a series of rocks in the creek, and even wading through the water.

A character who chooses to cross via any of these mundane methods must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall into the water and be swept downstream, become lost in the woods, and draw the attention of a hungry creature (see "Tracking Phillip" earlier in this chapter). Characters swept away by the creek can be followed by succeeding on a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check.

Once all characters have successfully crossed the creek or defeated the creatures triggered by rolling on the Hungry Woods table (see earlier in this chapter), read or paraphrase the following:

> A snapping branch and the rustle of leaves on the other side of the creek draw your attention to a creature on the forest floor just ahead. It looks like a large black hare with gnarled antlers, feathered wings, and sharp fangs. Two wide yellow eyes stare at you as the creature waits, unmoving.

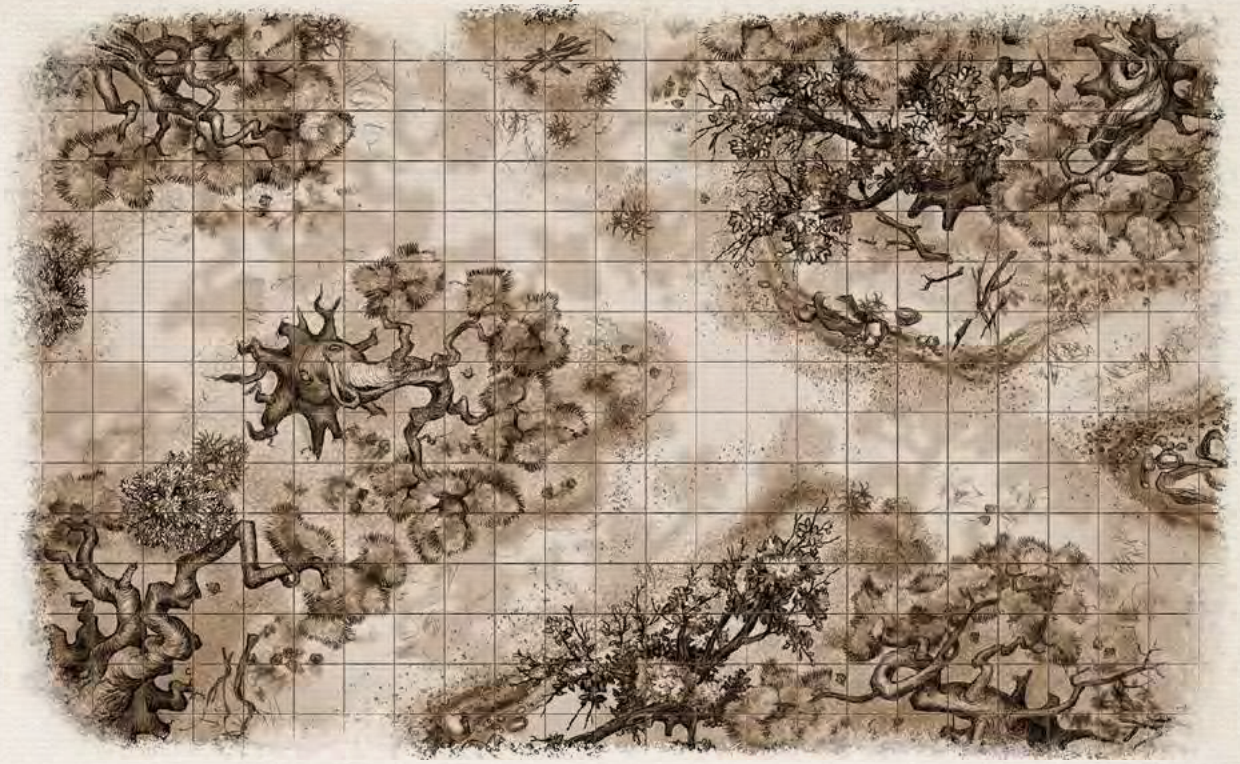
This **Crooked Hare** is Kehlenn's familiar, bound to the confines of the Wytchwood. The Crooked Queen sees through its eyes, and the creature speaks with her voice. The crooked hare does not approach or attack at first. It simply watches and waits, never once blinking.

If the characters attempt to approach or attack, the creature lets out a shrill scream, and Kehlenn's raspy and crackling voice fills the air. "You will be devoured by the beast that stalks these woods!"

It then leaps forward, attempting to fly amongst the characters before exploding into a 15-foot-radius Sphere of putrid gore. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 33 (6d10) Necrotic damage and is affected by the *Bane* spell for 8 hours. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage only.

Phillip's Clue. A character who investigates the gore left by the crooked hare and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds Phillip's silver pocket watch, its chain broken several links up.

24.2 Wytchwood Encounters



ENCOUNTER 2: BEWARE THE BEAST

As you press deeper into the Wytchwood, the dense forest closes in around you, and a prickling sensation runs across your skin. You are overwhelmed by the sensation of someone or something watching you, and you suddenly hear the rustling of leaves as a person stumbles out of the underbrush before you. And you recognize them.

This person is an illusion created by a particularly big, bad **Hypnovulfen** that hopes to devour the characters. Choose a surviving NPC that the characters have developed a strong connection with or even someone from a character's backstory for maximum emotional weight. The illusion doesn't move past a large patch of underbrush and begs the characters for help.

As a Search action, a character who closely examines the scene can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check to discern that the person is not real or spot the fur of the hypnovulfen in the bushes behind the illusory person. When a character gets within 5 feet of the illusion, the hypnovulfen attacks, surprising the characters if the illusion was not seen through. The hypnovulfen has Advantage on attack rolls against a character who hasn't yet taken an action in the combat.

Phillip's Clue. A character who investigates the underbrush that the hypnovulfen was lurking in and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds a bent and cracked Hooded Lantern expended of Oil, clearly discarded in haste by Phillip on his trip through the woods.

ENCOUNTER 3: DEATH OF HOPE

A rickety wooden hovel stands alone among the gnarled trees, its frame slanted against the weight of time. A single door creaks faintly in its tilted frame. Slatted windows offer no view of what lies within. Hanging from the grasping branches around the hut are hundreds of strange symbols made from crooked sticks and bones bound together.

This solitary structure is a manifestation of the Crooked Queen, where she hid away the last of her compassion and hope. The hovel is 20 feet by 30 feet, with a 15-foot ceiling.

Crooked Idols. The hanging idols are woven from sticks, bone, leather, twine, and strips of old cloth. Hundreds of these creations hang from branches in all directions. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that these ritualistic markers are eerily familiar, depicting moments from the characters' past, distorted but unmistakable. These moments are either from their time in Wickermoor Hollow or from their life before their ride aboard the *Ghostlight Express*.

These crooked idols have a bewitching hex placed on them. Any character who damages or disturbs the charms must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or be cursed until they finish a Long Rest. While cursed in this way, D20 Tests are made with Disadvantage. A *Greater Restoration* spell or similar magic ends the effect.







Into the Hovel. When the characters enter the hovel, read or paraphrase the following:

> A heavy layer of dust covers the ruined remnants of what once was a simple home. A rotting bed sits in the corner, not far from a bent table and broken chair. Ancient chipped paint covers every wall, forming strange scenes in simple articulation.

Closer inspection of the markings on the walls reveals that there are six separate scenes that wrap around the interior. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Insight) check pieces together what each depicts in the following order:

- A beautiful green queen stands in a lush forest, surrounded by bowing animals and fairy folk.
- A tall, thin man wreathed in fog holds a cane in one hand and a blazing torch in the other.
- The green queen and the thin man clash in battle amidst the inferno of a burning forest.
- A bustling city of tall buildings rises high over a pile of ash and bone.
- The green queen lies entombed beneath the earth, her skeletal remains entwined with gnarled roots.
- Standing beside a huge black goat, a barren, crooked tree reaches toward a crescent moon with a leering face.

If the characters investigate the hovel and take in the scenes depicted in the art, they gain the benefits of a Short Rest. A character who searches the room and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds an old set of Painter's Supplies underneath the bed.

Ashes to Ashes. After the characters finish studying the artwork, read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly, the cracks in the hovel glow bright as light fills the room, and you realize it's actual sunlight. A beam of light focuses on the art of the burning forest, and a rush of blistering wind and intense heat sets the hovel ablaze! Flames lick up the walls, the floorboards bend and pop from the heat, and acrid smoke fills the air. The door of the hovel slams closed. You are trapped!

The characters must find a way to escape before they succumb to fire and smoke. The interior of the hovel is Heavily Obscured by the smoke, and all creatures within must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) Fire damage from the heat, repeating this saving throw every 1 minute spent inside. All parts of the wooden hovel have Immunity to Fire, Poison, and Psychic damage. The door is locked (DC 20). Characters can break down the door as a Utilize action with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. The door has AC 15 and HP 20. The sealed windows have AC 15 and HP 10.

When all characters are free from the hovel, the fire immediately snuffs out. The flames vanish without a trace, and the building remains intact save for any damage dealt to the structure while escaping.







Phillip's Clue. A character who investigates around the base of the hovel and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds an empty silver hip flask that smells faintly of liquor with the letters "P.D." engraved on one side.

ENCOUNTER 4: HER LIMBS ARE THRAWN

> The forest becomes so dense that only certain paths are navigable, slowing down your pace to a crawl. Finally, the overgrown thicket opens up to a grove ringed with unnervingly evenly spaced trees. At the base of one of these trees kneels a young woman with dark hair in a white sleeping gown, digging away in the dirt amidst the roots. She looks down with determination and desperation.

The young woman is trying to find a locket that was lost to her long ago. Though the characters may not know it, this facsimile is the image of Rowan, the first human sacrificed to Kehlenn and the namesake of Rowan's Rise.

No Real Rowan. The false Rowan has been created by a **Maidenwood** using its bewitching power and gnarled branch lure to form a near-perfect facsimile of the maiden. She will speak to the characters, claiming she is trying to find her missing locket and asking if they have any tools to help her dig deeper. As a Study action, a character who scrutinizes the young woman and succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes that her fluid movements are too deliberate and she is not what she appears to be.

If a character comes within 5 feet of the false Rowan, or the maidenwood believes the characters have seen through the deception, it attacks. When the maidenwood is destroyed, the figure of Rowan remains whole and lifelike unless damaged during combat. Examining the figure reveals its true nature, formed from crooked branches.

Maidenwood Grove. When the first maidenwood is destroyed and the characters collect themselves, read or paraphrase the following:

> Suddenly, you hear the familiar voice of the maiden call out. "I need my locket. It is the only thing that can protect me from the Crooked Queen, and I fear her so. Her limbs are thrawn. Her soul is sin. She wants to open my throat to feed the tree. Please."
>
> Then dozens more of the same voice cry out, and you see the same young woman at the base of every tree in this grove. The path behind you has sealed shut, and the only opening in the interlocking branches and roots is directly before you on the other side of the grove.

These identical facsimiles are able to speak with an understanding of the story of Kehlenn and Rowan (see chapters 8 and 23) and will be frank with the characters despite their disingenuous plea for help finding the locket. The characters can converse with the Rowans, and as a Study action, a character who succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check can discern that the details of the stories are true, though the intention is to lure the characters to the base of the roots for an ambush.

The characters must walk to the other side of the grove to find passage back to the rest of the Wytchwood. Any character who moves within 5 feet of a false Rowan is attacked by the maidenwood projecting the lure, but the trees are far enough apart to pass between them without getting too close. However, as the characters proceed, the pleading of the maidens becomes more aggressive and intense, begging the characters to help find her locket.

When a character reaches the center of the grove, they must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be Charmed by the Wytchwood for 1 minute. While Charmed in this way, a character is compelled to move toward the nearest false Rowan to help find her locket. The moment that the characters leave the grove, all sounds of the identical Rowans' pleading dissipate, and the pathway closes behind them with the creaking of moving branches.

Phillip's Clue. A character who examines the first maidenwood and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check finds scraps of torn, bloody cloth hanging from one of the branches, clearly from a black pinstriped suit.

ENCOUNTER 5: LIVE DELICIOUSLY

> The forest grows darker as dense clouds swallow the Crooked Moon above. Through the trees, you see the familiar form of the black goat of the woods stalking your every move. Branches snap and the earth trembles with each fall of his huge hooves as the beast steps from the thicket until he is directly before you.
>
> You feel the enormous goat's hot, putrid breath on your skin, which crawls as he stares through your very soul with his third ruby-red eye. His low, seductive voice calls forth once more. "You have come so far, but for what? Tell me, what is it you truly seek? What does your heart desire? It shall be yours, and so much more."

While still an incorporeal spirit, the Horned King is the most visible he's been since the characters entered the Wytchwood. It is here he makes his final offer before they face the Crooked Queen.

Heart's Desire. The Horned King tailors his offering for each character, promising them whatever they wish for. This is his final gambit to make the characters fall, ensuring that the Crooked Queen can give him form and reclaim the dominion that was stolen from her.

Characters who accept this offer may ask for anything their heart desires, effectively asking the Horned King to cast a *Wish* spell for them. He will oblige but will do nothing that interferes with his or the Crooked Queen's machinations. Characters who accept gain these additional benefits:

- They may choose a Dark Bargain (see chapter 6) for themselves. Moreover, they can choose which features of the bargain they wish to accept.
- They gain a level.

Only you can know what the characters in this story would desire most, and it is up to you to offer the most delicious option. Refer to what the characters have revealed about themselves throughout the adventure and craft an offer that appeals to their most amoral appetites. These offers should be nearly impossible to resist—something that might align with their goals, their fears, or their proclivity to sin.

To the characters who accept his offers, read or paraphrase the following:

> "You have chosen wisely. Now, let us see this to its end."

To the characters who resist him, read or paraphrase the following:

> "You would deny yourself that which you crave? Foolish. This path is all that remains to you. There is only me. There is only my way. There is only forest. There is only surrender."

The Price. Any character who accepts the Horned King's offer is cursed. While cursed in this way, the character deals half as much damage to the Horned King and his minions. Additionally, if the character targets the Horned King, the Crooked Queen (including the Crooked Tree), or their minions with an attack or spell, they must first succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be forced to choose a different target or waste the action. Only a *Wish* spell or Divine Intervention can lift this curse.

Once the Horned King has finished making his final offers and the characters have either accepted or rejected him, he steps back into the shadows, his three eyes burning with hellish malevolence. Now, nothing stands in the way of the characters' arrival at the seat of the Crooked Queen, and they can proceed to the finale without having to make a Wisdom (Survival) check (see "Tracking Phillip" earlier in this chapter).



Phillip's Clue. Once the Horned King leaves the characters, the glinting of silver on the forest floor draws their attention to Phillip's cane, its goat skull topper tarnished with mud.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The Devil* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the discarded cane is the *Cane of Phillip Druskenvald*.



SIX HORNS HIS CROWN

There, bathed in moonlight, stands the Crooked Tree—gnarled and impossibly tall, its twisted branches reaching for the sky. Beneath it, a mound of earth—the Crooked Queen's barrow—awaits at the heart of the Wytchwood. The silvery light of the Crooked Moon washes across the clearing, highlighting an entrance into the burial mound that had opened to welcome Phillip so he might finally come face to face with Kehlenn.

WYTCHWOOD HEART FEATURES

The heart of the Wytchwood has the following features:

FOREST WALL. Characters can enter the clearing freely. Attempts to escape are blocked by the trees, which twist and writhe to form an impenetrable wall of branches and roots that have Immunity to all damage.

LIGHTING. Vivid moonlight illuminates the clearing with Bright Light.

WARDED. The forest heart is blanketed by clouding magic that prevents Divination spells from creating sensors or targeting creatures within the heart, stop teleportation into or out of the area, and blocks planar travel within the heart. A *Dispel Magic* spell can end the protection only if cast with a level 9 spell slot.

BEFORE THE CROOKED TREE

A crooked tree, twisted beyond comprehension, grows from a steep mound of earth, its roots snaking over large stones. A clearing in the forest stretches out all around it, a flat glade of short, green-gray grass. Moonlight casts an ominous glow throughout the clearing. The Crooked Moon has never felt closer as it looms above, enormous and grinning. A large goat skull rests at the base of the tree, a wooden symbol carved to look like a crescent moon tied between its horns. A wide opening in the barrow yawns beneath the trunk of the gnarled tree, radiating with warm light.

The clearing is 130 feet across. The mound itself is steep, rising to 15 feet. The tree's trunk is thick and stretches 40 feet into the sky. The branches are bare and twist in on themselves in unnaturally gnarled shapes. The tree and the goat skull have Immunity to all damage while Kehlenn inhabits the tree. The entrance to the barrow is narrow, just large enough for a Medium creature to squeeze through, forcing characters to crouch or crawl.



INTO THE BARROW

You crawl into the barrow and find a chamber aglow with warm light. The walls, floor, and ceiling are made of packed earth and knotted roots. It feels truly ancient here.

The soft light is cast by a large skeletal figure against the far wall, intertwined with roots and covered in green moss. Thin, sinewy roots dangle from the dirt above.

Bound to the floor in a crooked kneeling position is Phillip Druskenvald, his body battered, broken, and firmly restrained by thick roots that writhe and crush him slowly.

This is the burial chamber of Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen. The remains of her former archfey body are filled with power, but her true essence and consciousness inhabit the entirety of the Crooked Tree.

Ceiling. The ceiling is low, barely 6 feet tall at its highest point, and threaded with tangled roots. The tendrils bristle and twitch when Kehlenn speaks. The roots have Immunity to all damage.

Kehlenn's Bones. The bones shed faint light with the colors of a campfire. They have Immunity to all damage and can't be removed from the roots. Creatures within the barrow can't regain Hit Points, and after every hour a creature remains in the cave, it gains 1 Exhaustion level.

Lighting. Dim Light emanates from the bones bound in roots, shifting and dancing with the images of slain fey spirits that once thrived in Kehlenn's primeval green world.

Treasure and Trinkets. Held within the roots along the walls are the grisly trophies that Kehlenn has amassed during her long death. Any objects lost by or stolen from the characters over the course of the adventure are here, in addition to the following:

- A small oval portrait of a young woman (Rowan's beloved sister)
- A *Hypnovulfen Figure*
- A wooden toy deer, its edges worn smooth from handling
- A glass jar of human teeth
- A tarnished silver posy ring worth 10 GP
- An empty bird's nest made of human hair

DRUSKENVALD KNEELS

This is the final confrontation between Phillip Druskenvald and the Crooked Queen. Phillip cannot be saved—his fate is already sealed.

Kehlenn's Voice. The Crooked Queen's voice emanates not from the skeleton lying before Phillip, but from the roots that intertwine with the earthen walls of the barrow itself. Her voice is raspy and crackling; her words are bitter and cruel.

"He sought to unmake me. To steal what is mine. To shatter the cycle. To replace towering trees with towering buildings in garish cities and scum that scurry about their unnatural lives. He took everything from me and forgot that I existed! He truly thought this world had always been his. As if he did not steal it.

"But now, everything he ever was, everything he ever loved, belongs to me. And all shall be disintegrated, annihilated, and remade in my image once more!"

Kehlenn converses with the characters and even shares her story (see chapter 8) if asked. However, nothing will dissuade her from her goal of annihilating Druskenvald and remaking it in an abominable, crooked mockery. If the characters see her side of the story and agree to help her, Druskenvald is doomed and the adventure is over (see "Crooked Defeat" later in the chapter).

Phillip's Final Moments. The roots continue to crush Phillip, who winces in pain but does not attempt to prevent his fate. He is completely defeated. Brought to his lowest, he has a distant, hollow stare and responds to any attempts to talk to him with muttering:

- "All our high and shining towers… Now ash and bones…"
- "You promised… You said you'd give me back my beloved…"
- "The awful price you paid…"
- "How could I have forgotten?"
- "The future I imagined… This wasn't what I wanted…"
- "We were supposed to have all the time we needed…"
- "What would be enough to spare my soul?"
- "What have I done?"

Phillip (Lawful Neutral, human **Noble**) has 6 remaining Hit Points out of a maximum of 16.

Characters can interact with Phillip. Any attempts to remove him from the roots fail and cause him intense pain. The roots tighten, and he takes 3 (1d6) Bludgeoning damage that can't be reduced or prevented in any way. If reduced to 0 Hit Points, Phillip's transformation begins (see "Phillip's Transformation" below).

As a Study action, a character can succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to realize Phillip is beyond saving, and trying to free him only hastens his death.

Phillip's Transformation. Let this moment play out for as long as you wish, or until Phillip reaches 0 Hit Points. When Kehlenn believes Phillip's suffering is at its peak, she acts. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The chamber fills with the cracking of roots as they slither over every inch of Phillip Druskenvald's body, which bends and snaps as the man attempts to speak his last words. "Please. Adela."
>
> Immediately, a hole in the ceiling opens, and his body is ripped from the earthen floor and pulled up into the crooked tree above. The room rumbles as roots spill in from all around you. You hear the howling of wind from beyond the barrow. The agonized screams of Phillip Druskenvald echo for just a moment before turning into the horrific guttural bleating of a colossal abominable goat.

Each creature within 10 feet of Phillip when he is ripped into the ceiling must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) Force damage and have the Prone condition. The interior of the barrow is now a tangled mesh of roots and is considered Difficult Terrain.



BORN KING

When the characters leave the barrow to face the Horned King, read or paraphrase the following:

> Hellishly hot wind whips past you, caused by the beating of enormous bat-like wings that sprout from the shoulders of a gargantuan fiendish monstrosity that stands before you. Far larger than the creature you faced in the woods, the Horned King, now made flesh and blood, has six twisted horns, a long slithering tongue, a split lion's tail, and the jagged maw of a dragon from hell.
>
> Its three eyes stare you down with all the sin and hate of this world. As it bellows apocalyptically, the triumphant and mocking voice of the Crooked Queen echoes from the trunk of the tree at the center of the clearing, which shifts and twists until the form of a gnarled fey queen appears in the bark.
>
> "You will be the next to fall, just as he has—the first sacrifices at the altar of my consort. You will be the kindling for the flames of the great crooked rebirth!"

The Horned King manifests in his final form, a once-immaterial Fiend of corruption now made flesh. This is the climactic battle with the fate of Druskenvald—and the characters themselves—hanging in the balance. The Crooked Queen commands her consort and uses her influence to destroy the characters so she can be freed to remake Druskenvald. The trunk of the Crooked Tree shifts and curves, taking on the guise of the Crooked Queen herself, who watches on in anticipation.

The tree line has framed the outer ring of a massive magical circle with wide tracts of withered grass that form lines, shapes, and runic sigils on the earth. Embers float upward from these ley lines of power toward the Crooked Moon above. Use map 24.3 for this battle.

Regardless of promises made or the allegiance of the characters, the Horned King attacks as soon as more than half of them emerge from the barrow. The king is entirely patient if the characters linger in the barrow, waiting for them to present themselves so he can annihilate them for the glory of his queen. Roll Initiative!

KEHLENN'S INFLUENCE

On Initiative count 20 (losing Initiative ties), the Crooked Queen causes one of the following effects; she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

CROOKED EFFIGIES. Three **Crooked Effigies** grow from the branches of the Crooked Tree and drop into unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of the burial mound. The effigies act immediately and on Initiative count 20 on subsequent rounds. The effigies vanish when the Crooked Queen uses this option again, or when they or the Horned King are reduced to 0 Hit Points.

GRASPING ROOTS. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 15, up to three creatures within the clearing. *Failure:* The target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 13) until the Crooked Queen uses this option again.

MOONLIGHT DIRGE. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in the moonlight other than the Horned King. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Radiant damage, and the target has Disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

PHASE 1: THE BEAST IS RISING

The Horned King engages the characters, towering 30 feet high and trembling with power. At full strength, the Horned King's attacks are aggressive and relentless.

When the Horned King is Bloodied, the battle progresses to the next phase.

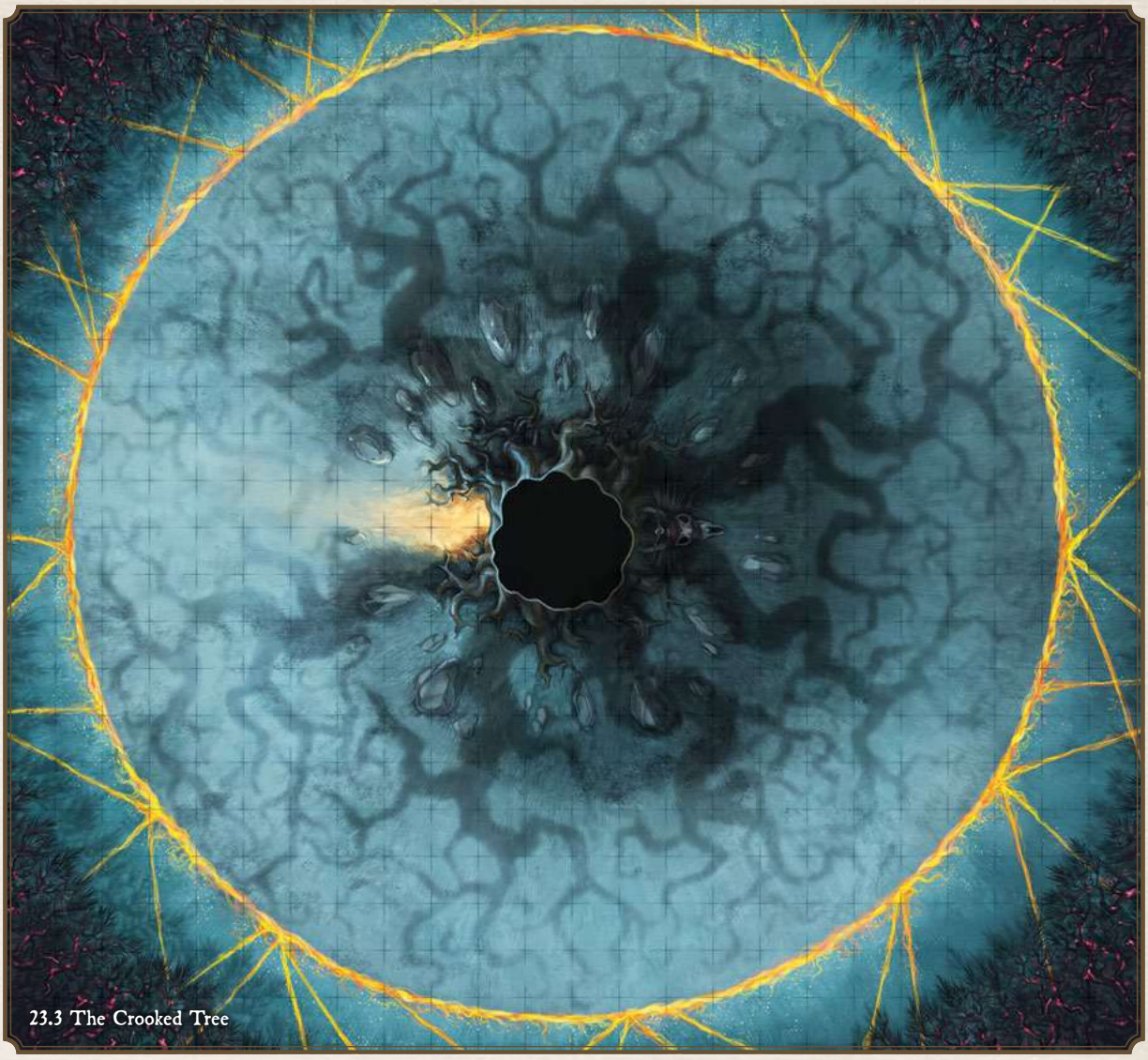
PHASE 2: WRATH OF THE CROOKED QUEEN

> The intense light of the Crooked Moon shines as though it were just above you, watching the battle with wicked glee. The shape of Kehlenn upon the Crooked Tree writhes as the tree itself bends toward the colossal beast.
>
> "Now, born king, leave it all burning, bleeding, breaking! You are the ritual of my freedom, my ascension, my revenge!"
>
> The Horned King lets out a terrible roar and surges with fiendish power as the circle of primeval magic crackles with sacrificial energy.

Kehlenn's magic intensifies. When a creature other than the Horned King or a crooked effigy starts its turn, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or choose one of the following options:

CROOKED THOUGHTS. The creature loses Concentration. If it isn't concentrating, it takes 10 Psychic damage.

DAZE. The creature can't take Reactions until the start of its next turn.



23.3 The Crooked Tree

Crooked Defeat. If all the characters are slain or otherwise fall, read or paraphrase the following:

> You have fallen, just like the rest of them. This sacrificial slaughter has ensured the end of all things. The Horned King rears up on its hind legs, filled with ascendant triumph, and lets out a bellow that sounds like the mixture of goat, lion, and dragon. The cacophonous sound cracks the Crooked Tree, and from the split trunk, a beautiful and horrifying fey queen emerges, her limbs and teeth as crooked as her soul. She rises into the sky, her arms toward the Crooked Moon above as she ushers in the annihilation of Druskenvald.

Fleeting Victory. When the Horned King is reduced to 0 Hit Points, read or paraphrase the following:

> With the final blow, the Horned King begins to unravel as the colossal beast lets out vile bleating death throes. Its flesh begins to shrink and contort, and for a moment, its head shifts to a dreadful mockery of Phillip Druskenvald's before the rippling fiendish body erupts into a putrid explosion of blood, viscera, and bone. A moment later, all that remains of the Horned King is the simple goat skull that had once rested against the barrow.
>
> The face of Kehlenn sneers with rage as she lets out a wordless shriek, her physical shape disappearing from the bark of the Crooked Tree. However, the tree itself begins to creak and bend back and forth, its limbs twisting in wrathful vengeance. This is not yet over.

Fated Tarot Reading. If *The World* was pulled during the "Fated Tarot Reading" in chapter 9, the character this card was pulled for is granted the ability to cast the *Wish* spell one time after the defeat of the Horned King.

END OF THE CROOKED QUEEN

Upon the Horned King's destruction, Kehlenn's voice shrieks and rages against the defeat as the Crooked Tree sways back and forth with wrathful creaking.

Kehlenn is intertwined with the Crooked Tree. She can no longer exert her influence and is now vulnerable. The ritual within the clearing still crackles with energy. The characters must disrupt the ritual to sever Kehlenn's last connection to the land. The bloody goat skull from the remains of the Horned King whispers to the characters with the voice of Phillip Druskenvald in one last attempt to set things right.

> "She is still here. The circle remains. But there is hope. My beloved is here. I can hear her now. She has shown me the path. My power still exists beyond the borders of Wickermoor Hollow, but there must be sacrifice to harness it.
>
> "You must make the sacrifices while touching the skull. Each one of you. If the sacrifices are great enough, Adela will claim my power and dethrone Kehlenn, sever her ties to my land, and bind her within the Crooked Moon.
>
> "Please... Let's set this right..."

To complete the ritual and trap the Crooked Queen within the moon, a character can touch the goat skull and offer a sacrifice. This can be anything of great personal value to the character: a cherished item, a piece (or person) of their past, or even a part of themselves (reducing an ability score by 2, giving up a class feature, etc.). Whatever is offered is lost forever.

Sacrifice. As a Magic action, a character can touch the goat skull, offer a sacrifice, and roll 1d20. On a 10 or higher, the sacrifice is accepted. However, Kehlenn in her Crooked Tree rages against her potential banishment. On a 9 or lower, Kehlenn receives a number of Ritual Points equal to the amount the roll failed by (10 minus the total rolled). Kehlenn can use these points to reduce future rolls before a character rolls the d20 for their sacrifice, potentially turning success into failure. On a failure, a character can try again on subsequent turns with a new sacrifice.

Last Act. A character whose sacrifice isn't accepted can choose to give their all to assure the queen's demise—the character can sacrifice their own life. A character who takes this option dies and can't be restored to life. The sacrifice is accepted, and the Crooked Queen is powerless to stop it.

Resolution. If the characters fail in making their sacrifices 6 times, or if any of the characters ignore the pleading of Phillip's spirit and don't offer a sacrifice, the ritual completes in the Crooked Queen's favor, and the Horned King reforms (see "Crooked Defeat" earlier in this chapter). If each character's sacrifice is accepted before that, the ritual collapses, and Kehlenn is untethered from Druskenvald and bound forever within the Crooked Moon.

UNDERNEATH THE CROOKED MOON

When the final sacrifice is accepted, read or paraphrase the following:

> As the final sacrifice is accepted by the goat skull, its empty eye sockets fill with a glowing orange light that spreads along the cracks in the bone, up its horns, and to the wooden moon through the twine that holds it aloft. Then, a breeze whips through the clearing. Riding the wind is a single small ember, the very same one that floated away after the burning of the Wicker Man. The glowing ember, guided by the will of Adela Druskenvald, drifts down and lands at the base of the Crooked Tree.
>
> In an instant, it bursts into flame. Shrieks of rage, pain, and hate fill the night sky for just a moment before silencing as the entire tree is fully engulfed from root to bough. You look up to the face of the Crooked Moon above, and where once had been a leering grin is now a scowl twisted with malice.
>
> The radiating energy of the sacrificial ritual fades as the tree burns, and the eternal night of Druskenvald quiets. For a brief moment, the shimmering blue-green specters of Phillip and Adela appear before you, embracing sorrowfully, before fading into nothing.



Those that still live find themselves watching the ancient trunk and branches collapse in flames, as safe as if they were sitting around a campfire sharing a story.

The primeval bonds that tied Kehlenn, the Crooked Queen, to the land of Druskenvald have been severed. She is trapped within the Crooked Moon, fated to forever look down impotently on the people she so bitterly hates.

Level Up. The characters reach level 14, if they are still level 13, when they complete the ritual and defeat the Crooked Queen. If you plan on continuing the adventure to level 20 (see chapter 26), they remain at level 13 and instead increase one ability score of their choice by 2. This increase can't raise a score above 24.

CONCLUSION: FLICKERING LIFE

With the threat of the Horned King and Crooked Queen eliminated, the characters can find their way out of the Wytchwood and return to Wickermoor Village if they choose. The manipulation of sin that was driving the townsfolk to chaos and mass hysteria has ended, and the survivors of the recent horrors just want to rebuild their lives in peace.

The people of Wickermoor Hollow, and indeed the peoples of Druskenvald, may never know how close they came to annihilation. With Kehlenn bound within the cold, distant light of the Crooked Moon, her power and vengeance no longer threaten this realm.

But Druskenvald will never be the same.

To conclude the story of the characters and learn about the fate of this land between life and death, proceed to the Epilogue (chapter 25).



FATEWEAVING CLIMAX

The Climax Narrative Touchpoint for all thirteen Threads of Fate occurs following the destruction of the Horned King and the defeat of the Crooked Queen. Depending on the number of characters who survive this final battle, it could be difficult to weave all of these climactic character moments together in a way that feels satisfying. It is recommended to select an order for the characters receiving their narrative Climax that allows for time to breathe in between each one so that every character gets their appropriate spotlight.

Some moments are a natural fit for happening immediately after the burning of the Crooked Tree, while others fit better later as the characters "catch their breath" physically, emotionally, and spiritually after their harrowing experience. These Climaxes should all be initiated while the characters are still within the Wytchwood, but not all of them must be at Kehlenn's barrow, so you can initiate these impactful moments at various points throughout the trek out of the woods. For characters who wish to use teleportation magic to immediately leave the Wytchwood, you may determine that these spells fail despite the banishment of the Crooked Queen, caused by the surging energies called forth by the final sacrifice to burn the Crooked Tree.

Finally, while the immediate effects of the respective Climaxes and the resulting Catharses may be fitting to happen immediately following each Climax, you are encouraged to allow some time to pass for the characters to fully process each of the climactic moments of their narrative journeys. The Catharsis of each character's Thread of Fate can be fully implemented during the conclusion of the campaign as presented in the Epilogue (see chapter 25).



Chapter 25: EPILOGUE

"Ya know, I never liked happy endings. There's a lie to 'em. A lovely lie, sure, but everyone knows it ain't the truth—even the narrator. Now, a story with a bittersweet ending is one worth listenin' to. How can you truly appreciate the few, brief moments of sweetness in life without first tastin' a whole bunch of bitter?"

- The Vagrant -



Phillip Druskenvald is dead. Kehlenn has suffered her final defeat. The journey of these two souls, intertwined by fate since time immemorial, has finally come to an end. As they moved toward their inevitable destiny, they left an immeasurable amount of death, destruction, and despair in their wake. It is up to the survivors to pick up the pieces.

In the aftermath of the bloody and burning fall of the Horned King and the Crooked Queen, the story of *The Crooked Moon* comes to an end. What awaits the characters following this epilogue is up to you and your players.

Tables interested in epic fantasy may continue the adventure into the higher tiers of play, and you can even guide the characters all the way to level 20 in Wickermoor Hollow with the tools presented in chapter 26. However, concluding the adventure following the events at the Crooked Tree provides for the most thematic experience that stays true to the spirit of folk horror. This epilogue is written with this in mind.

What's Become of Wickermoor?

After the defeat of the Horned King and the Crooked Queen, the characters leave the Wytchwood to find Wickermoor Hollow forever changed by their time in the valley. Although its people have grown accustomed to difficult lives filled with hardship and horror, the events in the recent weeks have deeply shaken even the hollow's hardiest folk.

Of all the places in the valley, Wickermoor Village has suffered the most since the characters first arrived from beyond the Shroud. Following the chaos unleashed by the minions of the Crooked Queen, some people search for a scapegoat to blame and exact vengeance upon, while others hope to leverage the instability to gain power. Most of the townsfolk, however, simply want to get their old lives back and return to some form of normalcy.

How the specific NPCs have been affected is largely dependent on the connections and choices that the characters made and how you chose to incorporate them throughout the adventure, especially during the burning of the Wicker Man atop Rowan's Rise.

As the characters spend time in Wickermoor Village to wrap up their unfinished business, make sure to tie up plot lines and provide closure with the surviving NPCs that became important to the characters. The people of the various ideologies and groups of the village respond to the recent horrors in the following ways.

Followers of the Old Ways

With the cult of the Crooked Queen exposed and almost entirely wiped out, the followers of the Old Ways who revered the Green Queen and never fell to wickedness become more entrenched in their superstitions and beliefs, blaming the corruption of their kin on the influence of new and profane ideals brought to the valley over the years. They become more distrustful of nonbelievers and anyone outside of their community, even going so far as to drive off members of the other groups. Wickermoor Hollow and its settlements retreat into the comfort of the old ideals.

Fold of the Patient Lady

Many adherents of the Patient Lady see the apocalyptic inevitability of magic and strange supernatural power and conclude that they must escape this doom, trusting that the wilds will provide for them. They chase off their own members who have magical abilities, leave the settlements of Wickermoor Hollow, and relocate to the natural world they view as a paradise, even if they do not have the survival skills to withstand the harsh conditions that await them.

The Brightsingers

Unlike the Fold of the Patient Lady, the Brightsingers do not lose hope in their community, seeing the recent disasters as proof that the bizarre superstitions and grim rituals of the valley are heretical acts that nearly brought about the doom of Druskenvald. Energized with a zealous desire to convert the folk who hold outdated beliefs to their newer religion filled with light, love, and truth, they call more missionaries to the valley and begin to aggressively spread their faith.

THE NEWCOMERS

The death of Phillip Druskenvald represents the crumbling of everything he stood for. All his vision, forward thinking, progress, and enlightenment could not save him from the hate of the old things. The newcomers in the valley see that there is little left for them, and what little hope they had was foolishness. Most of these folk will leave Wickermoor Hollow behind and seek civilizations that share their ideals, perhaps even seeking passage aboard the *Ghostlight Express* to discover new horizons beyond Druskenvald.

FOXWILLOW

While the once cheery and hardworking folk of Foxwillow had shared deep fellowship, the time spent trapped within the Fields of the Crow took a toll. The secrets unearthed and bared to all planted seeds of doubt, distrust, and shame amidst the efforts to rebuild. The Patient Lady is abandoned by the people, and strife slowly seeps back into the town. However, just when things look bleakest, a one-legged stranger from beyond the valley arrives to unite the community around a god of the four winds, and the fellowship of Foxwillow is restored once more, led by the vision of the man known only as Virgil.

DAWN'S GATE

If the fiendish identity of the Crimson Rose was not publicly revealed by the characters, the power vacuum and subsequent battles for control inevitably expose the truth of Viraxys, and the religion is abandoned after a violent falling-out. The former faithful and the townsfolk of Dawn's Gate come together in their bitterness toward the faith that manipulated and terrorized them for so long. Worship of any kind is outlawed, and parties of riders regularly patrol to bring justice and vengeance to any missionaries or evangelists.

MURKWATER BEND

With the threat of the shambling dead brought to an end, the people of Murkwater Bend were able to go back to their lives in peace, until the swamp trees of the Drowned Crossroads began blooming Snake Eye Magnolias, a flower with tremendous and versatile properties that are useful for healing, pleasure, spellcasting, and more. An enormous boom of prosperity comes to Murkwater Bend, and Vander Boone even contacts the Crescent Court with promises of their wildest dreams, including bringing their unruly folk to heel and a proposal to legitimize Wickermoor Hollow as an officially recognized province.



THE LAST RIDE

When the characters have resolved their unfinished business in Wickermoor Hollow and you have tied up the story's loose ends, the *Ghostlight Express* arrives to take the characters wherever they'd like to go. They may want to go home and put the horror of Druskenvald behind them, they might want to discover what awaits in the other provinces of the land of eternal night, or they could seek new horizons in other strange worlds within the Shroud. The possibilities are endless, but what matters is that their part in this story is over.

THERE'S AN OLD BLACK TRAIN A-COMIN'

During the Midnight Hour, when the characters are ready to depart Wickermoor Hollow, read or paraphrase the following:

> The darkness of the Midnight Hour surrounds you as a heavy fog shrouds the valley in an eerie gloom. A faint, distant music sails through the air—a single fiddle. Then a shrill whistle that sounds of wailing souls pierces the quiet of night, heralding the rumbling, chugging, and scraping of a locomotive. A single circle of ghastly blue-green light grows larger in the fog as the engine of the *Ghostlight Express* thunders out of the gloom on rails of mist. It slows before screeching to a halt in front of you.
>
> The darkened windows of the passenger car flank the single side door that opens with a creak. Out hops the Vagrant, a sprig of wheat in the corner of his mouth and his trusty fiddle in the back pocket of his patchy trousers. His sly smile is followed by a knowing wink. "Y'all didn't think I forgot about ya, did ya? All aboard!"

The characters once again realize that they each have a one-way ticket for the *Ghostlight Express*, but this time it says, "Destination: Unknown." The Vagrant casually apologizes for how long it took him to fix up the locomotive, claiming that he ran into some complications that he will not elaborate on. He tells them that he owes them a ride and asks where they're headed.

If Phillip and Adela are mentioned, he briefly removes his hat for a moment of silence before stating that he's sorry to have heard what happened to them, but he shrugs and claims that death comes for everyone, even the deathless. He shares rumors that the power vacuum in the Crescent Court has led to a power struggle among the lords and ladies of the court, intensified by the recent increase of wicked activity from the Coven of the Midnight Moon.

When the characters give the Vagrant their tickets and tell him where they'd like to go, he agrees and welcomes them aboard the passenger car, which has no spectral passengers this trip. As the characters get settled, the frogman hops off to his cab to prepare to move on.

When the time has come to conclude the session, the adventure, and the campaign, read or paraphrase the following:

> Following a single burst of the locomotive's ghastly whistle, the *Ghostlight Express* lurches forward into the fog. Through the windows of the passenger car, you take one last glimpse of Wickermoor Hollow and see the Crooked Moon above, sneering down at the land below. It almost feels as if its hateful gaze is upon you specifically as it slowly disappears and all that can be seen is fog rushing by.
>
> You all sit together and consider the horror, heartbreak, and heroism that you have experienced on this journey when the voice of the Vagrant crackles through the passenger car.
>
> "We're on our way, friends! This journey is a long one, but it'll all be over when it's time. Now, just relax as we lean into the shapeless night wind along these lonesome misty rails. All together, so alone, we ride!"
>
> And that is where this story ends.




Wheel of fortune

Chapter 26: MOONFALL

"The moon knows you, stranger. It has been waiting since the first stone was laid, since the first bone was buried. She comes to claim what was promised. And if you meet her mad gaze, it's too late—they've already chosen you."

- Rowan -

The horrors the characters have overcome were merely a prelude to the nightmare that now looms over Wickermoor Hollow. Though Kehlenn's influence has been severed from the land, her imprisonment within the Crooked Moon above did not put an end to her primeval power. The defeated archfey seeks her final revenge: the total destruction of the realm she once ruled. Her leering gaze settles on Wickermoor Hollow for the last time, awakening eight ancient beings of immense power to bring the moon crashing down upon Druskenvald, destroying everyone and everything within.

With Kehlenn's defeat at the Crooked Tree, a fragile peace has settled over Wickermoor Hollow, but it is a peace born of fear and uncertainty. Even in the face of victory, the people of the valley have been forever changed by the horrors that have occurred over the past weeks and months. While many inhabitants of the valley may not know the events that occurred in the Wytchwood and how close the Horned King came to annihilating them, they all soon learn of the new doom descending from above.

The moon's grin has curled into a sneer as it wakes eight eons-old powers still tethered to the land. With the promise of a transformation of the domain into their own image, these mythic beings call the moon down from the night sky to eventually crash into Wickermoor Hollow. The resulting cataclysm would destroy the whole of Druskenvald and remake it as Kehlenn and her champions see fit. The characters must act quickly, or all they have fought to save will be lost with the moon's apocalyptic embrace.

ENDGAME

This optional chapter offers guidance for leading level 13 characters to the pinnacle of level 20, providing the inspiration to craft challenging and harrowing encounters that will test their might and resolve. This chapter is aimed at tables that favor epic tiers of play and want to experience grandiose stakes of high fantasy.

If you wish to continue the campaign after the main events of *The Crooked Moon*, this chapter presents a flexible framework that challenges players while maintaining the unsettling dread central to folk horror. If you plan on following this path, the characters should not reach level 14 after defeating the Horned King. Instead, each character increases one ability score of their choice by 2. This increase can't raise a score above 24.

Characters who seek to prevent Kehlenn's final vengeance have the following goals:

- Seek out each of the eight awakened powers of Wickermoor Hollow.
- Destroy them and sever their tether to the Crooked Moon.
- Banish Kehlenn to the Crooked Moon for all time.

Many of the specifics of how the characters embark on this final adventure will be up to you to decide. If the adventure incorporated Fateweaving (see chapter 9), you must decide how the various climaxes and catharses of the characters would affect the events presented in this chapter.

THE MOON IS FALLING

One terrible night, the Crooked Moon lets out a horrific shriek and speaks with Kehlenn's voice, delivering a message that echoes across Wickermoor Hollow: the moon shall fall, and doom will come in thirteen nights. Slowly but surely, the moon begins to grow larger in the sky as it descends toward the valley.

The inhabitants of Wickermoor Hollow react in a variety of ways—some turn to panic, others to prayer, and surprisingly, many resign themselves to the end. However, most are too preoccupied with the destructive effects of the eight evils that have risen and the horrors they've unleashed upon the land. This development will stress or empower the relationships that the characters have nurtured during their time in Wickermoor Hollow.

IMPENDING DOOM

The characters must now hunt down these emerging evils, racing against time as each victory delays the moon's fall—but not its inevitable approach. Further, every moment wasted allows the once-dormant threats to grow in power and cause mass destruction ahead of the impending apocalypse.

COUNTDOWN TO EXTINCTION

As soon as the Crooked Moon begins falling, it will crash into Wickermoor Hollow in exactly thirteen nights. If this occurs, the resulting collision and explosion of primordial energy annihilates the entirety of Druskenvald, including the characters if they are still within the realm when the moon makes impact. This ends the campaign.

Achieving Victory. The only way to prevent Druskenvald's downfall is to kill all eight of the ancient evils bound to Wickermoor Hollow and reject Kehlenn's final bargain. This returns the Crooked Moon to its rightful place in the sky and ensures that the Crooked Queen is powerless forever.

Tracking Time. As each of the thirteen nights progresses, keep track of how many nights are left before the inevitable collision. Clearly describe to the players that the moon is growing larger in the sky and its face is growing more menacing. Also, consider how the people of the valley act in the face of a seemingly inevitable death.

Delaying the Inevitable. Each time one of the ancient evils is slain, the descent of the moon stops for 24 hours. This means that if the characters continually kill the powerful enemies before them, they have a full twenty nights to stop the doom.

Turn Back Time. If you wish to give the characters additional time or believe they have earned help, the Vagrant arrives right before the collision and aids them. He plays a powerful song on his fiddle that turns back time 72 hours, buying the characters three additional nights. Due to the timeless nature of the ancient evils, any of them killed before or during this reverted time remain dead.

THE OLD FEARS

Eight fearsome beings bound to the land of Wickermoor Hollow stir and rise to power, having felt the gaze of the Crooked Moon upon them. Imbued with Kehlenn's primordial energies, they have exchanged their own ties to Wickermoor Hollow so that the moon can continue to plummet toward a cataclysm with the promise to remake the realm in their own image. They are as follows:

THE GALLOPING HEADSMAN. A headless phantom of fiery wrath driven by revenge.
THE WHITE WORM. An eldritch being from beyond the stars that feasts on memories.
THE TALL MAN. A twisted and corrupted archfey that stalks the woods for victims.
THE WILD TITAN. A gigantic manifestation of the wilds that seeks to unleash savagery.
THE BARROW KING. A long-dead king seeking glory who commands Undead legions.
THE JINXED LEVIATHAN. An enormous swamp beast imbued with the essence of bad luck.
THE DUSK MOTHER. A tormented spirit of loss that spreads her misery to all.
THE BRIMSTONE BEHEMOTH. A volcanic colossus of hellfire that ushers in armageddon.

The characters must defeat these legendary creatures in order, each one more powerful than the last, if they hope to save Druskenvald. The subsequent sections of this chapter feature the eight ancient evils, including the following tools to craft an exhilarating adventure for each:

- A quest hook that points the characters in the direction of the ancient evil.
- The effects of the legendary creature's presence on the land, which are in addition to its lair features (see appendix A).
- How the locals are tormented, affected, and corrupted by it.
- What types of monsters and minions that might serve it.
- The circumstances of the final showdown with the powerful being.
- How the afflicted people react to the destruction of the creature.



THE GALLOPING HEADSMAN



Centuries ago, a centaur served as an executioner to the people who first founded Foxwillow. Due to corruption at the highest levels of the town's leadership, this headsman was falsely accused of murder, dragged through an unjust trial, and beheaded before the whole town. While its townsfolk exclaimed justice, the blood that spilled on the soil bound the centaur's spirit to the fields. With the power of the Crooked Moon, the Galloping Headsman thunders through the farmland, seeking justice against his killers' descendants, whipping them up in a frenzy of paranoia that spelled his doom so many years ago.

HYSTERIA IN FOXWILLOW

The distrust sown by the secrets revealed during the Harvest Terror's attack has boiled into all-out conflict, plunging the farming community into mass hysteria. A farmer from the town seeks out the characters and tells them that neighbor has turned against neighbor, and folks are being condemned to death by beheading. The executioner is rumored to be a spirit of fiery wrath that rides to meet each of the condemned, lops off their heads, and adds them to its collection.

FIELDS OF VENGEANCE

The fertile farmland around Foxwillow—so easily corrupted by the demonic influence of Raum—craves vengeance and has come to life under the ghastly influence of the Galloping Headsman.

Stone Pressing. The earth itself opens up, attempting to swallow the accused and crush them with the stones within. For every mile traveled, characters must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or fall into a sinkhole and have the Restrained condition. While Restrained in this way, a character takes 4 (1d8) Bludgeoning damage at the start of each of their turns. A Restrained character repeats the save at the end of each of their turns, freeing themself on a success.

Choking Crops. The crops attempt to choke the life out of the wicked. The first time a character enters any field that bears crops, its roots, stalks, or vines attempt to strangle the character. They must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or gain the Grappled condition for 1 minute (escape DC 15). While Grappled in this way, the character gains 1 Exhaustion level at the end of each of their turns. A character who can't be Charmed succeeds automatically. The crops have AC 5; HP 10; Vulnerability to Fire damage; Immunity to Bludgeoning and Psychic damage.

MOB INJUSTICE

When the characters arrive at the Foxwillow Farmland, they find its people are Hostile to them, accusing them of witchcraft, murder, sabotage, and of causing the incoming apocalypse. Some cunning townsfolk even attempt to act as friends to earn their trust before turning them over to frenzied mobs.

Vengeful Wrath. The wrathful emotion of the Galloping Headsman spreads like a virulent plague. Whenever a character comes within 20 feet of a Foxwillow villager, the character must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or lose the ability to distinguish friend from foe, regarding all creatures it can see as enemies. On a success, the character is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Wandering Mob. Roving gangs of vigilantes hunt the characters in the hopes of capturing, imprisoning, trying, and executing them. Every 1 hour that the characters spend within 1 mile of the town center of Foxwillow, they must succeed on a group DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check or be detected and attacked by 20 **Toughs.**

ALL HALLOWS' EVIL

The emergence of the Galloping Headsman has twisted the Foxwillow farmland's flora, fauna, and people, and it has awakened monstrous creatures with a burning vengeance:

Vengeful Spirits. The Headsman has riled up the spirits of the dead that faced wrongful deaths and seek retribution. These take the form of **Centaurs** (Undead), **Kackles**, **Phantom Hearses**, **Pumpkin Heads**, **Wayward Haints**, **Will-o-Wisps**, and **Wraiths.**

Monsters of the Fields. Livestock and scavenger birds have been twisted by the Headsman's vengeful fury. These take the form of **Cockatrices**, **Corvodaemons**, **Crowstorms**, **Drakkenhobs**, **Gobblegeists**, **Gorgons**, **Minotaurs of Baphomet**, and **Nightmares**.

VENGEANCE'S RECKONING

Some townsfolk whisper of a shadowy figure that looks like a rider on horseback but joined as one. They revere this being as an angel of judgment, punishing their town for the wickedness of their neighbors. The characters must learn where they can find this spirit to put an end to the mass hysteria.

Tarnished History. The characters can investigate Foxwillow to learn about the village's dark past. If the characters succeed on a group DC 17 Intelligence (History or Investigation) check, they learn the headsman's story and that he was beheaded before the covered bridge to the east of town toward the edge of Wickermoor Hollow.

Bloody Trail. The characters can tail a mob as it dispenses its "justice" or even infiltrate its ranks with a successful group DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) or Charisma (Deception) check to witness the attempted execution of a falsely accused villager.

THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

Characters who arrive at the covered bridge can lure out the vengeful spirit with the offering of the execution of a Foxwillow local or by inciting its warped sense of justice. **The Galloping Headsman** rides out from the darkness of the bridge's cover and charges the characters, seeking to behead them all and slake its never-ending thirst for vengeance.

Reckoning's End. With the Galloping Headsman's destruction, the town is freed from his oppressive judgment. The people of Foxwillow gain clarity and realize that they must aid their neighbors in these final nights. Grateful to the characters, they decide to spend their final hours feasting and celebrating instead of falling to despair. The Crooked Moon shifts, its gaze turning toward Moonsong Lake.

Level Up. The characters reach level 14, if they are still level 13, when they destroy the Galloping Headsman.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Axe of the Galloping Headsman* is left behind after the vengeful spirit is destroyed.

THE WHITE WORM

A once unfathomable horror from a forgotten reality beyond the stars, the eldritch entity known as the White Worm was pulled through the veil by the rituals of Matron Lethica (see chapter 17). Imprisoned for many years beneath Memory's Rest Sanatorium, it feasted upon the memories of the hospital's patients before escaping into the depths of Moonsong Lake. After recovering from its long torment and being fed countless ancient memories by the Crooked Moon, it has undergone a metamorphosis into its true form as a cosmic horror. It now ravenously hungers for the memories of Druskenvald until the land itself is forgotten.

A FEAST FOR WORMS

Moonsong Lake is infested with worms. These parasites slither through the water supply and infect the people who live upon its shores. Memories are devoured, personalities are reshaped, and bodies are contorted into horrific abominations of alien biology. A member of a small fishing village approaches the characters and begs them to end the infestation and restore the identities of the mindless victims.

LAKE OF THE WHITE WORM

The waters of Moonsong Lake and its estuary are tainted with alien parasites that sap memories, feeding them to the White Worm and spawning more thralls for the hivemind.

Water of Forgetfulness. Any character who drinks from the water of Moonsong Lake, or any well, river, or stream within 5 miles of it, must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or have the Poisoned condition for 8 hours. While Poisoned in this way, the character loses all memories from before the moment they drank the water. A character who succeeds on this save is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Parasite Found. Any character immersed in the water of Moonsong Lake must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be infected with a spawn of the White Worm. Unless the character receives a *Lesser Restoration* spell or similar magic, they transform into a **Wormhost Surgeon** in 7 days.

A STRANGE FOLK

When the characters arrive on the shores of Moonsong Lake, they find the fishing villages filled with folk who are oddly at peace with the coming doom. Some sit catatonically with no recollection of who they are or

who they once were. Those who have not forgotten their memories are secretly Hostile to the characters and seek to turn them into thralls of the White Worm.

Cult of the Worm. White Worm cultists cast *Dominate Person* (DC 17) on any character who is alone with them.

Shattered Psyche. The minds of those who have forgotten themselves are filled with oblivion. Any character who uses magic to attempt to read a villager's thoughts or look into their mind must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or be affected by the *Befuddlement* spell.

THINGS FROM BEYOND

The reawakening of the White Worm has twisted the minds of the lake's denizens to her alien will, and a tear to its home reality has opened at the bottom of the lake, unleashing unspeakable things into the dark water.

Deep Dwellers. The creatures that lurk in the depths of Moonsong Lake and are influenced by the great memory devourer include **Giant Crabs**, **Giant Toads**, **Giant Octopi**, **Hydras**, **Lake Dredgers**, **Plesiosauruses**, **Swarms of Quippers**, **Wellwyrms**, and worm swarms (use the **Swarm of Venomous Snakes** stat block).

Alien Invaders. Entities from beyond the stars drift through the veil into Druskenvald. These take the form of **Aboleths**, **Chuul**, **Cloakers**, **Gibbering Mouthers**, **Invaders Out of Space**, **Mutant Nurses**, and **Wormhost Surgeons**.

THE HUNGER BELOW

The people of the lakeside babble and sometimes shriek of the "thing in the lake" and its unending hunger that seeks to consume all memory of Druskenvald. Rumors of ancient ruins built by the original denizens of the lake hold the key to the creature's origin and goal. The characters must find the tear in reality at the bottom of the lake to restore memory to the people.

Black Obelisks. The characters can search for ancient ruins of the original lake dwellers. After locating the ruins, they can study the carvings. With a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check, the characters learn of the White Worm's origin and the signs to find it.

Into the Cult. The characters can feign interest in willfully joining the esoteric order that worships the White Worm with a successful group DC 17 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, learning its secrets.

THE ELDRITCH HORROR

Characters who find a way to brave the water and survive its crushing depths find reality and their minds warp the deeper they delve. Once they discover the tear into the long-forgotten reality, **The White Worm** emerges into the black water and attempts to devour the characters in both body and mind.

Remembering Once More. With the destruction of the White Worm, its tether to Druskenvald is broken, and its essence is ripped into the tear in reality as the rift seals forever. The parasitic worms wither and die, and the water becomes clean once more. The people around the lake regain their memories, though many wish they hadn't, for now they are gripped with the terror of their inevitable doom. The Crooked Moon, ever closer, looks to Hartsblight Forest.

Level Up. The characters reach level 15, if they are still level 14, when they destroy the White Worm.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Eye of the White Worm* can be claimed as a grotesque trophy from the withered corpse.



THE TALL MAN

Once a slender and agile archfey of the Greenwood who danced to the music of the forest, the Tall Man was twisted and rotted into an empty husk of his former self. Now, he silently lurks within the shadows between the trees. Emboldened by the Crooked Moon, he seeks to lure unsuspecting travelers to the woods so he may stalk his prey in a wicked game of cat and mouse. Once his prey is immobilized by terror, he uses his huge, gnarled fingers to snatch them up and dine on their flesh, made all the more delectable by their fear.

TERROR BETWEEN THE TREES

Wicked things lurk in the recovering woods of Hartsblight Forest. The shadows grow long as the moon draws nearer, and the people nearest to the forest's edge are consumed by waking nightmares and entranced by dancing shadows that lure them into the thicket. Members of a small logging settlement seek out the characters and ask for help finding those who are missing.

WHERE SHADOWS REIGN

With the destruction of Gorthos and the empowerment of the Crooked Moon, the Tall Man has made Hartsblight Forest his domain of terror, creating the ideal hunting grounds for the horrifying archfey and his corrupted court.

Fear of the Dark. For every hour of travel through Hartsblight Forest, each character must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or have Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls for 8 hours. A creature that can't be Frightened succeeds automatically.

Trick of Shadows. Throughout Hartsblight Forest, shadowy silhouettes of the Tall Man linger between the trees. Characters who move within 10 feet of these silhouettes are attacked by four **Lurkers in the Dark**.



EASY PREY

When the characters arrive at the settlements near the forest's edge, they are greeted by horrified shrieks and find the communities mostly empty. Those that remain are Indifferent toward the characters and can't rip themselves from their waking nightmares. Any who suffer these nightmares wander into the woods and become lost.

Fear and Panic. Whenever the characters find a missing villager in the forest, the villager soon begins to scream in terror, drawing the attention of the Tall Man or his minions, unless the characters calm them with a successful group DC 18 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check.

Lost and Alone. Voices of the lost cry out to the characters, but the forest distorts their location. For every hour of travel through Hartsblight Forest, the characters must succeed on a group DC 18 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check or spend the next 3 hours wandering through the woods, making no progress, and not finding the lost villager.

COURT OF FEAR AND SHADOW

With newfound dominion over the forest, all of the dark wood serve the Tall Man, whether they be the denizens of the forest once blighted by Gorthos or the vicious members of his fey court.

Rotten Hearts. The denizens of Hartsblight Forest now dance with the Tall Man, including **Death Dogs**, **Festerhulks**, **Giant Elks** (Undead), **Gloomwoods**, **Hypnovulfen**, **Keepers of the Blight**, **Owlbears**, **Rotweavers**, and **Treants**.

Bumps in the Night. The corrupted members of the fallen fey court serve their lord's twisted appetites, taking the form of **Dryads**, **Green Hags**, **Heralds of Fools** (Fey), **Ketgrinn**, **Lurkers in the Dark**, **Revelers of Song** (Fey), **Revelers of Stories** (Fey), and **Sprites**.

STALKER IN DARKNESS

The screeching villagers consumed by waking nightmares rave about the man between the trees, who dwells in his ruined palace of murk and misery. Rumors of the forgotten fey folk of the Greenwood are whispered by a few who know of the lithe dancing lord before he fell to rot. The characters must find his palace or lure him out to put an end to his reign of terror.

Fear in Folktales. The characters may seek out the folklore of these settlements, finding an old crone who knows of the Tall Man's story and his palace if they succeed on a group DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) or Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Hunting the Hunter. The characters can track and lure out the Tall Man with a successful group DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check if they use fear to draw his attention.

THE SLENDER ONE

Whether the characters discover the ruined palace or attempt to lure the withered archfey to them, **The Tall Man** knows of their coming and stalks them for hours before finally striking when the creeping dread is at its most intense.

Face Your Fears. When the Tall Man is slain, his body breaks and crumbles like dry bark, and the looming moon's light pierces the canopy of the woodland once more as the terror lifts. Having been consumed by fear for so long, the denizens of the forest's edge can't find it in them to dread their coming deaths, and they go about their business as if nothing happened. The Crooked Moon turns to the Howlers, its light growing colder as it seeks its next champion.

Level Up. The characters reach level 16, if they are still level 15, when they destroy the Tall Man.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Hook of the Tall Man* can be claimed by removing a finger from the butchered archfey.

THE WILD TITAN

Created long ago by some unknown will for a purpose now lost to time, the Wild Titan is the wilderness made flesh. It once wandered the remote peaks of the Howlers, the mountain chain that makes up the western border of Wickermoor Hollow, following the rune stones of its creator after the creature lost all contact. As the centuries passed, its long, heavy strides became more of a struggle, and it grew weary from its aimlessness. And so, it slumbered until the Crooked Moon instilled the beast with primal fury, the very essence of its creation. Now, it seeks to bring the mountains down upon civilization and unleash the bestial savagery within all mortal beings.

PRIMAL RAGE

Savage howls and frigid wind echo through the mountains as colossal boulders crash upon the settlements below. A feral violence has erupted among the communities nestled in the foothills of the Howlers. Some have even lost their humanity as they transform into monsters. A miner from Dawn's Gate who lost his family to these transformations pleads for the characters to bring an end to the wrath of the wilds.

THE RUMBLING

The looming, frigid mountain range of the Howlers is treacherous, but now it stands as a monument to unbound wilderness, as if the mountains themselves seek the destruction of civilized life.

Rocks Fall. Whether cast down by the Wild Titan or the mountains themselves, crashing stone tumbles from icy peaks. For every mile traveled within 1 mile of the Howlers, the characters must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) Bludgeoning damage and 14 (4d6) Cold damage.

Make No Fire. The harsh elements make it impossible for travelers to benefit from the warmth of fire. Within 5 miles of the Howlers, open flames, including torches and bonfires, are snuffed out instantly, and all Fire damage is halved.

THE BEASTS WITHIN

When the characters arrive at Dawn's Gate or any of the mining settlements at the base of the Howlers, they find rampant destruction and few buildings standing. Grunting townsfolk incapable of speech attack on sight and try to devour flesh. Even more dreadful are the hairy monsters that still linger on the fringes of the communities and drag screaming victims into the wilderness.

Going Berserk. Whenever a character comes within 10 feet of a villager afflicted with primal wrath or starts a turn there, they must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or go berserk until the start of their next turn, perceiving all creatures as enemies. While berserk, on each of their turns, a character must move to the nearest creature and take the Attack action against it. Characters who succeed on the saving throw are immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Titan's Roar. Strange roars bellow from the mountains. Every hour while within 1 mile of a settlement, each character must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or gain one Mark of the Wild Titan. When a character reaches three of these marks, they instantly transform into an **Alpengrendel**. A *Remove Curse* spell removes one or two accumulated marks.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

The untamed wilderness where the Wild Titan roams is filled with ferocious predators incensed by the howling of the hairy colossus. These include ravenous beasts and primeval entities drawn by the runestones that dot the peaks.

Menacing Menagerie. The creatures of the Howlers have gone berserk with the urge to destroy anything civilized, including **Alpengrendel**, **Behir**, **Boneflayers**, **Dire Wolves**, **Giant Apes**, **Mammoths**, **Polar Bears**, **Ogres**, **Remorhazes**, **Rocs**, **Trolls**, and **Winter Wolves**.

Spirits of the Wild. The ancient runestones of the Howlers call forth beings of the wild. These take the form of **Earth Elementals**, **Frost Giants** (Elemental), **Gargoyles**, **Ice Mephits**, **Stone Giants** (Elemental), **Stone Golems**, **Wildpyres**, **Woodwarped**, and **Xorn**.

ATTACK ON THE TITAN

The constant rumbling of the mountain crashing into the valley below and the howling of savage monsters cause the survivors and the villagers who remain to believe that the spirit of the mountain itself wishes to destroy them before the Crooked Moon does. Some, however, remember the tales of the titan that walks the peaks and the stones it uses as a guide, and the most cunning or desperate trackers are willing to sacrifice everything to bring an end to the titan's assault.

In the Runes. The characters can follow the clues left in the runestones along the mountainside. A successful group DC 18 Intelligence (History or Nature) check allows the characters to discover the Wild Titan's story and the path that it treads through the Howlers.

Dangerous Game. The characters encounter a grizzled hunter with a relentless dedication to kill the Wild Titan as a final triumph. A successful group DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check aids him in finding his quarry through wilderness tracking.

THE ABOMINABLE WILDMAN

When the characters make the ascent to the peaks of the Howlers and find the path of the wandering giant, **The Wild Titan** makes the approach deadly with an onslaught of rockslides and avalanches. It is prepared for a brutal battle for survival, issuing a bellowing challenge and seeking to crush all civilized beings beneath its enormous feet.

Harder the Fall. When the Wild Titan is slain, it lets out a mournful roar, having never discovered its purpose or the reason for its creation, before tumbling down the mountain like a boulder. The settlements among the foothills, especially Dawn's Gate, regain their senses. Despite the looming apocalypse, they immediately start rebuilding their crumbled communities. The Crooked Moon shifts once again, its baleful stare focusing now on Maidenmist Cemetery.

Level Up. The characters reach level 17, if they are still level 16, when they destroy the Wild Titan.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Runestone of the Wild Titan* can be found near the site of the battle once the beast has been cast off the mountain.

THE BARROW KING

None living know the origin of the long-dead monarch entombed in the grand barrow of Maidenmist Cemetery (see chapter 19), but legends of his undying army of wights, immense necromantic might, and unmatched combat prowess are told in hushed tones around campfires or the corners of taverns. Even the unrelenting primordial element of death condensed in the Shroud seeks to corrupt this ruler, but his tomb proved too impenetrable. Now, with the Crooked Moon casting its sight upon the endless graves, the one known as the Barrow King has risen to conquer a new kingdom of the dead.

DEATH REIGNS HERE

The graves of Maidenmist Cemetery burst open, and the shambling dead rise to join the undying legions of the Barrow King as he prepares for a bloody conquest of the living, many of whom submit to the awesome necromantic power. Every night, the army of death grows and pledges sword, bow, and axe to their monarch. An inhabitant of Wickermoor Village rushes to the characters, claiming they are the last line of defense against the march of death.

ALL THE WORLD'S A GRAVE

The land itself floods with necromantic power as the graveyard of Maidenmist spreads beyond its cold iron fence. The earth churns, graves open up, decay of living matter quickens, and a dense, shroud-infused fog rolls across the valley.

Death and Decay. Any healing within 10 miles of Maidenmist Cemetery is halved.

Draining Shroud. The dense fog saps the lifeforce from the living. For every hour spent within 10 miles of Maidenmist Cemetery, the characters must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. A *Death Ward*, *Hallow*, *Magic Circle*, or *Protection from Evil and Good* spell prevents this Exhaustion.

THE SCOURGE OF THE DAMNED

The Barrow King's influence spreads across the land, converting enthralled townsfolk into loyal cultists that advance his aims, Further, a plague rips through settlements that leaves its victims as mindless walking corpses.

Death Cults. Any villager encountered by the characters after the Barrow King rises has a 50 percent chance of being a member of a necrotic cult, which can be deduced with a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) check. These cultists attempt to guide the characters to their death or infect them with necrotic plague.

Necrotic Pestilence. A magical contagion spreads through the population of Wickermoor Hollow. Whenever a character ends their turn within 5 feet of an infected creature, they must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition. While Poisoned in this way, the character takes 13 (2d12) Necrotic damage at the end of every hour, which decreases their Hit Point maximum by the same amount. If a character is killed by the plague, their corpse rises as a **Wight** 8 hours later.

CALL THE BANNERS

The Barrow King commands endless legions of Undead that gather in masses of corpse and spirit, preparing for their inevitable march upon the land. They are joined by twisted monsters bound to the monarch's will.

Army of the Dead. The living dead form most of the Barrow King's forces, including **Ghasts**, **Kackles**, **Mummies**, **Night Creatures**, **Phantom Hearses**, **Shrouded**, **Specters**, **Vampire Spawn**, **Wights**, and **Wraiths**.

Horde of Domination. Monstrous creatures of the night also serve the Barrow King, taking the form of **Bat Hounds**, **Boneflayers**, **Death Dogs**, **Fleshdobbins**, **Hell Hounds**, **Necrolisks**, **Night Hags**, **Phase Spiders**, **Rotweavers** (Monstrosity), and **Vrocks**.

WRATH OF THE BARROW KING

As a plague tears through the valley and the sinister cult grows more influential, the people begin to resign themselves to a fate of undeath. The only way to destroy the monarch is by infiltrating his tomb, and knowledge of such a thing is nearly lost to Druskenvald. Only the dead hold such secrets.

Grim History. By exhuming graves and tombs throughout Maidenmist Cemetery, characters can discover how to breach the royal barrow with a successful group DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check.

Ghostly Communion. Spirits of the tortured dead still linger, some not entirely under the dominion of the Barrow King. A successful group DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) check when communing with such a spirit convinces a long-dead ghost to reveal their secrets.

KILL THE KING

Entering the royal tomb, the characters find that the stone has given way, and a network of catacombs and crypts winds deep into the earth, surging with the living dead. In the bowels of this subterranean fortress, **The Barrow King** awaits the interlopers on a grand throne of skulls. He rises to meet the battle head-on, fighting with overwhelming necromantic power and grave honor.

End of an Empire. When the Barrow King is defeated, his army of the dead collapses into piles of desiccated flesh and bone. The royal barrow and the catacombs beneath it collapse, and the spread of death comes to an end. The people of Wickermoor Village recover from the plague and turn to the Old Ways, performing numerous strange rituals to prevent the coming doom. The Crooked Moon looks northward to the Drowned Crossroads.

Level Up. The characters reach level 18, if they are still level 17, when they destroy the Barrow King.

Fabled Heirloom. The crumbled remains of the monarch wear the *Crown of the Barrow King*.

THE JINXED LEVIATHAN

Long ago, a simple alligator was captured by a cabal of jinxcraft-practicing magicians that poured hexes into it, creating an enormous swamp beast fused with bad luck itself, all in hopes of defeating the powerful death spirit known as Snake Eye Jack (see chapter 15). However, this misfortune fell upon the Jinxed Leviathan's captors when it broke free from their spell and devoured every last one of them, disappearing into the darkest tangled reaches of the Drowned Crossroads. Now, with the gaze of the Crooked Moon upon it, this reptilian colossus has risen to the surface once more, bringing misfortune and death to all those in its path.

GET JINXED

A terrible hex afflicts the Drowned Crossroads, bringing nothing but misfortune to its people. Horrible accidents, sudden sicknesses, and shocking disappearances occur by the hour, and even the simplest tasks can bring about a gruesome death. A resident of Murkwater Bend approaches the party, claiming that things are far worse than the jinxcraft of Mister Crossroads and begging for salvation before the swamp community's luck runs out.

MIRE OF MISHAPS

With the terrible jinx upon the Drowned Crossroads, every inch of the swamp is treacherous, with the bayou itself animated and twisted into a strange, glowing mockery of what it once was.

The Worst Luck. A jinx afflicts the swamp. When a character makes a D20 Test, it must subtract 1d4 from the total.

Swamplights. Eerie, jinxed hues radiate from patches of water, plants, and mud throughout the swamp. For every hour spent in the bayou, the characters must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be affected by the *Confusion* spell for 10 minutes. If one or more characters fail the save, a **Bayou Beast** rises from the swamp and attacks.

POOR UNFORTUNATE SOULS

The people of the Drowned Crossroads react to their turmoil with two different extremes: some party and live life to the fullest because they know their luck will soon run out, while others desperately try to appease the beast by any means necessary.

Last Dance. Many of the locals of the Drowned Crossroads are celebrating the last party before the apocalypse. They will use jinxcraft to convince others to party with them. Any character who starts their turn within 15 feet of one of these locals must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or have the Charmed condition for 24 hours. While Charmed in this way, the character parties without rest and gains 1 Exhaustion level at the end of that time. Characters who fail can repeat this saving throw every hour, and characters who succeed are immune for 24 hours.

Appeasing Meal. Many panicked swampfolk wish to calm the leviathan with sacrificial meals. Groups wander the swamps looking for victims. Every 8 hours spent in the Drowned Crossroads, the characters must succeed on a group DC 19 Dexterity (Stealth) check or be found and attacked by 20 **Bandit Captains** seeking a new offering.

SWAMP THINGS

The bayou has come to life with malevolent monsters that search for new meals for the Jinxed Leviathan, from hexed flora and fauna to the living dead and thralls risen from the unstable jinxcraft.

Bog Beasts. The swamp itself rises up at the command of the Jinxed Leviathan, including **Bayou Beasts**, **Dream Eaters**, **Giant Constrictor Snakes**, **Giant Crocodiles**, **Giant Toads**, **Gloomwoods**, **Gobblegeists**, **Shambling Mounds**, **Spirit Nagas**, **Water Elementals**, and whippoorwill flocks (use **Crowstorm** stat block).

Jinxed Servants. Risen dead and bewitched thralls serve the beast, taking the form of **Barbed Devils**, **Deepdrecks**, **Ferrymen**, **Festerhulks**, **Horned Devils**, **Kackles**, **Lake Dredgers**, **Trolls**, **Ogre Zombies**, **Wayward Haints**, **Wildpyres**, and **Will-o'-Wisps**.



THE LEVIATHAN SMILES

Every night that goes by sees more folk succumb to the worsening misfortune, and the survivors increasingly resign themselves to hedonism as the raging revelry reaches a fever pitch. Only by baiting the swamp beast or finding its cursed bayou can the characters slay it and finally end the madness.

Bait the Beast. Although the Jinxed Leviathan will eat most living things, its favorite meal is a giant serpent sacred to the followers of Snake Eye Jack. One of these creatures can be found and used to bait the giant swamp monster into a trap with a successful group DC 19 Wisdom (Animal Handling or Survival) check.

Accursed Murk. Although the story has been lost for generations, some survivors familiar with the folklore of the swamp tell the story of the cabal that sought to depose Snake Eye Jack. The location where the Jinxed Leviathan was first transformed can be learned with a successful group DC 19 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check.

THE MONSTER OF MISFORTUNE

No matter how the characters approach the behemoth, **The Jinxed Leviathan** erupts from the depths of the swamp, turning the black water of the bayou into raging waves. Glowing jinxcraft glyphs appear on every surface around it as its eternal hex spreads far and wide. Its jaws gnash and its tail thrashes in an effort to turn the characters into its finest meal yet.

Turn of Luck. When the Jinxed Leviathan is slain, it lets out a bellow and collapses into the murk. Immediately, the swamp grows dark and quiet as the powerful jinx that has cursed the Drowned Crossroads is broken and lifted. With the misfortune finally banished from the bayou, the people of Murkwater Bend and other settlements celebrate even more wildly than before, hoping to go out with a bang. The Crooked Moon turns its gaze southward to the Webwoods.

Level Up. The characters reach level 19, if they are still level 18, when they destroy the Jinxed Leviathan.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Tooth of the Jinxed Leviathan* can be pulled from the maw of the slain beast.

THE DUSK MOTHER

Once a human seamstress who practiced witchcraft, the mournful shade known only as the Dusk Mother was driven to inconsolable sorrow after she slew her children in a feverish ritual while possessed by a demonic entity she let into her home. In death, she has lingered in Wickermoor Hollow as a spirit clad in white, filled with immeasurable grief and hate. With the gaze of the Crooked Moon upon the Webwoods, a remote forest south of Wickermoor Village, her tether to the world of the living is at its strongest, and she seeks to ensure that all the valley shares in her misery.

THE THREADS THAT BIND

There is a ghostly witch in the Webwoods, and the humble farming communities near the forest's edge are under her spell. The crops wither and die, the livestock turn up mutilated, the children disappear, and adults awaken with their eyes and mouths sewn shut—catatonic husks robbed of their souls. A teenage girl from a homestead, barely escaping the wrath of her parents after her siblings went missing, finds the characters and begs them to bring salvation to the forest's edge.

THE WEBS THEY WEAVE

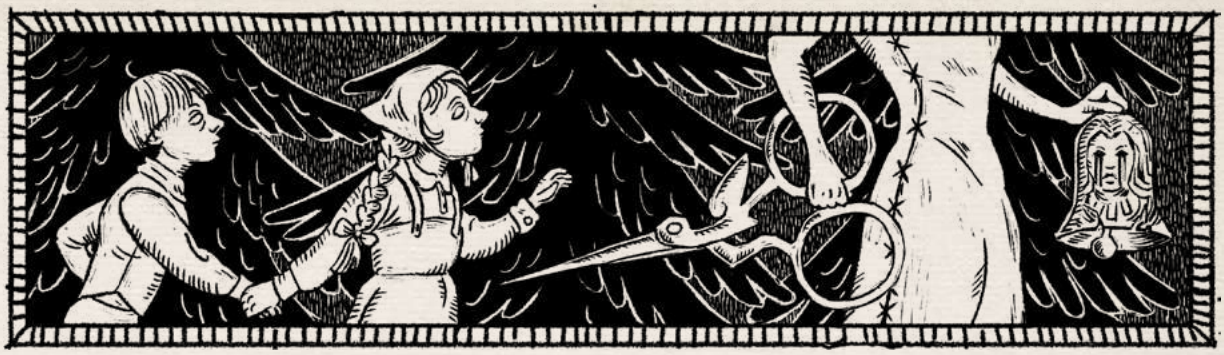
The Dusk Mother's hut lies in the Webwoods, a forest normally overrun with enormous spiders but is now a network of webbing filled with haunted, spectral energies and agonized crying.

Tangled Webs. The Webwoods are choked with webs that seem to have a mind of their own. For every mile traveled through the wood, the characters must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or have the Restrained condition (escape DC 18) and the Poisoned condition for 8 hours. Additionally, each character who fails is immediately attacked by eight **Ettercaps**.

Ghostly Wails. Mournful wails of the Dusk Mother can be heard all around. For every hour spent within 5 miles of the tree line of the Webwoods, the characters must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or have the Incapacitated condition for 10 minutes as they break down into tears.

COME LITTLE CHILDREN

The communities and homesteads near the Webwoods are nearly abandoned. The children have disappeared into the woods, and the adults that remain are bewitched and succumb to fits of convulsion and



catatonic spells, barely responding to external stimuli.

Severed Soul. The eyes and mouths of the adults who remain are sewn shut. They have no souls, and their bodies seek new ones to inhabit them. Any character who cuts the threads and opens someone's eyes and mouth must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or have their soul trapped within the **Commoner's** body as if by the *Magic Jar* spell for 8 hours.

Babes in the Wood. Numerous children have been bewitched and lured into the woods by the Dusk Mother, crying and whimpering for their parents or siblings. When a character moves within 5 feet of a child, the child's face turns wicked and they scream. Any character within 15 feet of the screaming child must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition from the Dusk Mother as if by the *Dominate Monster* spell for 1 hour.

PUPPETS ON STRINGS

The occult magic of the Dusk Mother is immensely powerful, utilizing ancient witchcraft to master soul weaving. This has allowed her to bind spirits and other monsters of the valley to her mournful and malicious will.

Here Be Haunts. Otherworldly entities conjured and dominated by the Dusk Mother take the form of **Corvodaemons**, **Doppelgangers**, **Erinyes**, **Ghosts**, **Green Hags**, **Incubi**, **Invisible Stalkers**, **Ketgrinn**, **Mariliths**, **Night Hags**, **Oni**, **Phantom Hearses**, **Pumpkin Heads**, **Revelers of Song**, **Revelers of Stories**, **Shrouded**, **Succubi**, and **Wraiths**.

Dolled Up. Puppeted monsters and strange dolls crafted by the Dusk Mother and given life stalk the woods, taking the form of **Alpengrendel**, **Clay Golems**, **Drakkenhobs**, **Driders**, **Ettercaps**, **Fleshdobbins**, **Flesh Golems**, **Gobblegeists**, **Harpies**, **Houses of Horror**, **Hypnovulfen**, **Lurkers in the Dark**, **Maidenwoods**, **Owlbears**, **Phase Spiders**, and **Werewolves**.

WICKED WOMAN OF THE WOODS

The people near the Webwoods have nearly been wiped out, and the children become more lost in the woods with every night that passes. The increasing quiet is more unsettling than the sniffling cries. Only by finding the Dusk Mother's hut, to which her spirit is bound, can the characters purge her spirit and cleanse the land of her sorrow and hate.

Nursery Rhymes. Although the missing children are bewitched by the Dusk Mother, they have seen her hut. When the characters encounter a child who sings haunting rhymes about the shade in white, they can piece together the location of the hut with a successful group DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check.

Queen of Webs. The arachnids of the Webwoods serve the Dusk Mother and view her as their spider queen. Characters who observe the skittering patterns of these local beasts and succeed on a group DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling or Survival) check can follow them to the spirit's haunted hut.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

When the characters arrive at the eerie hut in the woods, they find it surprisingly spacious inside. A table holds the tools of a seamstress and the implements of a witch. Countless dolls line the walls and cover the floors, many eerily similar to the missing children. **The Dusk Mother** materializes with a mournful wail and the tolling of her bell, seeking to sever the souls of the characters and make them her puppets in death.

Put to Bed. With the destruction of the Dusk Mother, the shade is finally freed from her lingering torment and fades with a wail. Many of the missing children wander out of the forest and find their parents and older siblings, all of whom have their souls restored. The reunited families spend time in quiet reflection and prayer before the end of everything. The Crooked Moon shifts its gaze toward its final destination: Rowan's Rise.

Level Up. The characters reach level 20, if they are still level 19, when they destroy the Dusk Mother.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Bell of the Dusk Mother* is left behind once the spirit is banished from Druskenvald.

THE BRIMSTONE BEHEMOTH

Throughout countless worlds, realms, and planes of existence, there is a single shared tale told across every culture. In every community, a legend is born from the universal fear of the end of all things. This collective belief manifested a Fiend of titanic proportions made from hellfire and dying earth that possesses a malevolent will and a single desire: armageddon. As the Crooked Moon makes its final descent, its baleful gaze calls down its first sacrifice the maiden once known as Rowan (see chapter 23), who has now ushered in the Brimstone Behemoth to Druskenvald.

THE END OF ALL HOPE

Kehlenn's sneering moon is low in the sky, with surging primordial energies trailing its incessant descent. A rumbling felt throughout Wickermoor Hollow serves as a prelude to an enormous eruption from Rowan's Rise, destroying the hill and turning the surrounding moors into a volcanic hellscape that stinks of brimstone. Screaming Fiends rise from rivers of lava and plumes of hellfire and take to the skies, heralding in the being that will end Druskenvald. All peoples across the valley can see the blaze and turn to despair. None are safe, and all shall perish underneath the Crooked Moon.

HELL ON EARTH

The entirety of Wickermoor Hollow is the domain of the Brimstone Behemoth. The scorching of the valley is the first wound that will bring about the demise of Druskenvald. Hellish volcanic eruptions send fiery death across the valley, and the people within twist and transform into Fiends that join the legions of the apocalypse.

The Sky is Falling. Boulders of lava and hellfire rain down across the valley. Every hour, there is a 50 percent chance that they crash toward the characters, who must each make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw against the effects of the *Meteor Swarm* spell.

Mark of the Beast. The corruption of armageddon afflicts the valley. Every hour, the characters must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or gain one Mark of the Apocalypse. A character who gains three marks permanently transforms into a Fiend under the command of the Brimstone Behemoth. To determine which, roll 1d2. On a 1, they transform into a **Balor**. On a 2, they transform into a **Pit Fiend**. A *Remove Curse* spell removes one or two accumulated marks.

LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

People from all over Wickermoor Hollow flee their homes and seek shelter and protection from others, praying, begging, and pleading for salvation from the end of everything.

Prayer for the Dying. Groups of faithful gather and pray to the Green Queen, the Patient Lady, the Brightsinger, and any other god who will listen. The characters can stay and spend an hour praying to make a group DC 20 Intelligence (Religion), Wisdom (Insight), or Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, the characters collectively gain one use of the Cleric's Divine Intervention feature and must unanimously decide how it is used.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing. Secret servants of the Brimstone Behemoth operate a doomsday cult. If the characters step within 5 feet of a cultist, the cultist explodes into hellfire and brimstone. Any character within 20 feet of the sacrificed cultist must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) Fire damage plus 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage and gain 1 Exhaustion level as their bodies and souls are seared.

THE BURNING LEGION

As the Brimstone Behemoth rises, it is joined by an army of Fiends, fallen angels, and otherworldly beings that share in the goal of bringing apocalypse to as many worlds as possible.

Seventh Seal. Malicious Fiends of all varieties erupt from the shattered, molten earth, and corrupted angels fall from burning skies, taking the form of **Barbed Devils**, **Bearded Devils**, **Bone Devils**, **Crowstorms**, **Devas** (Fiend), **Glabrezu**, **Gibbering Mouthers** (Fiend), **Hell Hounds**, **Heralds of Fools**, **Hezrou**, **Horned Devils**, **Manticores** (Fiend), **Nalfeshnees**, **Nightmares**, **Planetars** (Fiend), **Rakshasas**, and **Vrocks**.

Inferno. Beings of hellfire and brimstone join the infinite legions, taking the form of **Adult Brass Dragons** (Fiend), **Adult Red Dragons** (Fiend), **Chimeras** (Fiend), **Earth Elementals** (Fiend), **Efreet** (Fiend), **Fire Elementals** (Fiend), **Fire Giants** (Fiend), **Gargoyles** (Fiend), **Salamanders** (Fiend), **Soulfire Stokers** (Fiend), **Wildpyres** (Fiend), and **Xorn** (Fiend).

REVELATIONS

Although the creature of the apocalypse is bringing doom to Wickermoor Hollow, its physical form does not manifest unless commanded by its summoner, Rowan. Otherwise, it is content to suffuse the land with its power of the end of things. The only way to face, battle, and kill the beast is to confront the spirit of Rowan atop the volcanic mound and draw her ire. Only then will she lose her sense and draw the beast forward to attempt to destroy the characters. However, it requires particular information to provoke the spirit enough to initiate the final battle.

Final Folklore. The last hope of Wickermoor Hollow may be the local legends kept alive by those who adhere to the Old Ways. By seeking these stories from those knowledgeable of the valley's lore and succeeding on a group DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, the characters can learn the truth of Rowan. She was a malevolent maiden who sought apocalypse, and her fiendish dabbling made her the prime candidate for Kehlenn's first sacrifice. By appealing to the innocent maiden she once was, the characters who condemn her for her wickedness and how much she had fallen will turn the spirit to rage.

Family Ties. The only person Rowan cared for was her sister, whose descendant still lives in Wickermoor Village. By scouring any records for Rowan or her family and succeeding on a group DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check, the characters discover which townsfolk is her sister's descendant and use this knowledge against her. By appealing to the love of her family she once had, the specter's conflicted feelings will boil into a vengeful wrath.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

When the characters ascend the ruins of Rowan's Rise and face the shimmering maiden at the center of the bursting brimstone, her wrath is as fiery as the doom she has brought to the valley. With a cry to the moon above and the hellfire below, she heralds the apocalypse. **The Brimstone Behemoth** erupts from the sulfuric lava with an earth-shattering bellow and seeks to annihilate the characters and Druskenvald along with them.

To the Farrows and Fields. When the Brimstone Behemoth is destroyed, it explodes in a catastrophic burst of stinking lava that pours down upon Wickermoor Hollow. The lava instantly cools and hardens, forming countless scars upon the landscape. In time, they will provide nutrient-rich soil for a new age of fertility and regrowth.

Rowan's spirit calms, and she has a final moment of clarity, apologizing to the characters for everything she brought to pass before fading forever. With no champions remaining, the Crooked Moon gazes upon the characters themselves.

Ability Score Improvement. When the characters destroy the Brimstone Behemoth, they increase one of their ability scores by 4 or two of their ability scores by 2.

Fabled Heirloom. The *Hide of the Brimstone Behemoth* remains in the hardening lava after the colossus explodes.

CONCLUSION: ONE LAST CHOICE

With the Crooked Moon only several hundred feet above Wickermoor Hollow, the air is electrified as howling gales rip through the valley. Gravity itself has destabilized. The sneering moon stares directly at the characters and speaks to them in Kehlenn's voice. She offers them one last chance to annihilate Druskenvald and remake it in their image.

The Crooked Queen knows she has been defeated, her final gambit failed and spent. Her last chance for revenge is to convince the characters to accept the power of remaking Druskenvald, which would obliterate all those within and allow them to create a new realm. She is too proud to beg or plead, but appeals to their deepest desires, just as her destroyed consort, the Horned King, once did.

If the offer is accepted, the Crooked Moon crashes into the land, and all of Druskenvald, as well as every soul within it besides the characters, is destroyed. Left alone, the characters swim in a green sea of raw rebirthing energies and may unanimously decide the nature of their new realm. If the offer is refused, the moon returns to the sky, and the face in the crescent disappears as Kehlenn fades from existence, the last of her primordial power expended. Druskenvald is finally safe, and the moon is no longer crooked.



Appendix A: Bestiary

This appendix provides 85 monsters who live throughout the setting of *The Crooked Moon*. They appear in this book's adventure, and you can use them in your own encounters throughout the thirteen provinces of Druskenvald or anywhere else of your choosing.

The creatures in this bestiary are organized into three broad categories: "Crooked Moon Monsters," which are the traditional foes faced throughout a dreadful folktale, "Legendary Monsters" for the monsters of legend who serve as climactic antagonists in the adventure, and "Familiars," which can be recruited by player characters in addition to being encountered as any other monster might. Within each category, the monsters are organized alphabetically. The tables in the pages to come lists every creature in Appendix A, along with the creature's type and CR.

USING A STAT BLOCK

This appendix is a companion to the core rules and adopts a similar presentation. If you are unfamiliar with the monster stat block format, read the introduction of the *D&D Free Rules (2024)* before proceeding further. A stat block referenced in bold with a appears in this book.

MONSTER SECRETS

Most of the monsters in *The Crooked Moon* have a secret weakness or other quirk that can influence interaction and battle with the creature, but the trick is knowing it before it's needed. You can decide which nonplayer characters, writings, or other sources or methods might divulge a monster's secret. A few examples of how the player characters could learn of it include:

- Consulting with knowledgeable figures such as sages well-versed in peculiar creatures or hermits who have long lived in an area where a given creature lurks.
- Scouring libraries that hold lore.
- Talking with local folk who might have some factual information passed down in their superstitions and traditions.

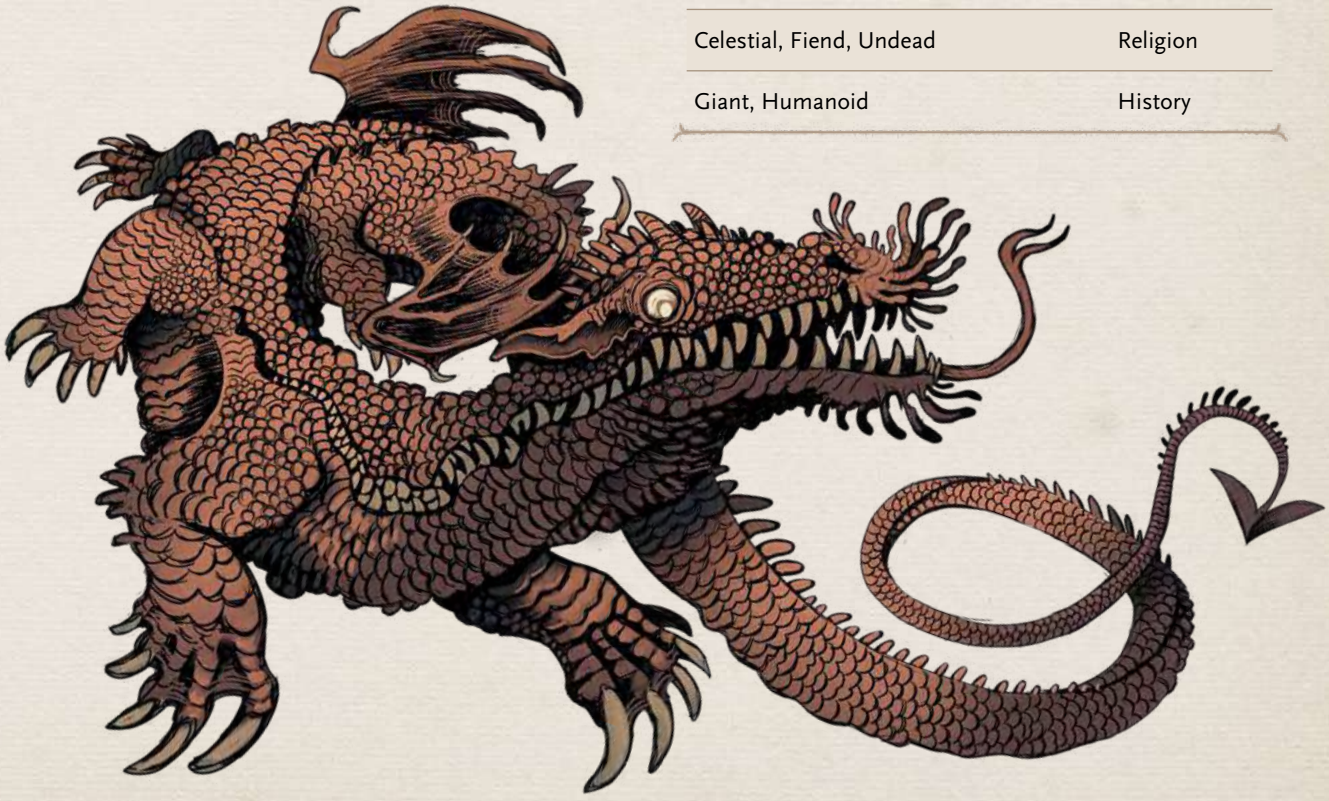
Once they have a potential reliable source, a character who spends a number of hours equal to the monster's CR (minimum of 1 hour) researching the secret must make an ability check using a skill proficiency determined by the monster's creature type, as outlined in the Monster Lore table. The ability check used is usually Intelligence, but it could also be Charisma in the case of sourcing rumors and local folklore, at your discretion. The DC for the check is 10 plus the monster's CR.

On a success, the character learns the monster's secret. On a failure, the sources don't have reliable information, and the character can try again with a new source.

If you decide that characters may have learned a monster's secret during their own experiences, a character can take the Study action to make the ability check with a DC of 20 or the monster's CR plus 10, whichever is higher. On a success, the character recalls the secret. On a failure, they can't try this method with that monster again and must seek out a reliable source as above.

Monster Lore

Creature Type	Skill
Aberration, Construct, Elemental, Fey, Monstrosity	Arcana
Beast, Dragon, Ooze, Plant	Nature
Celestial, Fiend, Undead	Religion
Giant, Humanoid	History



Crooked Moon Monsters

Creature	Type	CR	Page
Alpengrendel	Giant	6	487
Bat Hound	Monstrosity	1	488
Bayou Beast	Elemental	6	489
Boneflayer	Monstrosity	6	490
Boogleswarm	Fey	2	491
Centipede Hag	Fey	10	492
Corvodaemon	Fiend	4	493
Crimson Clergy	Undead	3	494
Crooked Effigy	Plant	2	495
Crooked Man	Undead	14	496
Crowstorm	Fiend	3	497
Deepdreck	Monstrosity	4	498
Drakkenhob	Dragon	9	499
Dream Eater	Monstrosity	10	500
Ferryman	Undead	6	501
Festerhulk	Undead	11	502
Fleshdobbin	Monstrosity	6	503
Gloomwood	Plant	10	504
Gobblegeist	Monstrosity	8	505
Herald of Fools	Fiend	10	506
Hospital Horror	Aberration	1	507
House of Horror	Construct	13	508
Hypnovulfen	Monstrosity	15	509
Invader Out of Space	Aberration	11	510
Kackle	Undead	7	511
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CROOKED MOON MONSTERS

ALPENGRENDEL

Brute Born of Mountain Ice

Habitat: Arctic, Mountain; **Treasure:** Any (except Relics)

Alpengrendel are hulking creatures covered in bluish white fur, with great tusks and horns. They were born of the ice and darkness of their mountaintop homes, shaped by the unseen hands of a deity of cold stone and gloam. The bitter cold of the mountain peaks infuses both their touch and their breath.

Alpengrendel draw upon the timelessness of the mountains, healing from otherwise lethal wounds in the blink of an eye. They fear only the power of lightning, which can slay them, and the power of the gods, whom they bitterly resent.

Secret. Their disdain for deities runs so deep that alpengrendel are enraged and unnerved by the trappings of faith.



ALPENGRENDEL

Large Giant, Chaotic Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 85 (9d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	12	+1	+4	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	9	–1	–1	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5, Survival +5
Resistances Fire
Immunities Cold
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Giant
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Aversion to Faith. The alpengrendel has Disadvantage on attack rolls while in a consecrated area or on attack rolls against a creature holding or wearing a Holy Symbol.

Regeneration. The alpengrendel regains 10 Hit Points at the start of each of its turns. If the alpengrendel takes Acid or Lightning damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The alpengrendel dies only if it starts its turn with 0 Hit Points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The alpengrendel makes one Claws attack and one Tusks attack.

Claws. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Slashing damage plus 5 (1d10) Cold damage.

Tusks. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) Cold damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Frost Breath (Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Cold damage. Until the start of the alpengrendel's next turn, the target's Speed is halved, and it has Disadvantage on attack rolls. *Success:* Half damage only.

BAT HOUND

Bloodthirsty Hunter of the Night

Habitat: Forest, Mountain, Underdark, Urban;
Treasure: None

Bat hounds are created through blood magic rituals that manipulate the curse of vampirism to transform a hound into a relentless stalker. Unswervingly loyal companions, bat hounds aid vampiric masters in tracking prey, able to outrun horses and their riders once they smell blood. They seek out stragglers or quarry that are escaping during a hunt and drag them back for capture.

Secret. Running water keeps bat hounds at bay and can destroy them, a lingering remnant from the vampiric curse that spawned them.



BAT HOUND

Medium Monstrosity, Neutral Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+3	DEX	12	+1	+1	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	4	−3	−3	WIS	15	+2	+2	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +6, Survival +6
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 16
Languages Understands Common plus one other language but can't speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Barred by Water. The bat hound can't willingly move into running water or to a space up to 20 feet above running water. If it starts its turn in running water, it takes 10 Acid damage and has the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn.

Glide. If it doesn't have the Incapacitated condition and isn't wearing heavy armor, the bat hound can extend its membranous wings to move up to 5 feet horizontally for every 1 foot it descends in the air.

Spider Climb. The bat hound can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, the bat hound regains a number of Hit Points equal to the Necrotic damage taken, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 13).

BONUS ACTIONS

Outmaneuver. The bat hound takes the Dash and Disengage actions, and until the end of the turn, needn't spend extra movement to move a creature it is grappling.

REACTIONS

Safe Descent. *Trigger:* The bat hound takes damage from a fall and isn't wearing heavy armor. *Response:* The bat hound extends its wings and reduces the fall's damage to 0.



BAYOU BEAST

Spirit Hex-Bound to the Swamp

Habitat: Swamp; **Treasure:** None

Bayou beasts are elemental spirits bound into great mounds of swamp plant matter through jinxcraft magic. These hulks obey their creators unfailingly, often lingering long after their death and carrying out their final orders. The hexed seals, fashioned from carved trinkets and masks, that trap the spirit in its form impart their curse on the creature's enemies.

Secret. The jinxcraft seals can be washed away with alcohol, hindering and even destroying the bayou beast.

BAYOU BEAST

Large Elemental, Unaligned

AC 14 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 105 (10d10 + 50)
Speed 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	5	−3	−3	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	6	−2	−2

Skills Stealth +6
Resistances Fire
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages Understands Primordial (Aquan) but can't speak
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Spirits Susceptibility. The elemental takes 9 (2d8) Force damage for every bottle of alcohol splashed onto it, and its Speed is reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two Hexed Slam attacks.

Hexed Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed until the start of the elemental's next turn. While cursed, the creature subtracts 1d4 from its attack rolls and saving throws.

Swamp Grasp (Recharge 5–6). Swamp water and plants roil around the elemental. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature on the ground in a 20-foot Emanation originating from the elemental. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Poison damage, and the target has the Restrained condition for 1 minute, until the elemental has the Incapacitated condition, or until the elemental dies. The target or a creature within 5 feet of it can take an action to make a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check, ending the Restrained condition on the target on a success.



BONEFLAYER

Voracious Carrion Eater

Habitat: Desert, Forest, Grassland, Mountain; **Treasure:** Any

Boneflayers are cruel, vulture-like creatures that originated from a broken fey pact. The creatures aren't content to wait for something to die and instead make their own carrion to gorge upon—they delight in snatching prey in their talons, carrying it into the air, and dropping it to its death. Boneflayers earn their name by using their sizeable, filth-riddled beaks to cleave flesh from bone and hoard the meat until it ages enough for them to enjoy.

Cults sometimes use boneflayer killing grounds as a source of bones to burn in ritual bonfires, occasionally making pacts with the creatures to pay or trade for the creature's castoffs. Villages that fear boneflayer attacks ward them off with thundering drums or gongs whenever they circle overhead.

Secret. A lingering result of the fey bargain that created them, boneflayers are disoriented and diminished by loud, thunderous noises.

BONEFLAYER

Large Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 94 (9d10 + 45)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 80 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+4	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	8	–1	–1	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	6	–2	–2

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +6, Survival +6
Resistances Fire, Necrotic
Immunities Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 16
Languages Sylvan; understands Common but can't speak it
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Flyby. The boneflayer doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Thunderous Ward. When the boneflayer hears a drum or gong, or takes Thunder damage, it has Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The boneflayer makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Slashing damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.

Talons. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from both talons. While Grappled, the target has the Restrained condition.

BONUS ACTIONS

Swoop (Recharge 5–6). If the boneflayer has a creature Grappled, the boneflayer flies up to half its Fly Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks and drops that creature.

BOOGLESWARM

Tricksy Fey Weasels

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** Individual

Boogleswarms are mischievous Fey spirits that take the form of weasels gathered into a slinking mob. These spirits covet and collect teeth of all kinds, but they favor the teeth of Humanoids most of all. Tales of tooth faeries might have their origin in boogleswarms, as they are known to enter into agreements to trade for teeth—such as those lost by children and tucked under a pillow—for rewards, favors, or safety.

Secret. Boogleswarms go wild for sugar, whether pure or in heavily-sweetened foods like candy, and are compelled to take and consume any they find.

BOOGLESWARM

Large Swarm of Tiny Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 27 (5d10)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	12	+1	+1	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5, Stealth +6
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing
Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Understands Common but can only speak if the swarm has gathered at least one Humanoid tooth
CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Mimicry (Only if the Swarm Can Speak). The swarm can speak in the voice of a creature whose tooth it has implanted (see the Bite action). Listeners must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check to discern the mimicry.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny weasel. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Sweet Tooth. If the swarm can see or smell sugar at the start of its turn, it must use all its movement to move closer to the sugar. If it reaches the sugar, the swarm has the Incapacitated condition until the start of its next turn as it consumes the sugar, and this trait doesn't function again until the swarm finishes a Short or Long Rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swarm makes two Bite attacks that must have different targets.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) Piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) Piercing damage if the swarm is Bloodied. If the target is a creature that has teeth, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or lose one of its teeth. The swarm immediately implants the tooth into one of its mouths. A creature that has already lost a tooth to this attack automatically succeeds on the saving throw.



CENTIPEDE HAG

Medium Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +7 (17)
HP 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	18	+4	+8
INT	16	+3	+7	WIS	18	+4	+4	CHA	21	+5	+9

Skills Deception +9, Intimidation +9, Medicine +12, Perception +8, Stealth +7
Immunities Poison; Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Sylvan
CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

TRAITS

Coven Magic. While within 30 feet of at least two hag allies, the hag can cast one of the following spells, requiring no Material components, using the spell's normal casting time, and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability: *Augury*, *Find Familiar*, *Identify*, *Locate Object*, *Lucky Charm* (lasts until the hag casts it again, or chooses to end it with no action required), or *Unseen Servant*. The hag must finish a Long Rest before using this trait to cast that spell again.

Scoured Filth. The hag is burned by soapy water. Treat a bucket or flask of it splashed on the hag as a vial of Acid. If the hag is fully immersed in soapy water at the start of its turn, it takes 20 Acid damage.

Spider Climb. The hag can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hag makes two Bite attacks or uses Spellcasting to cast *Contagion*. It can also use Warping Caress.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) Necrotic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of the hag's next turn.

Spellcasting. The hag casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At Will: *Contagion*, *Disguise Self* (24-hour duration), *Hold Person*, *Invisibility* (self only)
1/Day Each: *Insect Plague* (level 8 version), *Polymorph*

Warping Caress. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature within 5 feet. *Failure:* 19 (4d6 + 5) Necrotic damage, and the target gains 1 Exhaustion level. Until the target's Exhaustion level is reduced to 0, its body is warped and twisted, and it has Disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws that use Strength or Dexterity. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* If a Humanoid dies from this action, the hag can spend 2 days of work to shape its corpse into a **Deepdreck**, or it can combine it with the corpse of a horse to create a **Fleshdobbin**.



CENTIPEDE HAG

Hag of Pestilence and Flesh-Shaping

Habitat: Hill, Planar (Fey), Urban, Underdark;
Treasure: Arcana

Centipede hags are grotesque witches that revel in disease and filth, filling their presence with the scuttling vermin they adore. Their magic thrives in the corruption and warping of bodies, and they often engage in horrifying experimentation in grafting, swapping, and combining body parts to create nightmarish new creatures.

Secret. Centipede hags draw more than strength from the filth that covers them; it is the essence of their being. Scrubbing it away dissolves the hag.



CORVODAEMON

Demon of Hunger and Secrets

Habitat: Grassland, Planar (Abyss); **Treasure:** Arcana

Resembling a monstrous crow, the corvodaemon's sleek and twisted form soars on elongated wings tipped with razor-sharp, finger-like claws, its six amber eyes constantly seeking for prey.

Insatiable hunger for both flesh and souls—along with their accumulated secrets—gnaws at these Fiends. Their mimicry lets them take on the voice of those known and trusted by their would-be meals, luring the hapless mortals to their doom.

Secret. Savvy demon hunters bar corvodaemons with warding lines of ash prepared from feathers.

CORVODAEMON

Medium Fiend (Demon), Chaotic Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 84 (13d8 + 26)
Speed 20 ft., Fly 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+5	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	19	+4	+4
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	19	+4	+4

Skills Deception +8, Perception +2, Stealth +4
Resistances Acid, Fire
Immunities Poison; Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 90 ft.
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Ashen Forbiddance. The corvodaemon can't cross a line of ashes created by burning feathers sprinkled with Holy Water.

Demonic Restoration. If the corvodaemon dies outside the Abyss, its body dissolves into ichor, and it gains a new body instantly, reviving with all its Hit Points somewhere in the Abyss.

Devour Anima. A creature the corvodaemon reduced to 0 Hit Points is cursed until it regains any Hit Points. When the cursed creature fails a Death Saving Throw at the start of its turn, it dies regardless of how many failures it has.

Mimicry. The corvodaemon can mimic the voice of any creature it has heard, or of a creature known to one of the creatures within range of its telepathy. A hearer can discern the voices are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The corvodaemon can use Feeding Frenzy if available. It then makes one Beak attack and one Claws attack.

Beak. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Psychic damage.

Claws. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Feeding Frenzy (Recharge 5–6). The corvodaemon enters a voracious feeding frenzy, driven by its insatiable hunger for souls. Until the start of its next turn, the corvodaemon's Speed doubles, and when it damages a creature, it gains Temporary Hit Points equal to half the damage taken.

CRIMSON CLERGY

Vampiric Zealot

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Relics

Crimson clergy are Undead cultists, often created, led, and taught by a more powerful vampire. Crimson clergy view the consumption of blood—and in its use during their rituals and when casting spells—not only as necessary but sacred. Their hunger reaches beyond the limits of their fangs and claws, calling to the blood of their victims and drawing it out in scarlet ribbons.

Secret. Crimson clergy struggle to accept how monstrous they have become. They can't stand the sight of themselves and see their true visage in their reflection.



CRIMSON CLERGY

Medium or Small Undead (Cleric, Vampire), Lawful Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+3	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	16	+3	+5	CHA	14	+2	+2

Skills Deception +4
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Spider Climb. The clergy can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weakness. The clergy has the following weaknesses:

Self-Loathing. The clergy has Disadvantage on D20 Tests if it can see its reflection.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The clergy takes 20 Radiant damage if it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Consume. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Necrotic damage. The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the damage taken, and the clergy regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Spellcasting. The clergy casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At Will: *Disguise Self*, *Thaumaturgy*

BONUS ACTIONS

Crimson Blessing (1/Day). The clergy casts *Bless* using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

CROOKED EFFIGY

Splinter of Crooked Power

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Fey); **Treasure:** None

Crooked effigies are servants of a twisted archfey known as the Crooked Queen. They are made of gnarled wood and show some bipedal and feminine features in their queen's image. Crooked effigies impale their enemies with their branch-like arms and drag foes in close, where the thorns on their bodies carry the sting of a victim's own corruption.

Secret. Crooked effigies are bound to the Old Ways, and they recoil from the tools of forging and tinkering—symbols of a growing civilization.



CROOKED EFFIGY

Medium Plant, Chaotic Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 45 (6d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+5	DEX	13	+1	+1	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	9	–1	–1	WIS	16	+3	+5	CHA	9	–1	–1

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +5
Vulnerabilities Fire
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Crooked Thorns. At the start of each of its turns, the effigy deals 5 (1d10) Psychic damage to any creature it is grappling or any creature grappling it.

Old Bindings. The effigy takes an extra 10 Force damage if it's hit by an attack roll using Smith's Tools or Tinker's Tools (treat as a Club or Light Hammer).

ACTIONS

Impale. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) Piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 13) from one of two branch arms. Until the grapple ends, the target has the Restrained condition.



CROOKED MAN

Broken Spirit of Betrayal

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

The crooked man is an Undead embodiment of broken trust and the twisting of purpose. Those who die having betrayed what they hold sacred, embracing their treachery to their core, might return in this broken, gnarled form of snapped bones with a crooked grin. The creature's fingers end in curling claws that hook and hold, and the duplicity in its heart bleeds out to twist allies against one another. Despite the creature's name, anyone can become this manifestation of betrayal.

Secret. The crooked man can't abide self-sacrifice and withers in its presence.

CROOKED MAN

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +9 (19)
HP 221 (26d8 + 104)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+6	DEX	18	+4	+9	CON	19	+4	+4
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	14	+2	+7	CHA	19	+4	+4

Skills Deception +9, Perception +7, Stealth +9
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 14 (XP 11,500; PB +5)

Traits

Aversion to Self-Sacrifice. The crooked man takes 20 Necrotic damage if he can see a creature willingly take damage or gain a condition in place of someone else, or to someone else's benefit.

Magic Resistance. The crooked man has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The crooked man makes two Crooked Claw attacks, and he can replace one attack with a use of Snap Limb. He can also use Confusion if available.

Crooked Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) Psychic damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16) from one of two claws. Until the grapple ends, the target has the Restrained condition.

Snap Limb. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 19, one creature the crooked man is grappling, and that has limbs that can break. *Failure:* 35 (10d6) Force damage, and the bones (or equivalent) in one of the target's limbs (crooked man's choice) breaks, causing an appropriate effect below. A broken limb heals in 40 days, or when the creature regains any Hit Points from magic or Regeneration. *Success:* Half damage only.

Broken Arm. Disadvantage on attack rolls. Can't hold anything or manipulate objects with the limb.

Broken Leg. Speed halved. If the creature takes the Dash action, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or have the Prone condition.

Broken Wing. Fly Speed reduced to 0.

Confusion (1/Day). The crooked man casts *Confusion*, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17).

Bonus Actions

Blinking Teleport. The crooked man has the Invisible condition for 1 minute and teleports to an unoccupied space he can see within 60 feet. The condition ends immediately after the crooked man deals any damage.



CROWSTORM

Fiendish Murder

Habitat: Grassland, Planar (Lower Planes), Urban;
Treasure: None

A crowstorm is a great, swirling mass of dark feathers accompanied constant, harshly malevolent crow calls. Hundreds of fiendish birds fly in unison, their beady eyes dripping blood as they swoop down to tear at the flesh of their victims. A crowstorm's horrific caws mingle into an eerie cacophony of pleading whispers, and it robs the gift of flight from anything that draws too close.

Secret. While they might take the form of crows or possess crow bodies, crowstorms are held at bay by drawn images or crafted effigies of crows.

CROWSTORM

Large Swarm of Tiny Fiends, Chaotic Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +5 (15)
HP 44 (8d6 + 16)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	10	+0	+0	Dex	16	+3	+3	Con	14	+2	+2
Int	15	+2	+2	Wis	14	+2	+2	Cha	16	+3	+3

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Resistances Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Piercing, Slashing
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Stunned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Common; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

Traits

False Crows. The swarm can't enter a space with a drawn or painted image or crafted effigy of a crow. A creature holding such an icon has Advantage on saving throws the swarm forces it to make.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny crow. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Wing Bind. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, any creature (other than a Fiend) with a Fly Speed that starts its turn in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the swarm. *Failure:* The target's Fly Speed is 0 until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Peck. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) Piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) Piercing damage if the swarm is Bloodied. If the target is a creature, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of the swarm's next turn.

Cacophony (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the swarm. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the swarm's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

DEEPDRECK

Poisoned Subterranean Wretch

Habitat: Underground; **Treasure:** Implements, Individual

Deepdrecks were miners long ago who found themselves far too deep beneath the earth, where they were cursed and corrupted by deforming powers. Now they tunnel and dig greedily, bloated with poisonous gases.

Astute observers have noted that these monsters occasionally bear a resemblance to missing loved ones who have long been thought dead.

Secret. The toxic essence of deepdrecks is disrupted by pleasant scents such as flowers, perfume, spices, or incense.



DEEPDRECK

Medium Monstrosity, Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	9	–1	–1	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	6	–2	–2

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Immunities Poison; Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Tremorsense 120 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Explosive Death. The deepdreck explodes when it dies. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the deepdreck. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) Poison damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Fragrance Aversion. The deepdreck has Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws while within 10 feet of burning incense or a creature wearing Perfume.

Tunneler. The deepdreck can burrow through solid rock at half its Burrow Speed and leaves a 5-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The deepdreck makes two attacks, using Claw or Putrid Emission in any combination.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) Poison damage.

Putrid Emission. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Poison damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of the deepdreck's next turn.



DRAKKENHOB

Dragon Disguised as a Festival Horse

Habitat: Grasslands, Hills, Urban;
Treasure: Any

The drakkenhob is a draconic monster with a sinister disguise, presenting itself as an actor wearing a horse costume, such as a mounted knight or a festively clad rider. Its draconic head resembles a decorated or armored horse's head, and its sharp teeth fit together to appear like blunt, harmless decorations. The drakkenhob uses this benign guise to get close to its prey, which are typically within crowds near festivals or parades, before it summons its similarly garbed hunting hounds and strikes. Its breath is a blood-curdling wave of terror that makes lesser victims drop dead from fright alone.

Secret. Unable to resist revelry and merriment, drakkenhob are driven away by payment offered in gold or alcohol.

DRAKKENHOB

Large Dragon, Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	21	+5	+5	DEX	14	+2	+6	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Deception +4, Perception +7, Stealth +6
Resistances Fire
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Draconic
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

TRAITS

Irresistible Payment. As an Influence action, a creature that offers the drakkenhob alcohol or any amount of gold and succeeds on a DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check forces the drakkenhob to accept the offer and immediately take a Reaction to move up to half its Speed to get away from the creature by the safest route possible.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drakkenhob makes two Rend attacks.

Rend. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) Psychic damage.

Terrifying Breath (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 14 (4d6) Psychic damage, and the target drops whatever it is holding and has the Frightened condition. A Frightened target takes the Dash action and moves away from the drakkenhob by the safest route on each of its turns unless there's nowhere to move. It repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

BONUS ACTIONS

Call the Hounds. The drakkenhob lets out a wolf-like howl and magically summons three hunting hounds (use the **Wolf** stat block) that appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of it. The hounds take their turn immediately after the drakkenhob on the same Initiative count, and they obey the drakkenhob's mental commands. The hounds vanish when they or the drakkenhob drop to 0 Hit Points, or when the drakkenhob uses this Bonus Action again.

DREAM EATER

Large Monstrosity, Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 180 (19d10 + 76)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft., Fly 80 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	14	+2	+6	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	8	–1	–1	WIS	16	+3	+7	CHA	19	+4	+4

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +6
Immunities Charmed, Frightened
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Understands Common but can't speak
CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

TRAITS

Flyby. The dream eater doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Moth Ward. A creature holding a moth's wing automatically succeeds on saving throws against the dream eater's Hypnotic Wings.

Spider Climb. The dream eater can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dream eater makes two Talons attacks and can use Devour Dreams.

Talons. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of two talons, and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Devour Dreams. The dream eater unfurls its tongue and devours the dreams from a creature's mind. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 16, a creature the dream eater is grappling, or a creature within 5 feet of it that has the Incapacitated condition (Incapacitated creatures fail automatically). *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Psychic damage, and the creature's Charisma score decreases by 1d6. A creature reduced to 0 Charisma by this effect doesn't recover lost Charisma when it finishes a Long Rest, and it has the Incapacitated condition until its mind is restored with a *Greater Restoration*, *Heal*, or *Wish* spell. *Success:* Half damage only.

BONUS ACTIONS

Hypnotic Wings. The dream eater's wings shine with dazzling rainbow colors until the start of its next turn, emitting Bright Light in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the dream eater and Dim Light for an additional 30 feet. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature in the dream eater's Bright Light. *Failure:* Until the start of the dream eater's next turn, the target has the Incapacitated condition, and its Speed is 0.

DREAM EATER

Devourer of Nightmares

Habitat: Forest, Hill, Mountain, Swamp;
Treasure: None

Dream eaters are horrors that feed on the dreams, sense of identity, and—some say—the very souls of other creatures. Dream eaters have the bodies and wings of great owls, while their beaks are filled with blunt, humanlike teeth and hide long snaking tongues. Their feathers are drab colors on the exterior, but their wings display a dazzling cascade of rainbow hues on the undersides when unfurled.

These colors flow and shift, mesmerizing the dream eater's prey and leaving them helpless. A creature whose dreams are devoured is left in a listless, near-blank state. Without help, their victims waste away.

Secret. Dream eaters are confused by the intricate patterns on moth wings, and it disrupts their own colorful hypnosis.



FERRYMAN

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft., 40 ft. with Coffin Boat

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	8	–1	–1	WIS	10	+0	+3	CHA	14	+2	+5

Resistances Necrotic
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned, Prone (with Coffin Boat)
Gear Hooded Lantern
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

Traits

Coffin Boat. The ferryman rides an open coffin on a swell of swamp water, allowing it to travel with a Speed of 40 feet over any surface, including liquids, ignoring Difficult Terrain. The coffin can hold two other Medium creatures. Two Small creatures or four Tiny creatures count as one Medium creature.

While riding the coffin, the ferryman has Immunity to the Prone condition, and the coffin moves with the ferryman unless the ferryman has the Incapacitated condition. The coffin has AC 15; HP 25; Immunity to Necrotic, Poison, and Psychic damage.

If the coffin is destroyed, the ferryman can magically create a new one using a 10-minute ritual.

Payment. The ferryman must peacefully offer a ride in its boat to a creature that takes the Influence action to offer it 3 CP. If that creature is cursed by the ferryman, the curse ends. If the boat is full, the ferryman must return to offer the creature a ride once its current passengers leave the boat. If the creature or its allies damage the ferryman or force it to make a saving throw, this effect ends and the creature can't use that ferryman's Payment trait again.

Regeneration. The ferryman regains 10 Hit Points at the start of each of its turns if it has at least 1 Hit Point.

Actions

Multiattack. The ferryman makes two Lantern Pole attacks and uses Hexed Lantern if available.

Lantern Pole. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Hexed Lantern (1/Day). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature of the ferryman's choice in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* The creature is cursed for 1 minute and must subtract 1d4 from D20 Tests.

FERRYMAN

Cursed Undead Boatman

Habitat: Coastal, Swamp; **Treasure:** Implements

Ferrymen are Undead created through the use of curses and jinxcraft and are doomed to ply the waters where they were raised. They pole through the bayous and rivers, and even across land on a wave of swamp water, in coffin boats. They can focus the malice of their curse through the light of their lantern poles, jinxing enemies or those who try to force a ride without payment.

Secret. Paying a ferryman 3 copper coins lifts any curse the creature placed on the payer, and it entitles one to a single unnerving but safe ride in the ferryman's coffin boat.





FESTERHULK

Fungal Undead Giant

Habitat: Forest, Swamp, Underground; **Treasure:** None

Festerhulks are dead giants whose corpses are infested with fungus engorged by the magic of decay. This fungus has consumed and replaced much of the giant's flesh and now animates the corpse. The heads of these giants are often completely overtaken by repulsive mushrooms and other fungal growths. The spores given off by their infestation can spread to victims killed by festerhulks, giving rise to further Undead.

Secret. Festerhulks shrink from sunlight, which harms the fungus that animates them.

FESTERHULK

Huge Undead, Neutral Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** –1 (9)
HP 207 (18d12 + 90)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	25	+7	+7	DEX	9	–1	–1	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	3	–4	–4	WIS	6	–2	–2	CHA	3	–4	–4

Skills Perception +2
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned, Stunned, Unconscious
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Understands Common and Giant but can't speak
CR 11 (XP 7,200; PB +4)

TRAITS

Fungal Step. The festerhulk ignores Difficult Terrain caused by plants or fungi.

Spore Cloud. At the end of each of the festerhulk's turns, each creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the festerhulk takes 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage and has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn. A Giant or Humanoid killed by this damage rises as a new creature 24 hours later: **Festerhulk** (if a Giant), **Zombie** (if a Humanoid).

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The festerhulk takes 10 Radiant damage if it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The festerhulk makes two Fetid Slam attacks and uses Slime Mold if available.

Fetid Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 20 (2d12 + 7) Bludgeoning damage plus 13 (3d8) Necrotic damage.

Slime Mold (1/Day). The festerhulk disgorges a mass of ravenous slime mold into an unoccupied space within 20 feet. This mass uses the **Black Pudding** stat block except it is a Plant, and its size is Medium. The mass acts on the festerhulk's Initiative. It, and any masses it Split into, dries up and dies in 1 hour.

FLESHDOBBIN

Large Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 104 (11d10 + 44)
Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+8	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	19	+4	+4
INT	7	–2	–2	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +6, Perception +5
Immunities Psychic; Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified
Gear Chain Mail, Glaive
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Common
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

Traits

Bridle Binding. If a creature puts a bridle on the fleshdobbin (treat as securing Manacles), the fleshdobbin has the Charmed condition while it wears the bridle, and it can't take the bridle off on its own.

Immutable Form. The fleshdobbin can't shape-shift.

Actions

Multiattack. The fleshdobbin makes one Claw attack and one Wailing Halberd attack.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) Piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Wailing Halberd. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) Slashing damage plus 5 (1d10) Psychic damage.

Shriek (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Psychic damage. In addition, the target has the Frightened condition and repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

Reactions

Parry. *Trigger:* A creature the fleshdobbin can see hits it with a melee attack roll while the fleshdobbin is wielding a Melee weapon. *Response:* The fleshdobbin adds 3 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

FLESHDOBBIN

Flesh-Crafted Amalgam of Knight and Horse

Habitat: Grassland, Hill, Underground, Urban;
Treasure: Armaments

Fleshdobbins are abominations created when a horse and its rider are horrifically melded through fleshcrafting magic. Their limbs stretch and deform, though afterward, their bodies resist further transformation.

Fitted with saddles and bearing savage weaponry, these monsters may look like riderless horses from a distance, but each leg culminates in oddly human-looking gnarled hands with fingers ending in wicked claws. Their voices are the comingled shrieks of human and horse.

Secret. Affixing a bridle to a fleshdobbin causes the instincts of the horse within the amalgam to take over, becoming a loyal steed once more.



GLOOMWOOD

Huge Plant, Chaotic Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** –1 (9)
HP 161 (17d12 + 51)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	23	+6	+6	DEX	8	–1	–1	CON	17	+3	+3
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	16	+3	+7	CHA	12	+1	+5

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +3
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing
Immunities Necrotic
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

Traits

Blighted Aura. The ground in a 20-foot Emanation originating from the gloomwood is Difficult Terrain from mushrooms and fungus that grow in the area. A creature that ends its turn in the Emanation takes 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage.

Carved Past. As an action, a creature can use a Dagger or Woodcarver's Tools to carve the name in Sylvan of the ancient home of the gloomwoods into the gloomwood's trunk. Until the gloomwood finishes a Long Rest, it can't use its Fungal Fling or Spore Stomp actions.

Fungal Step. The gloomwood ignores Difficult Terrain caused by plants or fungi.

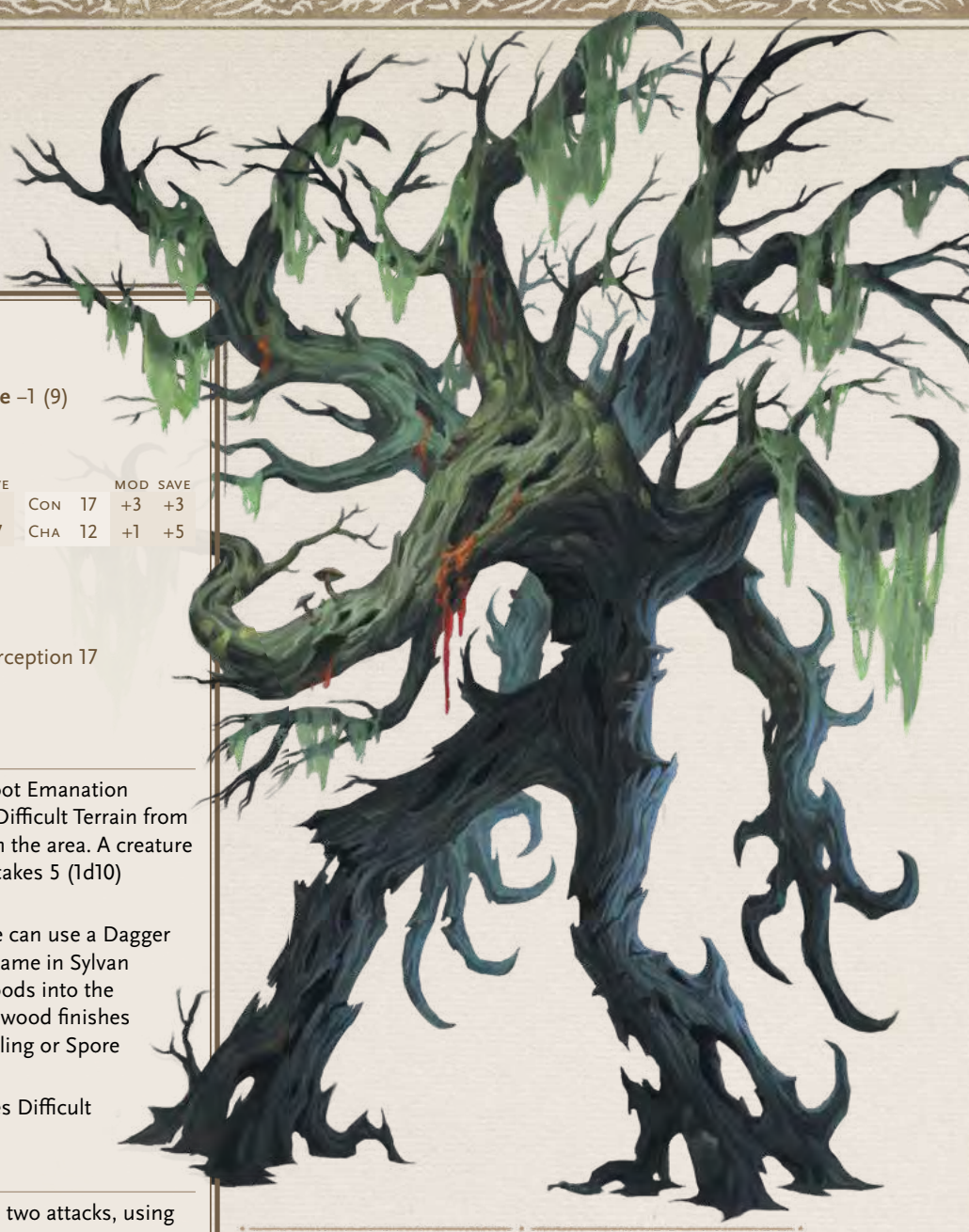
Actions

Multiattack. The gloomwood makes two attacks, using Slam or Fungal Fling in any combination.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16) from one of two branches. Until the grapple ends, the target has the Restrained condition.

Fungal Fling. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +10, range 60/180 ft. *Hit:* 23 (5d6 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage.

Spore Stomp (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) Bludgeoning damage. *Hit or Miss:* Each creature within a 20-foot Sphere centered on the target must make the following saving throw. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15. *Failure:* 36 (8d8) Poison damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.



GLOOMWOOD

Blighted Treant

Habitat: Forest, Swamp; **Treasure:** None

Gloomwoods were once treants in service to an archfey, but they were corrupted by a supernatural fungal blight. The growth bores through their trunks and into their souls, making the gloomwoods cruel and vicious, interested only in spreading more decay. Fungal spores drift from their trunks and branches, rotting any flesh and digging into the ground around them to spread the blight.

Secret. Carving the Sylvan name of the forest the gloomwood once called home into the creature's trunk quells its aggression.



GOBBLEGEIST

Blood-Drinking Avian Predator

Habitat: Forest, Hill; **Treasure:** None

Gobblegeists are massive birdlike monsters with earth-toned plumage, reptilian faces and claws, and a metallic beak edged with sharp teeth. These ravenous creatures descend from forest canopies or hilltops to snatch their prey unawares and carry them off to feed on their blood in solitude. Their single, unblinking eye can unnerve and dazzle more alert prey, making would-be threats an easy meal.

Secret. The folk who venerate the Old Ways believe that a seven-pointed star repels gobblegeists. They keep the monsters at bay by painting or weaving star sigils from wicker to hang from their homes or in trees.

GOBBLEGEIST

Huge Monstrosity, Neutral Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 114 (12d12 + 36)
Speed 30 ft., Fly 80 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	5	–3	–3	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	8	–1	–1

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 16
Languages None
CR 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

TRAITS

Flyby. The gobblegeist doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Repelled by Stars. The gobblegeist can't willingly move to a space within 10 feet of a seven-pointed star drawn on a surface or woven from wicker.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gobblegeist makes two Beak attacks. It can replace one attack with a Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage. The target's Hit Point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the Necrotic damage taken, and the gobblegeist regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Talons. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15) from both talons, and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Eye Beam. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 120-foot-long, 5-foot-wide line. *Failure:* 6 (1d12) Psychic damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the start of the gobblegeist's next turn.



HERALD OF FOOLS

Leader of Fiendish Revels

Habitat: Planar (Lower Planes), Urban;
Treasure: Implements

Heralds of fools lead troupes of fiendish revelers in service to the enigmatic Lord of Fools, a clown or jester entity who is a curious mix of levity and cruelty (though always with a sense of irony). The heralds are agile and graceful, every movement a dance, spinning their banner poles in intricate displays that can swiftly turn from entertainment to death.

Secret. Heralds of fools are wonderful dancers, and they must never stop dancing, or they quickly perish.

HERALD OF FOOLS

Medium Fiend, Chaotic Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +6 (16)
HP 153 (18d8 + 72)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0	+4	DEX	22	+6	+6	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	15	+2	+2	CHA	16	+3	+7

Skills Acrobatics +10, Insight +6, Performance +7
Immunities Exhaustion
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Abyssal, Common
CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

TRAITS

Endless Footwork. When the herald's Speed is 0, attack rolls made against it have Advantage, and if its Speed is 0 at the start of its turn, it takes 20 Necrotic damage.

Perfect Grace. The herald doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it leaves an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The herald makes three Banner Pole attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Lethal Jape.

Banner Pole. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10 (with Advantage if the target's Speed is 0), reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) Slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) Thunder damage, and if the target is a Large or smaller creature, the herald can move it to any other unoccupied space within the Banner Pole's reach.

Lethal Jape. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, a creature the herald can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 24 (7d6) Psychic damage, and the target's Speed is 0 until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

REACTIONS

Wave the Banner. *Trigger:* An ally of the herald's within 60 feet misses with an attack roll or fails a saving throw. *Response:* The ally can reroll the d20 and must use the new roll.

HOSPITAL HORROR

Medium Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 30 (4d8 + 12)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+6	DEX	16	+3	+5	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	7	–2	–2	WIS	9	–1	–1	CHA	6	–2	–2

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +6
Resistances Acid, Poison
Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 9
Languages Understands Common and Deep Speech but can't speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Aversion to Needles. If the horror takes Piercing damage, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Pack Tactics. The horror has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the horror's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally doesn't have the Incapacitated condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The horror makes two Graft Blade attacks.

Graft Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Slashing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Stim Burst. The horror takes the Dash action and can jump up to 30 feet by spending 10 feet of movement.

HOSPITAL HORROR

Mutated Experiment

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Hospital horrors were once people, but now they are repulsive mockeries created through surgical and magical alteration. They have no memory of their past lives, existing only within a chemically induced rage. Often, they are conditioned by the use of specific command phrases that allow them to be controlled.

Secret. Hospital horrors have spent much of their existence being prodded with needles, so being pierced frays what few wits they retain.



HOUSE OF HORROR

Cursed House Brought to Malevolent Life

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Arcana, Individual

Houses of horror are living houses, often angry or bitter due to the circumstances of their awakening. They were once mundane buildings or dwellings where powerful magics of life and death took place and infused the stones and timber.

Houses of horror jealously covet the true life that its former inhabitants enjoyed, or they carry echoes of the suffering that bodies and souls experienced within them. The houses vent this fury on any who enter, tormenting and terrifying trespassers. The souls of those who die inside are trapped, waiting to be unleashed upon future victims.

Secret. While not haunted houses in the traditional sense, houses of horror can have their consciousness quelled by the same exorcism or purification rituals that put unquiet spirits to rest or drive out possessing spirits.



HOUSE OF HORROR

Gargantuan Construct, Neutral Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +5 (15)
HP 217 (14d20 + 70)
Speed 10 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+6	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	5	−3	−3	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	7	−2	+3

Skills Athletics +11, Deception +8
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Grappled, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Understands Common plus one other language but can't speak
CR 13 (XP 10,000; PB +5)

TRAITS

Construction. Creatures can enter the house's space and navigate it as a normal building. The house makes attacks from any surface or object that isn't being worn or carried within its space. It doesn't have Disadvantage on ranged attack rolls due to an enemy being within 5 feet of it.

If a creature deals 30 or more damage in a single turn to a 5-foot section of the house's structure, the house must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or a 5-foot opening appears in that space until the start of the creature's next turn.

Exorcism Susceptibility. If the house is targeted by a *Dispel Evil and Good* spell, it has the Stunned condition. At the end of each of its turns, it can make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, ending the condition on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. As a Magic action, a creature inside the house that throws a flask of Holy Water against the house and succeeds on a DC 20 Charisma check affects the house as above.

Soul Trap. A Humanoid that dies within the house has its soul trapped there until the house dies. The creature can't be returned to life by any means short of a *True Resurrection* or *Wish* spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The house makes three attacks, using Structure Slam or Object Fling in any combination, and it uses Agonized Souls.

Structure Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) Force damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16). The house can grapple up to two creatures at a time, using animated furniture, objects, or fixtures such as stair railings.

Object Fling. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +11, range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d4 + 6) Bludgeoning or Piercing damage (house's choice). If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Agonized Souls. The house's stolen souls torment a victim. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, a creature within 10 feet of the house. *Failure:* 36 (8d8) Necrotic damage. *Success:* Half damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Alter Structure. The house can reshape itself to change the location of walls, doors, floors, and other features of its construction. When one of these features appears or disappears, a creature within 5 feet of a changing feature can make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature chooses which side of a feature it ends up on, or it moves to the nearest unoccupied space to avoid falling.



HYPNOVULFEN

Hungry Hypnotizing Wolf

Habitat: Forest, Hill; **Treasure:** Individual

Hypnovulfen resemble massive wolves with unnaturally large orange eyes and wide, crooked maws. Despite their size, hypnovulfen are shockingly stealthy, able to stalk their prey and snare them with a hypnotic gaze from the shadows. The gaze beguiles victims into seeing a loved one beckoning them closer for a warm embrace. All the better for a hypnovulfen to feed and consume the unfortunate morsel's memories.

Secret. Hypnovulfen have no power to mesmerize anyone holding a keepsake or memento received from a loved one, as it overpowers the false beckoning of the monster's gaze.

HYPNOVULFEN

Large Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 253 (22d10 + 132)
Speed 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	24	+7	+7	DEX	16	+3	+8	CON	22	+6	+6
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	16	+3	+8	CHA	22	+6	+6

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +8
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 15 (XP 13,000; PB +5)

TRAITS

Magic Resistance. The hypnovulfen has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hypnovulfen makes one Bite attack and one Claw attack, and it can use Swallow.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Psychic damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 17), and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Psychic damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Swallow. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 20, one Medium or smaller creature Grappled by the hypnovulfen (the hypnovulfen can have only one creature swallowed at a time). *Failure:* The hypnovulfen swallows the target, which is no longer Grappled. While swallowed, a creature has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the hypnovulfen, and takes 21 (6d6) Psychic damage at the start of each of the hypnovulfen's turns. If the creature dies from this damage, the hypnovulfen absorbs its memories and regains 25 Hit Points.

If the hypnovulfen takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the hypnovulfen must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls in a space within 10 feet of the hypnovulfen and has the Prone condition. If the hypnovulfen dies, a swallowed creature is no longer Restrained and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting Prone.

BONUS ACTIONS

Hypnotic Gaze (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. A creature holding a keepsake from a loved one succeeds automatically. *Failure:* The creature has the Charmed condition until it takes damage. While charmed, it has the Incapacitated condition and must move as close to the hypnovulfen as possible by the safest route. The creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.



INVADER OUT OF SPACE

Intruder From Beyond the Stars

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Any

Invaders out of space appeared after a falling star blazed down from the cosmos. These alien beings have an unsettling habit of appearing between glances and silently watching. Invaders stand upright like a biped, shrouded in what are either voluminous robes or draping folds of skin.

Observers who are lucky find the invaders gone in a blink, and those who aren't so fortunate hear the bloodcurdling hiss these things from beyond the stars emit as they attack. All that remains of their victims is a spray of gray powder amid crumpled clothing.

Secret. The invaders have little resilience to the toxic and virulent threats of the Material Plane, and they succumb quickly to diseases and poisons.

INVADER OUT OF SPACE

Medium Aberration, Neutral Evil

AC 18 **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 156 (24d8 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	14	+2	+2	Dex	18	+4	+4	Con	15	+2	+2
Int	14	+2	+6	Wis	12	+1	+5	Cha	19	+4	+8

Skills Arcana +6, Intimidation +8, Stealth +8
Resistances Psychic
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 11
Languages Deep Speech; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 11 (XP 7,200; PB +4)

Traits

Alien Mind. If a creature tries to read the intruder's mind or deals Psychic damage to it, that creature must succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or have the Stunned condition for 1 minute. It repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Gliding Levitation. The invader hovers 6 inches above the ground and leaves no tracks. It ignores Difficult Terrain caused by conditions on the ground, can move over liquids, and takes no damage from falling.

Magic Resistance. The invader has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Weak Constitution. The invader has Disadvantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Poisoned condition. If the invader is Poisoned at the start of its turn, it takes 20 Necrotic damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The invader makes three Disrupting Touch attacks and uses Unnerving Glare if available.

Disrupting Touch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) Force damage. A creature killed or an object destroyed by this damage is reduced to a fine gray dust. Magic items, and any equipment worn or carried by a disintegrated creature, don't disintegrate.

Unnerving Glare (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature the invader can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Incapacitated condition until the start of the invader's next turn.

Reactions

Otherworldly Slip. *Trigger:* The invader takes damage. *Response:* The invader teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet and can cause the following—*Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature within a 30-foot Emanation originating from the space where the invader vanished or appeared (invader's choice). *Failure:* 16 (3d10) Psychic damage, and the target's Speed is halved until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

KACKLE

Laughing Lantern Bearer

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Implements

Those who were particularly sadistic in life and died consumed by wicked mirth linger as Kackles—ghostly figures that drift above the ground, always flitting just out of sight. Adorned in tattered cloaks and concealing hoods or hats, their hollow laughter echoes through dark places, fading in and out to confuse and terrify their victims. Kackles always carry lanterns lit with ghostly flames, the color of which changes to reflect a kackle's current cruelty of choice.

Secret. Kackles are bound to their lanterns, and smashing their lights can snuff out the spirits' existence.



KACKLE

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 67 (15d8)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 60 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	17	+3	+3	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	18	+4	+4

Skills Stealth +6
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Gear Hooded Lantern
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 7 (XP 2,900; PB +3)

Traits

Incorporeal Movement. The kackle can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Lantern Vulnerability. The kackle's lantern has AC 15 and Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage. Any damage the lantern takes deals half that amount of Force damage to the kackle.

Actions

Lantern Flame. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. or range 90 ft. *Hit:* Varies by lantern color (kackle's choice):

Blue. 7 (1d6 + 4) Cold damage, and the target has the Restrained condition until the end of its next turn.
Green. 20 (3d10 + 4) Necrotic damage, and the target's Speed is 0 until the end of its next turn.
Purple. 10 (1d12 + 4) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn.
Red. 15 (2d10 + 4) Fire damage, and the target starts burning, taking 5 (1d10) Fire damage instead of the regular burning damage.

Bonus Actions

Flickering Teleport. The kackle teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. The kackle can then change its lantern color, and it can create the following—*Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the kackle's destination space. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) damage of the same type as the current Lantern Flame color. *Success:* Half damage.

KEEPER OF THE BLIGHT

Druid Transformed by Blight

Habitat: Forest, Swamp, Underground; **Treasure:** Relics

Keepers of the blight arise from Fey beings that dwell in a natural region that becomes overtaken by a supernatural or spiritual rot. Where they once tended the balance and cycles of their home, keepers are consumed by the blight and channel their magic through fungus, mold, and rot, pushing the cycle of life toward death, decay, and the flourishing of things that thrive in gloom.

Secret. The fungus growing throughout keepers of the blight empowers and sustains them, and killing that growth diminishes their power.



KEEPER OF THE BLIGHT

Large Fey (Druid), Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 97 (13d10 + 26)
Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+2	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	20	+5	+5	CHA	12	+1	+1

Skills Arcana +6, Medicine +8, Stealth +6
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Blight Dependent. If the keeper is targeted by an effect that ends the Poisoned condition, it takes 10 (3d6) Force damage and has Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the end of its next turn.

Fungal Step. The keeper ignores Difficult Terrain caused by plants or fungi.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The keeper makes two attacks, using Blight Staff or Spore Spray in any combination, and it uses Rotting Ritual.

Blight Staff. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage.

Spore Spray. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) Poison damage. If the target is a creature, it has the Poisoned condition until the end of the keeper's next turn.

Rotting Ritual. The keeper magically creates one of the following effects of its choice. It can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Frenzying Spores. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, a creature the keeper can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Psychic damage, and the target must immediately take a Reaction to make a melee or ranged attack against a creature of the keeper's choice that is within reach or range of the attack. *Success:* Half damage only.

Blight Spawn. The keeper magically summons a **Rotweaver** (lacks a Hunting Horn) in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of itself. The rotweaver takes its turn immediately after the keeper on the same Initiative count, and it obeys the keeper. The rotweaver vanishes after 1 minute, or when it or the keeper dies.

Devouring Fungus. Life-sapping fungus sprouts from the ground in a 60-foot radius centered on the keeper. The area is Difficult Terrain, and a creature has the Poisoned condition while within the area. The fungus remains for 1 minute, until the keeper uses this effect again, or until it dies.

Spellcasting. The keeper casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks):

At Will: *Druidcraft*, *Ray of Sickness*
1/Day: *Blight*



KETGRINN

Voice-Stealing Trickster

Habitat: Forest, Hill, Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** Arcana

Ketgrinn are catlike Fey spirits who delight in puzzles, riddles, and bargains. They have large, bright eyes and too-wide grins that gleam starkly even in shadows. Ketgrinn are tricksters and spies, often sent by those they serve to steal the voices of a rival's minions to sow chaos and confusion.

Secret. Ketgrinn can't resist a puzzle or riddle, and a difficult one can send a ketgrinn's mind spiraling.

KETGRINN

Medium Fey, Chaotic Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	12	+1	+1	Dex	17	+3	+5	Con	14	+2	+2
Int	16	+3	+3	Wis	10	+0	+0	Cha	18	+4	+6

Skills Deception +8, Perception +2, Persuasion +8, Stealth +5
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan; telepathy 100 ft.
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

Traits

Magic Resistance. The ketgrinn has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mimicry. The ketgrinn can mimic any voice it has heard, or a voice it has stolen (see Consume Voice below). A creature that hears the voice can tell it's an imitation with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check. The DC increases to 19 for a voice the ketgrinn has stolen.

Riddle Bound. As an Influence action, a creature that poses a riddle to the ketgrinn and succeeds on a DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check gives the ketgrinn the Incapacitated condition until the start of the creature's next turn. Each riddle posed increases the DC for future riddles by 1 for 24 hours.

Actions

Multiattack. The ketgrinn makes two Claw attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Consume Voice.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) Slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) Psychic damage, and if the target is a creature, it has Disadvantage on the next saving throw the ketgrinn forces it to make before the end of the ketgrinn's next turn.

Consume Voice. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 14, one creature within 5 feet. *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Psychic damage, and the ketgrinn steals the target's voice. The target can't speak or make any verbal sound while its voice is stolen. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If it fails three of these saving throws, the loss is permanent, and its voice only returns when the ketgrinn dies. *Success:* Half damage only.

Invisibility. The ketgrinn casts *Invisibility* on itself, requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability.

Bonus Actions

Teleport. The ketgrinn teleports up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.



LAKE DREDGER

Undead Aquatic Monster

Habitat: Coastal, Swamp, Underwater; **Treasure:** Individual

Lake dredgers are Undead water behemoths, such as whales, giant fish, or dinosaurs. These creatures are reanimated through the deep, primal fear of the unknown horrors that lurk in the murky depths. They dwell in the beds of lakes, rivers, or oceans, dredging up the detritus to replenish their ever-rotting mass.

They also add to their decaying bulk by feeding on living creatures, especially drawn to those who exhibit fear of the deep. Once prey is devoured, it is impaled on its cracked ribs until the waterlogged flesh becomes one with the beast's.

Secret. Lake dredgers exist because of the fear of the unknown, and their essence is undone in the presence of a captured or crafted depiction of themselves, such as a drawing or carving.

LAKE DREDGER

Huge Undead, Neutral Evil

AC 12 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 157 (15d12 + 60)
Speed 20 ft., Swim 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+6	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	4	−3	−3	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	4	−3	−3

Skills Stealth +8
Resistances Necrotic, Psychic
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 11
Languages None
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

TRAITS

Depicted Demise. The lake dredger takes 20 Force damage at the start of its turn if it can see a creature holding a created depiction (such as a drawing, painting, or carving) of the lake dredger.

Silt Stealth. The lake dredger has Advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made when in an area with aquatic plants or seaweed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lake dredger makes one Bite attack and one Tail attack.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) Necrotic damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16), and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Tail. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 24 (4d8 + 6) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

BONUS ACTIONS

Swallow. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, one Large or smaller creature Grappled by the lake dredger (the lake dredger can only have one creature swallowed at a time). *Failure:* The lake dredger swallows the target, which is no longer Grappled. While swallowed, the creature has the Restrained condition, has Three-Quarters Cover against attacks and other effects outside the lake dredger, and takes 21 (6d6) Necrotic damage at the start of each of the lake dredger's turns.

As an action, the swallowed creature can escape through the lake dredger's ribcage. The creature takes 11 (2d10) Piercing damage and emerges in a space within 5 feet of the lake dredger. If the lake dredger dies, a swallowed creature is no longer Restrained and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting Prone.

LURKER IN THE DARK

Medium Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	14	+2	+4	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	13	+1	+3	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Stealth +6
Resistances Bludgeoning
Immunities Grappled, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Nightmarish Contortion. The lurker can fit into a space as small as a 1-foot Cube and can pass through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so.

Spider Climb. The lurker can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Ward of Innocence. The lurker can't attack or willingly move to a space within 10 feet of a creature holding a stuffed animal once owned by a child.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lurker makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) Slashing damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of two claws. Until the grapple ends, the target has the Restrained condition.

BONUS ACTIONS

Dark Teleport. While the lurker isn't in Bright Light, it teleports up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. If the destination space isn't in Bright Light, the lurker doesn't need to see it. A creature the lurker is grappling must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or teleport with the lurker to an unoccupied space closest to the lurker's destination.

LURKER IN THE DARK

Thing That Goes Bump in the Night

Habitat: Planar (Shadow), Urban; **Treasure:** Any

Lurkers in the dark are wicked Fey creatures who prey upon the fearful, vulnerable, and alone. They resemble nightmarishly distorted people with gray skin, lank hair, and three-fingered, clawed hands. Their limbs move in impossible ways, allowing them to slip through and hide within spaces that seem far too small. They delight in stoking their victim's fears by whispering from spaces a person couldn't fit. When the terror crests, the lurkers strike, drag their victims into the dark, and vanish with them.

Secret. Frightened children know that lurkers in the dark can be held at bay by clutching a beloved stuffed animal.



MAIDENWOOD

Huge Plant, Chaotic Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** –1 (9)
HP 103 (9d12 + 45)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+6	DEX	8	–1	–1	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +7, Stealth +7
Vulnerabilities Fire
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

Traits

Undoing Gift (1/Day). The maidenwood must accept and eat an apple offered to it or to its lure. The maidenwood then takes 55 (10d10) Poison damage and has the Poisoned condition for 1 minute.

Actions

Multiattack. The maidenwood makes two Tendril attacks. It can replace one attack with a Chew attack.

Tendril. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16) from one of two tendrils. Until the grapple ends, it has the Restrained condition.

Chew. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) Piercing damage. If the target has the Restrained condition, it takes an extra 18 (4d8) Piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Lure. The maidenwood shapes its lure into a Small or Medium Humanoid, or it retracts the lure. The maidenwood can speak through the lure and move it anywhere within reach of its tendrils, and it causes the following effect—*Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature within 30 feet of the lure. *Failure:* The target has the Charmed condition until the start of the maidenwood's next turn. The Charmed target must approach the lure as closely as it can. The maidenwood has Advantage on attack rolls against the Charmed target. If the target takes damage, the Charmed condition ends at the end of the current turn.

Reactions

Absorb Magic. *Trigger:* The maidenwood succeeds on a saving throw against a spell or other magical effect, or a spell attack roll misses it. *Response:* The maidenwood gains 10 Temporary Hit Points.

MAIDENWOOD

Witch-Warped Ambushing Tree

Habitat: Forest, Swamp; **Treasure:** Individual

Maidenwoods are creatures birthed from tree stumps by old magics, often arising from curses that turn the forest against a transgressor. They scuttle on roots like legs, and the broken trunk becomes a fierce, grinding maw. The maidenwood's tendrils blossom into lifelike figures it uses to lure its prey close.

Secret. The curse that maintains a maidenwood unravels if one is offered an apple—an ancient trick used by witches turned against them.



MUTANT NURSE

Medium Aberration, Lawful Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 63 (14d8)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	15	+2	+4	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	11	+0	+0
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	17	+3	+5	CHA	11	+0	+2

Skills Medicine +5, Perception +7, Stealth +7
Resistances Poison, Psychic
Senses Truesight 30 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Deep Speech
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

Traits

Anchoring Mask. The nurse has a porcelain mask (AC 15; HP 15; Immunity to Poison and Psychic damage). If the nurse starts its turn and isn't wearing its mask, it must move as far as possible to retrieve its mask if possible, or to reach the closest creature it can see or hear, and it must attack that creature. If it can't see or hear any other creatures, it either stands still and does nothing, or it destroys any objects in its vicinity (50 percent chance of either).

Actions

Multiattack. The nurse makes two Stab attacks. If it hits a creature with a Stab attack, it can use Inject if available.

Stab. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Poison damage.

Inject (Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13, a creature the nurse hit with a Stab attack this turn. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition for 1 hour. *Failure by 5 or More:* The Poisoned target also has the Unconscious condition until it takes damage or a creature within 5 feet of it takes an action to shake it awake. *Success:* Half damage only.

Mutation. The nurse has one of the following mutation action options:

Cerebral Graft. Part of a psionic creature's brain is grafted to the nurse's own. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 13, one creature within 30 feet. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Psychic damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Tentacle Lash. A tentacle writhes beneath the nurse's skin or clothes. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Catalyst (Recharge after Short or Long Rest). The nurse injects itself with a stimulant. Until the start of the nurse's next turn, its Speed is doubled, it can make one extra Stab attack when it takes the Multiattack action, and it gains a +2 bonus to AC.

MUTANT NURSE

Caregiver Twisted by Mutation

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Arcana

Mutant nurses resemble the Humanoids they once were, though an alien mutation writhes within their bodies. They serve as caretakers of healing institutions, though they are fully beholden to whoever, or whatever, altered them to their current state. The nurses all wear a white porcelain mask made in the likeness of their original features, which grounds them to their sense of self and prevents them from losing their will fully to the aberrant influence that changed them.

Secret. Mutant nurses go berserk if their masks are destroyed or taken from them, or they become unresponsive if there are no other creatures nearby.



NECROLISK

Subterranean Spirit-Devouring Drake

Habitat: Planar (Shadow), Underground; **Treasure:** Individual, Relics

Necrolisks are subterranean dragons that feed on the essence of spirits. Tunneling through the ground in search of corpses, especially those buried in graveyards and crypts, they defile the graves and feed on the bodies in an effort to stir up restless spirits, which are then snared in the necrolisks' ephemeral saliva and devoured. Creatures of flesh and blood that disturb the dragons might also find themselves as a less preferred, but passable, meal.

Secret. Necrolisks are severely allergic to a concoction of lavender, nightshade, and lilies, which causes them to vomit uncontrollably—a boon to anyone swallowed by the monsters.



NECROLISK

Huge Dragon, Neutral Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 178 (17d12 + 68)
Speed 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+6	DEX	13	+1	+5	CON	19	+4	+4
INT	7	−2	−2	WIS	13	+1	+5	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Resistances Necrotic
Immunities Frightened
Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Tremorsense 120 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Understands Draconic but can't speak
CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

TRAITS

Entrapping Saliva. The necrolisk ignores Immunity to the Grappled and Restrained conditions of a creature with the Incorporeal Movement trait. Creatures swallowed by the necrolisk can't pass through it using Incorporeal Movement or through the Ethereal Plane, and creatures can't teleport out of its stomach.

Herb Allergy. If the necrolisk eats a specific concoction of herbs worth 25 GP (such as if a swallowed creature pours them into its stomach as a Utilize action), at the end of the turn, the necrolisk regurgitates anything in its stomach as if it failed the saving throw described in its Swallow Bonus Action.

Spider Climb. The necrolisk can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Tunneler. The necrolisk can burrow through solid rock at half its Burrow Speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The necrolisk makes one Bite attack and one Claws attack.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Force damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, it has the Restrained condition.

Claws. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Force damage.

Ephemeral Spit (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature in a 60-foot-long, 5-foot-wide Line. *Failure:* 42 (12d6) Force damage, and the target has the Restrained condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

BONUS ACTIONS

Swallow. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, one Large or smaller creature Grappled by the necrolisk (the necrolisk can only have one creature swallowed at a time). *Failure:* The necrolisk swallows the target, which is no longer Grappled. While swallowed, the creature has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the necrolisk, and takes 21 (6d6) Force damage at the start of each of the necrolisk's turns.

If the necrolisk takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the necrolisk must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls in a space within 10 feet of the necrolisk and has the Prone condition. If the necrolisk dies, a swallowed creature is no longer Restrained and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting Prone.



NIGHT CREATURE

Bestial Blood Hunter

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Night creatures are fiendish spirits bound into vampire-blood-tainted corpses through profane rituals. The hulking brutes are fanatically loyal to their creators, a fact some vampire overlords learn too late when those they employ to create the night creatures develop ambitions of their own.

Secrets. Night creatures are quickly undone by the purity of salt if wiped on a weapon and driven into a wound.

NIGHT CREATURE

Large Fiend, Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 75 (10d10 + 20)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+6	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	8	–1	–1	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	14	+2	+2

Skills Survival +5
Vulnerabilities Damage from weapons wiped with salt
Immunities Poison; Charmed (except from its creator), Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 11
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Blood Stalker. The night creature has Advantage on Wisdom checks made to find or track a creature that is missing any Hit Points.

Salt Susceptibility. The night creature has Vulnerability to damage from weapons wiped with salt. A creature can take a Bonus Action to wipe salt onto a weapon, which remains coated for 1 minute, or until it hits a creature.

Spider Climb. The night creature can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The night creature takes 20 Radiant damage if it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The night creature makes one Claw attack and uses Bite.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of two claws.

Bite. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 14, one creature within 5 feet that is willing or that has the Grappled, Incapacitated, or Restrained condition. *Failure:* 6 (1d4 + 4) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage. The target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Necrotic damage taken, and the night creature regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

BONUS ACTIONS

Shape-Shift. If the night creature isn't in sunlight, it shape-shifts into a Medium Humanoid or returns to its true form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

OLD WAYS CHOSEN

Medium or Small Humanoid, Neutral

AC 12 Initiative +2 (12)
HP 88 (16d8 + 16)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	8	–1	–1	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	8	–1	–1	WIS	18	+4	+4	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +6, Performance +6, Religion +2
Gear Animal Mask, Daggers (6)
Senses Passive Perception 14
Languages Common
CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

Traits

Animal Mask. The chosen wears the mask of an animal, imbuing it with the strength of the old gods. When a creature is grappling the chosen, the creature can remove the mask as an action, or as an attack during the Attack action, with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Without its mask, the chosen can't cast spells, its Concentration on any existing spells ends, and the save DC of Song of the Old Ways is reduced by 4.

Actions

Multiattack. The chosen makes three Ritual Dagger attacks.

Ritual Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Radiant or Necrotic damage (the chosen's choice).

Songs of the Old Ways (Recharge 5–6). The chosen sings one of the following songs:

Blessing of the Harvest. Each creature of the chosen's choice in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the chosen regains 14 (4d4 + 4) Hit Points.

Song of Sacrifice. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 14, one creature within 30 feet. *Failure:* 40 (9d8) Necrotic damage, and the target has the Paralyzed condition until the end of the chosen's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Wicker Chant. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature of the chosen's choice in a 20-foot Emanation originating from the chosen. *Failure:* 31 (9d6) Fire damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Spellcasting (Requires Animal Mask). The chosen casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components other than its Animal Mask and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks):

At Will: *Druidcraft*, *Minor Illusion*
2/Day Each: *Entangle*, *Scorching Ray* (level 4 version)

Bonus Actions

Jump (Requires Animal Mask). The chosen casts *Jump*, using the same spell components and spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.



OLD WAYS CHOSEN

Devout Follower of Old Gods

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Relics

Venerating old and forgotten gods who once held sway over the remote places of the world, the Old Ways chosen keep the last embers of belief and tradition burning. Many of the chosen are insular, keeping to the communities they foster. Some are more open to contact with outsiders, whether to be a beneficent presence or to draw in potential sacrifices to the Old Ways.

Secret. Old Ways chosen bind their power into a mask they use as a focus. Without the mask, their magic unravels.

PHANTOM HEARSE

Ghostly Coach of the Dead

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Any



Phantom hearses are ghostly carriages complete with horses and coachmen—amalgamations of tormented souls driven to claim the living and drag them to the land of the dead.

The spirit coachmen strike with phantom whips and weapons, and even fly out to harry foes at a distance, while the ghostly horses drive the hearse in a crushing charge that gathers victims and seals them into a spectral coffin that drains the warmth and vitality from flesh and bone. The tolling bell on the carriage precedes the apparition's appearance, and its sepulchral sound has caused more than a few witnesses to drop dead on the spot.

Secret. Phantom hearses are driven to collect the living, and they can't see a living creature that holds its breath.

PHANTOM HEARSE

Huge Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 110 (13d12 + 26)
Speed 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	3	−4	−4	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	18	+4	+4

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +5
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

TRAITS

Breathless Warding. A creature holding its breath has the Invisible condition to the hearse. If the creature takes damage while holding its breath, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or let out its breath and become visible to the hearse until the start of the creature's next turn, when it can hold its breath again.

Incorporeal Movement. The hearse can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hearse makes two Ghostly Coachman attacks. It can replace one of the attacks with a use of Trample, if available.

Ghostly Coachman. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Cold damage. If the target is a creature, it can't regain Hit Points until the start of the hearse's next turn.

Trample (Recharge 5–6). The hearse moves in a straight line up to its Speed. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature whose space the hearse enters during this action. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Cold damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14), and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends. *Success:* Half damage only.

Tolling Bell (1/Day). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature of the hearse's choice that it can see in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the hearse. *Failure:* 44 (8d10) Psychic damage, and the creature's Speed is halved until the start of the hearse's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

BONUS ACTIONS

Entomb. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature Grappled by the hearse (it can have up to three creatures entombed at a time). *Failure:* The target is entombed in a coffin in the hearse, and the Grappled condition ends. An entombed target has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the hearse, and at the start of each of the hearse's turns it takes 21 (6d6) Necrotic damage and gains 1 Exhaustion level.

If the hearse takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside a coffin, the hearse must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or release all entombed creatures, each of which falls in a space within 5 feet of the hearse and has the Prone condition. If the hearse dies, any entombed creature falls to the ground with the Prone condition in the hearse's former space.



PIGEON HAG

Vermin Hag of Deception and Control

Habitat: Mountain, Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** Arcana

Pigeon hags are vain witches who place themselves above every other being. They seek to reinforce that belief by controlling and undermining the knowledge and relationships of others. Pigeon hags often insinuate themselves into a mortal settlement and walk among the people, usually in a position to hear and spread gossip that they can twist and manipulate to their own ends.

Secret. The vanity of a pigeon hag is so overwhelming that polishing its ego can leave it flustered and briefly unable to act.

PIGEON HAG

Medium Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 18 **Initiative** +7 (17)
HP 228 (24d8 + 120)
Speed 30 ft., Fly 60 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	19	+4	+9	WIS	18	+4	+9	CHA	22	+6	+6

Skills Deception +11, Insight +9, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +7
Immunities Charmed
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Primordial (Avian), Sylvan
CR 13 (XP 10,000; PB +5)

TRAITS

Coven Magic. While within 30 feet of at least two hag allies, the hag can cast one of the following spells, requiring no Material components, using the spell's normal casting time, and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability: *Augury*, *Find Familiar*, *Identify*, *Locate Object*, *Lucky Charm* (lasts until the hag casts it again, or chooses to end it with no action required), or *Unseen Servant*. The hag must finish a Long Rest before using this trait to cast that spell again.

Disarming Vanity. As an Influence action, a creature that flatters the hag forces it to succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or have the Incapacitated condition until the end of the hag's next turn.

Harrying Wings. When the hag rolls Initiative, it is surrounded by fey spirits in the form of angry pigeons. The hag's enemies within a 10-foot Emanation originating from it have Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls. This trait doesn't function if the hag has the Incapacitated condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hag makes three Claw attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting (at will spells only).

Claw. Melee Attack Roll: +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) Psychic damage.

Agonizing Cackle (1/Day). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* A target takes 45 (10d8) Psychic damage and has the Incapacitated condition until the start of the hag's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Spellcasting. The hag casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At Will: *Command* (level 2 version), *Hold Person*, *Minor Illusion*, *Stinking Cloud*
1/Day Each: *Befuddlement*, *Dominate Person*, *Scrying*, *Word of Recall* (lair as sanctuary)

BONUS ACTIONS

Shape-Shift. The hag shape-shifts into a Small or Medium Humanoid, or it returns to its true form. Other than its size, its game statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

PUMPKIN HEAD

Fiendish Effigy of the Fields

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None



Pumpkin heads are scarecrows of straw, sticks, and clothing topped with a carved pumpkin for a head and animated by a fiendish spirit. They are crafted by demons to resemble their Humanoid victims and returned to wherever the unfortunate souls had been snatched from.

These living effigies speak with the voice of whomever they replaced, often repeating phrases and behaviors that the missing person said or did in life while stalking and killing new prey.

Secret. Pumpkin heads hold a shred of memory from the people they replaced. The sight of a keepsake or memento from a pumpkin head's victim confuses the creature.

PUMPKIN HEAD

Medium Fiend, Chaotic Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	17	+3	+3	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	6	−2	−2	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	14	+2	+2

Skills Deception +6, Stealth +4
Vulnerabilities Fire
Resistances Necrotic
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages Understands Common plus one other language, but only speaks using Mimicry
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Mimicry. The pumpkin head can mimic the voice of the person it replaced or someone it used Personality Consumption on. A creature that hears the voice can tell it's an imitation only with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Sorrowful Memento. If the pumpkin head can see a creature holding a possession of the person the pumpkin head replaced, it has Disadvantage on D20 Tests.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pumpkin head makes one Claw attack and one Pitchfork attack, and it can use Personality Consumption if available.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage.

Pitchfork. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) Piercing damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, the pumpkin head can push or pull it 5 feet.

Personality Consumption (Recharge 5–6). The pumpkin head consumes a victim's memories. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 12, one creature the pumpkin head can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn, and its Intelligence score decreases by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces that score to 0. A Humanoid slain in this way is replaced by a **Pumpkin Head** 1d8 hours later unless its body is burned.

REVELER OF SONG

Fiend of Music and Dance

Habitat: Planar (Lower Planes), Urban; **Treasure:** Implements

Revelers of song are Fiends of music and abandon who turn their art against their foes in destructive reverberation. The revelers dance and play at nearly all times and are known to fly into a murderous rage if their invitations to join the celebration are spurned. A variety of revelers of song exist, depending on the type of instrument a given reveler plays. Drone revelers play the hurdy gurdy and are surrounded by an accompanying swarm of bees. Drum revelers play drums or cymbals, and the world shakes to their beat. Bell revelers play some variety of bell, chime, or gong, and the ringing overtakes all other sounds.

Secret. Revelers of song can't accept that any creature is more skilled at an instrument than they are and so can't refuse a musical challenge.





REVELER OF SONG

Medium Fiend, Chaotic Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 97 (15d8 + 30)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	15	+2	+2	DEX	16	+3	+6	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	20	+5	+8

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +4, Performance +11
Resistances Cold, Fire
Immunities Poison, Thunder; Deafened, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 10 ft. (Drone only), Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 14
Languages Common; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

Traits

Compelled Contest. The reveler can't refuse a contest of skill with Musical Instruments. As an Influence action, a creature can make a Charisma (Performance) check using a Musical Instrument. The reveler must succeed on a Charisma saving throw with a DC equal to the check's total or take 20 Psychic damage and have the Stunned condition until the end of the creature's next turn.

Dancing Step. The reveler doesn't provoke Opportunity Attacks when it leaves an enemy's reach.

Ensemble Form. The reveler takes on a specific form: Drone, Drum, or Bell. The form determines certain traits and actions, as well as the instrument the reveler plays (hurdy gurdy, frame drum, or handbells, respectively).

Droning Swarm (Drone Only). A droning swarm of bees surrounds the reveler. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature that ends its turn in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the reveler. *Failure:* The target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The reveler makes two Instrumental Blast attacks.

Instrumental Blast. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. or range 90 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Thunder damage.

Infectious Rhythm (Drum Only). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, up to two creatures the reveler can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Psychic damage, and the target is affected by the *Irresistible Dance* spell (no Concentration required to maintain the spell). *Success:* Half damage only.

Stunning Clangor (Bell Only). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature the reveler can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 40 (9d8) Thunder damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of the reveler's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

REVELER OF STORIES

Fiend of Legend and Folklore

Habitat: Planar (Lower Planes), Urban; **Treasure:** Arcana

Timeless stories have inspired countless mortals, and the echoes of those stories in the Lower Planes have spawned fiendish embodiments of those tales—the revelers of stories. These Fiends twist the themes of their tales, turning inspiration into doom. The revelers' forms and powers change depending on the theme of stories they embody. Great beast revelers of stories rise from tales of terrible monsters. Hero revelers of stories embody the exploits of knights and other mighty heroes. Witch revelers of stories bring to life tales of wicked witches, wizards, and other magicians.

Secret. Revelers of stories exist because of fables, legends, and other tales, and reciting the moral of a story related to the reveler's theme robs the reveler of its potency.



REVELER OF STORIES

Large Fiend, Chaotic Evil

AC 15; 17 (Hero only) **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft.; 60 ft. (Hero only)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+7
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	15	+2	+6	CHA	20	+5	+5

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +6, Performance +13
Resistances Cold, Fire
Immunities Poison, Psychic; Charmed, Poisoned
Gear Shield (Hero only)
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Truesight 120 ft. (Witch only); Passive Perception 16
Languages Common; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)



TRAITS

Moral Quandary. As a Bonus Action, a creature can recite the moral of a story using the same theme as the reveler's Storied Form to weaken it for 1 hour. While weakened, the reveler can't take Reactions, and its AC is reduced by 4.

Storied Form. The reveler takes on a specific form: Great Beast, Hero, or Witch. The form determines certain traits and the theme of stories the reveler embodies (powerful monsters, brave heroes, or wicked magicians, respectively).

Terror Feeding (Witch Only). If there is at least one creature with the Frightened condition within 30 feet of the reveler at the end of its turn, the reveler gains 15 Temporary Hit Points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The reveler makes three Thrash attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Fabled Assault if available.

Thrash. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) Force damage.

Fabled Assault (Recharge 5–6). The reveler uses the option determined by its Storied Form:

Consuming Bite (Great Beast Only). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature within 5 feet (with Disadvantage if the reveler is grappling the target). *Failure:* 36 (8d8) Necrotic damage. If the target is Huge or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15), and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The reveler gains Temporary Hit Points equal to the Necrotic damage taken.

Heroic Charge (Hero Only). The reveler moves up to its Speed in a straight line without provoking Opportunity Attacks, and it can move through other creatures without expending extra movement to do so. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature whose space the reveler enters. *Failure:* 26 (4d12) Force damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Wicked Storm (Witch Only). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* 27 (6d8) Lightning damage, and the target has the Frightened condition. While Frightened in this way, the target's Speed is 0. A Frightened target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

REACTIONS

Dramatic Reversal. *Trigger:* The reveler is hit by an attack roll. *Response:* The reveler adds 4 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

ROTWEAVER

Fey Thrall of Rot

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Fey), Swamp; **Treasure:** Relics

Rotweavers were Fey caretakers of the natural world or fey planes who've been corrupted by the power of rot. Rotweavers serve powerful beings of withering and blight as minor acolytes and hunters, working to spread the bounds of their beloved decay.

Secret. The rotweavers' fey nature still holds; binding them with iron, such as manacles or a chain, mutes their strength.



ROTWEAVER

Medium Fey, Chaotic Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 38 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+3	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	8	–1	–1

Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Fungal Step. The rotweaver ignores Difficult Terrain caused by plants or fungi.

Hunting Horn. The rotweaver carries a hunting horn. The horn has AC 16, HP 10, and Immunity to Necrotic, Poison, and Psychic damage.

Iron Binding. If the rotweaver has iron wrapped around a part of its body, such as an iron bracelet, Manacles, or Chain (treat any of them as applying Manacles), the rotweaver can move, take an action, or a Bonus Action, but not all three.

ACTIONS

Staff. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) Necrotic damage.

Call the Rot (Requires Hunting Horn; Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Necrotic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The horn call is audible out to 300 feet, and any non-creature plants in the Cone die from fungus and rot.

SERUM BRUTE

Cursed Giant Enhanced by Alchemy

Habitat: Underground, Urban; **Treasure:** Any



Serum brutes are descended from giants who suffered an enduring curse when they failed to take over a Fey domain. They have third eyes, usually in their foreheads, which channel the giants' curse into the world around them. All three of their eyes are sewn or otherwise sealed shut to contain the curse. Serum brutes are further enhanced with—and get their name from—a series of alchemical infusions, often delivered through implanted vessels and tubes, which seek to deaden their sorrow and pain, as well as the disturbing power of their third eyes. They form deep emotional bonds with any who offer them comfort and an escape from the pain of their curse, and they are often willing to die for those allies.

Secret. Serum brutes are dependent upon their curse, and magic that breaks curses can leave the giants debilitated and bereft.

SERUM BRUTE

Large Giant, Neutral

AC 16 **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 115 (11d10 + 55)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	21	+5	+5	DEX	19	+4	+4	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	9	–1	–1	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	9	–1	–1

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5
Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius unless Unleashed Eyes is active); Passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Giant, Sylvan
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Curse Dependent. If the brute is targeted by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic, until it finishes a Long Rest, the brute loses its Blindsight, its Withering Eye trait, and its Cursed Gaze action.

Stimulant Rush. At the start of its turn, the brute must choose one of the following options (it can't use that option twice in a row):

Catalyst Infusion. Until the start of its next turn, the brute's Speed increases to 50 feet, it doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it leaves an enemy's reach, and its Long Jump is up to 30 feet and its High Jump is up to 15 feet with or without a running start.

Caustic Secretion. Until the start of its next turn, its Fist attack deals an extra 11 (2d10) Acid damage (included in the Fist attack below).

Stim Boost. Gain 10 Temporary Hit Points.

Unleashed Eyes (1/Day). When the brute is Bloodied, its sealed eyes rip open and unleash its curse. It is no longer blind beyond 60 feet, and it can use its Withering Eye trait and Cursed Gaze action until it finishes a Long Rest, whereupon its eyes seal shut again.

Withering Eye (Unleashed Eyes Only). When the brute moves to within 5 feet of a creature, the creature takes 4 (1d8) Psychic damage. A creature takes this damage only once per turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brute makes two Fist attacks and can use Cursed Gaze if available.

Fist. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Bludgeoning damage. If Caustic Secretion is active, the target takes an extra 11 (2d10) Acid damage.

Cursed Gaze (Unleashed Eyes Only). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 9 (2d8) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the brute's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

REACTIONS

Devotion. *Trigger:* An ally within 5 feet takes damage. *Response:* The ally gains Resistance to the triggering damage, and the brute takes an amount of Psychic damage equal to the damage the ally takes.

SHROUDED

Soul Corrupted by the Shroud

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Relics

Shrouded are the spirits of the dead—devoid of any ability to reason and corrupted by the deathly mists known as the Shroud. They are raw emotional energy, unfettered and unleashed, manifested into being. The shrouded are constantly whispering about a victim's incompetencies, weakness, foibles, and failings as they engulf their prey to drain the life from them, corrupting their soul.

Secret. Shrouded are bound by barriers and lines of iron, which is why cemeteries with iron fences keep them contained.



SHROUDED

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	5	−3	−3	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	6	−2	−2	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Mist Form. The shrouded can enter another creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without spending extra movement to do so.

Corrupting Mist. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13, a creature that starts its turn in the shrouded's space. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* The soul of a Humanoid that dies from this damage becomes a new shrouded at the start of the shrouded's next turn and takes its turn on that Initiative. The Humanoid can't be returned to life until the new shrouded is destroyed.

Graveyard Warding. The shrouded can't move through a space with a barrier or line of iron, such as a wrought iron fence or a line of iron filings. This impassible barrier rises to a height of 1 mile above the iron.

Variation. The shrouded has one of three variants, which determines a unique action option: Devourer, Reaper, or Whisperer.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shrouded makes two melee attacks.

Corrupting Touch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Necrotic damage.

Consuming Bite (Devourer Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 13). At the start of a Grappled target's turn, it takes 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage, and the shrouded regains Hit Points equal to that amount.

Scythe (Reaper Only). *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it can't regain Hit Points until the start of the shrouded's next turn.

Toxic Thoughts (Whisperer Only). *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature that isn't a Construct or Undead in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the shrouded. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the shrouded's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

SKITTERSWARM

Medium Swarm of Tiny Fey, Neutral

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 19 (3d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	15	+2	+2	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	7	–2	–2	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	8	–1	–1

Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing
Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned
Senses Blindsight 20 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages Understands Common and Sylvan but can't speak
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Body Burrowing. If the swarm can see the corpse of a Humanoid at the start of its turn, it must move up to its Speed toward the corpse. Once it enters the corpse's space, it must remain there for 1 hour, after which time the corpse's flesh putrefies.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny centipede. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Vile Vermin. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, any creature that starts its turn in the swarm's space. *Failure:* The target contracts a magical contagion. While afflicted, the target can't regain Hit Points, and it repeats the save when it finishes a Long Rest or when targeted by an effect that ends the Poisoned condition, recovering from the contagion on a success. *Success:* The target is immune to the Vile Vermin trait of all skitterswarms for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Infesting Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) Piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) Piercing damage if the swarm is Bloodied. If the target is a creature, a centipede infests its body. While infested, the target takes 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The infestation ends when the target regains Hit Points or is targeted by an effect that ends the Poisoned condition.

SKITTERSWARM

Fetid Fey Centipedes

Habitat: Planar (Fey), Underground, Urban;
Treasure: None

Disgusting Fey who delight in warping flesh and spreading sickness can gather into squirming masses of centipedes known as skitterswarms. These swarms lurk in places where foulness accumulates and often serve centipede hags.

Secret. Skitterswarms can't resist dead bodies and are drawn to the corpses of Humanoids.



SOULFIRE STOKER

Engine-Born Spirit of Flame and Death

Habitat: Planar (Elemental Plane of Fire), Urban;
Treasure: None

Soulfire stokers are Elemental spirits of fire who inhabit furnaces, engines, and boilers that burn bodies or souls. The resulting creature is composed of ghostly flames and steam, with swirling plates of phantom iron that resemble the engine or machine that gave it form. A crackling blend of fire and negative energy, soulfire stokers burn away souls as much as flesh.

Secret. Soulfire stokers are compelled to burn corpses they can see, so dead things can bait the spirits.



SOULFIRE STOKER

Medium Elemental, Neutral

AC 14 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 59 (7d8 + 28)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	9	−1	−1	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	7	−2	−2

Skills Perception +3
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing
Immunities Fire, Poison; Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Primordial (Ignan)
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Corpse Fuel. If the stoker can see a corpse at the start of its turn, it must move as far as possible to enter the corpse's space and use its action to incinerate the corpse. Medium or smaller corpses are reduced to ash, and larger corpses are partially incinerated and decrease one size.

Fire Form. The stoker can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so, and it can enter a creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 4 (1d8) Fire damage.

Illumination. The stoker sheds Dim Light in a 30-foot radius.

Soul Burn. At the end of each of the stoker's turns, each creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the stoker takes 4 (1d8) Necrotic damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stoker makes two Sear attacks.

Sear. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) Fire damage, and the target has Disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the start of the elemental's next turn.

BONUS ACTIONS

Spectral Steam (Recharge 5–6). The stoker unleashes a blast of glowing spectral steam. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* For 1 minute, the target sheds Dim Light in a 10-foot radius and can't benefit from the Invisible condition.

SQUABSWARM

Medium Swarm of Tiny Fey, Neutral

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 19 (3d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., Fly 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	12	+1	+1	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	5	–3	–3	WIS	13	+1	+1	CHA	8	–1	–1

Skills Perception +5, Survival +5
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing
Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 15
Languages Understands Common and Sylvan, but can't speak
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

Traits

Compelled Delivery. As an Influence action, a creature can direct the swarm to deliver a letter or parcel (which the creature must provide) to a recipient the creature knows. The swarm has the Charmed condition until it delivers the item to the specified recipient or until it takes damage. While Charmed in this way, the swarm must deliver the item to the specified recipient if it knows where the recipient is.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny pigeon. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Unerring Delivery. If the swarm is tasked to deliver an item to a creature, the swarm knows the distance and direction to the creature while they are on the same plane.

Actions

Peck. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) Piercing damage, or 2 (1d4) Piercing damage if the swarm is Bloodied. If the swarm isn't Bloodied and the target is a creature, the target has the Charmed condition until the start of the swarm's next turn.

Reactions

Many Eyes, One Voice (1/Day). *Trigger:* A creature who tasked the swarm to deliver an item and is on the same plane as the swarm takes an action to see through the swarm. *Response:* The swarm becomes a scrying sensor as if the creature cast *Scrying*. For the duration, the creature can speak through the swarm.

SQUABSWARM

Peeping Fey Pigeons

Habitat: Mountain, Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** None

Fey messengers that take the form of pigeons can gather into flocks, or squabswarms. Hags and other influential Fey use squabswarms as spies and messengers—and sometimes as unerring trackers to locate any who flee responsibility or judgement.

Secret. Squabswarms' drive to deliver letters or parcels is overwhelming, and they can be confused by delivery requests.



VERMIN FAMILIAR

Infesting Hag Companion

Habitat: Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** Any

Capricious Fey spirits incarnated into bodies reminiscent of normal pests, vermin familiars serve spellcasters and especially vermin hags. While they are most often drawn to serve wicked masters, they also delight in playing the part of dutiful servants to corrupt spellcasters who aren't evil.

Secret. Vermin familiars are gripped by deep-seated fears shared by the vermin forms they inhabit, and as such, are terrified of dogs and other canines.



VERMIN FAMILIAR

Tiny Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 31 (7d4 + 14)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.; Burrow 30 ft. (Centipede or Weasel only); Fly 60 ft. (Pigeon only)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	+0	DEX	19	+4	+4	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	6	−2	−2	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	15	+2	+4

Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +8
Senses Blindsight 30 ft. (Pigeon only), Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft. (Centipede only); Passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Disparate Incarnation. The familiar incarnates in a body similar to a pest: Centipede, Pigeon, or Weasel, which determines other traits and actions the familiar has.

Fear of Canines. If the familiar can see a dog, wolf, or other canine at the start of its turn, it has the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn. While Frightened in this way, it has Disadvantage on saving throws.

Flyby (Pigeon Only). The familiar doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Spider Climb (Centipede Only). The familiar can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vermin Telepathy. The familiar can magically control Beasts and swarms that match its incarnation (centipedes, pigeons, weasels, giant versions of each, as well as **Boogleswarms**, **Skitterswarms**, and **Squabswarms**) within 120 feet of itself, using a special telepathy.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The familiar makes two Rend attacks.

Rend. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Psychic damage.

Incarnated Assault (Recharge 5–6). The familiar uses the option that matches its incarnation.

Confounding Scratch (Weasel Only). *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 12, one creature the familiar can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Necrotic damage, and the target is affected by the *Confusion* spell until the start of the familiar's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Infectious Sting (Centipede Only). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, one creature the familiar can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Poison damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the end of the familiar's next turn. While Poisoned in this way, the target has the Paralyzed condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Terrifying Flutter (Pigeon Only). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 12, one creature the familiar can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the end of the familiar's next turn. The Frightened target uses its movement on its turn to get as far away as possible from the familiar, moving by the safest route. *Success:* Half damage only.

Invisibility. The familiar casts *Invisibility* on itself, requiring no spell components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability.



VERMIN INFESTATION

Medium Swarm of Tiny Fey, Chaotic Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft., Burrow 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+4	DEX	19	+4	+4	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	6	−2	−2	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	15	+2	+4

Skills Deception +6, Perception +5, Stealth +8
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing
Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned
Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Infighting. As an Influence action, a creature that insinuates that the components of the swarm are conspiring against each other and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check deals 10 Necrotic damage to the swarm.

Spider Climb. The swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can fit through any opening large enough for a Tiny creature. The swarm can't regain Hit Points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

ACTIONS

Shred. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., *Hit:* 14 (4d4 + 4) Piercing damage, or 9 (2d4 + 4) Piercing damage if the swarm is Bloodied. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature in the swarm's space, the target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14). The swarm can have one creature Grappled at a time. At the start of each of the Grappled target's turns, roll 1d6 to see which of the following effects it suffers:

1–2: Centipede Sting. The target takes 4 (1d8) Poison damage and has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

3–4: Pigeon Cry. The target takes 10 (3d6) Psychic damage.

5–6: Weasel Drain. The target takes 5 (1d10) Necrotic damage, and its Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the Necrotic damage taken.

VERMIN INFESTATION

Swarm of Verminous Familiars

Habitat: Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** None

A nightmarish amalgamation of centipedes, pigeons, and weasels, vermin infestations are thankfully rare. These swarms of Fey roil and scratch and rend with individual pigeons streaking out to tear at distant foes, becoming a frenzied mass that throws all subtlety and coordination to the wind. At times, the constituent vermin-like Fey seem to be at each other's throats as much as any victims of the swarm.

Secret. The Fey spirits that make up a vermin infestation loathe one another and can be tricked into fighting among themselves by a clever suggestion.



WAYWARD HAINT

Lost Soul Bound to Regret

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Wayward haints are restless spirits stuck between the realms of the living and the dead. Be it a curse or an unresolved conflict from their previous life, a haint can't rest until their unfinished business is resolved.

Haints only show hints of who they were in life, taking on a more symbolic form related to the hurt or loss they can't let go of. They tend to repeat their monotonous actions—often imitating those performed in life or reenacting their sorrow—over and over for eternity. When provoked, they can display a volatile temper and lash out with a crushing wave of the grief and indecision that binds their spirit.

Secret. Wayward haints can be trapped in empty bottles if they're tricked or forced to pass over one.



WAYWARD HAINT

Medium Undead, Neutral

AC 11 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 13 (3d8)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	9	−1	−1	DEX	13	+1	+1	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	14	+2	+4

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 14
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Bottle Trap. A haint that enters the space of an upright, empty bottle must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be drawn into the bottle, and a cork or stopper appears to close the bottle. The trapped haint can see and hear through the bottle out to 10 feet, and any creature in that range can hear the haint. The haint is released if the bottle breaks or another creature opens it.

Incorporeal Movement. The haint can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside a solid object.

ACTIONS

Draining Regret. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) Psychic damage, and the target gains 1 Exhaustion level. This can't raise the target's Exhaustion level above 5, and all Exhaustion levels gained from this action end when the target finishes a Short or Long Rest, or if it receives a *Lesser Restoration* spell or similar magic.

WEASEL HAG

Hag of Soul Twisting and Terror

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Fey), Urban; **Treasure:** Any

Covetous and bedecked in stolen and gifted teeth, weasel hags are Fey creatures that sow nightmares and temptation to wickedness. They often surround themselves with weasels and boogleswarms, using them as spies, thieves to steal trinkets (especially lost teeth), and to spread their malign influence.

Secret. Weasel hags' love of teeth goes beyond a mere quirk. They can't refuse a tooth willingly given by its owner and can't harm the owner for a time.



WEASEL HAG

Medium Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +5 (15)
HP 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	16	+3	+6
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	14	+2	+5	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +4, Stealth +5
Resistances Psychic
Immunities Frightened
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Infernal, Sylvan
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Biting Gift. If a creature willingly offers one of its teeth to the hag, the hag must accept it and has the Charmed condition for 24 hours, or until the creature or its allies deal damage to the hag or force it to make a saving throw.

Coven Magic. While within 30 feet of at least two hag allies, the hag can cast one of the following spells, requiring no Material components, using the spell's normal casting time, and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability: *Augury*, *Find Familiar*, *Identify*, *Locate Object*, *Lucky Charm* (lasts until the hag casts it again, or chooses to end it with no action required), or *Unseen Servant*. The hag must finish a Long Rest before using this trait to cast that spell again.

Magic Resistance. The hag has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hag makes one Bite attack and uses Spellcasting (at will spells only).

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) Psychic damage.

Spellcasting. The hag casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At Will: *Blindness/Deafness*, *Detect Magic*, *Ray of Enfeeblement*

1/Day Each: *Confusion*, *Dream*

Waking Terrors (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, one creature the hag can see within 30 feet. If the hag has one of the target's teeth, the target has Disadvantage on the save. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition. While Frightened in this way, the target perceives its allies as enemies born from its nightmares, but it isn't compelled to act against or harm them. At the end of each of its turns, the target repeats the save, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

BONUS ACTIONS

Shape-Shift. The hag shape-shifts to resemble a Tiny weasel (Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.) or a Small or Medium Humanoid, or back into her true form. Her game statistics, other than her Speed as a weasel and her size, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

WELLWYRM

Large Dragon, Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 153 (18d10 + 54)
Speed 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft., Swim 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+4	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	17	+3	+3
INT	5	–3	–3	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	9	–1	–1

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +6, Stealth +7
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing
Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 16
Languages Understands Sylvan but can't speak
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

TRAITS

Amphibious. The wellwyrm can breathe air and water.

Hunting Terror. If the wellwyrm hears a creature play a horn or similar Musical Instrument, it has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wellwyrm makes one Bite attack and uses Constrict.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) Piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) Poison damage.

Constrict. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 16, one Medium or smaller creature the wellwyrm can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Bludgeoning damage. The target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14), and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends. The wellwyrm needn't spend extra movement to move during this grapple.

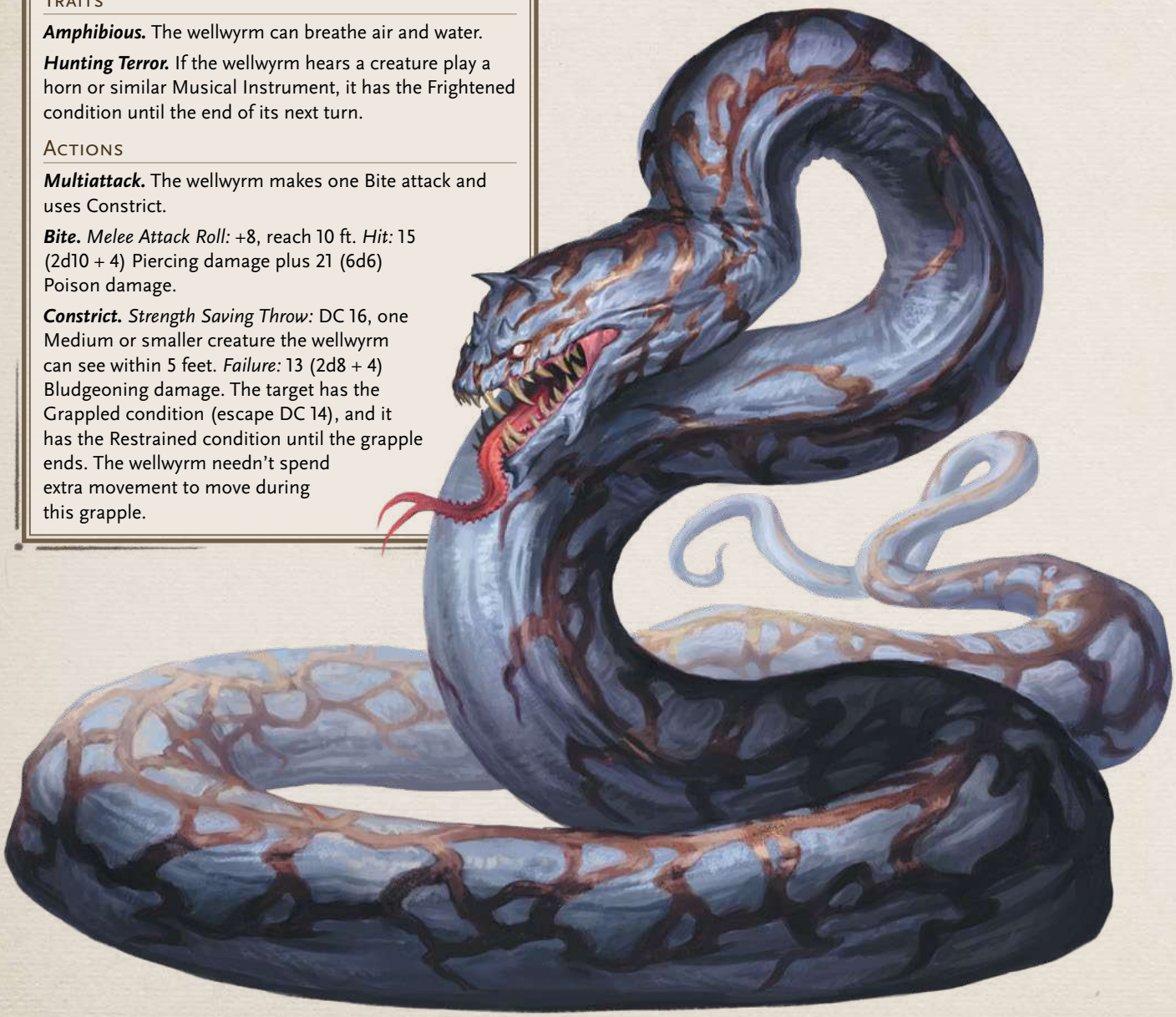
WELLWYRM

Serpent Lurking Beneath the Surface

Habitat: Coastal, Underground, Swamp; **Treasure:** Any

Wellwyrms are serpents originally touched by cruel Fey masters. The wyrms live in shallow waters where land-dwelling creatures frequent, such as wells and watering holes, lying in wait to coil around unsuspecting victims. Wellwyrms then drag their prey into water, or into burrows they dig under seemingly safe ground, to drown or suffocate.

Secret. The sound of a hunting horn drives wellwyrms into a panicked frenzy.



WILDPYRE

Spectral Blazing Beast

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

When animals perish in flames, their escaping spirits can cling to the fire that took their lives and arise as wildpyres. These Undead resemble the kind of animal they were in life, though made of ghostly flames. They lash out at anything in their vicinity, fanning the flames that consumed them.

Secret. Water can extinguish the undying flames of wildpyres, despite their ephemeral existence.



WILDPYRE

Medium or Large Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 60 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	18	+4	+4	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	4	−3	−3	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	7	−2	−2

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +7
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Fire, Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages None
CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

TRAITS

Incorporeal Movement. The wildpyre can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Quenching Water. Any water affects the wildpyre as if it were Holy Water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wildpyre makes two Blazing Rend attacks and uses Flame Bind if available.

Blazing Rend. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Necrotic damage plus 7 (2d6) Fire damage, and the target begins burning. If the target is a creature no larger than the wildpyre, it has the Prone condition.

Flame Bind (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature the wildpyre can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Restrained condition. At the end of each of the target's turns, it repeats the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. During the target's turn, it can choose to end the Restrained condition by taking 6 (1d12) Fire damage plus 6 (1d12) Necrotic damage.

WOODWARPED

Facsimile Grown of Root and Vine

Habitat: Forest; **Treasure:** Armaments

Whispered among forest dwellers is the tale of a cursed vine, said to creep into the bodies of the living or the dead, twisting them into woodwarped. These wooden creations of tangled roots and bark take shape into a crude yet eerily familiar imitation of their hosts. Those that slay their hosts are sometimes clad in the stolen clothing and armor of their victims, silently wandering the woods with hollow eyes that reflect the unnatural force that binds them to the forest. Cutting pieces from their bodies is a dangerous proposition, as the fragments quickly grow into new woodwarped.

Secret. Woodwarped possess a deep fear of axes—tools capable of severing not only their bodies but their bond to the forest. The mere sight of an axe is enough to hold the creatures at bay, and the bite of its blade slices them like smoke.



WOODWARPED

Medium Plant, Neutral Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** –1 (9)
HP 82 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	8	–1	–1	CON	17	+3	+3
INT	1	–5	–5	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	3	–4	–4

Vulnerabilities Slashing from Battleaxes, Greataxes, and Handaxes
Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing
Immunities Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened (except by creatures holding an axe)
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages None
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Aversion to Axes. At the start of the woodwarped's turn, if it can see a creature holding a Battleaxe, a Greataxe, or a Handaxe, it has the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn.

Thorns. At the start of each of its turns, the woodwarped deals 5 (2d4) Piercing damage to any creature it is grappling or any creature grappling it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The woodwarped makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Poison damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of two claws.

Thorn Spray (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the woodwarped, with Disadvantage if Grappled by it. *Failure:* 14 (4d6) Piercing damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition. At the end of each of its turns, the target repeats the save, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

REACTIONS

Splintered Propagation (1/Day). *Trigger:* The woodwarped takes Slashing damage that isn't from a Battleaxe, Greataxe, or Handaxe. *Response:* A fragment of the woodwarped breaks off and rapidly grows into a new **Woodwarped** in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the original. The new woodwarped is Small, has 10 Hit Points, only has the Claw action, lacks this Reaction, and takes its turn on the original woodwarped's Initiative.

WORMHOST SURGEON

Medium Aberration, Lawful Evil

AC 14 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 52 (7d8 + 21)
Speed 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	8	–1	–1	DEX	13	+1	+1	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	18	+4	+4	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Medicine +7, Perception +7
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Deep Speech
CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

TRAITS

Regeneration. The surgeon regains 10 Hit Points at the start of each of its turns. If it takes Poison damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The surgeon dies only if it starts its turn with 0 Hit Points and doesn't regenerate.

Veiled Ignorance. A creature whose mind can't be read, or that is under the effect of a *Mind Blank* or *Nondetection* spell, has the Invisible condition toward the surgeon (this ignores the surgeon's Blindsight).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The surgeon makes two Bone Saw attacks.

Bone Saw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Psychic damage. *Critical Hit:* If the target is a creature, its Intelligence score decreases by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces that score to 0.

Infested Spray (Recharge 5–6). The surgeon unleashes a spray of worm-ridden cerebral fluid. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 20-foot Cone. *Failure:* 17 (5d6) Psychic damage, and the target is infested with larval parasitic worms. The target takes 7 (2d6) Psychic damage at the end of each of its turns as the worms burrow toward its brain. The ongoing damage ends when the target takes Poison damage or is targeted by an effect that ends the Poisoned condition. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* If the target is reduced to 0 Hit Points by this Psychic damage, the worms reach its brain and it dies. A Humanoid slain in this way rises 24 hours later as a wormhost surgeon.

REACTIONS

Protective Parasite. *Trigger:* The surgeon is reduced to 0 Hit Points. *Response:* The parasite worm emerges from the surgeon's exposed brain and spits acid—*Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 20-foot-long, 5-foot-wide Line. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Acid damage. *Success:* Half damage.

WORMHOST SURGEON

Parasitical Physician

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Implements

Alien parasitic worms that infest the brains of Humanoid bodies mutate their hosts into wormhost surgeons. These aberrant husks are obsessed with anatomical study and with finding new Humanoids to infest with larval worm slurry to propagate their kind. They can pass for ordinary people in most cases but must take care to hide their exposed brains and the wriggling worms within their flesh.

Secret. Wormhost surgeons are drawn to seek out and infest sapient victims, so intelligent creatures with veiled minds slip beneath the surgeons' notice.



LEGENDARY MONSTERS

THE BARROW KING

Undying Monarch of the Damned

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Armaments

The Barrow King is known only by the armies of Undead he commands, which all slumber in tombs and burial mounds. Wights and their zombie conscripts arise when trespassers violate the resting place of the king's army, and tales speak of a tide of death that will sweep across the world if the king himself should awaken. Records of the king's living exploits and identity are near nonexistent, but rumors abound, and the storm of stories and myths may conceal grains of truth.

Secret. The Barrow King's only true weakness is his name, written in the runic form of his lost native language. A weapon inscribed with his runic name becomes his bane.

BARROW KING'S LAIR

The Barrow King's lair is his burial mound and the surrounding region of resting places for his vast army.

The region containing the Barrow King's lair is changed by his presence, creating the following effects:

EMPIRE OF DESECRATION. A *Hallow* spell cast within 1 mile of the lair fails, but any resources used to cast it aren't wasted.

NECROTIC SHROUD. When a living creature within 1 mile of the lair regains Hit Points as part of finishing a Long Rest, it can only regain up to half its Hit Point maximum.

If the Barrow King dies or moves his lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE BARROW KING

Large Undead, Lawful Evil

AC 20 **Initiative** +16 (26)
HP 414 (36d10 + 216)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	24	+7	+7	DEX	14	+2	+9	CON	22	+6	+6
INT	16	+3	+3	WIS	18	+4	+11	CHA	24	+7	+7

Skills Intimidation +14, Perception +11
Resistances Cold, Fire, Lightning
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned, Stunned
Gear Plate Armor, Shield
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 21
Languages Common
CR 22 (XP 41,000, or 50,000 in lair; PB +7)

Traits

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Lair). If the king fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The king has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Marshall Undead. Undead creatures of the king's choice (excluding himself) in a 60-foot Emanation originating from him have Advantage on attack rolls and saving throws. He can't use this trait if he has the Incapacitated condition.

Name of Rest. The king has AC 10 against attack rolls made with a weapon inscribed with the runic form of his original name, and the king has Disadvantage on attack rolls made against a creature holding such a weapon.

Actions

Multiattack. The king makes three Soul Blade attacks. He can replace one attack with a use of Life Drain.

Soul Blade. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +14, reach 5 ft. or range 40/80 ft. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) Slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) Necrotic damage. *Hit or Miss:* The blade magically returns to the king's hand immediately after a ranged attack.

Life Drain. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 22, one creature within 5 feet. *Failure:* 16 (2d8 + 7) Necrotic damage, and the target's Hit Point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the damage taken.

A Humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a Wight under the king's control, unless the Humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed.

Blade Storm (Recharge 5–6). The king's blade flies in a deadly arc around him. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 22, each creature of the king's choice in a 20-foot Emanation originating from him. *Failure:* A creature takes 35 (10d6) Force damage and has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Undying Mount (Recharge 5–6). The king casts *Phantom Steed*, requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability. The conjured steed takes no damage from areas of effect. The spell ends early if the king casts it again.

Reactions

Parry. *Trigger:* The king is hit by an attack roll while holding a weapon or shield. *Response:* The king adds 7 to his AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the king can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The king regains all expended uses at the start of each of his turns.

Death Grasp. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 22, one creature the king can see within 100 feet. *Failure:* A ghostly, skeletal arm pulls the target up to 40 feet closer to the king, and the target's Speed is halved until the end of its next turn.

Grim Charge. The king moves up to his Speed (or commands his mount to move up to its Speed) and makes one Soul Blade attack.

Lord's Call. The king magically summons two **Wights** into unoccupied spaces he can see within 30 feet of himself. The wights obey the king and take their turn immediately after him on the same Initiative count. A wight vanishes after 1 hour, when it or the king dies, or when the king uses this action again. A creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of a wight must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn. The king can't use this action again until the start of his next turn.

THE BEAST OF BLIGHT

Manifestation of Rot and Decay

Habitat: Forest, Swamp; **Treasure:** Relics

The Beast of Blight was once known as Farryn of the Greenwood, a druidic protector of the natural cycle who delved into forbidden lore to save her dead lover. Her love was virtuous, but in the end, it caused nothing but pain. Rot overtook the druid, and she is now a monstrous being that spreads and thrives on decay. The Beast of Blight moves effortlessly through decay and spews putrid spores when roused to anger.

Secret. Buried deep within the Beast of Blight, a tiny fragment of Farryn still exists. If shown an image of her lost love, the ignited memory will burn away the rot.

THE BEAST OF BLIGHT'S LAIR

The Beast of Blight's lair is a cave in the heart of a rotten forest where blight creeps endlessly forth.

The region containing the Beast of Blight's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

FOULING BLIGHT. Within 6 miles of the lair, ability checks made to forage for food or water have Disadvantage, and magic that creates food or water only produces half the normal amount.

RAPID DECAY. Within 1 mile of the lair, objects that aren't worn or carried have Vulnerability to Necrotic damage, and the length of time in which a dead creature can be brought back to life is halved.

If the Beast of Blight dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE BEAST OF BLIGHT

Gargantuan Fey, Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +12 (22)
HP 155 (10d20 + 50)
Speed 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	24	+7	+7	DEX	18	+4	+4	CON	21	+5	+5
INT	7	−2	−2	WIS	12	+1	+5	CHA	13	+1	+5

Skills Arcana +6, Athletics +11, Perception +9
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

Traits

Blighted Overgrowth. While the beast is Bloodied, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls, its Spew Blight action recharges at the start of its turn, and if it has at least 1 Hit Point at the start of its turn, it regains 20 Hit Points. If it takes Fire damage, it doesn't regain Hit Points at the start of its next turn.

Fungal Step. The beast ignores Difficult Terrain caused by plants or fungi.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the beast fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Unraveled Longing. If the beast can see the likeness of its long-lost love at the start of its turn, the beast takes 10 Psychic damage and has Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The beast makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) Slashing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 17) from one of two claws. If the beast moved at least 20 feet immediately before the hit, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) Poison damage.

Project Image. The beast casts the *Project Image* spell, requiring no spell components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability. During the spell's duration, the beast can use its Spew Blight action and Rot Stride Bonus Action as if it were in the image's space.

Spew Blight (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* 18 (4d8) Necrotic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it automatically succeeds. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Rot Stride. The beast teleports to an unoccupied space within 60 feet. Either its starting or destination space must contain fungus or rotting organic matter.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the beast can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The beast regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Hallucinate. The beast exhales hallucinatory spores. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature within 60 feet. *Failure:* The target is affected by the *Confusion* spell until the start of the beast's next turn. *Failure or Success:* The beast can't use this action again until the start of its next turn.

Impale. The beast impales a creature it is grappling on one of its exposed ribs (it can have two creatures impaled at a time). *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 19, one creature the beast is grappling. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Piercing damage, and the target now has the Grappled condition (escape DC 17) from an impaling rib, and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The beast can't use this action again until the start of its next turn.

Trample. The beast moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks. A Large or smaller creature in a space the beast enters must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or have the Prone condition.

THE BRIMSTONE BEHEMOTH

Apocalyptic Colossus of Hellfire

Habitat: Planar (Lower Planes), Underground;
Treasure: None

The emergence of the Brimstone Behemoth means armageddon for whatever realm it erupts into. A Fiend as old as time itself, it is made of hellfire, brimstone, and dying worlds. It has a malevolent will that seeks only to bring about mass extinction and apocalypse. The only hope for many civilizations has been through the regular willing sacrifice of citizens to slow or delay the inevitable doom to come.

Secret. If a soul willingly perishes in flame or lava to ensure the behemoth's demise, the Fiend will find its flame quenched.

THE BRIMSTONE BEHEMOTH'S LAIR

The Brimstone Behemoth's lair is a vast underground cavern filled with magma, flames, and smoke. Once this colossus awakens, the crater that its cavern becomes serves as its lair.

The region containing the Brimstone Behemoth's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

RELENTLESS BLAZE. Within 10 miles of the lair, flames become driven to spread and consume. Every hour, contained fires in that area have a 10 percent chance of spreading to a flammable object within 10 feet. Uncontained fires spread out of control in 10 minutes.

TENACIOUS LAVA. A creature that takes damage from lava within 1 mile of the lair starts burning, and it takes 1d6 Fire damage instead of 1d4 when it burns.

If the Brimstone Behemoth dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE BRIMSTONE BEHEMOTH

Gargantuan Fiend, Chaotic Evil

AC 22 **Initiative** +16 (26)
HP 468 (24d20 + 216)
Speed 60 ft., Burrow 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	30	+10	+10	Dex	10	+0	+8	Con	28	+9	+9
Int	18	+4	+12	Wis	16	+3	+11	Cha	26	+8	+8

Skills Arcana +12, Perception +11, Survival +11
Resistances Cold, Lightning
Immunities Fire, Poison; Charmed, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 21
Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 25 (XP 75,000, or 90,000 in lair; PB +8)

Traits

Burning Sacrifice. If a creature willingly sacrifices its life in fire or lava for the purpose of defeating the behemoth, the creature can't be returned to life by any means. For the next 24 hours, the behemoth has Disadvantage on D20 Tests, its Speed is halved, it has Vulnerability to Radiant damage, and it loses its Legendary Resistance trait.

Consuming Flame. When the behemoth deals Fire damage, it can choose to deal Necrotic damage instead.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Lair). If the behemoth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The behemoth has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Siege Monster. The behemoth deals double damage to objects and structures.

Tunneler. The behemoth can burrow through solid rock at half its Burrow Speed and leaves a 20-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

Actions

Multiattack. The behemoth makes one Bite attack, and it makes two Claw or Blazing Boulder attacks in any combination.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +18, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 26 (3d10 + 10) Slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) Fire damage, and the target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 20). Until the grapple ends, the target has the Restrained condition.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +18, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 10) Slashing damage plus 5 (1d10) Fire damage.

Blazing Boulder. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +18, range 150 ft. *Hit:* 15 (1d10 + 10) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Fire damage, and the target has the Prone condition.

Cataclysmic Spellcasting (1/Day). The Brimstone Behemoth casts *Earthquake* and *Meteor Swarm*, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 24).

Reactions

Hellish Rebuke. The behemoth casts *Hellish Rebuke* in response to that spell's trigger, using the same spellcasting ability as Cataclysmic Spellcasting.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the behemoth can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The behemoth regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Fire Rain. The behemoth makes one Blazing Boulder attack.

Lava Well. The behemoth causes lava to cover the ground in its space and in any unoccupied spaces in any tunnels it left by burrowing within 100 feet. A creature that touches the lava for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in the lava takes 55 (10d10) Fire damage. A creature takes this damage only once per round. The lava cools and hardens after 1 hour or when the behemoth uses this action again. The behemoth can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Trample. The behemoth moves up to half its Speed, and it makes one Claw attack. On a hit, if the target is a creature, it has the Prone condition.

THE CHAINED REAPER

Burdened Harbinger of Death

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Armaments, Relics

The Chained Reaper is all that remains of a once-noble orc caretaker of the departed called Yorgrim. Having been corrupted by the mists of death known as the Shroud, the Chained Reaper is a being of hatred and bitterness, striving to cremate all living things in its balefire before binding them in chains of anguish.

Secret. The Chained Reaper carries a memorial stone upon its back. If one can read aloud the names inscribed there, their purity will burn away the reaper's fury.

THE CHAINED REAPER'S LAIR

The Chained Reaper's lair is a mausoleum holding its own empty grave and those of its former companions.

The region containing the Chained Reaper's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

CHAINED VITALITY. A creature that isn't a Construct or Undead that finishes a Long Rest within 1 mile of the lair must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its Hit Point maximum reduced by 5 (to a minimum of 1 HP).

FALLING SHROUD. Thin mist arises within 1 mile of the lair. Undead with the Incorporeal Movement trait in that area have Advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

If the Chained Reaper dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE CHAINED REAPER

Gargantuan Undead, Chaotic Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +10 (20)
HP 201 (13d20 + 65)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 60 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	16	+3	+7	CHA	20	+5	+9

Skills Nature +4, Perception +7, Survival +7
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Necrotic, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Orc
CR 11 (XP 7,200; PB +4)

Traits

Ancestral Shame. If a creature that can speak Orc within 30 feet of the reaper takes an action to read aloud the names carved in the stone on the reaper's back, the reaper takes 20 Radiant damage.

Ethereal Sight. The reaper can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane.

Incorporeal Movement. The reaper can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the reaper fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The reaper makes one Balefire Scythe attack and one Chain attack, and it uses either Chain Slam or Fling.

Balefire Scythe. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Necrotic damage, and the target begins burning. It takes Necrotic damage instead of Fire damage while burning in this way.

Chain. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 20 ft. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) Piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15) from one of four chains.

Chain Slam. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature Grappled by the reaper. *Failure:* 9 (1d8 + 5) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Stunned condition until the start of the reaper's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Etherealness. The reaper casts the *Etherealness* spell, requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability. The reaper is visible on the Material Plane while on the Border Ethereal and vice versa, but it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Fling. The reaper throws a Large or smaller creature Grappled by it to a space it can see within 30 feet of itself that isn't in the air. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, the creature thrown and each creature in the destination space. *Failure:* 9 (2d8) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the reaper can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The reaper regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Balefire Scythe. The reaper makes one Balefire Scythe attack. The reaper can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Drift. The reaper moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Lantern Flare. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature of the reaper's choice in a 20-foot Emanation originating from it. *Failure:* The target has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

THE CRIMSON ABBOT

Unholy Crusader of Blood

Habitat: Hill, Mountain, Urban; **Treasure:** Relics

In life, the Crimson Abbot was a virtuous crusader named Sir Marius Renathyr but was seduced by the sweet whispers of an archdevil of deceit and pride who masqueraded as a goddess of righteousness. On the brink of death, the abbot accepted the whispered offer for eternal life, and in so doing, was transformed into a creature of unbearable pride with an unquenchable thirst for blood. He continues to work in the name of his "goddess" and has gathered a fanatically loyal congregation eager for his promise of pure, everlasting life.

Secret. The Crimson Abbot's pride is nearly unshakable, but seeing a true reminder of the righteous man he once was can crack his façade.

THE CRIMSON ABBOT'S LAIR

The Crimson Abbot's lair is a blood-soaked monastery where unworthy mortals are burned in sacrifice, and vampire minions study truths hidden in blood.

The region containing the Crimson Abbot's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

FRESH BLOOD. Within 1 mile of the lair, spilled blood doesn't dry out or coagulate, instead remaining fresh for 24 hours.

INCINERATE HERESY. Within 1 mile of the lair, when an enemy of the abbot's takes Fire damage, that creature starts burning until the end of its next turn.

If the Crimson Abbot dies or moves his lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE CRIMSON ABBOT

Large Undead (Paladin, Vampire), Lawful Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +8 (18)
HP 85 (9d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft., Fly 80 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+9	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+4	CHA	18	+4	+4

Skills Athletics +9, Insight +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +7
Immunities Necrotic; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened
Gear Half Plate Armor
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Elvish
CR 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

Traits

Honor Lost. If a creature takes a Bonus Action to present a memento or recite a reminder of the abbot's past and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the abbot has Disadvantage on the next D20 Test he makes before the start of the creature's next turn.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the abbot fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spider Climb. The abbot can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The abbot takes 20 Radiant damage if he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. The abbot makes two Sanguine Blade attacks. He can replace one attack with a use of Blood Call.

Sanguine Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) Slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage.

Blood Call. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature other than a Construct or Undead within 30 feet. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage, and the target's Hit Point maximum is reduced by the damage taken. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The abbot regains Hit Points equal to the damage taken. A Humanoid reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage and then buried rises the following sunset as a **Crimson Clergy** under the abbot's control.

Spellcasting. The abbot casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

At Will: *Command*, *Disguise Self* (can appear as a Medium Humanoid, 24-hour duration), *Thaumaturgy*
1/Day: *Word of Recall* (to lair only)

Reactions

Parry. *Trigger:* The abbot is hit by an attack roll while holding a weapon. *Response:* The abbot adds 3 to his AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the abbot can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The abbot regains all expended uses at the start of each of his turns.

Bloody Strike. The abbot moves up to half his Speed and makes one Sanguine Blade attack.

Castigate. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature within 60 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition and repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

Overwhelm. The abbot casts *Command*. He can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.



THE DUSK MOTHER

Shade of Motherly Anguish

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Any

The keening wail of a mother is unmistakable and haunting, and the legends that tell of the Dusk Mother barely scratch the surface of her terrifying existence. She carries a pair of oversized shears and a great bell she tolls to accompany her wailing. Her eternal torment stems from her children, who met their fate due to the Dusk Mother's negligence—or perhaps her wrath. Now she cries in shame for that loss as she searches for her children, or for souls to claim and fashion into dolls in a futile attempt to fill the void in her doomed soul.

Secret. The Dusk Mother's only true weakness or fear is the remnants of her children—some trinket or toy they played with in life or, more chillingly, their spirits, which also wander the world, but never in the same place as their mother's shade.

THE DUSK MOTHER'S LAIR

The Dusk Mother's lair is a home or other place in a settlement where tragedy struck, most often those involving children or families broken by loss.

The region containing the Dusk Mother's lair is changed by her presence, creating the following effects:

ENDURING DIRGE. Within 1 mile of the lair, creatures with an Intelligence score higher than 4 who can speak at least one language absently sing nursery rhymes or funeral songs without intending to.

THOUGHTS OF LOSS. Whenever a living creature within 1 mile of the lair finishes a Short Rest, it must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or it gains no benefit from the rest.

If the Dusk Mother dies or moves her lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE DUSK MOTHER

Large Undead, Neutral Evil

AC 19 **Initiative** +16 (26)
HP 315 (30d10 + 150)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 50 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	1	−5	−5	Dex	14	+2	+2	Con	20	+5	+5
Int	12	+1	+8	Wis	14	+2	+9	Cha	24	+7	+14

Skills Intimidation +14, Perception +9, Stealth +9
Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Necrotic, Poison, Psychic; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Stunned
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 19
Languages Understands all but can't speak
CR 24 (XP 62,000, or 75,000 in lair; PB +7)

Traits

Death's Shroud. The mother always has the Invisible condition. Blindsight, Truesight, and other effects that allow a creature to see Invisible creatures don't reveal the mother. A creature that has been reduced to 0 Hit Points at least once in its life can see her normally.

Incorporeal Movement. The mother can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Lair). If the mother fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The mother has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Steadfast Matron. Undead creatures of the mother's choice in a 60-foot Emanation originating from her (excluding herself) have Advantage on saving throws. She can't use this trait if she has the Incapacitated condition.

Undeniable Guilt. At the start of her turn, if the mother can see a possession once owned by her living children, or if she can see or hear the spirits of her children, she has the Incapacitated condition until the start of her next turn, and she must move as far from the object or spirits as possible.

Actions

Multiattack. The mother makes three Shears attacks.

Shears. *Melee Attack Roll:* +14, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) Force damage. If the target is a creature and is hit with two or more Shears attacks in the same turn, it gains 1 Exhaustion level.

Mournful Tolling (1/Day). The mother focuses her wail into her bell. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 22, each creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the mother (Constructs, Undead, and creatures that have ever been raised from the dead succeed automatically). *Failure:* 77 (14d10) Psychic damage that ignores the target's Resistance, if any, and the target has the Stunned condition until the end of the mother's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Bonus Actions

Soul Doll. The mother targets the corpse of a creature she killed within the last minute. The target's soul is drawn out and transforms into a ceramic doll of the creature. The doll is a Tiny object with AC 15, HP equal to half the creature's maximum Hit Points, Vulnerability to Thunder damage, and Immunity to Poison damage. The soul can dimly see and hear its surroundings, and creatures with telepathy can communicate with the soul. If the doll is destroyed, the soul arises from the doll as a **Shadow** under the mother's control. The creature can't be returned to life unless its soul is freed from the doll by a *Wish* spell, or by destroying the shadow it spawned.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the mother can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The mother regains all expended uses at the start of each of her turns.

Drift. The mother moves up to her Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks. When she enters a creature's space during this move, that creature takes 16 (3d10) Cold damage and has Disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn. A creature takes this damage only once per turn. The mother can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Endless Keening. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 22, each creature without the Deafened condition in a 30-foot Emanation originating from the mother (Constructs, Undead, and creatures that have ever been raised from the dead succeed automatically). *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Necrotic damage that ignores the target's Resistance, if any. *Failure by 5 or More:* The creature is reduced to 0 Hit Points. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* The mother can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Snip. The mother makes one Shears attack.

THE GALLOPING HEADSMAN

Headless Executioner of Vengeance

Habitat: Forest, Grassland, Hill, Urban;
Treasure: Armaments

The Galloping Headsman is a formidable combination of human and horse musculature fused with nightmarish magic and dark revenge. Gouts of flame burst from where its head and tail should be and dance dangerously along the edge of its massive two-headed axe. A burning, skull-shaped pumpkin floats eerily in one hand, its fiery visage a constantly shifting train of agonized faces.

Secret. The Galloping Headsman's original skull is its greatest weakness, and anyone holding the skull becomes the apparition's bane.

THE GALLOPING HEADSMAN'S LAIR

The Galloping Headsman's lair is the stretch of road that serves as the anchor point of the creature's search for vengeance.

The region containing the Galloping Headsman's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

ENCROACHING DOOM. Within 6 miles of the lair, an air of doom clings to creatures. Creatures have Disadvantage on saving throws made to avoid or end the Frightened condition that aren't caused by the Galloping Headsman.

INTERMINABLE JOURNEY. Paths warp and stretch within 6 miles of the lair. In that area, travel pace outside of combat is halved.

If the Galloping Headsman dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE GALLOPING HEADSMAN

Large Undead, Lawful Evil

AC 19 **Initiative** +15 (25)
HP 220 (21d10 + 105)
Speed 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	22	+6	+6	Dex	17	+3	+3	Con	20	+5	+5
Int	11	+0	+0	Wis	14	+2	+8	Cha	18	+4	+10

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +10, Perception +8
Vulnerabilities Damage dealt by a creature holding the headman's original skull
Resistances Necrotic
Immunities Fire, Poison; Charmed, Frightened, Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 18
Languages Common; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 18 (XP 20,000, or 22,000 in lair; PB +6)

Traits

Binding Skull. The headsman has Vulnerability to any damage dealt by a creature holding the headsman's original skull, and it has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls made against that creature.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Lair). If the headsman fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The headsman has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The headsman makes two Headsman's Axe attacks and one Hooves attack.

Headsman's Axe. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) Slashing damage plus 16 (3d10) Fire damage. If the target is a creature with at least one head and the headsman rolled a 20 on the attack roll, the target must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or it is decapitated and dies if it can't survive without a head. A target is immune to this effect if it takes none of the damage, has Legendary Actions, or is Huge or larger. Such a creature takes an extra 28 (8d6) Force damage from the hit.

Hooves. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 24 (4d8 + 6) Bludgeoning damage. If the headsman moved at least 20 feet immediately before the hit, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) Necrotic damage and has the Prone condition.

Flaming Skull (Recharge 5–6). The headsman hurls its skull, after which it reappears in the headsman's hand. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 20, each creature in a 90-foot-long, 10-foot-wide Line. *Failure:* 63 (14d8) Fire damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* The target starts burning.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the headsman can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The headsman regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Move. The headsman moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Rancorous Gaze. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature the headsman can see within 90 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition and repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Failure or Success:* The headsman can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Relentless Execution. The headsman makes one Headsman's Axe attack with Advantage. If the target has the Frightened condition, treat a 19 on the d20 as a 20. The headsman can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

THE GHOSTLIGHT LOCOMOTIVE

Corrupted Ghost Train

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** Any

The Ghostlight Locomotive is the engine of a phantom train that travels unseen between the realms of life and death, ferrying souls of the dead to their afterlife. During its normal operation, the locomotive burns doomed spirits for fuel and races along spectral, misty rails that appear as it travels, and it has little awareness beyond its crucial task.

Only a drastic event, such as the corruption of its soul-made fuel source, can turn the Ghostlight Locomotive from its endless duty, whereupon it stokes a consciousness of the innumerable souls it has burned and vents the fury of the damned upon any obstacles in its path. When pressed, the residue of wicked souls left from the burning of its corrupted fuel overwhelms the engine's amoral nature, driving it to malevolent and hateful destruction.

THE GHOSTLIGHT LOCOMOTIVE'S LAIR

The Ghostlight Locomotive's lair is a 1-mile-radius Emanation of shrouding mist originating from the locomotive. This mist doesn't extend within the cars of the *Ghostight Express* that the locomotive pulls.

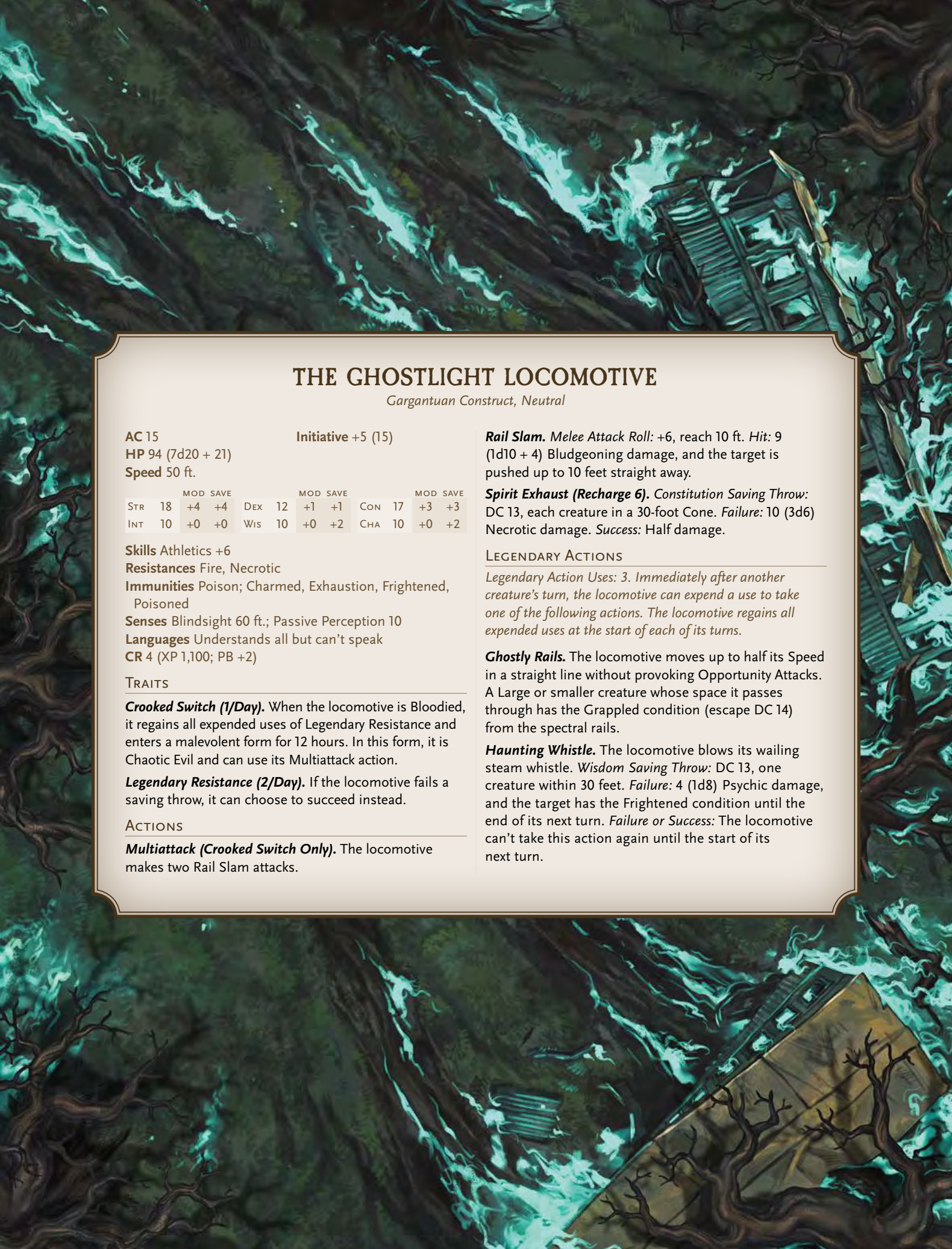
The region containing the Ghostlight Locomotive's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

GHASTLY SHROUD. When a creature that isn't Undead finishes a Short or Long Rest within 1 mile of the locomotive, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or any time it regains Hit Points, it only regains half the amount. This effect ends when the creature next finishes a Long Rest or receives a *Lesser Restoration* spell or similar magic.

SPIRIT CALLING. Within 1 mile of the locomotive, Hostile **Shrouded** and **Specters** are abundant and drawn to any creature that attacks the Ghostlight Locomotive or that tries to keep pace with, climb, or enter the *Ghostlight Express*.

If the Ghostlight Locomotive dies, these effects end immediately.





THE GHOSTLIGHT LOCOMOTIVE

Gargantuan Construct, Neutral

AC 15 **Initiative** +5 (15)
HP 94 (7d20 + 21)
Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	12	+1	+1	CON	17	+3	+3
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	10	+0	+2	CHA	10	+0	+2

Skills Athletics +6
Resistances Fire, Necrotic
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages Understands all but can't speak
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

Traits

Crooked Switch (1/Day). When the locomotive is Bloodied, it regains all expended uses of Legendary Resistance and enters a malevolent form for 12 hours. In this form, it is Chaotic Evil and can use its Multiattack action.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the locomotive fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack (Crooked Switch Only). The locomotive makes two Rail Slam attacks.

Rail Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) Bludgeoning damage, and the target is pushed up to 10 feet straight away.

Spirit Exhaust (Recharge 6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the locomotive can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The locomotive regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Ghostly Rails. The locomotive moves up to half its Speed in a straight line without provoking Opportunity Attacks. A Large or smaller creature whose space it passes through has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from the spectral rails.

Haunting Whistle. The locomotive blows its wailing steam whistle. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, one creature within 30 feet. *Failure:* 4 (1d8) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn. *Failure or Success:* The locomotive can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

THE GRINNING SINNER

Dealer of Jinxes

Habitat: Coastal, Swamp; **Treasure:** Any

Once the dashing pirate captain Briggsy Kratch, the crocodile-folk now known as the Grinning Sinner made a bargain for power with a spirit known as Snake Eye Jack. The sinner grew discontent with the power he was gifted and tricked Jack into a coffin before sealing him inside. Now the Grinning Sinner siphons his trapped patron's cursed power and makes bargains of his own to snare the souls of the desperate and foolish.

Secret. The Grinning Sinner holds his prowess and reputation as a fearsome and successful pirate captain above all; causing him to doubt his renown can turn his hexed magic against him.

THE GRINNING SINNER'S LAIR

The Grinning Sinner's lair is the derelict riverboat casino, the *Dead Man's Hand*.

The region containing the Grinning Sinner's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

FATE'S WHEEL. Within 1 mile of the lair, if the number rolled on a die to restore Hit Points is even, increase the number rolled by 1. If the number rolled is odd, reduce it by 1.

RUN OF BAD LUCK. Within 1 mile of the lair, a creature that rolls a 1 on a D20 Test must subtract 1d4 from its next D20 Test.

If the Grinning Sinner dies or moves his lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE GRINNING SINNER

Large Humanoid (Lizardfolk, Warlock), Neutral Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +11 (21)
HP 152 (16d10 + 64)
Speed 30 ft. (60 ft. while on coffin)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+8	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	19	+4	+4
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	20	+5	+9

Skills Arcana +10, Deception +9, Intimidation +9
Resistances Necrotic
Immunities Charmed
Senses Darkvision 120 ft. (unimpeded by magical Darkness); Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Infernal, Primordial (Aquan)
CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

Traits

Coffin Rider. The sinner has a magic coffin that has Immunity to all damage. While standing on the coffin, the sinner rides it on a ghostly wave of swamp water with a Speed of 60 feet and can move over liquids as if they were solid.

Curse Bottle. The sinner has a bottle that holds cursed magic. The bottle has AC 15, HP 25, and Immunity to all damage except Force. If the bottle is destroyed, the sinner can magically create a new one when he finishes a Long Rest.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the sinner fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Overweening Pride. As a Bonus Action, a creature can insult the sinner's skill and renown as a pirate captain. The sinner must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 Psychic damage and have Disadvantage on attack rolls against any target other than the creature.

Actions

Multiattack. The sinner makes two attacks, using Hex Grasp or Blunderbuss in any combination. He can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting to cast *Bane*.

Hex Grasp. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it is cursed until the start of the sinner's next turn, or until the sinner curses it in this way again. While cursed, the target has Disadvantage on attack rolls and on ability checks that rely on an ability of the sinner's choice.

Blunderbuss. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +9, range 30/90 ft. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) Force damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is pushed up to 10 feet straight away.

Curse Blast (Recharge 5–6). The sinner unleashes one of the following curses from his blunderbuss:

Jack's Anguish. A magenta wave fires out with a deep, wailing moan. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it automatically succeeds. *Success:* Half damage only.

Shadowy Friends. A wave of shadow coughs forth and wraps around foes. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in a 15-foot Cone. *Failure:* The target has the Paralyzed condition until the end of the sinner's next turn. If a Paralyzed target takes damage, the condition ends early.

Spellcasting (Requires Curse Bottle). The sinner casts one of the following spells using his Curse Bottle (and no other Material components) and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At Will: *Bane*, *Bestow Curse*, *Major Image*, *Remove Curse*
1/Day Each: *Animate Dead*, *Creation*, *Darkness*

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the sinner can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The sinner regains all expended uses at the start of each of his turns.

Barbed Curse. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 17, one creature cursed by the sinner or affected by his *Bane* spell within 30 feet. *Failure:* 6 (1d12) Force damage.

Grinning Grasp. The sinner teleports to an unoccupied space he can see within 30 feet. He makes one Hex Grasp attack before or after teleporting and can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Jinxed Ground. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature within a 20-foot Emanation originating from the sinner. *Failure:* The target has the Prone condition. *Failure or Success:* The sinner can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

THE HARVEST TERROR

Demon of Secrets and Despair

Habitat: Grassland, Planar (Abyss); **Treasure:** Implements

Once a jovial soul imbued into the body of a scarecrow called Ol' Jericho Sticks, the Harvest Terror is now a nightmarish abomination. It is a mockery of demonic flesh molded in the shape of a crow-like scarecrow. Its twisted body is made of molding wicker with four tattered, black-feathered wings sprouting from its back. An oversized corvid head with amber eyes sits upon its broad shoulders, its dark beak a jagged mess, and it wields a chipped, wicked scythe covered in old blood. Forever hungry, the Harvest Terror feeds on secrets and those that keep them.

Secret. The soul of Ol' Jericho Sticks still exists in the dark recesses of the Harvest Terror's mind. Singing or playing Jericho's favorite song tips the balance of control over Jericho's stolen body.

THE HARVEST TERROR'S LAIR

The Harvest Terror's lair is the extraplanar corn maze known as the Fields of the Crow.

The region containing the Harvest Terror's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

AMBER EYES. Within 1 mile of the lair, amber-eyed crows watch everything. Enemies of the Harvest Terror have Disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in the region.

SPILLED SECRETS. Within 1 mile of the lair, creatures other than the Harvest Terror have Disadvantage on Charisma (Deception) checks made to keep secrets.

If the Harvest Terror dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE HARVEST TERROR

Large Fiend (Demon), Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +10 (20)
HP 105 (10d10 + 50)
Speed 30 ft., Fly 90 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+4	DEX	19	+4	+7	CON	20	+5	+8
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	15	+2	+2	CHA	18	+4	+4

Skills Deception +10, Perception +8, Stealth +7
Resistances Cold, Fire, Lightning
Immunities Poison; Charmed (except for its Unraveling Song trait), Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 18
Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

Traits

Demonic Mimicry. The terror can mimic voices and sounds it has heard. A listener can discern the mimicry for what it is with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the terror fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The terror has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Unraveling Song. As an Influence action, a creature can play or sing Jericho Sticks' favorite song, "Coal-Eyed Birds," to give the terror the Charmed condition until the end of the creature's next turn. The condition ends early if the creature damages the terror or forces it to make a saving throw.

Actions

Multiattack. The terror makes one Claw attack and one Scythe attack.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) Slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

Scythe. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Psychic damage.

Dirge of Secrets (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature within a 30-foot Emanation originating from the terror. *Failure:* The creature takes 11 (2d10) Psychic damage and has Disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls. At the end of each of its turns, it repeats the save, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the terror can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The terror regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Averting Winds. The terror casts the *Wind Wall* spell (which can't appear in a creature's space), requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability.

Crow's Swoop. The terror moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Devour Secrets. The terror's beak gapes and devours secrets. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 20-foot Emanation originating from the terror (with Disadvantage if the target has given up one of its secrets to the terror). *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Psychic damage, and the target's Speed is 0 until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The terror can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

THE HORNED KING

Sin Made Manifest

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Lower Planes); **Treasure:** Any

Every sinful, selfish action in the world pours a fraction of itself into the Horned King, a being composed of every mortal who has surrendered to temptation. Fortunately, under normal circumstances, the Horned King exists as an ephemeral spirit with no physical presence. During times of upheaval, when a great many mortals give in to their selfish desires or when another power—such as a deity, demon lord, or archfey—interferes, the Horned King is made manifest, and with it comes the weight of sin flooding back into the world that created it.

THE HORNED KING'S LAIR

The Horned King's lair is the forest clearing where a twisted tree focuses the malevolent will that gave rise to the king's physical presence.

The region containing the Horned King's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

SWEET TEMPTATION. Within 1 mile of the lair, a creature that acts on a sinful impulse to the detriment of a Friendly or Indifferent creature increases its Hit Point maximum and current Hit Points by 10 until it finishes a Long Rest. Creatures are aware of this effect. This can't occur again until the creature finishes a Long Rest.

TENACIOUS CURSES. Within 1 mile of the lair, saving throws against curses have Disadvantage.

If the Horned King dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE HORNED KING

Gargantuan Fiend, Neutral Evil

AC 19 **Initiative** +14 (24)
HP 217 (14d20 + 70)
Speed 50 ft., Fly 100 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	22	+6	+12	Dex	14	+2	+2	Con	20	+5	+11
Int	10	+0	+0	Wis	10	+0	+6	Cha	22	+6	+6

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +12, Perception +12
Resistances Cold, Fire
Immunities Poison, Psychic; Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 22
Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 17 (XP 18,000; PB +6)

Traits

Enduring Restoration. If the Horned King dies, its body disappears in a cloud of ash. It becomes an intangible, Invisible spirit in its home forest, and it can't reform a new physical body for 10d10 years.

Legendary Resistance (5/Day). If the Horned King fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The Horned King has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The Horned King makes three Cursed Strike attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Terrorizing Breath.

Cursed Strike. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12 (against a cursed target, scores a Critical Hit on a 19 or 20 on the d20), reach 10 ft. Hit: 17 (2d10 + 6) Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage (Horned King's choice) plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it is cursed until the end of the Horned King's next turn. While cursed, it must subtract 1d4 from D20 Tests.

Breath of Corruption (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Necrotic damage plus 21 (6d6) Psychic damage, and the target gains 1 Exhaustion level that ends at the end of the target's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Terrorizing Breath. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 19, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition. It repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

Bonus Actions

Sense Desire. The Horned King casts *Detect Thoughts*, requiring no spell components and using Charisma for the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 20).

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the Horned King can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The Horned King regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Taste of Wickedness. The Horned King's snakelike tongue whips out hungrily. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 20, one cursed creature the Horned King can see within 15 feet. *Failure:* The target takes 16 (3d10) Psychic damage, the Horned King regains Hit Points equal to the damage taken, and one curse of the Horned King's choice affecting the target ends.

Temptation. The Horned King speaks to a creature it can see within 120 feet and offers it either Heroic Inspiration or to restore 20 of its Hit Points. If the creature accepts, it gains that benefit but is cursed for 1 minute. While cursed, the Horned King has Resistance to all damage the target deals. The Horned King can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Trample. The Horned King moves up to half its Speed, and it makes one Cursed Strike attack.The Horned King can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

THE JINXED LEVIATHAN

Curse-Wrought Swamp Monster

Habitat: Coastal, Swamp; **Treasure:** Arcana

Once a normal alligator that dwelled in a cursed swamp, the Jinxed Leviathan was warped by the strange hexes and twisted spells of nefarious magicians who sought to defeat the deathly spirit known as Snake Eye Jack. Growing to colossal proportions and infusing with the essence of misfortune itself, the Monstrosity could not be controlled and devoured its makers. Now, it lurks in the still, black water of hexed bayous, always seeking its next meal, upon which it unleashes its jinxcraft before feasting.

Secret. An idol of the fabled deal maker Snake Eye Jack that has been blessed by one of Jack's followers can turn the Jinxed Leviathan's own cursed power against it.

THE JINXED LEVIATHAN'S LAIR

The Jinxed Leviathan's lair is a cursed swamp steeped in confounding magic.

The region containing the Jinxed Leviathan's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

HANGING HEX. Within 1 mile of the lair, when a creature other than the Jinxed Leviathan rolls a 1 or a 20 on a D20 Test, the next D20 Test the creature makes has Disadvantage, and it can't have Advantage.

MURKY WATERS. Within 1 mile of the lair, swamp water is cloudy and shows fleeting faces in the murk. Creatures in the water have Advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

If the Jinxed Leviathan dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE JINXED LEVIATHAN

Gargantuan Monstrosity, Unaligned

AC 21 **Initiative** +16 (26)
HP 437 (25d20 + 175)
Speed 40 ft., Swim 80 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	30	+10	+17	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	25	+7	+14
INT	6	−2	−2	WIS	12	+1	+8	CHA	21	+5	+5

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +9
Resistances Force, Necrotic
Immunities Frightened
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 18
Languages Understands Draconic but can't speak
CR 23 (XP 50,000, or 62,000 in lair; PB +7)

Traits

Amphibious. The leviathan can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Lair). If the leviathan fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Returned Curse. If the leviathan curses a creature holding an idol of Snake Eye Jack blessed by one of his devoted followers, the creature is unaffected by the curse. The leviathan then takes 20 Radiant damage and has Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the end of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The leviathan makes one Bite attack and one Tail attack.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +17, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 23 (2d12 + 10) Piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) Force damage. The target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 20), and until the grapple ends, the target has the Restrained condition.

Tail. *Melee Attack Roll:* +17, reach 20 ft. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 10) Bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition and is pushed up to 20 feet straight away from the leviathan.

Accursed Breath (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 22, each creature in a 120-foot-long, 10-foot-wide Line. *Failure:* 78 (12d12) Necrotic damage, and the target is cursed. The cursed target has Disadvantage on D20 Tests and can't regain Hit Points. The target can end the curse early if it voluntarily fails a saving throw forced by one of its enemies. *Success:* Half damage only.

Swallow. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 25, one Large or smaller creature Grappled by the leviathan (it can have up to four creatures swallowed at a time). *Failure:* The target is swallowed and no longer Grappled. A swallowed creature has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the leviathan, and takes 24 (7d6) Force damage at the start of each of its turns.

If the leviathan takes 50 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the leviathan must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, each of which falls in a space within 10 feet of the leviathan and has the Prone condition. If the leviathan dies, any swallowed creature no longer has the Restrained condition and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting Prone.

Reactions

Jinxed Hide. *Trigger:* A creature within 60 feet of the leviathan hits it with an attack roll or targets it with a spell. *Response:* The triggering creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become cursed until the end of its next turn. The cursed creature has Disadvantage on D20 Tests and can't regain Hit Points.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the leviathan can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The leviathan regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Devour. The leviathan uses Swallow.

Swamp Surge. The leviathan causes a swell of muddy water and grasping roots. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 20, each creature in a 20-foot Emanation originating from the leviathan. Failure: 21 (6d6) Bludgeoning damage, and the target's Speed is 0 until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The leviathan can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Tail Sweep. The leviathan moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks and makes one Tail attack.

THE LORD OF FOOLS

Fiendish Master of Revels

Habitat: Planar (Lower Planes), Urban; **Treasure:** Any

The Lord of Fools is the embodiment of revelry, cherishing amusement at any cost. He most often leads a procession of revelers of song, revelers of stories, and heralds of fools, compelling townsfolk and travelers to join their celebration to the exclusion of all other concerns. Many of these celebrants dance, drink, and make merry until they drop—sometimes dead! The Lord of Fools laughs all the louder and longer at their demise.

Secret. The Lord of Fools thrives on laughter and amusement, so when someone doesn't react accordingly to one of his japes, he becomes enraged at that creature to the exclusion of others.

THE LORD OF FOOLS' LAIR

The Lord of Fools' lair is the Fool's Revel carnival.

The region containing the Lord of Fools' lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

EMPTY TREATS. Within 1 mile of the lair, carnival snack food is abundant even in unlikely places. The food is delicious but offers no sustenance. A creature that eats the food can't feel the effects of starvation (though they still suffer the effects) for 24 hours.

PRATFALLS. Within 1 mile of the lair, ability checks or saving throws made to avoid the Prone condition have Disadvantage.

If the Lord of Fools dies or moves his lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE LORD OF FOOLS

Huge Fiend, Chaotic Evil

AC 16 **Initiative** +13 (23)
HP 190 (20d12 + 60)
Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+5	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	16	+3	+3	WIS	14	+2	+7	CHA	23	+6	+11

Skills Deception +11, Intimidation +11, Perception +7, Performance +11
Immunities Poison; Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 17
Languages All; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 13 (XP 10,000; PB +5)

Traits

Bitter Medicine. As a Bonus Action, a creature can dismiss or belittle the lord's attempts at humor. If the creature succeeds on a DC 16 Charisma (Deception) check, the lord has Disadvantage on attack rolls against any target other than that creature until the start of the creature's next turn.

Infinite Jest. The lord creates an illusion of a Small Humanoid jester in his space. While he doesn't have the Incapacitated condition, the lord can move the image up to 60 feet during his turn (no action required). The lord can perceive and speak through this image as if he were in the image's space. The image is insubstantial, but it can manipulate objects as if it has a Strength of 10.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the lord fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Reactive. The lord can take one Reaction on every turn of combat.

Actions

Multiattack. The lord makes two attacks, using Ribbon or Joy Buzzer in any combination. If the lord has cast *Project Image*, he can make melee Joy Buzzer attacks from the image's space.

Ribbon. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Slashing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15) from one of six ribbons. It has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Joy Buzzer. The lord's Infinite Jest illusion moves to a target within range. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 24 (3d12 + 5) Lightning damage, and the target can't take Reactions until the end of the lord's next turn. *Hit or Miss:* The jester vanishes and reappears in the lord's space.

Exploding Pie (Recharge 5–6). The lord throws a massive pie that explodes in corrosive custard. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point the lord can see within 100 feet. *Failure:* 16 (3d10) Acid damage, and the target has the Blinded condition until the end of the lord's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Spellcasting. The lord casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At Will: *Hideous Laughter*, *Project Image* (appears as a Small Humanoid jester), *Vicious Mockery* (4d6 Psychic damage)
1/Day Each: *Irresistible Dance*, *Magnificent Mansion*

Bonus Actions

Ribbon Step. The lord vanishes in a burst of confetti and ribbons and teleports to an unoccupied space he can see within 30 feet.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the lord can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The lord regains all expended uses at the start of each of his turns.

Frolic. The lord moves up to half his Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks, during which he can move through other creature's spaces without expending extra movement to do so. A creature whose space the lord enters takes 7 (2d6) Psychic damage. A creature takes this damage only once per turn.

Joke's on You. The lord uses Spellcasting to cast either *Irresistible Dance* or *Vicious Mockery*.

Ribbon Dance. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 18, each creature the lord is grappling. *Failure:* 22 (4d10) Bludgeoning damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* The lord can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

THE TALL MAN

Murderous Archfey of the Dark Wood

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Fey); **Treasure:** Implements

The Tall Man is a mysterious entity that haunts an accursed forest. Once, he was an archfey who ruled a now-forgotten court, renowned for its dances that lasted for nights on end. Doomed now to walk his rotting forest, the Tall Man finds pleasure where he can by tempting travelers and forest denizens alike to play hide and seek with him—with deadly results.

Secret. Dancing forgotten steps once performed in the fey court that the Tall Man formerly ruled shreds his being.

THE TALL MAN'S LAIR

The Tall Man's lair is the dark forest he now haunts, where his forgotten Fey court once thrived.

The region containing the Tall Man's lair is changed by his presence, creating the following effects:

DEEPENING SHADOWS. Within 1 mile of the lair, shadows stretch far beyond what they should. Creatures can find a sufficiently shadowy spot to hide in, even without cover, 50 percent of the time.

TOO QUIET. Sounds are muffled within 1 mile of the lair, halving the distance at which sounds can be heard.

If the Tall Man dies or moves his lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE TALL MAN

Huge Fey, Chaotic Evil

AC 18 **Initiative** +18 (28)
HP 322 (28d12 + 140)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+10	DEX	22	+6	+6	CON	20	+5	+11
INT	18	+4	+4	WIS	16	+3	+9	CHA	20	+5	+11

Skills Acrobatics +12, Perception +15, Stealth +18
Immunities Psychic; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 25
Languages Common, Sylvan; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 20 (XP 25,000, or 33,000 in lair; PB +6)

Traits

Legendary Resistance (4/Day, or 5/Day in Lair). If the Tall Man fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The Tall Man has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Memory's Dance. As a Bonus Action, a creature can perform some steps from a dance of the Tall Man's court and make a DC 20 Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, the Tall Man takes 20 Force damage and has Disadvantage on D20 Tests until the start of the creature's next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The Tall Man makes two Claw attacks and uses Spellcasting to cast *Vicious Mockery* (4d6 Psychic damage).

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +12, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) Slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) Psychic damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from one of two claws, and has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Spellcasting. The Tall Man casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At Will: *Invisibility*, *Minor Illusion*, *Vicious Mockery* (4d6 Psychic damage)

2/Day: *Darkness*

Bonus Actions

Elusive Disguise. The Tall Man magically transforms into a Small or Medium Humanoid, or back to his true form. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying changes to accommodate his new form. He can take on any features he chooses, but he is always unnaturally tall for whatever guise he takes. He returns to his true form if he dies.

Reactions

Evasive Blink. *Trigger:* The Tall Man takes damage. *Response:* The Tall Man has Resistance to the triggering damage and teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the Tall Man can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The Tall Man regains all expended uses at the start of each of his turns.

Spellcasting. The Tall Man uses Spellcasting.

Strike. The Tall Man makes one Claw attack, then can't take this action again until the start of his next turn.

Teleport. The Tall Man teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see. When he teleports, he can force a creature he is grappling to succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or teleport with him, appearing in the closest unoccupied space to the Tall Man's destination.

THE VERMINTOLL ABOMINATION

Verminous Coven Amalgamation

Habitat: Forest, Planar (Fey), Mountain, Urban; **Treasure:** Any

The magic that binds hag covens together is far more powerful than many spellcasters can fully comprehend. Vermintoll abominations come about when the magics of a centipede hag, a pigeon hag, and a weasel hag enmesh and fuse the witches into one mass, bound to their cauldron.

THE VERMINTOLL ABOMINATION'S LAIR

The Vermintoll Abomination's lair is a decrepit hideaway, often hidden in plain sight such as an attic, basement, or a seized home.

The region containing the Vermintoll Abomination's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

ENDLESS VERMIN. Within 1 mile of the lair, **Giant Centipedes**, **Giant Weasels**, and pigeons (use the **Raven** stat block) are common nuisances. They steal Tiny objects and befoul food.

LOYAL DWELLING. The lair itself, including any greater structure or complex it resides within, rejects intruders. Ability checks to pick locks or find secret doors have Disadvantage.

If the Vermintoll Abomination dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.





THE VERMINTOLL ABOMINATION

Large Fey, Chaotic Evil

AC 17 **Initiative** +12 (22)
HP 178 (21d10 + 63)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+4	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+8
INT	17	+3	+3	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	20	+5	+10

Skills Arcana +8, Intimidation +10, Perception +6
Resistances Psychic
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Infernal, Primordial (Auran), Sylvan
CR 14 (XP 11,500; PB +5)

Traits

Legendary Resistance (4/Day). If the abomination fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The abomination has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Multiple Heads. The abomination has three heads: a centipede hag's, a pigeon hag's, and a weasel hag's. Whenever the abomination takes 50 damage or more on a single turn, one of its heads dies (determined randomly). The abomination dies if all its heads are dead. At the end of each of its turns, if it has at least 1 Hit Point and any of its heads are dead, the abomination regains 20 Hit Points and one of its dead heads returns to life.

Actions

Multiattack. The abomination makes three attacks, using Cauldron Slam or Brew Spray in any combination.

Cauldron Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) Acid damage.

Brew Spray. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, range 90 ft. *Hit:* 20 (4d8 + 2) Acid damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to AC until the end of the abomination's next turn.

Spellcasting. The abomination casts one of the following spells, requiring no Material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):

At will: *Dispel Magic*, *Hypnotic Pattern*
1/Day Each: *Contagion*, *Dream*, *Dominate Person*

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the abomination can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The abomination regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Corrosive Teleport. The abomination teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, each creature in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the abomination at its destination space. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Acid damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Crushing Leap. The abomination jumps to a space within 30 feet that contains one or more Large or smaller creatures. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 17, each creature in the abomination's destination space. *Failure:* 15 (2d10 + 4) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only, and the target is pushed 5 feet straight away from the abomination. *Failure or Success:* The abomination can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Hag's Head. The abomination uses one of the following options (if the necessary head is alive); it can't use that option again until the start of its next turn:

Contagious Miasma (Centipede Hag Head). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature the abomination can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* The target takes 13 (3d8) Poison damage and has the Poisoned condition. While Poisoned, it can't regain Hit Points. The target repeats the saving throw when it finishes a Long Rest, ending the effect on itself on a success. *Success:* Half damage only.

Overwhelming Doubt (Pigeon Hag Head). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature the abomination can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Incapacitated condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Waking Nightmare (Weasel Hag Head). *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 18, one creature the abomination can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition. While Frightened, the target perceives its allies as enemies but isn't compelled to act in a specific way. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically. *Success:* Half damage only.

THE WEEPING WIDOW

Matron of Malevolent Medicine

Habitat: Underground, Urban; **Treasure:** Arcana, Relics

Once a priestess committed to healing the sick through divine rites, the Weeping Widow abandoned the gods after a personal tragedy and turned to sinister science. Believing she knows how to best treat the suffering and make them stronger, she employs a harrowing regimen of alchemical and medical experimentation to wipe minds and alter bodies, whether the patient wants the treatment or not.

Secret. The only way to force the Weeping Widow to live up to her moniker is to remind her of the family she lost, such as her husband's sword or portrait, which forces her to confront what she has become.

THE WEEPING WIDOW'S LAIR

The Weeping Widow's lair is the sanitorium where she conducts her horrific experiments.

The region containing the Weeping Widow's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

DULLED MEMORIES. Within 1 mile of the lair, creatures have Disadvantage on Intelligence checks made to recall information related to painful or emotional memories.

FADED DREAMS. Within 1 mile of the lair, creatures who sleep or Trance have only vague impressions of dreams and recall no details.

If the Weeping Widow dies or moves her lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE WEEPING WIDOW

Medium Aberration, Lawful Evil

AC 15 **Initiative** +8 (18)
HP 104 (19d8 + 19)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0	+0	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	20	+5	+8	WIS	16	+3	+6	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Medicine +9, Religion +8
Resistances Poison, Psychic
Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned, Unconscious
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elvish, Giant; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

Traits

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the widow fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Reopened Memories. At the start of her turn, if the widow can see a memento of her husband or some other reminder that forces her to realize what she's lost, she has Disadvantage on D20 Tests and can only expend 2 uses of her Legendary Actions until the start of her next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The widow makes two Injection attacks.

Injection. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft. *Hit:* 1 Piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) Poison damage. If the target is a creature, it has the Poisoned condition until the end of its next turn. While Poisoned, the target suffers one of the following effects of the widow's choice (each option can only be used once per turn):

Hyperphobic Stimulant. The target has the Frightened condition. At the start of its turn, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or take the Dash action and move away from the widow by the safest and shortest available route, unless there is nowhere to move.

Soporific Infusion. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 16, the target hit by Injection. *Failure:* The target's Speed is halved. On its turn, it can take either an action or a Bonus Action, but not both, and it can make only one attack if it takes the Attack action. *Failure by 5 or More:* The target has the Unconscious condition for 1 minute, until it takes damage, or until a creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Thaumaturgic Inhibitor. If the target casts a spell, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or the spell fails, but a spell slot used to cast the spell isn't expended.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the widow can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The widow regains all expended uses at the start of each of her turns.

Alacrity. The widow or a creature she is riding moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Dose. The widow makes one Injection attack. She can't take this action again until the start of her next turn.

Hypertrophic Injections. The widow targets herself or an ally within 5 feet and grants the target one of the following effects of her choice; she can't take this action again until the start of her next turn:

Aggression. The target has Advantage on attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Fortitude. One of the following conditions of the widow's choice ends on the target: Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Restrained, Stunned.

Vigor. The target regains 10 Hit Points.



THE WHITE WORM

Eldritch Devourer of Memories

Habitat: Coastal, Underground, Underwater;
Treasure: Arcana

Born of a forgotten realm beyond the stars, the White Worm is an eldritch horror resembling a humungous, pallid grub that ravenously hungers for memory. Greedily consuming the memories of any beings capable of remembering, its mere existence sends out shockwaves of alien psychic energy. It also serves as the queen of a hivemind colony of infinite wormlike spawn that seek mortal hosts to feast upon and control.

Secret. A specific series of constellations and star paths through the heavens is a deadly poison to the White Worm if it consumes that memory.

THE WHITE WORM'S LAIR

The White Worm's lair is a secluded lake and the shores surrounding it.

The region containing the White Worm's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

ALIEN GROWTH. Strange life grows rampant within 1 mile of the lair. In that region, **Gricks**, **Purple Worms**, and **Wormhost Surgeons** are common.

PSYCHIC PHANTOMS. Within 1 mile of the lair, creatures are plagued by horrid nightmares. When a creature sleeps or enters a Trance and finishes a Long Rest in that area, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain no benefit from finishing the rest.

If the White Worm dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE WHITE WORM

Gargantuan Aberration, Chaotic Evil

AC 18 **Initiative** +10 (20)
HP 330 (20d20 + 120)
Speed 50 ft., Burrow 30 ft., Swim 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
Str	28	+9	+9	Dex	7	−2	−2	Con	22	+6	+12
Int	7	−2	−2	Wis	19	+4	+10	Cha	21	+5	+5

Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened
Senses Tremorsense 60 ft., Truesight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 14
Languages Understands all but can't speak; telepathy 120 ft.
CR 19 (XP 22,000, or 25,000 in lair; PB +6)

Traits

Inscrutable Mind. If a creature tries to read the worm's mind, that creature must succeed on a DC 19 Intelligence saving throw or have the Stunned condition. The creature repeats the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After 1 minute, it succeeds automatically.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, or 4/Day in Lair). If the worm fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Poisoned Knowledge. If the worm uses Devour Mind on a creature that knows a special sequence of constellations and their path through the sky, at the start of the target's next turn, the worm takes 50 Psychic damage and Devour Mind ends.

Tunneler. The worm can burrow through solid rock at half its Burrow Speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

Actions

Multiattack. The worm makes one Bite attack and uses Psychic Caress on one or two creatures.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +15, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Force damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 19).

Psychic Caress. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 19, one creature the worm can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 17 (5d6) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the start of the worm's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Devour Mind (1/Day). The worm vanishes and magically enters the mind of a creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The worm can't target a creature under the effect of the *Mind Blank* or *Protection from Evil and Good* spells. While in the target's mind, the worm can't take actions, and the target experiences the worm appearing in its memories as it devours each one. At the end of each of the target's turns, it takes 88 (16d10) Psychic damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 Hit Points, the target is Stable but loses all its memories permanently. Only a *Wish* spell can restore the lost memories.

Devour Mind ends if the target is reduced to 0 Hit Points and the worm appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of the target. Devour Mind can also be ended in the following ways:

- **As an action, the target mentally duels the worm and makes a DC 20 ability check using Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (its choice).** On a success, the worm must succeed on a Charisma saving throw with a DC equal to the check's total or Devour Mind ends.
- **Devour Mind ends if the target receives an effect that ends possession, including the** *Dispel Evil and Good* **spell.**
- **If the target takes damage, the worm takes Psychic damage equal to half that amount.** It must succeed on a Charisma saving throw with a DC equal to the Psychic damage taken, or Devour Mind ends.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the worm can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The worm regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Slither. The worm moves up to its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Spawn Parasites. The worm disgorges a slimy spray of pale, parasitic worms. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 20, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* The target is infested with parasitic worms and has the Poisoned condition. At the start of the Poisoned target's turn, it takes 7 (2d6) Necrotic plus 7 (2d6) Psychic damage as the worms burrow toward its brain. A creature reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage dies and then rises 24 hours later as a **Wormhost Surgeon**. The infesting worms are killed by any effect that ends the Poisoned condition on the target, or if 10 Poison damage or more is dealt to it. *Failure or Success:* The worm can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Strike. The worm makes one Bite attack. It can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

THE WICKER MAN

Blazing Sacrificial Colossus

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

The ultimate expression of a cult's dedication to its patron is the Wicker Man. This massive Construct is woven from wicker and bound with wire and iron bands in the shape of a great bipedal effigy. The chest cavity and limbs are hollow where sacrifices can be secured, with the wicker skin forming cage-like bars and gaps. Celebrated and protected with a cult's very existence, the Wicker Man stands silent and impassive until it is ignited while filled with living sacrifices. Then it comes to life and seeks to consume any nonbelievers—and sometimes even the faithful.

THE WICKER MAN'S LAIR

The Wicker Man's lair is the hilltop where it is constructed and venerated.

The region containing the Wicker Man's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

BITING FLAMES. Within 1 mile of the lair, when Fire damage is dealt to a creature outside the Wicker Man's dedicated cult that has Resistance or Immunity to Fire damage, the creature takes an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage.

ENDLESS PRAISE. Within 1 mile of the lair, cultists of the Wicker Man who sing their cult's praises or hymns can be heard up to 300 feet away, even through a *Silence* spell.

If the Wicker Man dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE WICKER MAN

Gargantuan Construct, Chaotic Evil

AC 18 **Initiative** +12 (22)
HP 155 (10d20 + 50)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+6	DEX	14	+2	+7	CON	20	+5	+5
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +5
Immunities Fire, Poison; Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Incapacitated, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Stunned, Unconscious
Senses Truesight 120 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages Understands all but can't speak
CR 15 (XP 13,000; PB +5)

Traits

Burning Aura. At the end of the each of the Wicker Man's turns, each creature of its choice in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the Wicker Man takes 5 (1d10) Fire damage. Creatures and flammable objects in the Emanation start burning.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day). If the Wicker Man fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The Wicker Man has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Reactive. The Wicker Man can take a Reaction on every turn of combat.

Soul Motes. The Wicker Man has 3 Soul Motes. It gains 1 Soul Mote when a creature that isn't a Construct or Undead dies within 30 feet of it. The Wicker Man can expend Soul Motes to fuel Soul Mote Reactions. When the Wicker Man finishes a Long Rest, its Soul Mote total resets to 3.

Actions

Multiattack. The Wicker Man makes two Blazing Slam attacks.

Blazing Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) Fire damage.

Cremating Flame (Recharge 6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 18, each creature in a 60-foot Cone. *Failure:* 35 (10d6) Fire damage. *Success:* Half damage. *Failure or Success:* A creature reduced to 0 Hit Points by this damage is reduced to ash, and its soul is absorbed into the Wicker Man. The creature can't be restored to life by any means until the wicker man is destroyed.

Reactions

Crushing Blow (Soul Mote). *Trigger:* The Wicker Man hits with an attack roll. *Response:* The Wicker Man expends 1 Soul Mote, and the hit becomes a Critical Hit.

Repair (Soul Mote). *Trigger:* The Wicker Man starts its turn. *Response:* The Wicker Man expends 1 Soul Mote and regains 20 Hit Points.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3. Immediately after another creature's turn, the Wicker Man can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The Wicker Man regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Burning Clutch. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 19, one creature within 15 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16) from one of two hands, and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends. At the start of the Wicker Man's turn, the Grappled creature takes 10 (3d6) Fire damage. *Failure or Success:* The Wicker Man can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Slam. The Wicker Man makes one Blazing Slam attack. The Wicker Man can't take this action again until the start of its next turn.

Stride. The Wicker Man moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

THE WILD TITAN

Ferocious Giant of the Wilderness

Habitat: Arctic, Forest, Hill, Mountain; **Treasure:** Relics

Wandering the most inhospitable mountain ranges, the Wild Titan is the wilderness made manifest, created long ago by a forgotten will for a purpose that none know. Favoring solitude in the most remote places of the world, when it encounters settlements and "civilized" people, it wants only to turn them to primal savagery or crush them beneath its immense bulk.

Secret. The name of the Wild Titan's forgotten creator is its undoing. Recovering the lost name and carving its glyph form into a stone creates a zone that severs the titan's connection to the wild.

THE WILD TITAN'S LAIR

The Wild Titan's lair is a hollowed-out peak in the mountain range the creature stalks.

The region containing the Wild Titan's lair is changed by its presence, creating the following effects:

WHITEOUT. Within 1 mile of the lair, there is a 75 percent chance every day of heavy precipitation.

WILD HUNGER. Within 1 mile of the lair, creatures always feel ravenously hungry, no matter how much they've eaten. A creature that finishes a Long Rest in this area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 Exhaustion level. A creature that doesn't require food succeeds automatically.

If the Wild Titan dies or moves its lair elsewhere, these effects end immediately.



THE WILD TITAN

Gargantuan Giant (Titan), Chaotic Evil

AC 20 **Initiative** +14 (24)
HP 350 (20d20 + 140)
Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	30	+10	+10	DEX	11	+0	+7	CON	24	+7	+7
INT	8	–1	–1	WIS	16	+3	+3	CHA	10	+0	+7

Skills Athletics +17, Perception +10, Survival +10
Immunities Cold; Charmed, Frightened, Stunned
Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 120 ft.; Passive Perception 20
Languages Common, Giant, Primordial (Terran)
CR 21 (XP 33,000, or 41,000 in lair; PB +7)

Traits

Legendary Resistance (4/Day or 5/Day in Lair). If the titan fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The titan has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Runic Sever. If the titan starts its turn within 50 feet of a stone at least 10 feet high and 10 feet wide that is carved with the glyph representing its forgotten creator, the titan takes 50 Necrotic damage and has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

Siege Monster. The titan deals double damage to objects and structures.

Actions

Multiattack. The titan makes two Massive Fist attacks. It can replace one or both attacks with a use of Thrown Boulder.

Massive Fist. *Melee Attack Roll:* +17, reach 20 ft. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 20) from one of two fists, and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends.

Thrown Boulder. The titan hurls a boulder at a point it can see within 150 feet. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 25, each creature in a 10-foot radius Sphere centered on that point. *Failure:* 14 (4d6) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

Wild Roar (Recharge 5–6). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 19, each of the titan's enemies in a 100-foot Emanation originating from the titan. *Failure:* The target has the Charmed condition until the start of the titan's next turn. While Charmed in this way, the creature must use its action to make its most powerful melee or ranged attacks against the nearest creature it can see.

Legendary Actions

Legendary Action Uses: 3 (4 in Lair). Immediately after another creature's turn, the titan can expend a use to take one of the following actions. The titan regains all expended uses at the start of each of its turns.

Arm Sweep. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 25, each creature in a 20-foot Cone. *Failure:* 9 (2d8) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only. *Failure or Success:* The titan can't use this action again until the start of its next turn.

Crushing Hurl. The titan hurls an object it is holding, a creature it is grappling, or a Large clod of earth to a space within 100 feet. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 25, each creature in the projectile's space, including a hurled creature. *Failure:* 19 (2d8 + 10) Bludgeoning damage, and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only. *Success or Failure:* The titan can't use this action again until the start of its next turn.

Stomping Stride. The titan moves up to its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks. It can enter a Huge or smaller creature's space, and the creature is pushed to nearest unoccupied space.



FAMILIARS

The creatures presented in this section are special beings who can form bonds with another and serve as a familiar—not just for a spellcaster, but for anyone. This bond creates a deep, magical connection and isn't entered into lightly by these familiars. They demand respectful treatment, but in return offer loyal companionship and service. If the familiar is mistreated or wronged, it can sever the bond and may become a thorn in the side of their former companion.

Learning to form a familiar bond with one of these creatures isn't necessarily common knowledge, and you can treat discovering how to perform the ritual as a secret, as discussed in the "Monster Secrets" section in the Appendix A introduction.

Familiar Bond. When a creature performs a 10-minute ritual using materials worth 100+ GP (noted in each familiar's subtitle), the familiar can form a magical bond with that creature to serve as its familiar. The bond ends when the creature dies, or when the familiar decides to end it (no action required). While the bond lasts, the creature and the familiar gain the following benefits:

BONDED SYMPATHY. The familiar can choose to exclude the bonded creature from any area of effect it creates, such as a damaging Sphere or an Emanation like the goatstealer's Stench trait. Additionally, if the familiar has another feature that creates a bond (such as the devil's glove's Symbiosis Bonus Action), that bond forms as part of the familiar bond.

CHANNEL MAGIC. When the bonded creature casts a spell with a range of touch while within 100 feet of the familiar, the familiar can take a Reaction to deliver the touch when the spell is cast.

TELEPATHIC CONNECTION. While the bonded creature and the familiar are within 100 feet of each other, they can communicate telepathically. Additionally, as a Bonus Action, the creature can see and hear through the familiar's senses until the start of its next turn, gaining the benefit of any special senses the familiar has.

REVIVAL. If the familiar dies while the bond exists, the bonded creature can restore the familiar to life with all its Hit Points by performing a 1-hour version of the Familiar Bond ritual (no further research required to learn this version).

CORN DOLLY

Tiny Construct, Neutral

AC 10 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 38 (11d4 + 11)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	3	−4	−4	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	8	−1	−1	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Perception +1
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Passive Perception 11
Languages Understands Common but can't speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Husk Body. The corn dolly can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so.

Uneasy Visage. The strange, childlike inked face unnerves onlookers. While a creature is holding the corn dolly, creatures within 10 feet of it have Disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made against the creature.

ACTIONS

Husk Cut. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 1 Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Psychic damage.

Blank Stare. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, one creature the corn dolly can see within 30 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Psychic damage. *Success:* Half damage.

Sowing Dread (2/Day). *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature of the corn dolly's choice in a 15-foot Cone. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn.

REACTIONS

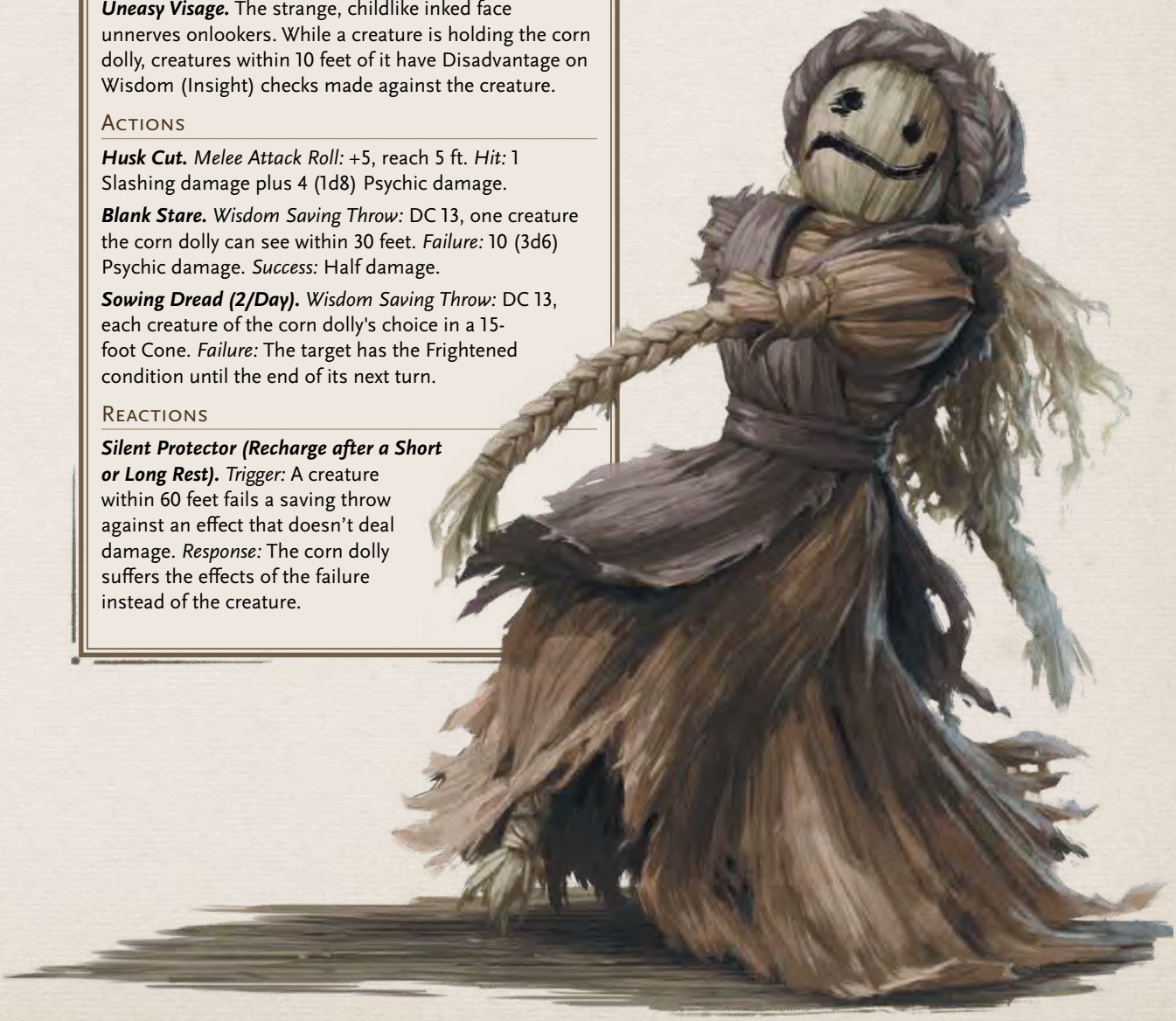
Silent Protector (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest). *Trigger:* A creature within 60 feet fails a saving throw against an effect that doesn't deal damage. *Response:* The corn dolly suffers the effects of the failure instead of the creature.

CORN DOLLY

Grain Husk Companion (Curved blade plated in gold)

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Crafted from dried husks and bound with twine, corn dollies' delicate forms are stitched together with rustic care. Their faces are ink-brushed with simple, childlike expressions—smiling mouths that curve a bit too wide and hollow eyes that seem to stare far beyond the physical world. The Constructs are spirits of deceased Humanoids drawn to the hollow corn husk shell, seeking refuge. These spirits retain faint traces of who they once were—a protective instinct entwined with a simmering fury. Once animated, the dolls reflect this dual nature: acting as silent guardians one moment and vengeful specters the next.



CROOKED HARE

Tiny Fey, Chaotic Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 21 (6d4 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., Fly 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +5, History +2, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Trackless Step. The crooked hare leaves no tracks, or it leaves the tracks of a Large or smaller creature of its choice. If it doesn't have the Incapacitated condition, it can share the effects of this trait with another creature within 5 feet (no action required).

ACTIONS

Twisting Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Poison damage, and if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Charisma saving throw or become cursed for 24 hours. The cursed creature's limbs sporadically twist and move in unnatural ways, giving the creature Disadvantage on attack rolls and on ability checks that rely on Charisma.

CROOKED HARE

Crooked Trickster (Anything stolen or gained by trickery)

Habitat: Forest, Hill, Planar (Fey); **Treasure:** Individual

Crooked hares look like rabbits at first glance, but their true nature is given away by the antlers and wings they grow and the cunning gleam in their eyes. They are mischievous tricksters that delight in stealing things from unsuspecting travelers and hiding them in amusing, slightly dangerous, or just unlikely places. If roused to anger or cornered, crooked hares deliver a bite that carries an unsettling—if minor—curse. Despite their troublesome nature, crooked hares might serve as companions for woods-crafty folk who have a good sense of humor.



DEVIL'S GLOVE

Five-Fingered Fungus (Rare wood chips)

Habitat: Forest, Swamp, Underground;
Treasure: None

Comprised of five twitching, blood-red tendrils lined with black slime, the devil's glove fungus feeds voraciously off decaying matter, unwary insects, and small creatures. Resembling a long-fingered hand, they grow from bulbous roots that look like leathery, white eggs and constantly emit an overpowering scent of death and rot. Despite their unpleasant aura, these fungus creatures can form beneficial relationships with others, providing nourishment and resilience in exchange for protection and a ready supply of decaying material to feed upon.



DEVIL'S GLOVE

Tiny Plant, Unaligned

AC 13 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 27 (6d4 + 12)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+2	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	3	−4	−4	WIS	8	−1	−1	CHA	4	−3	−3

Immunities Deafened, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 9
Languages Understands Common but can't speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Scent of Death. Creatures that can smell have Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to find the devil's glove.

Spider Climb. The devil's glove can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Tendril. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) Necrotic damage, and the devil's glove attaches to the target. While attached, the devil's glove can't make Tendril attacks against other targets, and if the target is a creature, the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn if it can smell the devil's glove.

The devil's glove can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. The target or a creature within 5 feet of it can detach the devil's glove as an action.

Decaying Bloom (2/Day). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, each creature in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the devil's glove. *Failure:* 9 (2d8) Necrotic damage, and the target can't regain Hit Points until the start of the devil's glove's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

BONUS ACTIONS

Symbiosis. The devil's glove forms a magical bond with a willing creature it touches. The bonded creature doesn't need to eat or drink, and the creature has Advantage on saving throws to avoid or end the Poisoned condition. The bond ends when the creature dies, the devil's glove dies, the devil's glove ends the bond (no action required), or when the devil's glove uses this Bonus Action again.

DINGPOT

Jovial Cauldron Helper (Spices and rose quartz)

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Dingpots are animated objects created to assist in magical and alchemical research—or simply to help in the kitchen. Often cheerful, dingpots delight in serving up delicious meals, soothing tea, and the occasional magical draught.

DINGPOT

Tiny Construct, Neutral Good

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 22 (4d4 + 12)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 20 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	12	+1	+1

Skills Medicine +3, Perception +3
Immunities Fire, Poison; Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 30 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Boil and Bubble. While the dingpot doesn't have the Incapacitated condition, it can provide enough heat to boil water within its vessel.

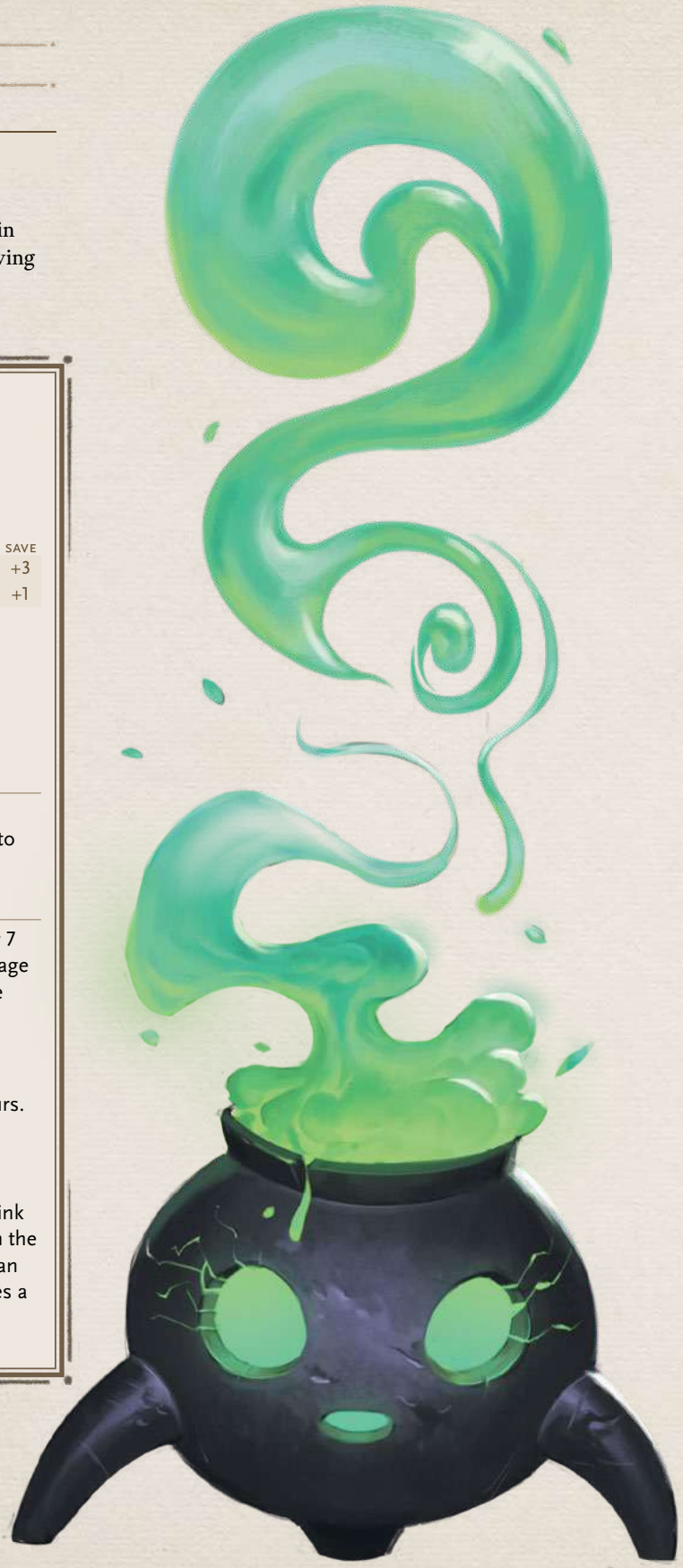
ACTIONS

Steam Spray. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 60 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) Fire damage, and the target has Disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the start of the dingpot's next turn. Being underwater doesn't grant Resistance to this Fire damage.

Brew (1/Day). The dingpot produces a magical elixir within its vessel. The elixir remains potent for 24 hours. It can choose from the following brews:

Healing Draught. As a Bonus Action, a creature can drink the elixir to regain 4 (1d6 + 1) Hit Points.

Lucky Draught. As a Bonus Action, a creature can drink the elixir to gain startling luck for 10 minutes. When the creature fails an ability check or a saving throw, it can reroll the d20 and use the new roll. Once this causes a roll to succeed, the effects of the elixir end early.



GHOST CRAWLER

Tiny Undead, Unaligned

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 25 (10d4)
Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	2	−4	−4	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	1	−5	−5	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	2	−4	−4

Skills Stealth +5
Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Seer's Strand (see below); Passive Perception 10
Languages Understands Common but can't speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Ephemeral Body. The crawler can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without expending extra movement to do so.

Seer's Strand. The crawler can see and hear through the space of its Ether Webs as if it were in that space.

Spider Climb. The crawler can climb difficult surfaces, including along ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The crawler ignores movement restrictions caused by webs, and the crawler knows the location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crawler makes two Bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Piercing damage, and if the target is a creature, it has the Poisoned condition until the start of the crawler's next turn.

Ether Webs (2/Day). The crawler fills a 5-foot Cube with Invisible, ephemeral webs for 8 hours. If the web isn't anchored between two solid masses (such as walls or trees) or layered across a floor, wall, or ceiling, the web collapses on itself and vanishes. When a creature touches the webbing, the crawler knows the location of the creature as long as they are on the same plane of existence.

GHOST CRAWLER

Spirit Spider (Silk threads soaked in wine)

Habitat: Forest, Swamp, Underground; **Treasure:** None

Silent and nearly invisible, ghost crawlers skitter between the darkest corners, hiding and watching. Their diminutive, ghostly, spider-like bodies are ill-defined and as translucent as a wisp of smoke, while their legs are long, uneven, and jarringly solid. The webs they spin are ephemeral and ghastly, allowing the crawlers to sense through them regardless of the distance.



GOATSTEALER

Hungry Livestock Snatcher (Incense and spoiled meat)

Habitat: Desert, Forest, Grassland, Hill; **Treasure:** None

The hairless, reeking goatstealers are vicious predators and scavengers that earn their name from their habit of preying upon livestock. They latch onto prey with wicked, needle-like teeth, delivering lethal venom and devouring creatures far larger than its wiry frame would suggest is possible. Especially dangerous in packs, the carrion-yet-peaty stench of goatstealers is the stuff of legend.



GOATSTEALER

Small Monstrosity, Unaligned

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 22 (4d6 + 8)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+2	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	3	−4	−4	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	8	−1	−1

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 15
Languages None
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Pack Tactics. The goatstealer has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the goatstealer's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally doesn't have the Incapacitated condition.

Stench. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, any creature that starts its turn in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the goatstealer. *Failure:* The target has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn. *Success:* The target is immune to the Stench of all goatstealers for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Poison damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 12). Until the grapple ends, at the start of each of the goatstealer's turns, the target takes 3 (1d6) Poison damage.

HEMONCULUS

Tiny Fiend, Neutral Evil

AC 13 Initiative +3 (13)
HP 27 (6d4 + 12)
Speed 20 ft., Fly 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	7	−2	−2	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	6	−2	−2

Skills Athletics +2, Stealth +7
Resistances Cold, Fire
Immunities Poison; Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 10
Languages Common
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Blood Sense. The hemonculus knows the location of any Bloodied creature within 60 feet of it, unless the creature is a Construct or Undead.

Flyby. The hemonculus doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Magic Resistance. The hemonculus has Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage, and the hemonculus attaches to the target. While attached, the hemonculus automatically hits the target with its Claw attacks.

The hemonculus can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. The target or a creature within 5 feet of it can detach the hemonculus as an action.

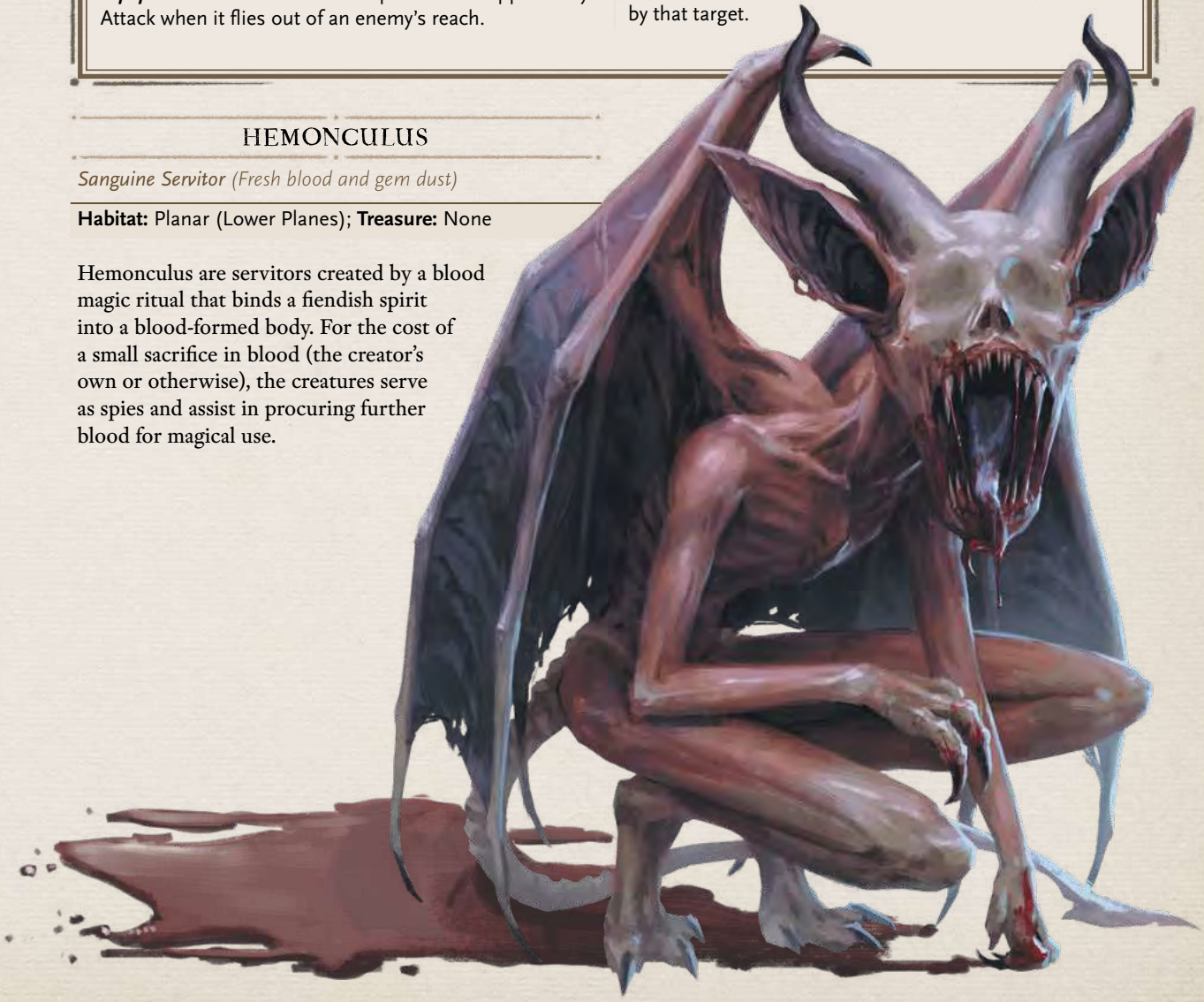
Exsanguinate (1/Day). The hemonculus magically draws blood from nearby creatures. *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature of the hemonculus' choice in a 15-foot Emanation originating from the hemonculus. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Necrotic damage, and the target can't regain Hit Points until the start of the hemonculus's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only. *Success or Failure:* If the hemonculus is attached to a creature, the hemonculus regains Hit Points equal to the Necrotic damage taken by that target.

HEMONCULUS

Sanguine Servitor (Fresh blood and gem dust)

Habitat: Planar (Lower Planes); **Treasure:** None

Hemonculus are servitors created by a blood magic ritual that binds a fiendish spirit into a blood-formed body. For the cost of a small sacrifice in blood (the creator's own or otherwise), the creatures serve as spies and assist in procuring further blood for magical use.



MAGPIE OF OMENS

Tiny Fey, Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 25 (10d4)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	2	−4	−4	DEX	17	+3	+3	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	5	−3	−3	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	6	−2	−2

Skills Perception +3
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages None
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Traits

Flyby. The magpie doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Multiattack. The magpie makes two Beak attacks.

Beak. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Radiant damage.

Bonus Actions

Bonded Voice. The magpie can form or dissolve a magical bond with a willing creature within 5 feet. While the bond lasts, the bonded creature can speak through the magpie using the creature's own voice and language, but with a birdlike lilt. The bond ends when the creature dies or if the magpie creates a new bond.

Reactions

One for Sorrow (1/Day). *Trigger:* A creature within 30 feet of the magpie makes a D20 Test with Advantage. *Response:* The target rolls 1d6 and subtracts it from the total.

Two for Joy (2/Day). *Trigger:* The magpie or another creature within 30 feet makes an ability check or a saving throw. *Response:* The target rolls 1d4 and adds it to the total.

MAGPIE OF OMENS

Bird of Fate and Fortune (Crystal or gemstone shards)

Habitat: Forest, Grassland, Planar (Fey); **Treasure:** None

To those who respect the Old Ways, this bird of black and white brings tidings both fair and foul. Although the omens the magpie delivers can bring joy and grief in equal measure, they are always trustworthy.



MOONSHINE

Tiny Undead, Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 22 (5d4 + 10)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	1	–5	–5	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	13	+1	+1	CHA	9	–1	–1

Resistances Acid, Bludgeoning, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Necrotic, Piercing, Slashing, Thunder
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Detect Life (see below); Passive Perception 11
Languages Common plus one other language
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Traits

Detect Life. The moonshine magically senses the direction of creatures up to 60 feet away that aren't Constructs or Undead.

Ephemeral. The moonshine can't wear or carry anything.

Illumination. The moonshine sheds Bright Light in a 15-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 15 feet.

Incorporeal Movement. The moonshine can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) Force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Actions

Multiattack. The moonshine makes two Gloomy Touch attacks.

Gloomy Touch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) Psychic damage.

Siphon Life (2/Day). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 11, one creature that isn't a Construct or Undead the moonshine can see within 5 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Stunned condition until the end of the moonshine's next turn, and the moonshine or a creature of its choice within 30 feet regains 3 (1d6) Hit Points.

MOONSHINE

Lingering Soul Guide *(Broken glass and powdered onyx)*

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

When a person dies with unfinished business, their soul can remain shackled to the living world as an Undead spirit. Usually such spirits rest and move on when their business is concluded, but some remain as companions, guides, and helpers for the living. Moonshines are spirits who resolved their emotional tethers but have chosen to linger on. They often take a liking to a living person and choose to help them through their life's journey.



NAMELESS THING

Tiny Aberration, Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 17 (5d4 + 5)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 40 ft. (hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	16	+3	+3	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	9	−1	−1

Skills Arcana +5, Perception +2, Stealth +4
Immunities Psychic; Charmed, Frightened
Senses Blindsight 30 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Deep Speech; telepathy 30 ft.
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Flyby. The nameless thing doesn't provoke an Opportunity Attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Psychic Strike. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) Psychic damage, and if the target is a creature, it has the Frightened condition until the start of the nameless thing's next turn.

Invisibility. The nameless thing casts *Invisibility* on itself, requiring no spell components and using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability.

When it casts the spell, the nameless thing can extend the effect of the spell to a creature it is touching. The spell ends early if either creature breaks the spell on itself or if the nameless thing stops touching the other creature. Once the nameless thing extends the spell in this way, it can't do so again until it finishes a Long Rest.

NAMELESS THING

Unknowable Lifeform from Beyond (Meteorite fragments)

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Nameless things are alien minds bound into physical vessels, most often diminutive animals, objects, or pieces of monsters. These creatures can creep into the world when outer influence seeps into existence but are usually deliberately invited.



RAVENCRAFT

Tiny Undead, Unaligned

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 30 (12d4)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	2	−4	−4	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	11	+0	+0
INT	8	−1	−1	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	4	−3	−3

Skills Perception +3
Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 13
Languages None
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Traits

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the ravencraft to 0 Hit Points, it makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 5 plus the damage taken) unless the damage is Radiant or from a Critical Hit. On a successful save, the ravencraft drops to 1 Hit Point instead.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage.

Harbinger of Doom (2/Day). The ravencraft lets out a wail of anguish commingling with the croaking of ravens. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 11, one creature within 60 feet. *Failure:* 5 (1d10) Psychic damage, and the target has the Frightened condition until the end of its next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Reactions

Death Veil. *Trigger:* A creature within 30 feet of the ravencraft makes a Death Saving Throw. *Response:* The creature has Advantage on the save.

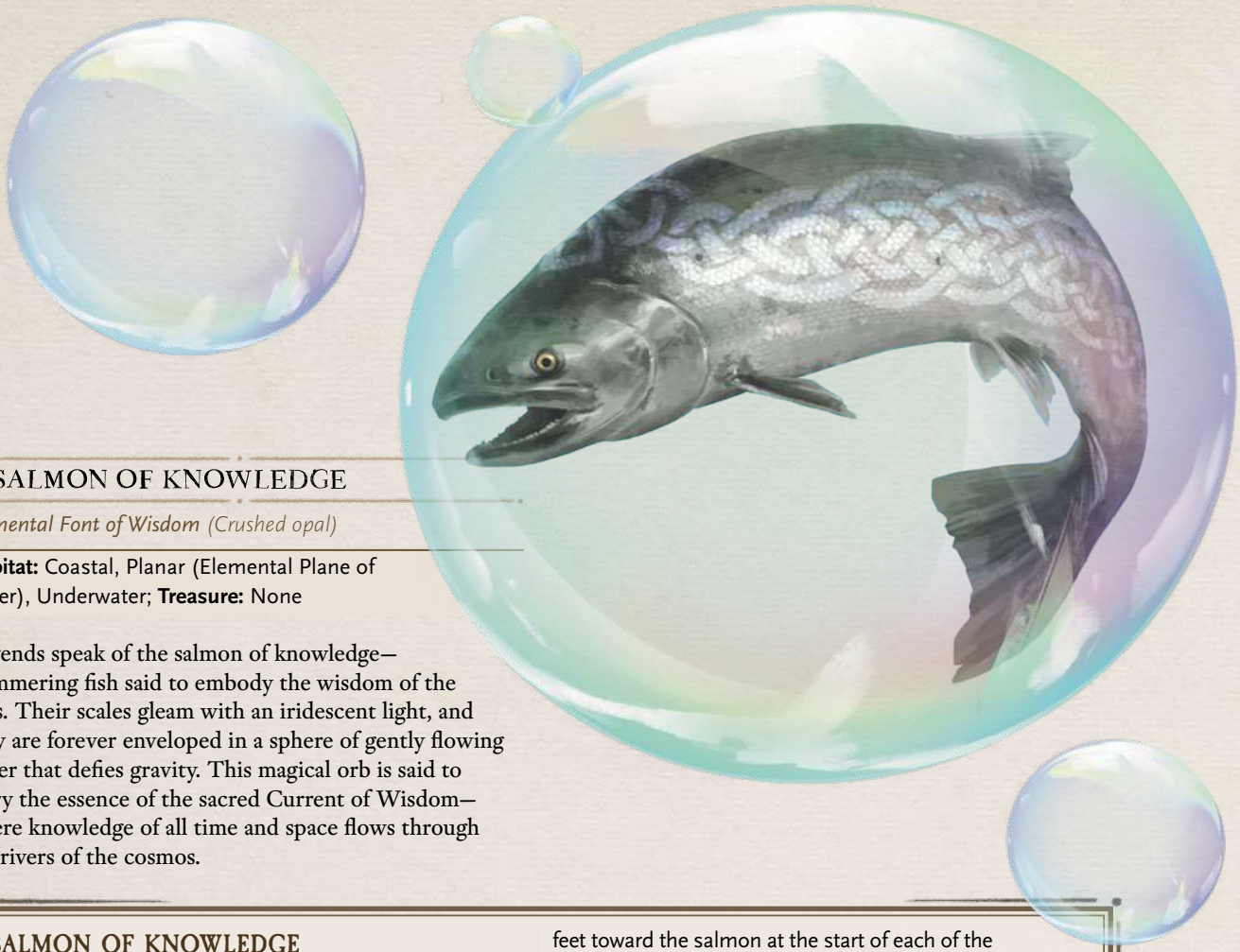
RAVENCRAFT

Undead Avian Amalgamation (Silver wire)

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Ravencrafts are a grotesque fusion of feathers, sinew, and bone. Their tiny form is a contorted and twisted nightmare carelessly sewn together into the mockery of a bird. The mere presence of a ravencraft is an affront to natural death and can keep further death at bay, or they can chill the hearts of their foes with cries of torment from beyond the grave.





SALMON OF KNOWLEDGE

Elemental Font of Wisdom (Crushed opal)

Habitat: Coastal, Planar (Elemental Plane of Water), Underwater; **Treasure:** None

Legends speak of the salmon of knowledge—shimmering fish said to embody the wisdom of the ages. Their scales gleam with an iridescent light, and they are forever enveloped in a sphere of gently flowing water that defies gravity. This magical orb is said to carry the essence of the sacred Current of Wisdom—where knowledge of all time and space flows through the rivers of the cosmos.

SALMON OF KNOWLEDGE

Tiny Elemental, Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 25 (10d4)
Speed 5 ft., Fly 30 ft. (hover; Orb of Water only), Swim 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	5	−3	−3	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	18	+4	+4	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Arcana +4, History +6, Insight +6, Perception +6
Resistances Fire (Orb of Water only), Psychic
Immunities Charmed, Frightened
Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Passive Perception 16
Languages Understands all but can't speak; telepathy 60 ft.
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Orb of Water. The salmon is surrounded by a sphere of flowing water that moves with it. While inside of the sphere, the salmon has Resistance to Fire damage. A creature that grapples the salmon can choose to pull it out of the orb of water. The orb of water moves up to 20 feet toward the salmon at the start of each of the salmon's turns. If it enters the salmon's space, the Grappled condition ends on the salmon.

Water Breathing. The salmon can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The salmon makes two Water Spray attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Prophetic Guidance.

Water Spray. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Cold damage.

Prophetic Guidance (2/Day). A creature the salmon can see within 30 feet gains a flash of foresight. Once in the next minute, when the creature fails a D20 Test, it can roll 1d4 and add it to the total, potentially turning the failure into a success.

REACTIONS

Echo from the Current. *Trigger:* A creature within 5 feet makes an Intelligence or Wisdom check. *Response:* The creature can use the salmon's Wisdom modifier (+4) in place of its own ability modifier for the check.

WITCHWOVEN

Tiny Construct, Neutral

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 21 (6d4 + 6)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	6	−2	−2	DEX	17	+3	+3	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Nature +4, Stealth +5
Vulnerabilities Fire
Immunities Poison; Deafened, Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned
Senses Blindsight 60 ft.; Passive Perception 12
Languages Understands Sylvan but can't speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Actions

Cursed Scratch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Necrotic damage, and if the target is a creature, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of the witchwoven's next turn.

Reactions

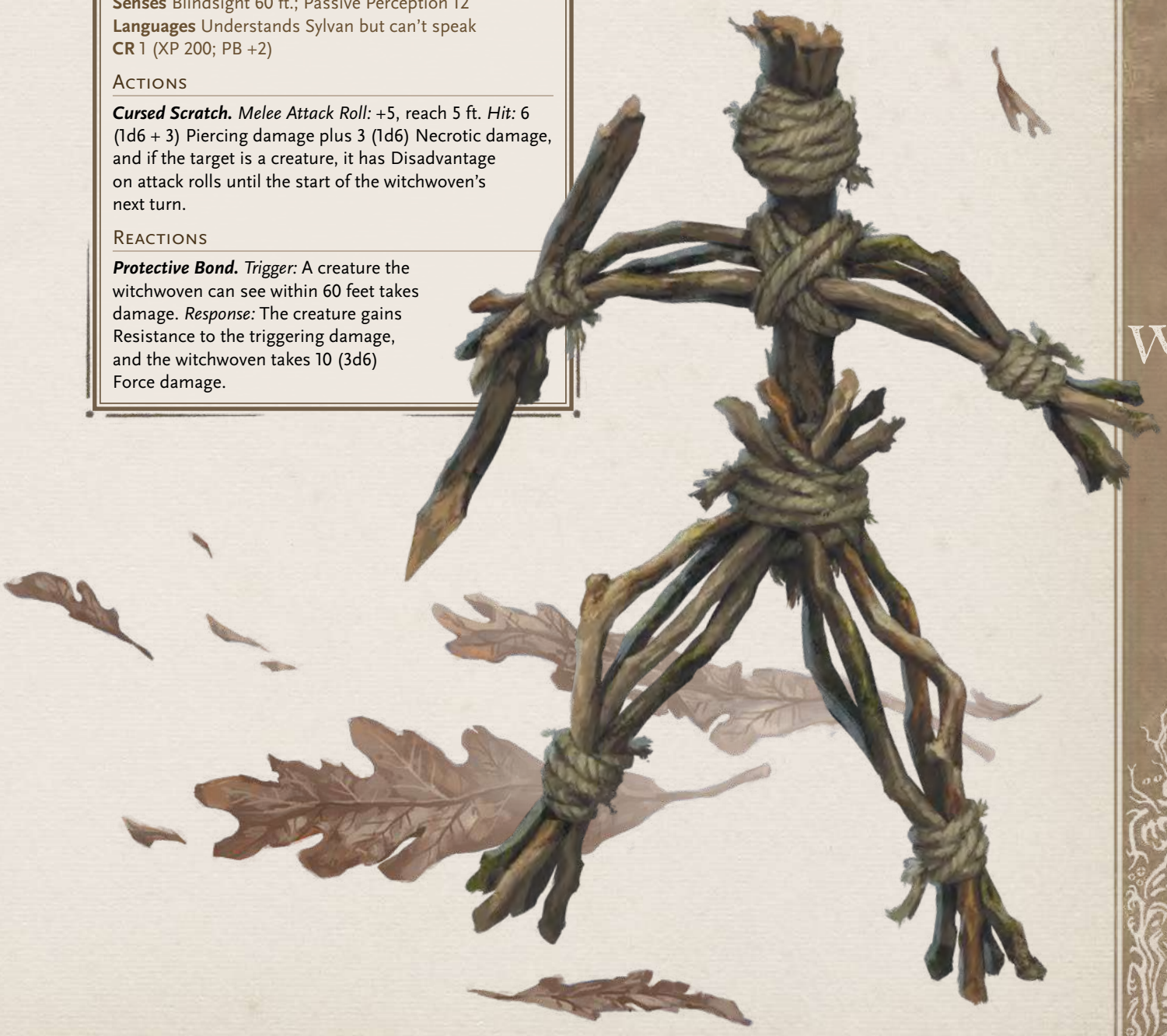
Protective Bond. *Trigger:* A creature the witchwoven can see within 60 feet takes damage. *Response:* The creature gains Resistance to the triggering damage, and the witchwoven takes 10 (3d6) Force damage.

WITCHWOVEN

Helper Made of Twine and Twigs (Ruby wrapped in a wicker cage)

Habitat: Any; **Treasure:** None

Witchwoven are little dolls or effigies made of sticks, twine, and other simple materials, then imbued with life. Some happen naturally in places suffused with old nature magic, but most are created to serve as familiars by spellcasters knowledgeable in the Old Ways.





Appendix B: Treasury

Fabled Heirlooms

Ancient soul-binding magicks twist through the shrouded domain of Druskenvald, drawn to legendary beings with fate-touched souls. This spiritual energy weaves its way through the relics that these entities possess, imbuing them with their wielder's essence and power. Once severed from the mythic figures that shaped them, Fabled Heirlooms can be taken up by new bearers, granting strange and fearsome abilities that continue to awaken as their keepers' souls grow stronger.

Each Fabled Heirloom is a magic item that grows in strength as its attuned owner gains power. The rarity of each heirloom increases as the character grows in level, as shown on the Heirloom Rarity table. An heirloom's description details the properties it always has, as well as the properties it gains as it increases in rarity. The heirloom has all the properties of its rarity and lower.

Heirloom Rarity

Level 1–6	Level 7–12	Level 13+
Rare	Very Rare	Legendary



AXE OF THE GALLOPING HEADSMAN

Weapon (Battleaxe), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This axe has a wickedly curved head, honed to a razor's edge and limned with dark fire. Its handle is wrapped in cracked leather, and the entirety is etched with malevolent runes.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with this magic weapon determined by the axe's rarity. You can also use the following properties.

Fiery Smite (Rare+). This axe deals an extra 1d6 Fire damage on a hit. If the target is a creature that damaged you since the end of your last turn, the extra damage becomes 1d10.

Mark of Guilt (Very Rare+). When you hit a creature with the axe, you can mark it for punishment (no action required). You know the direction and distance to the creature. If it leaves this plane of existence, you know the destination plane and the mark ends. The mark otherwise ends when this property is used again, or when the target dies.

Sense Guilt (Very Rare+). You can take a Bonus Action to hold the blade of the axe to a creature's neck (if it has one), and it must succeed on a Charisma saving throw (DC = 16 + the axe's bonus) or you learn something the creature feels guilty about. Once this property is used, the target is immune to it for 24 hours.

Dark Binding (Legendary). Once during your turn when you hit a creature with the axe, you can immediately take a Bonus Action to force the target to succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or have the Paralyzed and Prone conditions until the start of your next turn. If its body shape allows it, the target kneels and presents its neck.

Executioner's Blade (Legendary). When you attack a creature with the Prone condition using the axe, you score a Critical Hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20. On a Critical Hit, the axe deals an extra 3d6 Fire damage, and if the creature is left with 20 or fewer Hit Points after taking this damage, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or die.



BANJO OF OL' JERICHO STICKS

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

An old, weathered banjo inscribed with runes, this instrument once belonged to Ol' Jericho Sticks, a scarecrow bard created by a hag coven.

While holding the banjo, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells; you gain a bonus determined by its rarity to spell attack rolls, your spell save DC, and Charisma (Performance) checks; and you can use the following properties.

Fiendish Lure (Rare+). As a Magic action, choose one Fiend or Humanoid that you can see within 60 feet. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 16 + the banjo's bonus) or have the Charmed condition (ignoring a demon's Immunity) for 1 minute. The Charmed condition ends if you or your allies deal damage to the target or force it to make a saving throw. Once a creature is Charmed in this way, this property can't be used again until the next dusk.

Scarecrow's Dance (Rare+). You can take a Bonus Action to strum the banjo and dance wildly to take the Disengage action. The music is audible within 120 feet.

Join in the Dance (Very Rare+). When you use Scarecrow's Dance, one creature of your choice that you can see within 15 feet of you can take a Reaction to move up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Birdcage (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can force a creature you have Charmed to make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature disappears, drawn into the banjo. The banjo can contain one creature at a time in this way for up to 24 hours. On a success, the Charmed condition ends on the creature.



BELL OF THE DUSK MOTHER

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This heavy iron handbell is elaborately decorated with filigree. Its handle is a large ring, and its clapper hangs from a chain within. Its only sound is ever-mournful tolling.

While holding the bell, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC determined by its rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Dolorous Tolling (Rare+). As a Magic action, you can ring the bell, producing an ominous tolling. Creatures of your choice in a 30-foot Emanation originating from you must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 16 + the bell's bonus). On a failed save, a target takes 3d10 Psychic damage, and for 1 minute, when it makes an attack roll or saving throw, it must subtract 1d4 from the total. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Call of the Bell (Very Rare+). You can take a Bonus Action to create a doll (use the **Animated Armor** stat block) from a 5-foot Cube of wood, clay, or stone within 10 feet. The doll obeys your commands and acts immediately after your turn on your Initiative. It reverts to the materials used to create it after 10 minutes or when it dies. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Death Knell (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can ring the bell, creating a loud clang. Each Bloodied creature in a 30-foot Emanation originating from you must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 5d10 Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails the save by 5 or more drops to 0 Hit Points. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

BLUNDERBUSS OF THE GRINNING SINNER

Weapon (Musket), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This dark, ornate blunderbuss has a brass barrel and a wooden handle etched with arcane symbols. It was the Grinning Sinner's weapon of choice, who imbued it with the power to shoot jinxes and hexes.

The blunderbuss functions as a Musket that ignores the Loading property, and it can make its own ammunition that deals Necrotic damage on a hit. You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with it determined by the blunderbuss's rarity. While holding the blunderbuss, you can use the blunderbuss as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, and you can use the following properties.

Jinxshot (Rare+). When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can replace one of your attacks with a blast from the blunderbuss that forces each creature within a 30-foot Cone to make a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 16 + the blunderbuss's bonus), taking 2d4 Necrotic damage (Rare) or 3d6 Necrotic damage (Very Rare+) on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Sinner's Jinx (Very Rare+). Once during your turn when you damage a creature with the blunderbuss, the target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw (DC = 16 + the blunderbuss's bonus) or be cursed for 1 minute. When it makes a D20 Test while cursed, it subtracts 1d4 from the total. The curse ends if this property is used on another creature.

Luck Taker (Legendary). When a creature you can see within 60 feet of you that is cursed by this weapon makes a D20 Test and rolls a 19 or 20 on the d20, you can take a Reaction to mimic their luck. The next time you make a D20 Test within 1 minute, change the number you roll on the d20 to the triggering number.



CANE OF PHILLIP DRUSKENVALD

Rod, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This ornate cane is made from polished black wood and is topped with a silver goat-skull ornament. Even a glance at it sparks greed and envy in all but the truly humble.

While holding the cane, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC determined by the cane's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Eldritch Glutton (Rare+). When you succeed on a saving throw against a spell that targets only you, you can take a Reaction to consume the spell and store its energy in the cane. The spell has no effect on you. You can take a Magic action to absorb the stored energy to either regain an expended spell slot that is at least one level lower than the triggering spell or gain Temporary Hit Points equal to three times the spell's level. If you absorb a new spell while the cane holds spell energy, the previous energy is lost. Once the cane absorbs a spell, this property can't be used again until the next dusk.

Allure of Sin (Very Rare+). You can cast *Dominate Person* (save DC = 16 + the cane's bonus) from the cane. Once a creature is Charmed by the spell, this property can't be used again until the next dusk.

Sin-Binder's Call (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can summon three **Hell Hounds**, one **Incubus**, or one **Succubus**. They appear in unoccupied spaces you can see within 30 feet of you, obey your commands, and take their turns immediately after yours on your Initiative count. After 10 minutes, they no longer obey you, but if you treated them well, they are Indifferent or Friendly toward you. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.



CAULDRON OF THE VERMINTOLL COVEN

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

The tarnished cauldron bubbles with a strange, dark liquid. Even in transport, the liquid stays within the rune-emblazoned rim of the cauldron.

While you hold the cauldron, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus determined by the cauldron's rarity to all saving throws, and you can use the following properties.

Size Change (Rare+). You can perform a 1-minute ritual to change the cauldron's size from Tiny to Medium, or from Medium to Tiny. It weighs 1 lb. when Tiny and 80 lb. when Medium. As a Medium object, its feet can move. It has a Speed of 20 feet and moves when you command it during your turn (no action required).

Cookpot (Rare+). As part of a Short or Long Rest, you can use the Medium cauldron to prepare food for up to ten creatures. At the end of the rest, each creature that eats gains 2d6 Temporary Hit Points.

Vermincall (Rare+). As a Magic action, you can spill liquid from the cauldron to cast *Conjure Animals* with it. The conjured spirits take the form of grotesque insects or rats. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Fortifying Gorge (Very Rare+). When you use the Cookpot property, one creature of your choice who eats gains a +2 bonus to AC until you finish a Short or Long Rest. During this time, the creature's skin is hardened and monstrous.

Coven Abomination (Legendary). As a Bonus Action, you can drink from the cauldron or administer a draught from it to a creature within 5 feet. For 1 hour, the drinker of the thick, sickly-sweet liquid becomes Large if it is currently smaller than that, its reach increases by 5 feet, and its melee attacks deal an extra 1d8 damage. When the effect ends, the creature has the Incapacitated condition for 1 minute from the agony of its bones shrinking slower than its flesh.



CROWN OF THE BARROW KING

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This crown of twisted iron has five sharp, tall spikes that are crusted with dried blood. None who see it doubt the malice and corruption that the Barrow King imbued into it.

While you wear the crown, you gain a bonus determined by the crown's rarity to spell attack rolls and to your spell save DC for Necromancy spells and spells that deal Necrotic damage, and you can use the following properties.

Demand of the Dead (Rare+). You can cast *Speak with Dead* from the crown.

Grave Grasp (Rare+). You know the *Chill Touch* cantrip. Your spell attack bonus with it is +9 (Rare), +10 (Very Rare), or +11 (Legendary).

Necromancer's Call (Rare+). You can cast *Animate Dead* from the crown. It can be used to cast this spell three times, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

Master of Undeath (Very Rare+). Undead that you create or summon have twice as many Hit Points as normal and have Advantage on saving throws.

Soul Transfer (Very Rare+). When you drop to 0 Hit Points or fail a Death Saving Throw, you can transfer your soul into an Undead that you created and that is within 1 mile of you (no action required). Your previous body dies instantly. Your new body has none of your possessions except the crown. You use your game statistics, except the target Undead's current Hit Points replace your current Hit Points. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Compel Undead (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can choose an Undead within 30 feet of you. It must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition for 1 minute. It obeys your commands while Charmed in this way, and the condition ends early when the creature is Bloodied.

CUTLASS OF BRIGGSY KRATCH

Weapon (Scimitar), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

A fearsome weapon imbued with jinxcraft magic, this cutlass was once wielded by the notorious pirate captain, Briggsy "The Kutlass" Kratch. Its tarnished blade glimmers with a faint, otherworldly light. A skull and crossbones adorn the leather-wrapped hilt, and arcane symbols etched into the blade pulse with hidden power.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with the cutlass determined by its rarity. While holding the cutlass, you can use the following properties.

Raise the Stakes (Rare+). As a Bonus Action, choose a creature within 5 feet of you and mark it until the start of your next turn. Count the number of times you hit the target and the number of times it hits you while the mark lasts. If you hit the target more times, it takes 2d10 Psychic damage. If it hits you more times, you take 2d10 Psychic damage. If your hits are tied, you both take 2d10 Psychic damage. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Sea Legs (Rare+). When you take the Disengage action, Difficult Terrain doesn't cost you extra movement until the end of that turn.

Double Down (Very Rare+). When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can make one additional attack against a target marked by the Raise the Stakes property.

Jinxcraft Panache (Very Rare+). When a creature hits you with an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to increase your AC against that attack by twice the cutlass's bonus to attack and damage rolls if the creature already dealt damage to you on this turn.

Hex Ward (Legendary). You can't be targeted with Divination spells or perceived through magical scrying sensors, and a creature that curses you takes Psychic damage equal to your level.



EYE OF THE WHITE WORM

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This fist-sized eyeball is cold and clammy to the touch. It is milky-white with purple veins, and its pupil constantly searches for something.

While holding the eye, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC determined by the eye's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Thought Scour (Rare+). You can cast *Detect Thoughts* (save DC = 16 + the eye's bonus) from the eye. When you probe deeper into a creature's mind, it takes 3d8 Psychic damage unless it is a willing target. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Mnemonic Siphon (Very Rare+). You can cast *Modify Memory* (save DC = 16 + the eye's bonus) from the eye. When you do, you gain a version of the affected memory as if you experienced it yourself, though you still know the memory isn't yours. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

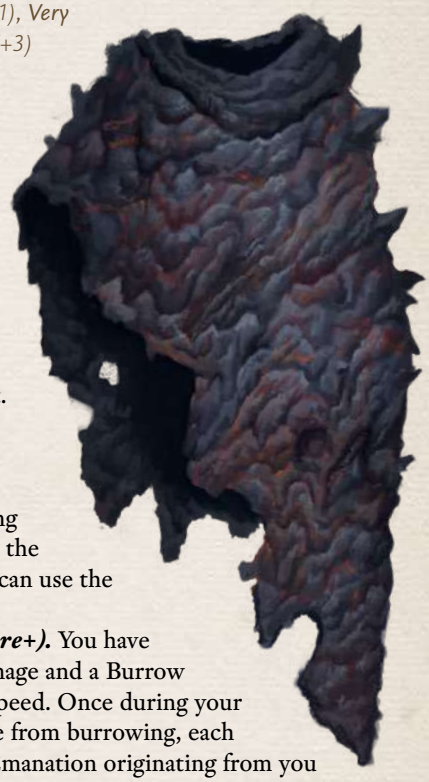
Violation of the Real (Very Rare+). When you cast a Conjuration spell using a spell slot that deals damage, or that summons a creature that can deal damage, the spell or creature deals an extra 1d10 Psychic damage to one target the first time it deals damage during a turn.

Enduring Violation (Legendary). When you cast a Conjuration spell with a duration of 1 hour or more, you can extend the duration to 24 hours, and the spell no longer requires Concentration. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.



HIDE OF THE BRIMSTONE BEHEMOTH

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)



This cloak was made from the hide of a reptilian magma Fiend, incomparable in its destructive power. Flame now shies away from it, for one who has mastered such a titanic creature can master its element.

While wearing this cloak, you gain a bonus to Armor Class and Constitution saving throws determined by the cloak's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Deep-Dweller (Rare+). You have Resistance to Fire damage and a Burrow Speed equal to your Speed. Once during your turn when you emerge from burrowing, each creature in a 10-foot Emanation originating from you must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 16 + the hide's bonus), taking 2d8 Fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Infernal Roar (Rare+). You can cast *Fear* (save DC = 16 + the hide's bonus) from the cloak. This property can be used three times, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

Hellfire Maw (Very Rare+). As a Magic action, you can exhale hellfire in a 30-foot Cone. Each creature in the area must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 16 + the hide's bonus). On a failed save, a creature takes 4d6 Fire damage and 4d6 Necrotic damage, and it can't regain Hit Points for 1 minute. On a successful save, it takes half damage only. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Pernicious Fire Immunity (Legendary). Fire actively avoids you. You have Immunity to Fire damage. When you are the target of an attack that deals Fire damage, the attack randomly targets another creature within the attack's range, which can include the attacker. When you make a saving throw against an effect that deals Fire damage, you must choose one other creature that is also making the saving throw against that effect. It has Disadvantage on the save.



HOOK OF THE TALL MAN

Weapon (War Pick), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This hook is made from a single huge claw attached to a large bleached fingerbone mounted on a haft of ash. The tip of the claw gives off an eerie glow. The finger and claw were cut from the hand of the Tall Man.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with this magic weapon determined by the hook's rarity. While holding the hook, you can use the following properties.

Snare (Rare+). When you hit a creature with the hook, you can activate the Topple mastery property in addition to a different mastery property you're using with it.

Fey Haunt's Stride (Rare+). You can cast *Misty Step* from the hook, and when you do so, you have Advantage on your next Dexterity (Stealth) check made before the end of your next turn. This property can be used twice, regaining all expended uses when you roll Initiative.

Strike from Shadows (Very Rare+). When you start your turn with the Invisible condition, you have Advantage on the first attack you make on your turn, even if the condition ends before you make the attack. If that attack hits, it deals an extra 2d6 Piercing damage.

Hunter's Hook (Legendary). When you hit with an Opportunity Attack made with the hook, the target takes an extra 2d6 Psychic damage, and its Speed is 0 until the end of the turn.

Terrifying Stride (Legendary). Immediately after you use the Fey Haunt's Stride property, you can choose a creature within 20 feet of you. It must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the end of your next turn. While Frightened in this way, the creature can't take the Disengage action.



IDOL OF THE BEAST OF BLIGHT

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

Made of bleached and mutated bone, this idol in the shape of a stag contains the sinister knowledge of the Beast of Blight. It pulses with the power of rot and decay.

While holding the idol, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC determined by the idol's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Rotting Touch (Rare+). You can use your Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom modifier for the attack and damage rolls of your Unarmed Strikes, and on a hit, your strike deals an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage (Rare), 1d8 Necrotic damage (Very Rare), or 1d10 Necrotic damage (Legendary).

Touch of Oblivion (Rare+). As a Bonus Action, you can touch a creature that has been dead for less than 1 hour. It rots away to bleached bone and can't be used for this property again. The next time you hit with an Unarmed Strike using the Rotting Touch property before the end of your next turn, it is a Critical Hit instead.

Hallucinatory Spores (Very Rare+). When you cast a spell using a spell slot or from the idol, you can choose one creature that you can see within 10 feet of you. It must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 16 + the idol's bonus) or take 2d6 Psychic damage and have Disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of your next turn.

Rot in the Flesh (Very Rare+). You can cast *Barkskin* from the idol targeting only yourself. For the duration, a creature that hits you with a melee attack roll takes 1d8 Necrotic damage. Once the spell is cast from the idol, it can't be cast from it again until the next dusk.

Hollow with Rot (Legendary). When you regain Hit Points from a spell, you also gain Temporary Hit Points equal to the spell's level.

LANTERN OF THE CHAINED REAPER

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This ornate Hooded Lantern was once a weapon in the hands of the Chained Reaper, filled with ghastly balefire. Able to pierce the veil, the lantern reveals a glimpse at things hidden from mortal eyes.

While you hold the lantern and it is lit, you gain a bonus to Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks determined by the lantern's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Ghostly Flame (Rare+). The lantern doesn't require fuel, and it sheds blue-green light. It casts Bright Light in a 30-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 30 feet. You can snuff or ignite its light as a Bonus Action while you are within 30 feet of it.

Revealing Flame (Rare+). Creatures in the Border Ethereal within the area of the lantern's Bright Light are visible to creatures on the Material Plane. When a creature within the lantern's Bright Light is possessed or affected by the *Magic Jar* spell, the creature in control appears overlaid on the body in a spectral form.

Mystic Sight (Very Rare+). You can cast *Detect Magic* from the lantern. The spell ends early if you extinguish the light or aren't holding the lantern.

Summon Spirit (Very Rare+). As a Magic action, you can summon a **Ghost** that appears in an unoccupied space you can see within 30 feet of you. The ghost obeys your commands, and it takes its turn immediately after you on your Initiative count. The ghost vanishes after 1 minute, or when it dies. You can't use the lantern's properties, except for Ghostly Flame, during this time.

Balefire (Legendary). You can cast *Scorching Ray* (level 5 version, +11 to hit) from the lantern. This property can be used three times, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

Warding Light (Legendary). The lantern's area of Bright Light offers the protection of a *Magic Circle* spell. This protection can't operate in the reverse direction, and it ends if you aren't holding the lantern or if you have the Incapacitated condition.



MAROTTE OF THE LORD OF FOOLS

Rod, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This wooden fool's scepter is painted with vibrant, unsettling colors that depict a grinning face. While no creature is attuned to the marotte, the face looks like the infamous Chuckles, the Lord of Fools.

While holding the marotte, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC determined by the marotte's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Coulrophobia (Rare+). When you succeed on a saving throw to avoid the Frightened condition, you can take a Reaction to force the creature that created the effect to make the same saving throw. On a failed save, it has the Frightened condition until the end of your next turn.

Fortune's Fool (Rare+). You can cast *Hideous Laughter* (save DC = 16 + the marotte's bonus) from the marotte. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk. You regain use of the spell early if you roll a 1 on the d20 for a D20 Test.

Fool's Motley (Very Rare+). You can cast *False Life* from the marotte. Any clothing or armor you wear looks like a fool's motley for the duration of the spell.

Slapstick (Very Rare+). When a creature is affected by a *Hideous Laughter* spell you cast, you can choose another creature. When that creature deals damage to the target of the spell, the target has Disadvantage rather than Advantage on its saving throw to end the spell.

Lord of Fools (Legendary). You can cast *Mass Suggestion* (save DC 19) from the marotte. The effect ends on a creature if it is behind Total Cover or more than 120 feet from you. A creature affected by your *Hideous Laughter* automatically fails its saving throw against this *Mass Suggestion*. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.



MASK OF LETHICA NIGHTBORNE

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This immaculate porcelain mask is painted with delicate violet filigree and once belonged to Lethica Nightborne—a priestess of a goddess of night and healing known as the Nightmother.

While wearing the mask, you gain a bonus to Wisdom and Charisma saving throws determined by the mask's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Gift of the Night Goddess (Rare+). You can see normally in magical and nonmagical Dim Light and Darkness.

Soothing Darkness (Rare+). Creatures of your choice in the area of a *Darkness* spell that you cast have Resistance to Psychic damage.

Whispers of Night (Rare+). You can cast *Darkness* from the mask. This property can be used twice (Very Rare+: four times), regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

Balm of Midnight (Very Rare+). At the start of your turn, a Frightened creature of your choice within 60 feet of you must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the condition ends, and if the creature is in an area of Darkness, it gains 2d10 Temporary Hit Points.

Offering of Burdens (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can touch a willing creature with Exhaustion levels and transfer any number of Exhaustion levels to yourself, then remove up to two Exhaustion levels from yourself and regain one expended spell slot of level 5 or lower. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Surcease of Sorrows (Legendary). You can cast *Modify Memory* from the mask (save DC 19). If the target voluntarily fails the saving throw, you can choose a memory that happened at any time in its lifespan. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

PLANCHETTE OF ADELA DRUSKENVALD

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

A small, heart-shaped silver pointer hangs from a silver necklace. It is inscribed with occult symbols. When placed on an open book or other assortment of letters, the air nearby feels heavy and cold.

While wearing the planchette, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to Intelligence and Wisdom ability checks determined by the planchette's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Sense the Unseen (Rare+). The planchette has 5 charges and regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dusk. You can expend charges to cast the following spells from it: *Detect Magic* (1 charge), *Locate Object* (2 charges), *See Invisibility* (2 charges).

Starlight Ward (Rare+). You have Resistance to Radiant damage. When you take Radiant damage, for the next minute, the star-sigils on the planchette shed Bright Light in a 10-foot radius and Dim Light for an additional 10 feet.

Vision Beyond (Very Rare+). The planchette now has 9 charges and regains 1d8 + 1 expended charges daily at dusk. You can also cast *Find Traps* (2 charges) and *Sending* (3 charges) from it.

Spirit Ward (Very Rare+). When you fail a saving throw against the *Magic Jar* spell or possession (such as by a ghost), you can expend 3 charges to succeed instead.

Third Eye Opened (Legendary). The planchette now has 13 charges and regains 1d12 + 1 expended charges daily at dusk. You can also cast *Divination* (4 charges), *Contact Other Plane* (5 charges), and *Etherealness* (7 charges) from it.



RUNESTONE OF THE WILD TITAN

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This mighty granite runestone is etched with complex glyphs on much of its angular surface. Though an incredible burden to carry, it thrums with the power of the wild titan. The stone weighs 50 pounds.

While holding the stone, you gain a bonus to Strength and Constitution saving throws determined by the runestone's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Crushing Weight (Rare+). When you are within 5 feet of a creature with the Prone condition, you can take a Bonus Action to set the stone on the creature to give it the Restrained condition. The creature can take an action to make a Strength saving throw (DC = 16 + the stone's bonus), pushing the stone free and ending the Restrained condition on a success.

Boulder Throw (Very Rare+). You can throw the stone as a Simple Ranged weapon using Strength for the attack and damage rolls. The stone has the Heavy and Thrown properties. It has a normal range equal to twice your Strength score and a long range equal to five times your Strength score. On a hit, it deals 2d10 Bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC = 16 + the stone's bonus) or have the Prone condition.

Recall (Very Rare+). As a Bonus Action, you can call the stone back to you, provided it is within 1 mile. If you have an empty hand, it appears in your hand; otherwise, it appears at your feet in your space.

Primal Vitality (Legendary). While you stand on fertile soil or unworked stone, you have Advantage on Strength and Constitution saving throws, and you gain Temporary Hit Points equal to 2d6 + your Strength modifier at the start of each of your turns.

Pummeling Boulder (Legendary). The damage of the Boulder Throw property increases to 3d10, and the stone deals double damage to objects and structures.



SCYTHE OF THE HARVEST TERROR

Weapon (Halberd), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This menacing scythe with a rusted blade was wielded by the Harvest Terror, a demon of secrets and fear. The scythe appears old and worn, with a handle wrapped in ancient, weathered cloth. The blade is etched with hatch marks, tallying its kills.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with this magic weapon determined by its rarity. While holding the scythe, you can use the following properties.

Feed on Fear (Rare+). Once during your turn, when you attack with the scythe and hit a creature that has the Frightened condition, it takes an extra 1d10 (Legendary: 2d10) Psychic damage.

Sweep of Dread (Rare+). You can cast *Fear* (save DC = 16 + the scythe's bonus, no Concentration required) from the scythe. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Harvest of the Hidden Word (Very Rare+). As a Bonus Action, you can force one creature you can see that has the Frightened condition to make a Charisma saving throw (DC = 16 + the scythe's bonus). On a failed save, you learn one fact that it deliberately keeps secret. The creature is then immune to this property for 24 hours.

Seed of Terror (Very Rare+). Immediately after you hit a creature with the scythe, you can take a Bonus Action to force one creature within 30 feet of the creature you hit to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 16 + the Scythe's bonus). On a failed save, the creature gains the Frightened condition until the end of your next turn.

Lurking Terror (Legendary). When a creature you can see that has the Frightened condition ends its turn within 60 feet of you, you can take a Reaction to teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space the Frightened creature can see.

SHIELD OF MARIUS RENATHYR

Armor (Shield), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

Crafted from polished gold and white enamel and adorned with an intricate design of a rose encircled by thorny vines, this Shield was once owned by Marius Renathyr, a knight-errant destined for a terrible fate.

While holding this Shield, you gain a bonus to AC determined by the Shield's rarity, in addition to the Shield's normal bonus to AC, and you can use the following properties.

Valorous Guard (Rare+). When a creature within 5 feet of you is hit by an attack roll, you can take a Reaction to add 2 + the Shield's bonus to the creature's AC, potentially causing the attack to miss. When a creature within 5 feet of you fails a Dexterity saving throw, you can take a Reaction to add 2 + the Shield's bonus to the creature's total, potentially causing it to succeed.

Honor of the Vanguard (Very Rare+). When you roll Initiative and an ally you can see is within 30 feet of an enemy, you can teleport to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of that ally and gain Temporary Hit Points equal to 5 times the Shield's bonus.

Righteous Wrath (Very Rare+). When you use the Valorous Guard property to cause an attack to miss, the next time you hit that attacker with a weapon or Unarmed Strike before the end of your next turn, it takes an extra 1d8 (Legendary: 3d8) Radiant damage.

As Terrible as the Dawn (Legendary). You can cast *Flame Strike* (save DC 19) from the Shield. If you are in the spell's area, you regain 5d6 Hit Points instead of taking damage. Once the spell is cast from the Shield, it can't be cast from it again until the next dusk.



SHOVEL OF YORGRIM

Weapon (Greatclub), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This shovel features a steel blade and collar at the end of a makeshift walking stick, appearing old and well-used. It was once the shovel of Yorgrim of the Shadestone Clan, who could commune with the spirits of the dead. It occasionally emits a faint whispering sound when handled.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with this magic weapon determined by its rarity. While holding the shovel, you can use the following properties.

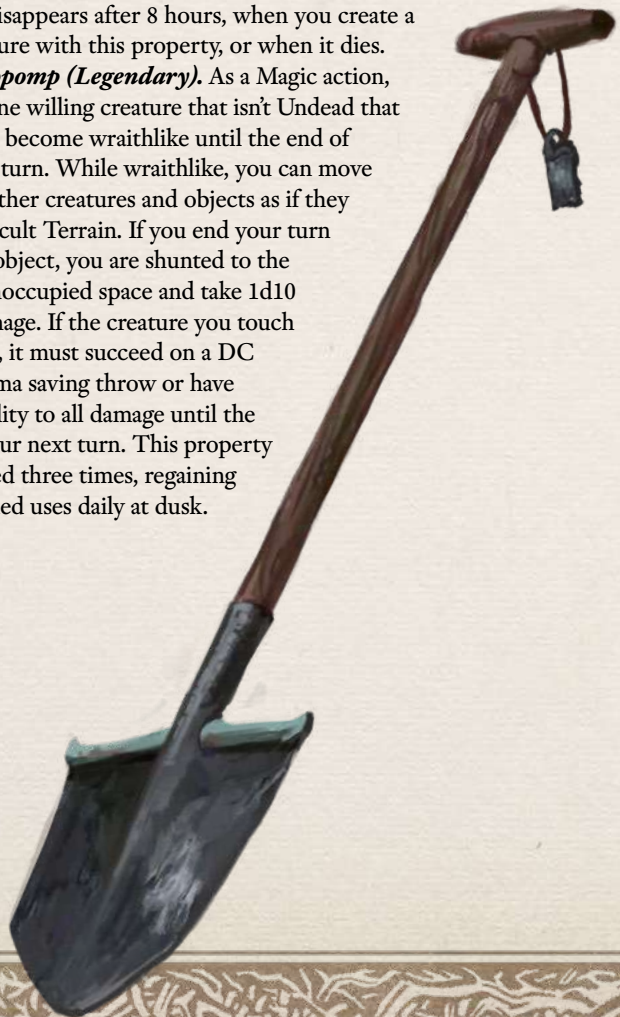
Death-Kenning (Rare+). When you hit an Undead with the shovel, you can take a Bonus Action immediately after the hit to learn its Resistances, Immunities, and Vulnerabilities, if any.

Deathspeaker (Rare+). You can cast *Gentle Repose* and *Speak with Dead* from the shovel.

Deny Death's Touch (Very Rare+). You and your allies within a 10-foot Emanation originating from you have Resistance to Necrotic damage.

Bind Deathly Servant (Legendary). When a Humanoid dies within 30 feet of you, you can take a Reaction to turn its soul into a **Specter** that obeys your commands. If the Humanoid was Friendly to you when it died, you can turn the soul into a **Wraith** instead. You can control one creature at a time with this property. The Undead disappears after 8 hours, when you create a new creature with this property, or when it dies.

Psychopomp (Legendary). As a Magic action, you and one willing creature that isn't Undead that you touch become wraithlike until the end of your next turn. While wraithlike, you can move through other creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. If you end your turn inside an object, you are shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and take 1d10 Force damage. If the creature you touch is Undead, it must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or have Vulnerability to all damage until the start of your next turn. This property can be used three times, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.



STAFF OF FARRYN OF THE GREENWOOD

Staff, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This twisted wooden staff is crowned by a trinket-adorned deer's skull. It was fashioned by Farryn before she delved into the dark lore of Gorthos. Soft, fragrant moss and earthy mushrooms grow along the staff's length.

While holding the staff, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and your spell save DC determined by the staff's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

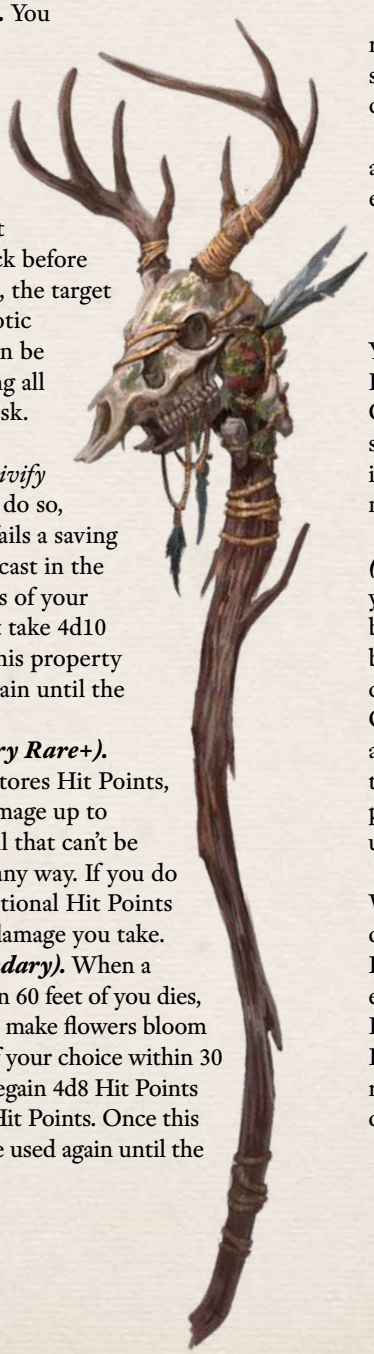
Living Ward (Rare+). You have Resistance to Necrotic damage.

Servant of the Cycle (Rare+). You can cast *Cure Wounds* (level 3 version) from the staff. When you do so, the next time you hit with an attack before the end of your next turn, the target takes an extra 1d10 Necrotic damage. This property can be used three times, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

Cycle's Balance (Very Rare+). You can cast *Revivify* from the staff. When you do so, the next time a creature fails a saving throw against a spell you cast in the next hour, it and creatures of your choice within 20 feet of it take 4d10 Necrotic damage. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Sacrifice of Flesh (Very Rare+). When a spell you cast restores Hit Points, you can take Necrotic damage up to twice the level of the spell that can't be reduced or prevented in any way. If you do so, the target regains additional Hit Points equal to three times the damage you take.

Death Blossom (Legendary). When a creature you can see within 60 feet of you dies, you can take a Reaction to make flowers bloom around them. Creatures of your choice within 30 feet of the dead creature regain 4d8 Hit Points and gain 2d8 Temporary Hit Points. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.



SWORD OF THE CRIMSON ABBOT

Weapon (Longsword), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This powerful, fiendish sword was once wielded by the Crimson Abbot. While it was created as a gift that brought evil and malice to the corrupted former knight, it has lost its connections to the Crimson Rose. However, its evil origins still linger within. The sword is sleek and polished, with a blade that absorbs light. A blood-red ruby on the hilt is fitted within a setting of thorns and roses.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with this magic weapon determined by the sword's rarity. While holding the sword, you can use the following properties.

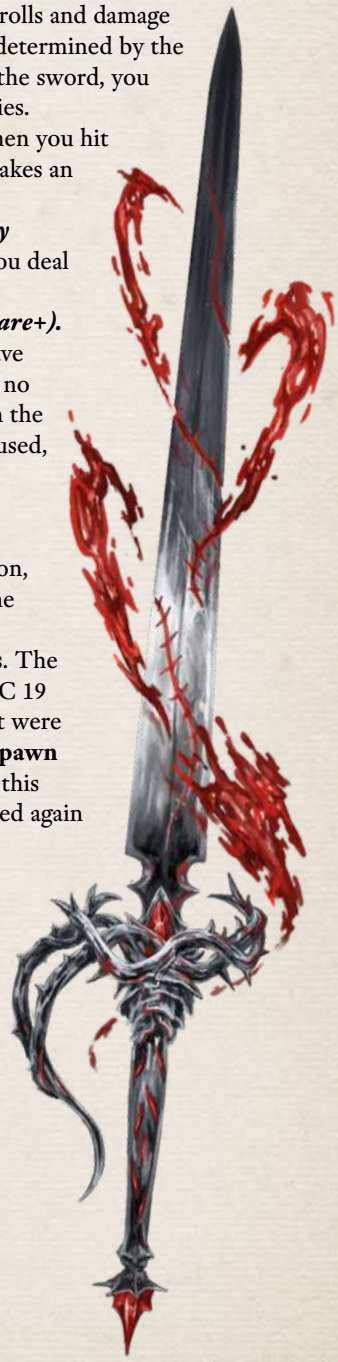
Blood Drain (Rare+). When you hit a creature with the sword, it takes an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage.

Irresistible Hunger (Very Rare+). Necrotic damage you deal ignores Resistance.

Vampiric Charm (Very Rare+). You can cast *Charm Person* (save DC = 16 + the sword's bonus, no Concentration required) from the sword. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Embrace of the Duchess (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can touch the sword to the body of a Humanoid that has been dead for 1 minute or less. The creature must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw (as if it were alive) or become a **Vampire Spawn** that dies again at dawn. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Stolen Life (Legendary). When you deal Necrotic damage with the Blood Drain property, you can expend and roll one Hit Point Die. You regain Hit Points equal to the number rolled plus the Necrotic damage dealt.



TOOTH OF THE JINXED LEVIATHAN

Weapon (Dagger), Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This tooth is razor sharp and can be wielded as a Dagger. Its "hilt" is wrapped in alligator hide, and the flat of its blade flickers with magenta hex magic in carved glyphs.

You gain a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with this magic weapon determined by its rarity. While holding the tooth, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus for your spells, and you can use the following properties.

Jinx of Dire Fortune (Rare+). As a Bonus Action, you can force one creature you can see within 60 feet of you to make a Charisma saving throw (DC = 16 + the tooth's bonus). On a failed save, the target is jinxed for 1 minute. While jinxed, when the target makes a D20 Test and rolls an even number on the d20, it must reroll the d20 and take the new roll. On a successful save, you must make the same saving throw, becoming jinxed for 1 minute on a failure. This property can't be used again while another creature is jinxed by it.

Exposed Weak Spot (Very Rare+). When you make an attack roll with the tooth, you score a Critical Hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.

Steal Unluck (Very Rare+). When an enemy you can see within 60 feet of you makes a D20 Test with Advantage, you can take a Reaction to negate their Advantage. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until a creature you can see makes a D20 Test and rolls a 1 on the d20, or until the next dusk.

Strange Fortunes (Legendary). Each time you score a Critical Hit with the tooth against an enemy, the tooth gains a cumulative +3 bonus to damage rolls. This bonus is in addition to the bonus based on the tooth's rarity. When you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll with the tooth, you take Force damage equal to the accumulated bonus. This property's damage bonus returns to +0 when you finish a Long Rest.



VEIL OF THE WEEPING WIDOW

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This mourning veil is imbued with alien power. The Weeping Widow wore the veil to hide her permanently tear-stained face, and rumors circulate that the widow used it to hide the otherworldly corruption writhing within her eyes.

While wearing the veil, you gain a bonus to Wisdom checks and Wisdom saving throws determined by the veil's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Psychic Fortitude (Rare+). You have Resistance to Psychic damage.

Sense Grief (Rare+). You can cast *Detect Thoughts* (save DC = 16 + the veil's bonus) from the veil.

Psychic Shock (Very Rare+). When a creature forces you to make a saving throw against Psychic damage, or to avoid or end the Charmed or Frightened conditions, you can take a Reaction to deal 2d8 Psychic damage to it.

Thought Worm (Very Rare+). You can use the veil to cast *Modify Memory* (save DC = 16 + the veil's bonus). When a creature fails its saving throw against the spell, you can implant a parasitic spawn of the White Worm in the target's brain. While you're on the same plane, you know the distance and direction to the target, and you can cast Divination and Enchantment spells on it as if it were in range and in sight. A *Greater Restoration* or *Heal* spell kills the parasite and ends this effect. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Psychic Storm (Legendary). You can take one extra Reaction during a round, which you can only use to activate the Psychic Shock property.

Veiled Countenance (Legendary). When you are the target of a Divination spell, the caster must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the caster takes 6d8 Psychic damage and has the Incapacitated condition for 1 minute. At the end of each of the caster's turns, it repeats the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.





VISAGE OF THE OLD WAYS

Wondrous Item, Rare (+2), Very Rare (+4), Legendary (+6) (Requires Attunement)

This wood-carved mask has a haunted expression and makes the wearer's eyes look like empty shadows. Rabbit ears protrude over the head. While you wear the mask, you hear the whispers of an ancient forest archfey deep within your mind.

While wearing the mask, you gain a bonus to your damage rolls when you deal Fire damage determined by the mask's rarity, and you can use the following properties.

Cultic Mask (Rare+). You can't be targeted by Divination spells or perceived through scrying sensors. Ability checks made to discern your identity have a minimum DC of 25.

Fire Within (Rare+). While you are burning, your weapon attacks deal an extra 2d4 Fire damage. You can take a Bonus Action to begin or stop burning.

Strange Sight (Rare+). You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet, and you can see normally through areas obscured by smoke.

Mastery of Flame (Very Rare+). Fire damage you deal ignores Resistance.

Sacrificial Flame (Very Rare+). As a Bonus Action, you can cause a creature you can see with 0 Hit Points that is within 30 feet of you to burst into flame. Its body burns to ash over the next minute, and when a creature Hostile to you starts its turn in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the body, it takes 2d8 Fire damage. The flame is extinguished if the target regains any Hit Points.

Harvest Offering (Legendary). As a Magic action, you can expend up to 5 Hit Point Dice to regain a spell slot of a level equal to the number of Hit Dice spent. Alternatively, you can touch a creature that is willing or that has the Unconscious condition and force them to expend any number of these Hit Dice in your place. This property can be used twice, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

WHISTLE OF THE VAGRANT

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement)

This tarnished brass whistle belonged to the conductor of the *Ghostlight Express*, imbuing it with ghastly, mysterious powers. Its metal is cold to the touch, and its sound is an unnerving shriek.

While you hold or wear the whistle, you gain a bonus determined by the whistle's rarity to all saving throws, and you can use the following properties.

Call the Dead (Rare+). As a Magic action, you can blow the whistle to cast *Gentle Repose* on all dead bodies within 30 feet of you. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Sense the Undead (Rare+). As a Bonus Action, you can detect the presence and location of Undead within 60 feet of you, even through Total Cover of any material other than iron or lead.

Undaunted (Rare+). You have Advantage on saving throws you make to avoid or end the Frightened condition.

Call the Undead (Very Rare+). As a Magic action, you can blow the whistle to cast *Banishment* against an Undead creature (save DC = 16 + the whistle's bonus) from it. The target always appears in a harmless demiplane resembling the interior of a train. If you maintain the spell for its full duration, the target arrives in an appropriate afterlife. Creatures with Legendary Actions automatically succeed on the saving throw. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Steam Cloud (Very Rare+). You can blow the whistle to cast *Fog Cloud* (no Concentration required) from it. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Touched by Death (Very Rare+). You have Resistance to Necrotic damage.

Afterlife Express (Legendary). You can blow the whistle to cast *Ghastly Charge* (takes the form of a ghost train) from it. This property can be used twice, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.



CURSED CURIOS

Some magic items carry the kind of curse that worms its way into the flesh, mind, or soul, digging deeper the longer you remain attuned to it. Power is never without cost and danger in Druskenvald, but once you grasp power, do you have the courage to relinquish it?

Lingering Curses. Ending your Attunement to one of these items removes its curse, but the power of a Cursed Curio doesn't release its hold on the user easily. If you attune to it again within 28 days, the progression of its curse returns to where it was before you ended your Attunement.



Black Candle



Amber Birdcage

AMBER BIRDCAGE

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This birdcage, shaped from amber, physically replaces your torso while you are attuned to it. When your Attunement ends, it separates from you, and your torso returns to its previous state. The birdcage has the following properties.

Sense Fiends. As a Bonus Action, you can sense the location of Fiends or magical effects created by Fiends within 60 feet of yourself.

Capture Fiend. As a Magic action, choose one Bloodied Fiend that you can see within 60 feet of yourself. It must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be transformed into an amber songbird and trapped in the birdcage. The songbird is an inert object until removed from the cage and released. You can remove one songbird from the cage as a Bonus Action. If you stop holding the bird, the Fiend reverts to its true form with all its Hit Points, and it is Hostile to you.

Consume Songbird. As a Magic action, you can consume one amber songbird you are holding. The Fiend dies, and you can either regain one expended spell slot with a level up to half the Fiend's CR, or you can gain Temporary Hit Points equal to the Fiend's CR.

Amber Curse. You have a −1 penalty to Wisdom saving throws. Each time you use the Capture Fiend or Consume Songbird properties, this penalty increases by 1.

BLACK CANDLE

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This broad, black tallow candle is engraved with arcane symbols. When lit, its smoke is greasy and pungent, and its flame is pale gray, but it never burns down. The candle has the following properties.

Word of Flame and Darkness. As a Bonus Action, you can light or extinguish the candle by speaking a command word while within 60 feet of it. It sheds Dim Light in a 30-foot radius.

Witchlight. While you are in the candle's light, you can cast a level 1 or 2 spell without expending a spell slot. When you cast a spell in this way, you can't cast that spell using the candle again for 24 hours, and you must succeed on a DC 0 Constitution saving throw or take Fire damage equal to 2d6 times the spell's level.

Cursed Candle. After you succeed or fail on the saving throw of the Witchlight property, its save DC increases by 2. This increase can't happen again until you finish a Long Rest. When the DC is 10 or higher, you also have Vulnerability to Necrotic damage.

BLOODY FIDDLE

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This scarlet-lacquered fiddle is warm to the touch, like the heat of fresh blood. Though it looks like it has seen better days, its sound is clear and strong.

While you hold the fiddle, you gain a +2 bonus to Charisma (Performance) checks, and you can use the following properties.

Song of Stirred Blood. As a Magic action, you can play a lively or stirring tune on the fiddle. Up to six creatures of your choice within 30 feet of you gain Temporary Hit Points equal to 1d10 + your Proficiency Bonus, and if you have Bardic Inspiration dice, you can expend and roll one to add it to the total. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Sanguine Curse. The first time that you play the fiddle after finishing a Long Rest, you take 1 Slashing damage that ignores Resistance. When you use the Song of Stirred Blood property, this Slashing damage increases by 1.

CHUNK OF OOZING FUNGUS

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This fist-sized fungal growth is a pallid color, is oozy and lumpy, and frequently fills the air with spores. The fungus has the following properties.

Spore Cloud. As a Magic action, you can throw the fungus up to 30 feet. The fungus is destroyed and explodes into a cloud of spores in a 30-foot Sphere centered on that point. Each creature other than you in the area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 3d8 Poison damage and has the Poisoned condition until the start of your next turn. A creature that fails this save by 5 or more also has the Incapacitated condition. On a successful save, a target takes half damage only.

Regrow. You can grow another *Chunk of Oozing Fungus* by coughing green-black spores into your hand as a Bonus Action. When you do so, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or your Hit Point maximum decreases by 5.

Fungal Curse. You have a −1 penalty to Constitution saving throws. This penalty increases by 1 immediately after you succeed or fail on the saving throw from the Regrow property.

DEVILBONE BUTTON

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This bone button is found on an article of clothing, such as a shirt or coat, and is carved with the tiny image of a devil. It must be attached to clothing that you wear to attune to it. You gain a +1 bonus to saving throws, and it has the following properties.

Improbable Luck. When you fail a saving throw while wearing the button, you can choose to succeed instead. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Protective Bone. While wearing the button, your Hit Point maximum increases by 5 + your Constitution modifier.

Diabolic Curse. When you finish a Long Rest, there is a 1 percent chance the button is mysteriously missing and your Attunement to it ends. A devil with a CR of your level + 3 or CR 20 (whichever is lower) then becomes your enemy and seeks to destroy you. The GM determines the devil's details. When you use the Improbable Luck property, the chance the button disappears increases by 1.



Bloody Fiddle

Devilbone Button

Chunk of Oozing Fungus

GREEN RIBBON

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This green satin ribbon is just long enough to fasten around a person's neck comfortably. It's hard to think why you'd even want to remove it. While you wear the ribbon, you have a +5 bonus to Death Saving Throws, and it grants the following properties.

Instant Attunement. If the ribbon is wrapped around the neck of a dead creature that has been dead no longer than 10 days and wasn't Undead when it died, the creature returns to life as if by a *Raise Dead* spell, and it instantly attunes to the ribbon. The creature dies immediately if its Attunement to the ribbon ends or if the ribbon is removed.

Ribbon's Mending. When you drop to 0 Hit Points, you can take a Reaction to immediately regain Hit Points equal to half your level (minimum 1). Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk or until you roll a 20 on the d20 for a Death Saving Throw.

Curse of the Ribbon. Creatures other than you within 60 feet of you have a −1 penalty to Death Saving Throws. This penalty increases by 1 each time you use the Ribbon's Mending property.

HYPNOVULFEN FIGURE

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This carved wooden figurine depicts a crooked wolf with large, leering eyes and a wild, toothy maw. While holding the figure, you can use it as a Spellcasting Focus, and you gain a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls and spell save DCs. The figure has the following properties.

Hypnovulfen Bite. Your teeth become viciously sharp. You can bite as an Unarmed Strike that deals 1d6 Piercing damage instead of Bludgeoning damage.

Hypnovulfen Eye. While holding the figure, you can cast *Confusion* (save DC 14) with it. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

Cursed Hunger. When you roll Initiative, you must succeed on a DC 0 Wisdom saving throw or you can't use the Attack or Magic actions except to use the figure's properties until you hit a creature with a Hypnovulfen Bite attack. When you use the Hypnovulfen Eye property, the DC of this saving throw increases by 2.

JINXED POKER CHIP

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This ceramic poker chip is painted with a crocodile's skull on one side. Hoarse laughter sounds when it flips. While you hold the chip, it grants the following properties.

Jinxed Luck. When you fail a D20 Test, you can take a Reaction to flip the chip. Roll 1d6. On a 4–6, you succeed on the D20 Test instead. After you use this property, roll 1d20. On a 1–5, this property can't be used again until the next dusk.

Sense Cheating. If you have proficiency with a Gaming Set, you automatically succeed on ability checks to know if someone in a game you are playing is cheating.

Cursed Coin. When you roll Initiative, you must succeed on a DC 0 Charisma saving throw or become cursed until you finish a Short or Long Rest. While cursed, you subtract 1d6 from D20 Tests. When you use the Jinxed Luck property, the saving throw DC increases by 1.

Hypnovulfen Figure



Jinxed Poker Chip



Green Ribbon



REVELRY SUIT

Armor (Hide), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This bulky suit is made from natural materials, including fur, canvas, and straw. Its mask is exceptionally oversized and shaped into a sun, smiling in an unsettling way. While you wear this armor, you gain a +2 bonus to AC, and it grants the following properties.

Dancing Dodge. When you fail a Dexterity saving throw, if your Speed isn't 0, you can use this property to succeed instead. Once used, this property can't be used again until the next dusk.

Wild Steps. As a Bonus Action, you can move up to your Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Dancing Curse. When you roll Initiative, you must make a DC 0 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, you gain the Incapacitated condition, and your Speed is 0 until the start of your next turn as you perform a folk dance. When you use the Dancing Dodge or Wild Steps properties, the DC of the saving throw increases by 2. The DC of this curse can't increase again until you finish a Long Rest.

MIDWIFE SHEARS

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

These scissors are shaped to resemble a stork. Their blades are forever wickedly sharp, and the threads they cut are more than merely physical.

Cut the Unseen Thread. While holding the scissors, you can cast *Dispel Magic* (+4 bonus) or *Remove Curse* from them. Once either spell is cast from the scissors, that spell can't be cast from them again until the next dusk.

Curse of the Severed Thread. When you make a saving throw to avoid being pushed or to avoid the Prone condition, you have a −1 penalty to the roll. This penalty increases by 1 each time you use the Cut the Unseen Thread property. If you fail such a save by 5 or more, you are pushed 1d6 x 5 feet straight away from the source of the save, in addition to any other distance pushed.

THE BAG

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This weathered old satchel has three tarnished silver buckles that hold it shut. There are faint bloodstains on the inside of the flap, and the bag occasionally ripples as if something inside is moving. The bag functions as a *Bag of Holding* and has the following additional properties.

Inhabitant. A **Lurker in the Dark** lives in the bag's extradimensional space. If reduced to 0 Hit Points, the lurker vanishes and reappears in the bag at the next midnight. The lurker only dies if it is reduced to 0 Hit Points by a creature holding a toy or stuffed animal once owned by a child. If the lurker is killed, the bag loses its magic, and anything in it appears in unoccupied spaces closest to the bag.

The Bag's Claw. While holding the bag, you can take a Bonus Action to have the lurker in the dark lash out with its claw at a creature within 5 feet of you. Make a melee attack roll with a +7 bonus. On a hit, the claw deals 1d10 + 4 Piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14) from the claw, and it has the Restrained condition until the grapple ends. This property can be used three times, regaining all expended uses daily at dusk.

Lurker's Curse. When you finish a Long Rest, roll 1d6. On a 1, the lurker slipped out of the bag during the rest and caused mayhem in a nearby area, such as attacking people, causing livestock to sicken, or spoiling provisions.



Revelry Suit



Midwife Shears

TOY RIVERBOAT

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This tiny, brightly painted boat is made in exacting detail, with smokestacks and a paddlewheel that turns, but it looks like a child's plaything. Studying it reveals a miniscule but unearthly passenger within the boat's cabin. The riverboat grants the following properties.

Passengers. As a Magic action, you and up to twelve other willing, Medium or smaller creatures you can see within 30 feet of yourself shrink to Tiny size and appear aboard the riverboat, along with up to 300 pounds of gear per passenger. The boat moves over water or other liquids at 3 miles per hour and doesn't require wind. You can travel this way for up to 12 hours a day. A passenger that leaves the boat returns to its normal size.

Unearthly Passenger. You can release the riverboat onto water to cast *Arcane Eye* with it. The riverboat is the spell's sensor and only moves on water, but you can otherwise move it as normal for the spell.

Haunting Curse. When a creature leaves the riverboat, it must make a DC 0 Charisma saving throw, becoming cursed on a failed save. While cursed in this way, it has Disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma ability checks and on saving throws to avoid or end the Frightened condition. After you make this saving throw, the save DC increases by 2. This increase can't happen again until you finish a Long Rest.

WITHERED HAND

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

The skin of this desiccated hand on a looped leather cord is covered with tattoos signifying dreadful hexes. The fingers seem to curl slightly when the hand is at the edge of your vision. While you hold or wear the hand, you gain a +1 bonus to spell attack rolls and spell save DCs. The hand grants the following properties.

Withering Grasp. When you make an Unarmed Strike, you can extend your reach to 30 feet with threads of magenta jinx magic. When you do so, on a hit, you deal Necrotic damage instead of Bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a creature no more than one size larger than you, you can give it the Grappled condition with the threads. The escape DC for this grapple can use your spellcasting ability or Charisma (your choice) in place of your Strength. The Grappled condition ends if you use this property against a different target.

Withering Curse. When you use the Withering Grasp property, your Hit Point maximum decreases by 1. Your Hit Point maximum can't decrease again until you finish a Long Rest. You don't regain the Hit Point maximum lost to this curse when you finish a Long Rest.



Withered Hand

The Bag

Toy Riverboat



PARANORMAL POTIONS

Those who work magic in Druskenvald bind spells into potions, oils, and unguents of great power. They also know of secret practices that can exalt the base materials into draughts of greater or more lasting potency.

The potions presented here each have a Heightened Potency property. They can be found with or without the property at your discretion, and you can treat a potion with this property as one rarity higher (to a maximum of Legendary) for the purpose of determining levels at which it might be found.

BREWING POTIONS

The art of potion-making is practiced by hedge-wizards, swamp-witches, Old Ways herbalists, and many other folk. Characters can create paranormal potions using the normal magic item crafting rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Characters can also create these potions with the Heightened Potency property, or they can add the property to an existing potion that lacks it. In the rules to do so below, "you" refers to the character crafting the potion.

Cost. Adding the Heightened Potency property to a potion you're creating or to an existing potion requires extra materials, as shown in the Heightened Brewing table, beyond the cost for a normal potion of its rarity.

Time and Ability Check. Creating a potion with the Heightened Potency property takes the normal time for its rarity. Adding the Heightened Potency property to an existing potion takes 1 hour of work using Alchemist's Supplies or an Herbalism Kit. After the work time, make an Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check with a DC determined by the potion's rarity on the Heightened Brewing table. On a success, you create the potion without issue. On a failure, you roll 1d6 on the Potion Quirks table, then decide whether to create a potion that has the indicated quirk or discard all materials.

Heightened Brewing

Base Potion Rarity	DC	Cost
Common	10	10 GP
Uncommon	15	50 GP
Rare	20	500 GP
Very Rare	25	5,000 GP
Legendary	30	25,000 GP

Potion Quirks

d6	Effect
1	**Cracked Bottles.** Spend twice the normal heightened brewing cost. You can pause work on the potion to acquire more materials.
2	**Unusual Viscosity.** This potion takes an action to use instead of a Bonus Action.
3	**Strange Feeling Inside.** The drinker must expend 1 Hit Point Die as part of the Bonus Action to use this potion, or it has no effect.
4	**Dormant Magic.** This potion only provides a benefit for a drinker who can cast spells, and the drinker must expend a spell slot as part of the Bonus Action to use this potion or it has no effect.
5	**Bitter Brew.** The potion tastes so awful that the drinker must succeed a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or spit out and waste the potion.
6	**Concentrated Draught.** By strange innovation or pure luck, you've created a potion that can be used one additional time.

DRAUGHT OF THE RED HUNGER

Potion, Legendary

When you drink this potion, you gain a ravenous thirst for blood and gain the effect of the *Vampiric Touch* spell (level 6 version, no Concentration required) for 1 minute. You can repeat the attack on subsequent turns as a Bonus Action instead of a Magic action.

This liquid is a shimmering red deeper and more intense than natural blood.

Heightened Potency. For the duration, as a Magic action, you can gain the effects of the *Gaseous Form* spell (no Concentration required) while you aren't in sunlight. You can also revert to your normal form as a Magic action.

ELIXIR OF FOGWALKING

Potion, Rare

When you drink this potion, your breath billows out in clouds of fog. For the next 10 minutes, fog and smoke don't hinder your vision, you can cast *Fog Cloud* up to three times (no Concentration required), and you can cast *Misty Step* up to three times as long as your teleportation begins or ends in an area of fog.

This bottle has a base like cobblestone. The glass widens near the top before narrowing again into an iron cap, resembling a lantern. The liquid inside is a murky gray.

Heightened Potency. The potion's duration becomes 1 hour, and when you use this potion to cast *Misty Step*, you also gain Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage until the start of your next turn.

HAINT HOOCH

Potion, Rare

When you drink from this glass jug, you become insubstantial for 1 minute. During this time, you can move through creatures and objects as if they were Difficult Terrain, taking 1d10 Force damage if you end your turn inside an object.

The potion is stored in jugs labeled "XxX," with a skeletal smile drawn on it. The ghastly, blue-green liquor within has an overpowering smell and harsh taste.

Heightened Potency. For the duration, you gain a Fly Speed equal to your Speed.



Draught of the Red Hunger



Haint Hooch



Elixir of Fogwalking

HARVEST BREW

Potion, Rare

When you drink this potion, you are filled with good health and bounty, providing you with enough nourishment to sustain you for 1 day. For the next hour, when you regain Hit Points, you regain additional Hit Points equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

The potion's bottle is made from a hollowed-out gourd, and the thick, liquid inside is a deep orange that tastes of nutmeg and cardamom.

Heightened Potency. The additional Hit Points you regain are equal to half your level rather than your Proficiency Bonus (minimum +2).

JINXED RUM

Potion, Uncommon

When you drink this brightly colored rum, your luck takes a strange turn for 1 hour. For the duration, when you make a D20 Test, roll 1d4. On a 2–4, add the number to your roll. On a 1, roll an extra d20 and use the lowest roll for the test.

This potion is stored in a glass rum bottle marked with crossbones.

Heightened Potency. Roll 1d6 instead of 1d4.

LILYPAD TONIC

Potion, Common

When you drink this potion, you gain the effect of the *Polymorph* spell (no Concentration required), turning you into a **Frog**.

This potion is found in a clay jar shaped and painted like a large frog, with a cork stopper in its back.

Heightened Potency. The potion has six doses instead of one.



NECTAR OF THE GREEN MAN

Potion, Very Rare

When you drink this potion, you gain the effect of the *Commune with Nature* spell, but your experience is filled with terror and dread. You must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, for the next 8 hours, you have Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks while you can see a forest. You automatically succeed on the save if you have Immunity to the Frightened condition.

This bottle is carved from wood, with a green, leafy face adorning its surface. The liquid is a deep green streaked with shades of umber.

Heightened Potency. You can learn all five facts from *Commune with Nature*.

NIGHTWATCHER POTION

Potion, Rare

When you drink this potion, you have Darkvision out to 120 feet for the next 24 hours. During that time, you don't need to sleep, and if you take a Long Rest, you can remain conscious throughout.

This clay bottle with a waxed stopper is painted with the head of a great horned owl, and the liquid within is midnight blue

Heightened Potency. The duration increases to 72 hours.

REAPER'S REVENGE

Potion, Rare

When you drink this potion, you are filled with intense and violent vigor, gaining 3d8 Temporary Hit Points. For 1 minute, when one of your enemies dies within 30 feet of you, you can take a Reaction to regain 1d8 Hit Points.

The base of this glass potion bottle is shaped like a skull, and the images of scythes run up its neck.

Heightened Potency. For 1 minute after drinking this potion, when you hit a Bloodied creature with an attack roll and deal damage to it, the creature takes an extra 1d8 Necrotic damage.

SIGHT OF SIN

Potion, Rare

When you drink this potion, you gain the effect of a *Detect Magic* spell (no Concentration required) for 10 minutes, and during that time, you have Advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks to discern hidden motives or deception.

This potion is stored in a round glass flask. An iron band wraps around the bottle, ornamented with a goat's skull.

Heightened Potency. For the duration, you also gain the effect of the *See Invisibility* spell.



SILENCE OF THE DROWNED

Potion, Uncommon

When you drink this potion, you gain the effect of the *Silence* spell (no Concentration required) as a 20-foot Emanation originating from you for 10 minutes, and for the duration, squid tentacles emerge from your mouth.

This sculpted clay jar is painted in a deep blue and adorned with squid tentacles. Uncorking it reduces all noise in the area as if you are underwater, and the liquid within is a coppery blue-green.

Heightened Potency. For the duration, you can spit ink from your mouth as a Bonus Action. One creature within 30 feet of you makes a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target gains the Blinded condition until the start of your next turn. On a successful save, the target is immune to this property for the next 24 hours.

TINCTURE OF MOURNING

Potion, Rare

When you drink this potion, you weep with inexpressible sorrow for 1 hour. During that time, you have Immunity to the Charmed condition, but your continued wailing prevents you from being silent. If you are Charmed when you drink the potion, the condition is suppressed for the duration.

This glass bottle is topped with a small crypt angel carved from stone. The fluid within has the taste and consistency of tears and the colors of a rain cloud.

Heightened Potency. Creatures within 10 feet of you that are Friendly to you also gain Immunity to the Charmed condition.

WYTCHWOOD SAP

Potion, Rare

As a Bonus Action, you can coat one weapon or up to three pieces of ammunition with this sticky sap and choose a damage type: Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Poison, or Thunder. A creature that takes damage from the coated weapon or ammunition takes an extra 3d8 damage of the chosen type. Once applied, the sap retains its potency for 1 minute or until its damage is dealt, whichever comes first.

Wytchwood Sap is stored in small vessels made of bark with a wooden stopper that never fully contains this oozing, amber-hued tar.

Heightened Potency. If you roll the same number on two or more of the d8s, another creature of your choice within 30 feet of your target takes 2d8 damage of the same type.



Silence of the Drowned

Tincture of Mourning

Wytchwood Sap



Appendix C: CHAOTIC CURSES

This section presents 156 chaotic curses, which can be optionally used to add a bit of unexpected chaos and humor to your game. Normally, curses are lasting or permanent negative conditions that require magic or significant effort to end. Chaotic Curses deviate from such curses in several ways:

Fleeting. These curses are designed to last a brief amount of real-world time (15-30 minutes or less) and should fade before they become tedious.
Roleplay-focused. They add whimsy, surprise, or mayhem to the game without heavily impacting mechanics or combat.
Unpredictable. These effects alter the characters' beliefs, appearance, and actions in humorous or unexpected ways.

Chaotic Curses are entirely optional and should be used with discretion. Groups that prefer less active roleplay or serious folk horror atmosphere should avoid these curses. For those that favor sillier games, even while confronting the many horrors described in this book, these curses add levity and entertainment.

USING CHAOTIC CURSES

To distribute Chaotic Curses, use one of the following methods:

TAROT DECK. Shuffle a tarot deck and draw a card. Each card is associated with a curse (see the table below), and the card's position—upright or reversed—determines which curse takes effect. The card can then be removed from the deck permanently or reshuffled into the deck each time.

ROLLING DICE. Alternatively, you can roll a d100 and check the corresponding curse on the table below.

STARTING AND ENDING CURSES

Chaotic Curses are best left up to the GM's discretion, so they occur at unexpected times rather than during intense or pivotal moments. However, you can use mechanical triggers to determine when a curse begins and ends. Here are some ideas that might trigger Chaotic Curses:

- Rolling a natural 1 on a D20 Test
- Whenever combat ends
- Finishing a Long Rest
- Touching a cursed object
- Entering a specific location

Ending curses can also be handled in a variety of ways:

- Expending Heroic Inspiration
- *Remove Curse* or similar magic
- Healing magic above a certain threshold
- Finishing a Short Rest
- GM pity

TAROT INTERPRETATIONS

The tarot deck is simply used for randomization. There is no intended connection between the card's traditional meaning and its curse effect.

1 ***The Fool (Upright).*** You become a clown and are foolish and silly.

2 ***The Fool (Reverse).*** You cannot stop laughing. You have the most extreme case of gallows humor; the more macabre something is, the funnier it becomes to you.

3 ***The Magician (Upright).*** You consider being headless the ideal state of being. You believe you can remove your head and endeavor to remove the heads of your allies.

4 ***The Magician (Reverse).*** Everyone around you appears to have had their eyes replaced by small round black buttons.

5 ***The High Priestess (Upright).*** You cannot stop coughing up blood.

6 ***The High Priestess (Reverse).*** Every time you drink something, you feel as if you are drowning.

7 ***The Empress (Upright).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of wrath.

8 ***The Empress (Reverse).*** Everything you touch begins to rot.

9 ***The Emperor (Upright).*** You see false visions of a past where you did horrible things. They are so realistic and convincing that you begin to doubt your own reality.

10 ***The Emperor (Reverse).*** You believe your soul belongs to a dark entity that can come to claim it at any moment.

11 ***The Hierophant (Upright).*** You have an insatiable hunger for bones.

12 ***The Hierophant (Reverse).*** You are so incredibly sleepy, it's hard to keep your eyes open. Every time you start to fall asleep, you jolt awake as if from a nightmare.

13 ***The Lovers (Upright).*** You lose all sense of direction. No matter what you do or what anyone says, you believe you are lost and will never find your way.

14 ***The Lovers (Reverse).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of pride.

15 ***The Chariot (Upright).*** You have an overwhelming fear of death and are afraid that everything can kill you, even the most mundane things.

16 ***The Chariot (Reverse).*** Your third eye opens—literally. It gives you no additional powers, but you now have a third eye in the middle of your forehead.

17 ***Strength (Upright).*** You believe yourself to be the ferryman of the dead, and all souls must be judged by you.

18 ***Strength (Reverse).*** When you move, you emit the sound of leprosy bells, even though you have neither bells nor leprosy.

19 ***The Hermit (Upright).*** You feel your personality split in two. A dark and evil version of yourself wrestles for control over your mind.

20 ***The Hermit (Reverse).*** You turn into a talking black cat. You know who you are, but the people around you have no reason to believe you.

21 ***Wheel of Fortune (Upright).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of greed.

22 ***Wheel of Fortune (Reverse).*** You believe you are immortal—you are not.

23 ***Justice (Upright).*** A pox appears all over your body.

24 ***Justice (Reverse).*** You are incredibly unlucky. You have Disadvantage on every roll.

25 ***The Hanged Man (Upright).*** Every time you must make a d20 roll, you instead roll with a d12.

26 ***The Hanged Man (Reverse).*** A creepy mask affixes to your face, and nothing you do can remove it.

27 ***Death (Upright).*** Your face disappears and is replaced by smooth, featureless skin.

28 ***Death (Reverse).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of gluttony.

29 ***Temperance (Upright).*** Your eyes disappear from your face and appear in the palms of your hands.

30 ***Temperance (Reverse).*** You can only move by crawling around on all fours, and the crawling is always creepy and unsettling.

31 ***The Devil (Upright).*** Your head is replaced by the head of a black goat.

32 ***The Devil (Reverse).*** Every time you eat something, you find 1d8 human teeth inside.

33 ***The Tower (Upright).*** You fall madly in love with the next person you see.

34 ***The Tower (Reverse).*** You become incredibly gullible, and you believe everything you are told.

35 ***The Star (Upright).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of lust.

36 ***The Star (Reverse).*** You believe you are invisible—you are not.



37 ***The Moon (Upright).*** You feel like you are covered in cobwebs, yet nothing you do can stop the feeling. If you don't shake them off soon, you believe you will be cocooned.

38 ***The Moon (Reverse).*** You believe you are turning into a were-creature—you are not.

39 ***The Sun (Upright).*** Your skin shrivels and hardens, taking on a bark-like texture and appearance.

40 ***The Sun (Reverse).*** You believe your body has begun to rot and decay—it hasn't.

41 ***Judgement (Upright).*** You have an insatiable thirst for blood.

42 ***Judgement (Reverse).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of sloth.

43 ***The World (Upright).*** You have a mounting desire to consume brains.

44 ***The World (Reverse).*** You grow a pair of fangs, making it incredibly difficult to talk.

45 ***Ace of Wands (Upright).*** Everyone around you sounds like they are speaking unintelligible gibberish, and nothing allows you to comprehend what they are saying—not even magic that would normally allow you to understand any language.

46 ***Ace of Wands (Reverse).*** You believe you can talk to the dead—you cannot.

47 ***Two of Wands (Upright).*** You hear the voice of a dead clown antagonizing you in your mind.

48 ***Two of Wands (Reverse).*** You believe you are the reincarnated soul of a witch unjustly burned at the stake.

49 ***Three of Wands (Upright).*** You become the epitome of the deadly sin of envy.

50 ***Three of Wands (Reverse).*** You hallucinate that you and all your allies have turned into the undead.

51 ***Four of Wands (Upright).*** You believe your shadow is out to get you.

52 ***Four of Wands (Reverse).*** You are unable to tell a lie.

53 ***Five of Wands (Upright).*** A mushroom cap appears on your head like a hat, but you cannot remove it.

54 ***Five of Wands (Reverse).*** You are unable to tell the truth.

55 ***Six of Wands (Upright).*** Blood begins to pour from your eyes.

56 ***Six of Wands (Reverse).*** Your head is replaced by a jack-o'-lantern.

57 ***Seven of Wands (Upright).*** You feel like pollen clouds the air, and you cannot stop sneezing.

58 ***Seven of Wands (Reverse).*** You believe your body is being held together by straw, and you need to keep stuffing your clothing with it or you will collapse.

59 ***Eight of Wands (Upright).*** A swarm of carrion birds continually circles overhead. You believe this to be an omen of your impending death.

60 ***Eight of Wands (Reverse).*** You believe you are a walking, talking skeleton—you are not.

61 ***Nine of Wands (Upright).*** You smell the intense scent of pumpkin spice. Nothing you do makes the aroma dissipate, and it's beginning to give you a horrible headache.

62 ***Nine of Wands (Reverse).*** You cannot shake the feeling that you are being followed.

63 ***Ten of Wands (Upright).*** You see someone watching you out of the corner of your eye. When you turn to check, there is no one there.

64 ***Ten of Wands (Reverse).*** When you move, you hear footsteps following behind you. When you stop moving, the sound stops as well. No one else can hear this.

65 ***Page of Wands (Upright).*** Your legs turn into bird legs. If you happen to have bird legs, your legs turn into human legs.

66 ***Page of Wands (Reverse).*** All food appears and smells rotten. Rotten food instead looks delicious.

67 ***Knight of Wands (Upright).*** You believe the sky is filled with thousands of vicious and aggressive swarms of birds.

68 ***Knight of Wands (Reverse).*** You become incredibly clumsy, and you trip and fall over everything—even your own feet.

69 ***Queen of Wands (Upright).*** You are horribly afraid of the dark.

70 ***Queen of Wands (Reverse).*** You believe you are a vampire—you are not.

71 ***King of Wands (Upright).*** Your bones become incredibly fragile, and you can't stop breaking them.

72 ***King of Wands (Reverse).*** There is a worm in your brain trying to convince you to do unspeakable things.

73 ***Ace of Cups (Upright).*** Everyone around you appears to have an eerie, unnatural smile on their face. No matter what their true emotions, the smile never fades.

74 ***Ace of Cups (Reverse).*** You hear children laughing all around you. When you turn to find the source, the laughter stops, but it returns when you look away again.

75 ***Two of Cups (Upright).*** You believe you are dead and that no one can see or hear you, even if they say otherwise.

76 ***Two of Cups (Reverse).*** You believe you are being followed by a large black dog that is an omen of your impending doom.

77 ***Three of Cups (Upright).*** You believe you can tell the future, and you make wild claims for what is to come.

78 ***Three of Cups (Reverse).*** Your teeth become rotten and fall out, just to painfully regrow minutes later and then fall out again. The cycle keeps repeating itself.

79 ***Four of Cups (Upright).*** There is honey all over your legs, and nothing you do can remove it. Everything sticks to you.

80 ***Four of Cups (Reverse).*** You believe that scarabs are eating your body from the inside out.

81 ***Five of Cups (Upright).*** You believe that everyone around you is dead and that you are speaking to ghosts that don't realize they have died.

82 ***Five of Cups (Reverse).*** You become incredibly superstitious, going so far as to make up your own superstitions to justify your fear.

83 ***Six of Cups (Upright).*** You believe that everyone around you is a sinner and needs to be redeemed.

84 ***Six of Cups (Reverse).*** You randomly cough up feathers. This seems normal to you.

85 ***Seven of Cups (Upright).*** You believe you can communicate great distances via howl.

86 ***Seven of Cups (Reverse).*** You sprout a pair of membranous bat wings from your back. If you previously had wings, they are replaced by these wings. You cannot fly, though you believe you can.

87 ***Eight of Cups (Upright).*** You believe you can communicate via echolocation—you cannot.

88 ***Eight of Cups (Reverse).*** Hundreds of eyes—ever blinking, ever watching—sprout up all over your body.

89 ***Nine of Cups (Upright).*** You feel as if you are suffocating, almost as if you are being buried alive.

90 ***Nine of Cups (Reverse).*** Randomly, when you attempt to speak, grave dirt pours out of your mouth.

91 ***Ten of Cups (Upright).*** Worms wriggle beneath your skin, exiting your body from your mouth, eyes, and ears.

92 ***Ten of Cups (Reverse).*** The disembodied hand of a long-dead wizard has pledged itself to your service. This hand functions as a physical *Mage Hand* and can perform simple tasks for you. This seems normal to you, but everyone else that witnesses this hand is horrified by it.

93 ***Page of Cups (Upright).*** Every time you're injured, bugs, insects, spiders, and maggots spill out of your wounds instead of blood.

94 ***Page of Cups (Reverse).*** You turn into a creepy doll.

95 ***Knight of Cups (Upright).*** You believe spiders are crawling all over your body, and nothing you do removes them all.

96 ***Knight of Cups (Reverse).*** You have a horribly uncomfortable hangnail, and when you pull on it, your flesh unzips from your body.

97 ***Queen of Cups (Upright).*** You believe you can turn people to stone by making eye contact with them—you cannot.

98 ***Queen of Cups (Reverse).*** You are overwhelmed by the smell of burning hair and flesh.

99 ***King of Cups (Upright).*** The first person you see appears to you as a biblically accurate angel. Every time you close your eyes, they get closer to you. Don't blink.

100 ***King of Cups (Reverse).*** You believe a monster lurks behind every door, and you must check twice to be safe. Roll a d20. On a 1, you see 1d100 harmless skeletons lurking behind the door. You are the only one who can see these skeletons.

101 ***Ace of Swords (Upright).*** Your body is covered in frost, and you freeze in place. You are unable to move.

102 ***Ace of Swords (Reverse).*** Your skin feels like it is melting off, and nothing you do provides relief.

103 ***Two of Swords (Upright).*** You believe you can send long-distance messages via the mycelium network—you cannot.

104 ***Two of Swords (Reverse).*** You randomly see the visions of another's demise. The only way to get the visions to stop is to tell the person what you've seen in excruciating detail.

105 ***Three of Swords (Upright).*** You become deathly afraid of fire—even the tiniest of flames.

106 ***Three of Swords (Reverse).*** Hair begins to grow all over your body. If you are already covered with hair, it all falls out.

107 ***Four of Swords (Upright).*** Your feet and hands swap places.

108 ***Four of Swords (Reverse).*** Tiny fruit flies buzz all around you. Nothing you do can rid yourself of them.

109 ***Five of Swords (Upright).*** You are unable to control your facial expressions. No matter how capable you are of lying, your facial expressions are over exaggerated and give away your true feelings.

110 ***Five of Swords (Reverse).*** It's both too hot and too cold at the same time. When you put on more layers, you feel like you're burning up. When you remove your layers, you feel like you are freezing.

111 ***Six of Swords (Upright).*** You believe everyone around you is whispering about you, but every time you focus on what they are saying, the whispering stops.

112 ***Six of Swords (Reverse).*** You are overwhelmed with an intense paranoia of the coming winter, and you feel the need to hoard random objects like a magpie—rocks, sticks, clumps of weeds, or trinkets.

113 ***Seven of Swords (Upright).*** You believe you are turning into a scarecrow; you are convinced that you must stand like a scarecrow with your arms out or you and your allies will be horribly devoured by swarms of birds.

114 ***Seven of Swords (Reverse).*** You believe the next person to speak to you is secretly planning to kill you—they are not

115 ***Eight of Swords (Upright).*** You feel like you have not eaten for an entire winter season. Your hunger cannot be sated, and you'd eat practically anything.

116 ***Eight of Swords (Reverse).*** You feel like you have eaten too much and are on the verge of being sick. Nothing provides relief.

117 ***Nine of Swords (Upright).*** You have an unshakeable head cold. Your nose is runny, your throat is sore, and your muscles ache. It's inconvenient and even magic can't cure it.

118 ***Nine of Swords (Reverse).*** You can only speak in song, rhyme, poetry, prose, rap, or other artistic outlets.

119 ***Ten of Swords (Upright).*** You feel the need to dance, and you cannot stop.

120 ***Ten of Swords (Reverse).*** You feel the need to express yourself through interpretive dance and must do so whenever you speak.

121 ***Page of Swords (Upright).*** Flowers begin to sprout up all around your body. You are nearly swallowed up by them and are unable to move.

122 ***Page of Swords (Reverse).*** You can no longer see in color. Everything is in shades of black and white.

123 ***Knight of Swords (Upright).*** You randomly slip bird noises into your speech. You do not realize you are doing this.

124 ***Knight of Swords (Reverse).*** You begin to grow feathers all over your body. If you are already covered in feathers, they all fall out.

125 ***Queen of Swords (Upright).*** A raven circles overhead, mocking you by mimicking your allies' voices.

126 ***Queen of Swords (Reverse).*** You hear the wailing death throes of those that have died at your hand. Not even the *Silence* spell can quiet their voices.

127 ***King of Swords (Upright).*** You begin to age rapidly. This does not kill you, but you suffer all other effects of an aging body.

128 **King of Swords (Reverse).** The first person you see appears to you as a clown, and you are deathly afraid of clowns.

129 ***Ace of Coins (Upright).*** Your skin is incredibly itchy, and nothing you do provides relief. You are beginning to believe that the only solution is to remove your skin piece by piece.

130 ***Ace of Coins (Reverse).*** You feel the need to juggle whatever you are holding. You believe that if you stop juggling, you will die.

131 ***Two of Coins (Upright).*** You turn into a marionette, and you believe you are being controlled by a puppet master that manipulates your movement using your puppet strings.

132 ***Two of Coins (Reverse).*** You can only speak in a whisper.

133 ***Three of Coins (Upright).*** All your words come out as screams no matter how hard you try to control your volume.

134 ***Three of Coins (Reverse).*** You are overcome by theatrics. Everything you do is overdramatic. You randomly burst into song or monologue, or you wax philosophical.

135 ***Four of Coins (Upright).*** Your memory is hazy; you keep forgetting things. When you forget something important, you replace it with false details, and it is clear you're doing so.

136 ***Four of Coins (Reverse).*** You believe everyone you meet is flirting with you—they are not.

137 ***Five of Coins (Upright).*** When you speak, bees pour out of your mouth and swarm those around you.

138 ***Five of Coins (Reverse).*** Your jaw transforms into mandibles.

139 ***Six of Coins (Upright).*** You believe you have preternatural strength, but you have actually become incredibly weak.

140 ***Six of Coins (Reverse).*** You are a mime, unable to speak, and can only communicate through pantomime.

141 ***Seven of Coins (Upright).*** Your body becomes covered in moss and lichen.

142 ***Seven of Coins (Reverse).*** You are filled with overwhelming sorrow and cannot shake it.

143 ***Eight of Coins (Upright).*** You feel incredibly lonely no matter how many people you are around.

144 ***Eight of Coins (Reverse).*** You believe you are being stalked by a witch's familiar.

145 ***Nine of Coins (Upright).*** You believe you have been called upon by an ancient evil to enact their dark machinations. You are their herald of doom, and you must convert those around you to this darkness.

146 ***Nine of Coins (Reverse).*** You believe the trees are trying to tell you the ancient secrets of the land, but the only way to truly hear their words is to bury yourself within the roots of a tree.

147 ***Ten of Coins (Upright).*** You believe you are a witch in need of a familiar, and the first creature you see will do.

148 ***Ten of Coins (Reverse).*** You think you are a bridge troll, and anyone that tries to move past you must pay a toll.

149 ***Page of Coins (Upright).*** You believe you are betrothed to a creature of the deep, and you must prepare to leave the surface world behind.

150 ***Page of Coins (Reverse).*** Whenever you open your mouth, a dense, dark fog billows out. It doesn't inhibit your speech, but it's very spooky.

151 ***Knight of Coins (Upright).*** You are a fool, and everyone around you perceives you as such.

152 ***Knight of Coins (Reverse).*** You are like a moth to the flame; you are incredibly drawn to any source of light.

153 ***Queen of Coins (Upright).*** Every creature you see appears to have humanoid teeth.

154 ***Queen of Coins (Reverse).*** The bones in your arms disappear.

155 ***King of Coins (Upright).*** You are haunted by the ghost of a very depressing clown.

156 ***King of Coins (Reverse).*** Your hair turns into wriggling venomous snakes that are friendly to you but aggressive to everyone else.



Appendix D: MUSIC

Alongside this book are three music albums by The Blasting Company that serve as companion pieces to the adventure of *The Crooked Moon*, all available on most streaming platforms. However, they can be used to set the tone for any Folk Horror adventure you wish to run. Below is suggested guidance for how to use all three albums to maximize the atmosphere of your dreadful folktales.

THE CROOKED MOON SOUNDTRACK

The first album acts as a soundtrack for this book's adventure campaign. In most cases, these songs aren't literally occurring in the "canon" of the world (non-diegetic music) and can be utilized for conveying the tone of each character or encounter. Alternatively, if you wish to run a more musical campaign, you can find creative ways to incorporate each song into the context of the adventure (diegetic music). The list below overviews the characters and scenarios that have inspired each song.

CROOKED MOON. A cultist of the Old Ways tells of the folklore and superstitions of Wickermoor Hollow.
WHEN IT'S TIME. The Vagrant welcomes wayward souls aboard the *Ghostlight Express* for their final journey.
IMPOSSIBLE. Phillip and Adela Druskenvald share a tender moment and celebrate what they've built.
THE ECHOES. The spirit of Joseph Patrini laments the grisly fate of the inhabitants of the Crooked House.
COAL EYED BIRDS. Ol' Jericho Sticks is manipulated by his inner demon Virgil to join together as Raum.
UNDER YOUR SHADOW. Father Renathyr leads worship of the devil goddess Viraxys, still wounded by lost love.
BY THE LAGOON. Mister Crossroads makes a deal with a sinner and takes them to the *Dead Man's Hand*.
LULLABY OF THE SEA. Matron Lethica sings a lullaby to Hugo, still consumed by the grief of her lost love.
DEAD TREES. Gorthos dwells on who she once was, whom she once loved, and what she has become.
COLD IRON. Yorgrim tends to his penitent duties as the twisted souls of the Shroud corrupt him.
NO FUN TO DIE. Chuckles wakes up to lead a parade of revelry and usher in rebirth in Wickermoor Hollow.
SING YE VERMIN. The Vermintoll Coven meets to brew a magic concoction and commune with their vermin.
LIGHT OF MY LIFE. Adela reflects on her life and love before meeting a fiery fate in the Wicker Man.
BORN KING. Kehlenn takes her revenge against Phillip and transforms him into the Horned King.
NIGHTWIND. The Vagrant returns at the end of the journey to take the survivors to their next destination.



ATMOSPHERIC & COMBAT MUSIC

The second and third albums feature looping instrumental tracks that evoke the themes of this book's adventure, whether to set the tone while exploring a location or increase the tension and excitement during combat encounters. The table below suggests which chapters or scenarios to play these songs during, but they can be a thematic fit in any Folk Horror campaign.

ATMOSPHERIC TRACKS PER CHAPTER

FORGETTING GLOW. The Ghostlight Express
LIFE DELICIOUS. Wickermoor Village
SILENT HOURS. The Crooked House
SUNKEN SKY. Fields of the Crow
DRAINED OF FEAR. The Crimson Monastery
A PLACE TO UNWIND. The Drowned Crossroads
WRIGGLE FORTH. Skitterdeep Mine / The Roving Rookery / The Crooked Nightmare
CRADLED IN DARK. Memory's Rest
ROTTED RINGS. Hartsblight Forest
ENDLESS TWILIGHTS. Maidenmist Cemetery
ROUND AND AROUND. Fool's Day
SONGS WE'VE BORROWED. Wicker's Vigil
HALF FORGOTTEN. The Crooked Tree
CREAKING BONES. Outdoor Locations
BLURRING FACES. Indoor Locations

COMBAT TRACKS PER CHAPTER

RIDING TOO LONG. The Ghostlight Express
THRASHING LIGHT. Wickermoor Village
THESE SPLITTING WALLS. The Crooked House
TALONS. Fields of the Crow
HEARTS AGAPE. The Crimson Monastery
ALLIGATOR'S SMILE. The Drowned Crossroads
STEAMING DEATH. Skitterdeep Mine / The Roving Rookery / The Crooked Nightmare
SHUDDERS IN A TEARDROP. Memory's Rest
HER ROTTING THRONE. Hartsblight Forest
BREAKING. Maidenmist Cemetery
DIZZY DANCING. Fool's Day
FIRE RISING. Wicker's Vigil
BENEATH IMMORTAL HOOVES. The Crooked Tree
SHRIEKS OF ENDLESS NIGHT. Outdoor Locations
SO SOLEMN AND GRIM. Indoor Locations

Find all these tracks and more at **avantris.com/music**



On behalf of everyone at Avantris Entertainment, I want to thank you for reading *The Crooked Moon* and supporting our dream of making games - whether you were one of our first Kickstarter backers or just discovered this book at your favorite local game store. Every member of our team has poured their heart and soul into this project to meet the high standard we set for ourselves, and we hope you've found its contents both useful and inspiring as you craft your own folk horror stories for years to come.

As we look toward new horizons, I hope you've enjoyed your time in Druskenvald. Once again, thank you for making our wild, kinetic dreams a reality.

Mikey Gilder,
Creative Director & Lead Writer



A & J Kishiyama
A Lv.5 Bidoof
A Pack o' Noodles
A. Denbigh Strickland
A. Lucas Bogacz
A. Mouse
A. Oshiro
Aaron Garcia
Aaron L.
Abigail Broker
AbsentMindedCaveman
AceNinjaViking
Acolus Would
Adam Bakken
Adam Clous
Adam J. Garrow
Adam Lewandowski
Adam M. Edwards
Adam M. Pierce
Adam Martin
Adam Novitch
Adam Zirkle
Adamanthea Whynot
Aden Murtagh
Adessa Avery / No1WrthNoin
Adron
Agent 007-11
Aidan Domogalla
Aidan Gray
Aidan Meador
Aileen N Nevius
AJ Janes
Ajay B.
AJB
Akame
Akira SoulSweets
Akira Vong
Akiva Vallins
Alea Heesch
Alec Boehlke
Alex 'thevagrantmoose' Collins
Alex “Era” Nguyen
Alex (Sionwolf) Berglund
Alex Andrews
Alex Carrier
Alex Coronis
Alex Crimson
Alex Friesz
Alex Goerner
Alex Horgan
Alex M.
Alex Munson
Alex Salem
Alex Villa
Alexander Lewis
Alexander McWhirter
Alexander Popken
Alexander Sciolino
Alexander Von Blankenberger
Alexandre H. Snow
Alexandria R Aguirre
Alexis Cru
Alexis J.
Alexis Mayberry
Alfonso Prieto Piqué
Alice Darling
Alice Sylensa
Alisha Cartin
Alison LeDuc
Alistair Turpin
Alix Augustyn
Aliyah & Haley Emerson
Allen Gray Stenson
Allie Stoppelmoor
Allison Mitchler
Allison Smith & Carley Hulsey
ALoversRose509
Alyssa
Alyssa "The_earthy_ sammich" High
Alyssa Jayne
Alyssa M. Rosewood
Amanda Arce
Amanda Chambers
Amanda Nappier
Amanda O'Farrill
Amandah O. (a.k.a Miscivious)
Amara Erickson
Amber & Emillia
Amber Lawson
Amber Saffen
Amp
Amy Boskovich
Amy Quach
Ana M Cruz
Anamedez
Andi B.
Andres Restrepo
Andrew & Avrey Fryman
Andrew Bookman
Andrew Eisendrath
Andrew Giorgio Gencarelli
Andrew Peedle
Andrew Swink
Andrew VanDrunen
AndrewN1628
AngelEuphie (and my dad)
Angelic Azya
Angelo Palermo
Anivette Wong & Andrew Hernandez
Anna Lehman
Anna Miranda
Anna Noel
Annabel Hartmann
Annette Freeman
Ante Albrechtsson
Anthony "An" Broad
Anthony "LtFirstline" Moreland
Anthony & Kaitlyn Kosal
Anthony Viencent Braden
Anton Torchia
Antony Thomas Morello
Aqilah Yunus & James Nase
AquaRose
Arbor Grayson
ArcticGolem
Arcturus Aufeis Kairos
Ari & Ana
Arianna B.
Aric Wieder
Ariel Jon & Wes McPugh
Arin C.
ArkamikarisT (Jacob Krauss)
Arlen P.
Arlo Jacobi Olson
ArmyAngel
Arwyn Cunningham
Arya Zerangi
Ash Jayde
Ash Swahn
Ashe Fuller
Ashen Ruby
Ashley A. Fuentes
Ashley Caisse
Ashley Duwe
Ashlyn Rasor
Ashton E. Crow
Ashton Monroe
Aslak Rustad Hauglid
Atlas teVelde
AtomKnowsBetter (Jeff Reynolds)
Atrixia Willowbrook
Atticus H.
Atticus Stevens
Audrey Eldridge
August Galanoble
August Mashburn
Aurealis Sky
Austin Biggs & China Biggs
Austin Funk
Austin Gutman
Austin Herman
Austin Kinstner
Austin Rosa
Austin Tompt
Austin W. Kuehl
Autumn ‘Myth’ Tyack
AvaeleththeCreator
Avery "Alfred" Engweiler
Avery Heron
Avi T.
Azteca-Sol
AzuraxFox
B. Hobgoblin
B.M. Joisarri <3
BabyPaprika
Bacent Rekkes <3's Robert Ilcri
BackKickerEnd
Bailey B. Christiansen
Barbatos
Barry Holmes
Bastian Felix Uhlmann
Bayne Young
BDH BuzzKill - Grayson
Bear Harvey
Bebop Aphelion
beevee428
Belladonna Elizabeth Strange
Ben Dionne
Ben Greene
Ben Jamin
Ben R.
Ben Wheeler
Benjamin Hurlock
Bernpaulson
Beth Bullock
Bianca L. Contreras
Billie Stanley
Billy Argiris
Billy Smith
Black Rose Designs
Blaine M. & Allison D.
Blake & Kali
Bloodprincess
Bloodredskull
BLOODWIM
BluberrySaida
BMJPCW
Bo Sanders
Bobby / Holy_Oreoo
Bodhi Anthony
Bolthorn
Bot & Hal
Bow the Crow
Brad Allebone
Brad Munn
Brady "Brady819" Bennett
Brady F.
Brady J. P.
Brady S. Wiens
Brandon and Ho'o Polston
Brandon Bosso
Brandon K. Tanner
Brandon Nieves
Brandon Wahler
BrandonD
Brandy Zagrocki / Rippa Wildthorn
Brendan Buchanan
Brendan Ladd
Brendan O'Malley
Brendyn Wesley Clark Sands
Brennan H. & Ava V.
Brent J. Dean
Bri Slaughter
Bri Wright
Brian "Ulfgar" Williams
Brian Baggerly Jr.
Brian F.
Brian Findley
Brian K.
Brian Lawrence
Brian Murphy
Briana E. Hendrickson
Brianna Pach
Brianna Randler
Bridgette Lane
Bridgette S. (LadyButters)
Brigalow "Nicholas" Young
BrightAtNight
Brittney & Charles Wilson
Brookelynn Gluskie
Brutus Okenbough
Bryce A. T. Knoch
Bryce Edgar Lee Kell
Bryce L.
Bryn Greenfield
Bryson Laughlin
Bubba Langston & Honor Chandler
Bucket. Jacob,D,A.
Buddy Webber
BumbleBeeholder
Bunny
C. C. Lundgreen
C. Draconis & Biir Ebrath
C3C3M3
CakeTheBandit
Cal Dupraw
Caladin Crockett
Caleb Coppola
Caleb Kozell
Callum Shaw
Callum Woolley
Calvin Meyer "Thegearmonkey"
Cam K.F. Clark
Camellia Ostwald
Cameron Davis
Cameron Sillence
Cameron Smith
Cameron Williams
Cami & Adam Jensen
Camille Stidsen
Capria Fish
CAPT Splashclaw
Caretaker Luxia
Carl "ClapCloud" Berry
Carl Ericksen
Carl W.
Carmelo Polisano
CarmenBA
Carsen LeGrand
Carter L. Wright
Caryn and David Redner
Casey Keke Travis
Casey R. Fagan
casey1day
Cash Haskins
Cassandra Judd
Cassie Montalvo
Casuccini Bonci Maxime
Catherine Nguyen
Cecilia Paz
CedarRaven
Celeste Soul
Chameleon Boi
Chandler Ingles
ChaosEmperorPT
ChaosEnsues
Charles and Katherine Johnson
Charles C. Hickinbotham
Charles Chase
Charles Kaiser
Charles Winston Norton III
Charlie M.
Charna-Leigh
Chase & Ella Fairrington
Chase Broussard
Chase Gosse
CheesyCaracal
Cheezcakelord
Chelsea K.
Chelsea Thiel
Cheshire K.
Chlorobone
Chris "The Hobbit" Lewis
Chris Brevard
Chris H.
Chris K. Moses
Chris Kropp
Chris Nebgen
Chris Reinhart
Christian Calloway
Christian D. Torres
Christian Duncan
Christian Malcolm
Christian P. Shippee
Christian Sherwood
Christine Fowler; Canon-Thought
Christopher "Platinum" Pasciuta
Christopher "Zhul" Dean Jr.
Christopher & Jennafer Sawyer
Christopher Baker
Christopher Freeman
Christopher Hooper
Christopher James Marsee
Christopher Luzum
Christopher Todd Waters
Chuan Hao Chen
Cid Bell
Cierra Lynn Crandall
Claire Bond
Clarissa 'Quila' Henry
Clayton Gray
Cody & Ash Merwyn
Cody L. Cozad
Cody Maddix
Cody Ryan Grable
Cole Crabb
Cole Jetson
Colton Auxier C.T.
Colton Meeks
Colton Veselka
Connaire "Gamnaire" Woodbridge
Conner
Conner Twomey
Connor Enke
Connor Logan
Connor Reis
Conor Brownlee
Conor O'Neil
Conrad S.H.
Cooper "Kylardog" M.
Cordon Lee
Corinne Lambert
Corrin Thompson
CorvidKid
Cory & Autumn
Cory & Sarah Cooper
Cory Crow
Cory Winebo
Craig Compton CmdrNils
Creeperofmines
Crispe

CriticalFrog
Crystal & Alex Larose-White
Crystal Hurst
Cyhiraeth "Rae" Ybarra
D. "Sal" Salmon
D. Bobby Fry
D. Scott Family
D. Vyin
Daddy Patty
Dagger Ambrose
Dagnarus26
Dakota & McCaela Gates
Dakota Hylton
Dakota Wayde Stewart
Dallas F. & Kirstin P.
Damien Zimmerman
Damion B.
Dan "The Man" Fillingim
Dan & Allie Wallace
Dan Hartwell
Dan Nelson
Dane Dragoness
Daniel "Brassy" Dey
Daniel "DJ" Thomay
Daniel "Kuzokun" Greuel
Daniel & Elaina Welch
Daniel Alex Monroe
Daniel Blue Herron
Daniel Edwin Spafford the 7th
Daniel Kehoe
Daniel Lloyd
Daniel Morera Garro (Meraxes)
Daniel Nieto
Daniel Warrington
Daniel Weatherhead
Daniel/Xiomara
Daniela N Mata ~ La Guajolota
Daniella Aurélia Brockman
Danielle Sutton-Tate
Danmagi
Danmanking
Danny (Gumnut) Akins
Danny Serrano
Darcy James
Darien Astleford
Darius V.
Dark Alchemist Lazarus
Darkheart "The Lightbringer" Kilmarg
DarkLordJKG
Darkstar1429
Darren Shilhan
DatGobbo (Andi T wuz here)
Dave Slocum
David & Lexi
David Can
David Cogan (inked_melech)
David Garrick
David Hager
David Jones
David Kilmer
David Lopez
David Munoz Jr.
David P. Long
David R. Brady
David&Sean_B
Dawny Madden
Dean Hickey
Dean Meray
Deanna K.
Deanna Keplar
Declan Gallagher & Amelia Burkley
Declyn P.
Dee Helton
Deegan J. Pearce
Demmie Repkin
Dennis E. Brezinski
Derrick J (TNineGamer)
Desmond Alastair
DestroyersWench
Devan Clark
Devan Jacobsen & Amy La
Devin J Cheney
Devin Massey
Devin Nesselhauf
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Dezirae Katt
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Diana Gauthier
Diana M. Fye
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Dire Woof
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Dmandahug
DMG Dy
DMKingRonnoc
DoctorSherbet
DogsGoMeow
Domenic J. Pirri
Dominic Truesdale
Don O'Possum
Donald Lee P III
Donovan Cook
Donovan Mason
Douglas Bougard
Douglas C.
Douglinton
Dr Hobo 13
Dr. Tickles
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Dreadful Threads (MH)
Drethen Crabb
Drew Bell
Drew Bomgardner
Drew Gidewall
Drew Samiec
Drumund Beck
Drunkenhobo9d
Duck with Glasses
Dun_Jack
Duncan Gibson
Dungeon Mistress Samie
dust_bunni
Dylan & Garret
Dylan Collier
E. Fauntleroy
E. Lukkarila
Echo Nightfury
EchoDJ
EctoplasmicHUNGR
Ed Couchman-Boor
Ed K.
Eden Malus Pumilla
Edwan H. Quarrels Jr.
Edward M. de Kleer
Eggs317
Eire "Bagel" Armstrong
Eithin Chardet
Elaina Poitra
Eli Bradfield
Eli Scoby
Elias - Beezelberry Enthusiast
"Elijah Guinn"
Elipsa
Eliza LaCrossiel
Elizabeth "Lizard Eyes" Bennett
Elizabeth Baker
Elizabeth Bird ("Skeletal Byrdy")
Elizabeth Tafel
Elle O'Neal
Elliott J. Clark
Elvis Rodriguez aka Joker
Emanuel “Manny” Rivero
Ember "Blakpaw" Doherty
Ember Rose
EmberM :)
Emil Lysgaard Nielsen
Emily (Xillionno)
Emily Liersch
Emily Mattulke
Emily Schmeling
Emily Tiekamp
Emmy & Pete
Emperor Geronimo Gambone VI
Endos "S" Riken
Enrique Castaneda-Pineda
Eoin the Potato Goblin
Eric Aidan Reyes
Eric Basu
Eric Sjolander
Eric Waddell
Erica & Jo Hughart
Erika Heelan
Erin B.
Erin Baker
Erin G
Erin Griesser
Eryka Carroll
Eryn M Whalen
EtandaClown
Ethan "RotNibelung" Harris
Ethan Moran
Ethan T. Blake
Ethie & Jam
Eugene Peterbourgh
Eva Lanthripe
Evan & Amber Edgell
Evan Anglin
Evan Bish
Evangeline Lubak
Everr Dragonspeak
Evi L. D. Knight
Evie Miller
Evie Titcombe
Ewa "Perse" Kulpińska
Ezekiel Ashari
F. A. Terwilliger & Family
F.M.Harm
Fading_Echo
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Felix Watts
Fen Durill
Fern Yoder
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Fiere Redfern
Fig N. Cordes
Figgle McStonkins
Finky Winky
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Fisher Hammann
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FluffyVoid
ForsakenedNinja
Fox
FoxRunner
FoxyGames1987
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Frankie W R Baxter
Fred Shertzer
Frederick Emerson Parker
Frog & Lawrence
Frost_Phoenix
Funkeymytolo
Furrylover246
G. J. Ellsworth
G.Lam
G.R. Feather
Gabriel Rosenberg (C0dezar1)
Gabriel Xavier Schroeder
Gabrielle Frescas
Gabrielle Spicer & Colton Reed
Gaia Glockner-McKelvey
Garrett Fox
Garrett Pipkin
Gaza El-Diablo
George Anthony Paul Stevens
George Clapsis
George Corte & Family
George N.B Keller
Georgia Slack
Geran “Coyote” Wiley
Gerold D. Westley II
Gianna Ferrecchia
Gianni V. Pratico
Gina K.
Gina Mirror - Constellation Witch
Giulio Sprega
GoGoPowerTazer
GoldBubble
Goldscar99.
Gosk Yazda, King of Tarrasques
Granvill
GratYag87
Gray the Swift
Grayce (Ghostgirl_weeb)
Gregory Scott Egan
Greta D.
Griffin Hehmeyer
Grim Melody Nova
Gurg
Guy Webb, Weaver of Nightmares
Gwen Buchholz
Gwenzilla
Hag_O_the_Hills
Hailey Adkins <3
Hailey Wood
Hanah Stevens
Hannah & Michael Macks
Hannah & Pete
Hannah Armstrong
Hannah Woolley
Haply, The Silly Goober
Harland Jacob Maynard
Harper L.
Hayden AJ Newton
Hayden Cowan
Hayden Phillips
Hayley & Joe Woods
Hazard the Hatter
HazelBlonddee
hdylyoureggo
Heaphestus
Heather Knable
Heather M Yaron
HellishHotline
Helson Joseph Meirino
Henbog
Henry & Edward Nicol
Herbert & Bo-Dara McIntyre
Hetrio
Hisako & Vash — Hearth & Hare
Hlootoo Thunderhammer
HobiHobiShop
Holly Nodzo
Holly TR
Hopper Gilman
HubrisandApathy
Human~Speed~Bumpin
Hunter Adams
Hunter B Smith
Hunter C. Gabel
Hunter T. Fountain
Ian C. Nodurft
Ian Norman
Ian White
Inari & Hati
India Edwards
Indigo Payeur / FrankAlmond
InfiniteOblivion
Inlé-rah
Ioka
Irv "Dante" Morales aka Don Sombra
Isaac B. Oberholster
Isaac Elessar
Isabelle Keeley
Isadora Pierre
Isaiah Hopper
Istkael Volcain
Ittbell
Ivy99999 / Bailey Matteau
J. Alice Gind
J. Copeland & R. Heflin
J.a.m.
J.R. Biché
Jace “DrJ” Garthright
Jace H.
Jack Bloom
JackGamma(JOM)
Jackie & Brandon Gehron
Jackson Boughey (TheBespoken)
Jacob Anders
Jacob Ashcraft
Jacob B. LeBlanc
Jacob Daniel Peterson McIntyre
Jacob DelGiudice
Jacob Dixon
Jacob Pearwood
Jacob Rosenberg (Gingy)
Jacob Smith, The Mind Goblin
Jacob Stoneburner
Jacob the Murph
Jacob Winkle - MrYashaBlack
Jacob Wynn
Jade L. Block
Jade L. Wagner
Jaden Edgar
Jaden G.
Jadyn Theilen
Jaison S.
Jake Liesch
Jake Morales
Jake Ross :)
Jake Ryckman
Jake Stewart
Jake Turnmire
Jalisa Williams
James Claydon
James Lee Wells
James Thomas
Jamey Baker
Jamie & Sage
Jamie and Eric Dunlap
Jana L
Jared & Aurie Nopens
Jas-Priya Kaur Randhawa
Jasmine RW Durnell
Jason 'Phorsaken' Merritt
Jason D. Moore
Jason Holland
Jason Phares
Jason Simard
Jason Snarr
Jasonwthe1st
Jasper Dews
Javier S. Caro
Jax Valentine
Jay Bachorek <3 Red
Jay Decay
Jay Guilford
Jayden & Lilly
Jayson Garner
JB Ford
Jean Haineault
Jeffrey F. Goodrich
Jenna Martin
Jennifer "Ryker" Blackburn
Jennifer Schafer
Jeracho Morgan
Jeremiah Olson
Jeremy Ultsch
Jerrod Wolfe
Jerry J. Rodriguez
Jess & Chris
Jesse "Sloth with ADHD" Weldon
Jessica B.
Jessica Lyn Cowles
Jessica Wasserman @ wishywassy
Jester King
Jesy Burton
Jim Jones
JJ Hogan
JL
Joakim
Joe "Mung Daal" Markwick
Joe "Redd" Miller
Joe & Laurie Koen
Joe and Stefanie Stivala
Joe Kubis
Joe Marcotte
Joel Collier
Joel Munn
Joel Putman
Joey & Kaz
Joey Alexandra Riascos
John & Ryan Maddox
John & Sarah Howell
John Connor & Mayor Boarglet
John Denny
John F.
John Folmer
John H. Humphreys III
John Hacha
John Harbinger
John Lampl III
Johnathan Cantrell
Johnny K
Johno Boski
Jojo Schalk
Jomaki
Jon & Tiffany Gooch
Jonah
Jonah L.
Jonathan "Amarice Sovald" Lomeli
Jonathan Badten
Jonathan Brown
Jordan A. Thomas
Jordan Larkin
Jordi Millard
Jordon and Harrison Miller
Jose Chalarca
Jose De Jesus Sanchez
Joseph C Mullins
Joseph Nguyen
Joseph Nuzzo

Joseph Spoonman
Josh & Kylee Stark
Josh Greenfield
Josh Morey
Josh Prewitt
Josh Waldriff
Joshua Ackling
Joshua Adams
Joshua Boswell
Joshua Foldoe
Joshua Hauser
Joshua Hewitt
Joshua McGahan
Joshua Michael Robirds
Joshua P. Clark
Joshua R. & Alexander T. Ponn
Joshua Vickrey
Juan Guardado (Jean Charles)
Juan Rosario
Juan Tejeda
Julia Malitoris
Julian B.
Julian Pacheco "Cellopha"
Juliette C.
Justice Cave Clan
Justin "JT" Politzer
Justin Butler
Justin Clyde Beavers
Justin Forkey
Justin Gray
Justin M. Grosvenor
Justin Pena
Justin Richardson
Justin Robert Evans
Justise Briones
K-Mart
Kadan Tony Kenneth Miller
Kade The All Knowing
Kai Rose
Kai Wright
Kaiju Pineapple
Kaili Stowers
Kaitlyn Poppe
Kaleb Beddoes
Kane Judas Denisen
KapitalQuwu
Karen M Geary
Karin Adar
Karina Baxter
Karma-Kam
Kat Palmer
Kat Turner
Kate Gosnell
Kate Paisley
Katelyn Agunat
Katharina E. Grabenbauer
Katherine “Arel” Boehm
Katie Beebe
Katie Skelton, Queen of the Hallows
Katy "Jetrics" Bradley
Kayla Molnar (EireFortune)
Kayleeann McElhaney
Kaylynn Tannehill & Orion Tannehill
KBuggs
Keenan L. Murphy
Kekoa Campbell
Kelly Mack
Kelsey Rose Lennon
Kelson Mayes
Kendall, Chase & Clover
Kendragoon
Kenneth Knick
Kenneth Scharwarth
Kenneth2210
Kenny Martinez
Kerri King
Kerstin Borden
Kesh of Seshur
Kessidie_Bear
Kevin "Snerdles" Lojewski
Kevin A.Fielder
Kevin Calkins
Kevin D. Wilcox
Kevin Holley
Kevin J Irwin (aka Fang)
Kevin Pierce
Kevin Simmons
Kiara Pereira
Kickazz006
Kili (Caithlin.L)
Kinda_Quirky
KINGCVST
Kinginkarts
Kirsten
Kit Williams
Kitsunekiri
Kitty [Kaos_Kitten]
Kitty Krixa & Havoc (Erika & Daniel)
Kivalia
Klinda Helen-Renee Gordon
Koan Bouchaud
Koba Vermilion
Kole Jones
Kora Painter
Korin the Dicesmith
Kramer Walper
Kree T.
Kris Yepez
Krissy & Joe
Kristian Griffiths “BloodiedHeretic”
Kristina O.
Krowe / Jess Wiedmeyer
Kurodian (Mia)
Kurt Wesely
Kusala
Kyle 'Crimson' Hruska
Kyle "Ulfhednar" B.
Kyle A. Fisher
Kyle A. Lovett
Kyle Alexander Herwart Beckmann
Kyle Ashcraft
Kyle Borgschatz
Kyle John Philip Henley
Kyle Moore
Kyle Morrison
Kyle Staugh
Kylee LaPierre
Kylee Sonterre
Kyndillis
L.D. Kruidenier
Lachlan Nagorcka
Lady Allie of the Soup Kingdom
Lady Sunshine
LadyBedivere
Lars Poulsen
LASERLOG
Launi Benton
Laura Uhl
Lauren Michel
Lauren O'Reilly - Day
Lauren Pelle
Lauren Van Herk - McKay
Layne F. Sanders
LazyDaja
Le Fox
LeDooby
Lee & Jessie Wilson
Lee Ambrose
Lee Harris
Leif Anderson
Leigh Cotter
Lena of Froghollow
Lena Taylor
Leo de Leven, Winter's Lion
Leo H.
Leslie E.
Levi Bowers
Lew Hendrickson
Lewis Dick
Liam Pickells
Library D&D
LichKingLuke
Lil Bro
Linden Meyer
Lindsey Kirby & Jason Reynolds
Linnea Mankell
Lireal11
Little Crow
Little Crow
littlefishstick
Liz Gunderson
Lizzy Ricks
Loading Crew Crafts
Locojmo666
Logan Bricker (Doctor Cosmic)
Logan C. Clark
Logan J J Clareburt
Logan Melvin
Logan Price
Loki Roamer
Lone_Guard
Lord Bonezilla
Lord Noah Ebberts
Lord Rev. Clifford Henry Garrison III
LordReclined
Loth Tintinnabulary
Louis J. Sanchez
Louise Seirmarco and Wendel Yale
Love You Tofu
Luca Aurelius Williams
Luca Graves
Lucian Rivers
Lucky_Dog
Lucy & Lia
Lucy Sullivan
Ludovic Hollié
Ludvig Sundqvist
Luigino "CLGeekboy" Gigante
Luis Fernando Perez
Luke “Sharky” Pearson
Luke Luczak
Lula Kitsune
Lulah Tunmore
Luner Zie Snider
LunerRaven
Luther Thomas Wheat Jr.
Lyani M. La Santa
Lynn & Skyler Mooney
Lysa J
Lysanderoth the Thunderstruck
M & B Langston
M.G. Lyman
Macie Harris Backer #795
Mad Mage
Maddi Marshall
Maddy C. (Possum)
Madeline “Luna”
Madison Pousson
Mads Green
Maesta
MagnaPinna
Magnus Hauge Nielsen
Magnus Krokström
Magnus, Rachel, Tom
Mako & Vincent Burkhead
Makon Jensen
Makskip
Makuddlez
Malaloo234
Mali Dibblee (bulbabum)
Mallory Watson
Manic_Panda_
Manuel F. (Soul)
Maple & Revenant
Marcella Story
Marcemellow
Marco E. Romero
Marcos Flores
Marcus Anthony Allen
Mareda Winters
Mario Gonzalez
Mario Ortiz III - Slybread
Mark 'Specter' Shadow
Mark Faurie Jr.
Mark Sleeper
Mark Whiting
Marla Hawkins
Marqus Edwards
Mars Miller
Marsha Deuel
Marshul S.
Martin Andreas Søvik Simonsen
Martin E. Rich III
Martin Francis Bassett
Martin Lee Barnes
Martin Schwartz
MaskedMagus
Mason Hire
Mathew Kulin
Matt "Shadoweaver" Leahy
Matt Burrows
Matt Hammond
Matthew Bridges
Matthew Cawley
Matthew Collins (Collo2101)
Matthew Coustier
Matthew Cummings
Matthew Dylan Brakie
Matthew Grayson
Matthew Haynes
Matthew Maxwell
Matthew Quevedo
Matthew Redmon
Matthew Trover
Matthew Wallace
Matthieu Thanh Hai
Max Allman
Max Girczyc
Max Hill
Maxim Kalenkov
Maxwell Rosenberg
Maya Dragon
Maya Myers
Mckenna G. Benoit
Megan Irizarry
Megan Sanok
Megan Scott
Meghann & Robert Cole
Mekeila Anderson
Mel Stevens
Melissa Yates
Menak Cherlock
Menolly Crossett
Mia A. Cerantola
Micah S.
Michael “Steadybear” Stead
Michael & Rosie <3
Michael Breedveld
Michael Chadwell
Michael Dryden
Michael Emerson
Michael Marquis
Michael Nelms
Michael Pakstis
Michael T Rogers
Michaela Landis
Michaela R. Hill
Michelle Dylan
Michelle L. Sone (aka LordFluffs)
Mickey Davis
Miger & Luka
Mikayla Kerr
Mikayla Shalis Gomez
Mikey Tommer
Miku Da Kitty
Miles S.
Miles Titus & L Leven
Milo-is-tired
Mini_azrilon
Minnie McDade-Allen
Miranda Harrington-Garza
Miranda Huff | InaNyra
Mirth
Mis. Mackinzey & Lucille Furrier
Missing_Milord
Misstory & Dragonfluffy
Mitch McCoy
Mitch Nemirovsky
Mixtinma P
Miyako Kurosawa
Moll_Doll26
Monica & Daniel Hansen
Moon Teamin
Moosh The Mooshroom
Morgan
Morgan (featherfjord)
Morgan & Ffion Emmanuel-Parsons
Morgan Holinka, Cameron Paul
Morgan Patrick Lynn Martin
Morgan Williams
Morgoth Gamboa
Moses A.R.
Mr. & Mrs. Robins
MrBobbyT
Muninson
muttfanqz
Mya Greenfield
Myles and Savannah Stillman
Mylon elliott
Natali Gonzalez
Natalie Sipos
Natalie Weingartz
Natasha Floyd
Nate & Chloe
Nathan "Shnate" Karkosh
Nathan Horvath
Nathan O'Sullivan
Nathan Plowman
Nathan Turford
Nathan Walton
Nautilys
Navayra, R.
Neal Frick
nearlytuna
NEET
Nemeia Dundragon
NerdsEradicate
Nessbound
NeverMorrs (Ava Strout)
NH Buck
Niamh & Zoe
Nic Bush
Nicholas Horst
Nicholas J Redd
Nicholas Martin
Nicholas Pauk - Pauketsjr
Nicholas Petitmermet
Nicholas Sech
Nicholas Webb
Nicholi Klis
Nick Hutchinson
Nick Laub
Nick Morris
Nick Oliverio
Nick-Nack
Nico Nalbantian
Nicolas Breton
Nicole B.
Nicole Lee
Nicolò Landini
Nikki and Cassie
Nikki Nichols
Nikko Brown
Nimyrho
Nina Fininis
Ninwolfer
Nivek Lowe
Noa Lindauer
Noah Ault
Noah Flaum
Noah Packwood & Bryant Mickelson
Noah Schneider
Noah Tamez
Noah the Dungeon Diver
Noah TW
Noemi Hatch
Nomad
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Nyk Zarek
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OceanWalker
Oliver Lipary
Oliver Tessner
Omid, M Shahzadi
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Onyx Davis
Onyx Raven
Optimuspiggy
Orion Petitclerc
OscarNotGrouch
Osha Gillespie
OTTO
OverripeLoki
Owiion
Owrtho
OxygenBrain
Ozzy Worden
Pandora Moon
Pandorables
PapayaSam
Par Martin
Parker J. Brower
Pascal Linders
Patricia Asher
Patrick F.
Patrick Lafond
Patrick Thompson
Patsy Piscitella Jr
Paul Chrisman
Paul-Michael Martin
Pauline & Belle
Pawliemorph
Payton Charles Nemmers
Peanut Butter & Tony
Pedro A. Valentín Camuñas
Pedro Shelby
Pepe & Pelle
PeriodicallyDead
Peter Flood
Pharmecius
Philip Broome
Phillip S. Brunyee
Phillip Zundel
Phoenix Dawn
Phoenix H.

Phoenix Hunter Jones
Phoenix Popek
Phoenix Sage
Phoenix Winterova
Phoenyx Fhyre
PJ and Alex
PJ Huyett
PotatoKnightshade
Prefade
Preston Hilburn
Preston Monigle
Prime, Ether, and Nico
Prince Halcyon
Proxy Doc
Qrow
Quentin
Quin D. Whelchel
Quinlan Gidaro
Quinn Swanson
R. Condon
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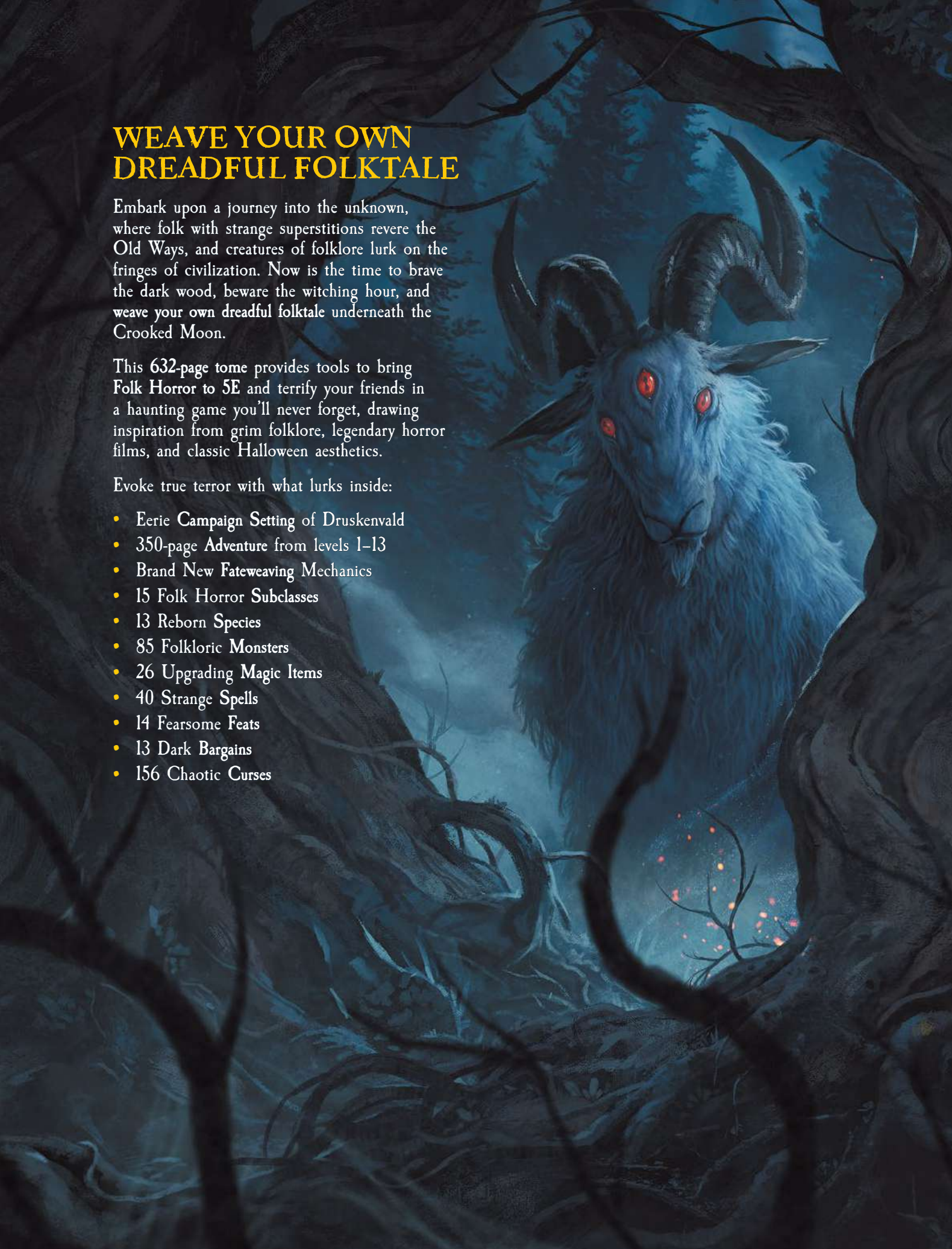
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ERRATA & UPDATES

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WICKERMOOR HOLLOW

HARTSBLIGHT FOREST

THE WYTCHWOOD

THE DROWNED CROSSROADS

Murkwater Bend

Memory's Rest Sanatorium

Skitterdeep Mine

Rowan's Rise

FOXWILLOW

THE HOWLERS

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Silverbell River

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THE WEBWOODS

MAIDENMIST CEMETERY