

Mischievous Monsters

An Adventure for Low-Level Characters

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Introduction

This adventure pits the characters against a group of mischievous fairies, who raid the inn the characters (henceforth, the Party) are staying at and steal the goods of a wealthy trader. The trader hires the Party to track the thieves down and recover his goods, and awards them handsomely to do so.

The Party follow the rather obvious trail left by the fairies and discover that the group has split up, heading in three different directions. Each leads to an area where the fairies are waiting to ambush and otherwise harass the Party, in their own mischievous way. All of the areas have the stolen goods, while the third also holds the portal that the fairies used to cross into the mortal realm.

Once the goods have been recovered, the trader rewards the Party and might even hire them to escort him on the rest of his journey.

Background

Several leagues off the main road is a portal to the realm of fairy; a ring of standing stones resting in a clearing surrounded by ancient trees. Once a year, from the full moon to the next full moon, this portal opens and allows the fairies to cross over, to wreck havoc and cause mischief in the mortal realm.

The portal has been open a week, and a gang of unruly, cruelly mischievous fairies have descended on the area. These are **Fir Darrig**; small, agile, quick to anger, fuelled by a need to spread chaos and led by a larger Fir Darrig that calls himself *Ratkin*.

They have raided nearby farms, scared cattle, stolen cats, and curdled milk. Now they have set their eyes on the inn that stands at the junction, and on the luxury goods that a trader has recently arrived with on his wagon.

On a wet night, as the Party arrive at the inn to spend the night, the Fir Darrig sneak into the inn and steal the goods. They are spotted and an alarm raised, allowing the Party to catch a glimpse of the thieves, but unable to do anything to prevent the goods being stolen. The next morning the trader begs them to recover the stolen items. Meanwhile, the Fir Darrig have split off, two parties taking the goods to a cave and a tainted woods, where they lurk and lure intruders into their traps and ambush. The other party, with their leader, return to the portal and begin summoning one of their larger brethren in order to further their need for chaos.

Timeline

There is a limit on the amount of time the Party can spend tracking down the fairies. When this limit is reached, the creature the fairies are summoning is brought forth into the world. Further delays result in more of these creatures being brought forth, as well as a concentrated attack on the inn.

Part One: Mischief at the Inn

The adventure begins as the Party are travelling and come across an inn as night falls and it begins to rain. The inn is located by a junction, a fork in the road with a signpost pointing to two nearby towns. It can also begin in a town, city or anyplace where there is an inn, so long as there is wilderness in the surrounding area.

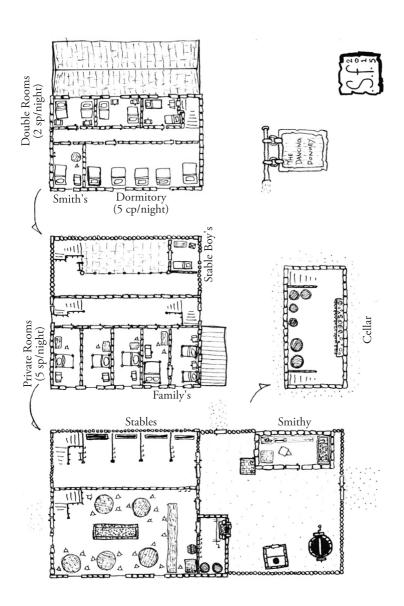
For the purpose of this adventure, the inn is at a junction and is called the *Dancing Donkey*; a modest, friendly and family-ran inn that caters to traders mostly and the odd adventuring party or band of passing mercenaries. It has rooms to sleep in, a stable for horses, and is the only place to stay for several miles in any direction.

The Dancing Donkey Inn

Ran by Joseph and his family (wife, son and daughter), with a couple of loyal and decent servants (the stable boy and an on-site smith that deals with horseshoes and maintains the inn).

The inn has 3 private rooms, 3 doubles, and a common dormitory for 5 sp, 2 sp and 5 cp a night, respectively. Breakfast comes with the room, and is served in the morning; a buffet of cold meats, bread, honey, fresh fruit and porridge spiced with cinnamon. Other meals are simple and plentiful, costing 5 cp per meal. Ale and wines are sold by the tankard or cup, for 3 cp and 4 cp per drink, both are pleasant if uninspired; a bottle of wine costs 1 sp and holds enough for four cups.

When the Party arrives the inn is fairly quiet, with only the trader, a wandering minstrel and a pair of caravan guards looking for work in the taproom. Another patron has retired to his room early; a frail looking old man who is actually a magic-user heading to the nearest town to meet up with an old friend.



In the middle of the night...

...when everyone has gone to bed, to sleep and dream of treasure and forgotten dungeons, the Fir Darrig swarm into the inn and start stealing things. There are two per Party character (including any henchmen).

Every turn (10 minutes) they succeed at something, and then the Party have a chance of being woken from their slumber. The table below shows on which turn what happens, and the chance of a character waking up.

It is entirely possible that the Party sleeps through the entire night; if so, when they awake in the morning they find the inn in turmoil as people find things missing, and the character's will also have a few of their own items gone.

If discovered and confronted, the fairies will spend a round 'playing' with the Party before fleeing into the night. If any are killed, remove them from the later encounters. If any are captured, they will do their best to lead the Party to one of the three sites, and will seek to escape at any and every opportunity.

No one in the inn, nor the Party, have any idea what these creatures are, only that they are obviously evil and dangerous, and as such must be hunted down.

NPC	Names	Class (Level); HPs; [AC]
Innkeeper	Joseph	Fighter (1); 8; [0]
Wife, Son, Daughter	Mildred, Eric, & Bonnie	0-Level; 4, 5, 3; [0, 0, 1]
Smith	Norris	Fighter (1); 10; [1]
Trader	Barton Millson	Thief (1); 6; [2]
Minstrel	Samuel Songsmith	Bard (1); 8; [2]
Magic-User	Old Esau	Mage (1); 5; [0]
Caravan Guards	Horace, and Jacob	Fighters (1); 8, 9; [2]

Turn	What happens?	Chance of Waking
1	The Fir Darrig sneak into the	
	trader's wagon and liberate the goods.	1 in 6
2	One Fir Darrig visits each patron's room,	
	and steals something shiny.	2 in 6
3	The trader wakes up, and spots a Fir Darr	ig
	stealing his hat.	3 in 6
4	The trader runs down to the taproom,	
	calling for help.	4 in 6
5	Three Fir Darrig go into the stable and dr	ess
	the horses up in fancy hats.	3 in 6
6	The Fir Darrig head off into the night,	
	giggling to themselves.	2 in 6

Description	Items of Note
Pot-bellied & jolly	Short sword, club
Kind, friendly, quiet	None
Laconic, tough & loyal	Hammer, tools, leather apron
Loud & arrogant	Dagger, leather armour
Vain & brash	Lute, daggers (2), leather armour
Old & secretive	Staff, spell book
Bold, stubborn	Leather armour, short sword, dagger, short bow
& lacking common sens	e

In the morning...

The patrons of the inn assemble and lament the loss of their goods. Only the trader (unless a member of the Party woke and saw them too) caught sight of the thieving fairies, but was too frightened (too 'outnumbered') to do anything about it. By the time he has roused the innkeeper, the fairies had fled, with their stolen goods.

The trader will beg the Party to help him; by tracking down the thieves and recovering his stolen goods. If they are returned, intact, he will gladly pay them 50 gp each (and may be haggled up to 75 gp), and offers to hire them on as guards when he leaves for town.

In addition, the other patrons, who have also lost something, offer their own reward for the recovery of their belonging (see table below); they may also be persuaded to join in the hunt, but if convinced they naturally offer no reward. A persuasive argument will convince them to join the Party, with Morale being determined as per normal *Henchmen* rules.

Patron	What was stolen?	Reward
Trader	His luxury goods.	50/75 gp
Minstrel	His lute.	25 gp
Mage	His book of spells.	A potion
Caravan	Their small bag of	
Guards	coins and gems.	25 gp

Timeline of Events

After waking in the morning, the Party only have so many hours until the fairies work their magic and summon their brethren. After several of them have been brought over, the fairies regroup and head back to the inn to cause further havoc, as per the table below.

Hours since waking Events

5	The first of the brethren are summoned. Ratkin sends one of the Fir Darrig to each of the other groups, to bring them back to the standing stones.
7	The second of the brethren is brought over. The Fir Darrig from the eastern cave return to the stones with their stolen goods.
9	The third of the brethren is brought over from the realm of fairy. The Fir Darrig from the western wood return to the stones, stolen goods in tow.
10	The Fir Darrig gather themselves and head off to the inn.
15	The inn is attacked, and everyone inside is slaughtered and eaten by the brethren.

Part Two: To Catch a Thief

The fairies have left an easily followed trail. It leads off the main road and into the fields of grass, passing over a hill before the tracks split off into three separate trails: one heads north, another west, the last east.

To the north can be seen a line of trees, the stream meandering in that direction. In the east is a rocky crag and some hills sloping away into the distance; while to the west is a dark woodland that looks bleak compared to the surrounding wilderness.

The North Wood

A thick copse of old oaks stands here, spreading across the land. At its heart lies the ring of standing stones that the fairies has used to cross over.

By the stones is Ratkin and several (1 per PC & henchman) Fir Darrig, currently working on summoning their brethren. Depending on how many hours have passed, there may also be

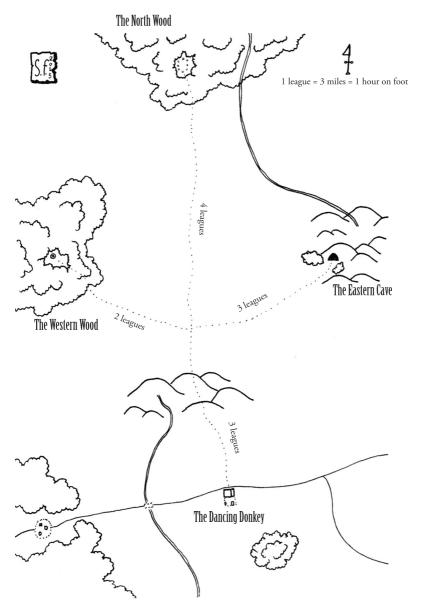
one or more of the Fir Darrig's brethren here, restless and eager to go and slay, then eat mortals.

Stolen Goods

They have the Magic-User's spell book on them, which is stuffed in Ratkin's sack; and any item that was stolen from the Party is also found here, in a pile outside the stones.

The spell book contains the following 1st Level spells:

Read Magic Detect Magic Sleep Magic Missile Shield



The Standing Stones

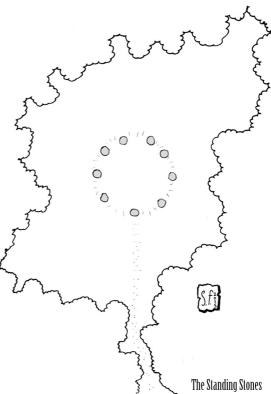
These waist-high (on a human) stones are weathered sandstone, each shaped like a talon curving to the centre of the circle. There are nine stones in all, all roughly the same size. They detect as chaotic magic, and indeed amplify such magic cast within 30' of the circle (any arcane spells

are treated as if the caster were one Level higher than normal).

Anyone of Lawful alignment (such as a Cleric) that enters this area feels sick. and if a saving throw versus magic fails they suffer a -2 to attacks, and when casting a spell must first make another save versus magic in order to cast it; failure means no spell can be cast and the round is wasted, but the spell is not spent.

On the middle night of a full moon a portal opens

between the mortal and fairy realms, allowing free passage. At all other times it requires a special summoning spell (known only to certain fairy folk) to allow a crossing; this is what Ratkin and his fellow Fir Darrig are doing to bring in their brethren.



The Eastern Cave

Halfway up the craggy rock that sticks out of the hills to the east, lies a cave. The trail leads straight inside.

Inside the cave the Fir Darrig (1 per PC) have laid some traps, and watch with eager anticipation from the rear of the cave, where the tunnels are. If any of the traps are triggered, the fairies burst out laughing, and then retreat into the tunnels to the next trap. They again wait and watch, laughing if the trap is triggered, and withdrawn to the other exit.

If attacked, they will fight back, but will flee if any of them are killed. If they are brave enough they remain nearby, to harass the Party until word comes that it is time to return. Otherwise, they head back to the stones to inform Ratkin what has happened.

Traps

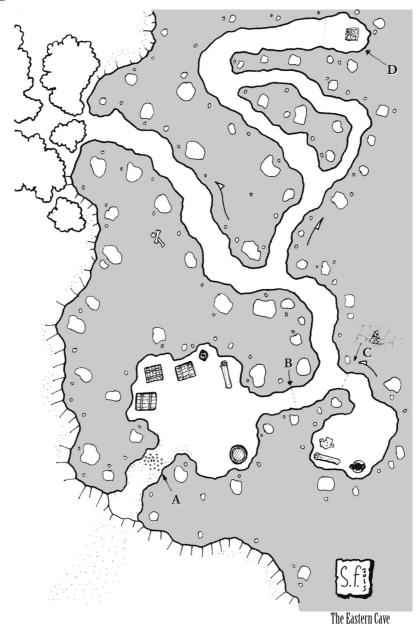
Stink bomb (A): a loose pile of stones lies across the path, under which are concealed several glass beads full of a yellow, noxious liquid.

Anyone entering the cave has a 4 in 6 chance of stepping on the stones, breaking the beads, and releasing a cloud of stinking gas that spreads out for 10' in all directions. Anyone (other than the fairies, who are used to the smell) caught in the area must make a *saving throw versus breath weapon* or be sickened for 1d4 turns (-2 to attack, 1 in 10 chance of spells miscasting due to nausea, lose Dexterity bonus to Armour Class).

Trip Wire & Stick (B): a thin wire lies level with the ground, easily missed, which is triggered on a 2 in 6. It is attached to a broom handle that springs up from the dusty floor of the tunnel (where it has been concealed) and hits the triggering character in the face: roll to hit as a 3 HD monster. The broom handle does 1 point of damage and increases the character's chance of being surprised by 1 for the next round.

Rock-Fall (C): a carefully balanced pile of rocks rests on a narrow ledge above the entrance to the side cave.

Passing underneath has a 3 in 6



chance of causing them to fall, bouncing rocks off the character's head. If wearing a helmet (chain or better armour) then no damage is taken, otherwise 1d2 damage is dealt.

Rat-Trap (D): at the back of this dead end is a crate, with a lid held in place by a slender piece of wood.

The wood is tied to a thin wire that is attached to a concealed trip wire 10' from the rear wall. If triggered (4 in 6 chance) the lid falls open, releasing a swarm of terrified rats that pour down the tunnel, attacking anything in their way.

They travel at a rate of 30' per round, clambering over anything in their way: treat the swarm as a 1 HD monster, with 5 hit points, and having one attack against anyone they swarm over, doing 1d3 damage on a hit.

Stolen Goods

In the main cave are the most of the stolen goods taken from the trader's wagon. The rest are in the side cave off the tunnel.

In the main cave are...

...three small crates packed with straw, each holding ten bottles of fine wine, each worth 25 sp apiece (they are 25 years old and made by monks far to the northeast);

...a bolt of silk cloth, dyed a bright green (worth 50 sp);

...a small ceramic jug, stoppered with a wax seal, which holds a quart of rose-scented perfume (and will fetch 30 sp at market);

...a small barrel of brass buttons (1000 in all), each decorated with pictures of dancing elves (worth 1 sp each).

Inside the side cave are...

...a ceramic jar filled with rich honey (worth 10 sp);

...another bolt of silk cloth (light blue, worth 35 sp);

...a suit of dark red leather armour, fancy looking and welltailored (4 in 6 chance of fitting a character, normal Armour Class, but worth double due to its construction and colouring).

The Western Wood

This woodland is bleak, with trees rotting and shedding leaves and bark. The woods are tainted, corrupted by foul magic that emanates from a well in the midst of the diseased trees. The fairies (1 less than the number of PCs, minimum of two) have placed the stolen goods in plain sight next to the well, and have laid a few traps around the immediate area. They are hiding in the trees and bushes, waiting to see what happens; when something does happen, they attack using their blowguns, running back and forth to confuse, and doing whatever they can to cause the Party as much distress as possible.

Note that the Fir Darrig do not seek to kill (unless pushed too far or threatened with death themselves) but to merely harm and hinder; they'll leave whatever is in the well to do any real harm to the Party.

Traps

Snares (A): a concealed loop of rope, tied to a bending branch, triggered by anyone putting their foot in the loop and pulling it

free of the wooden peg holding it in place.

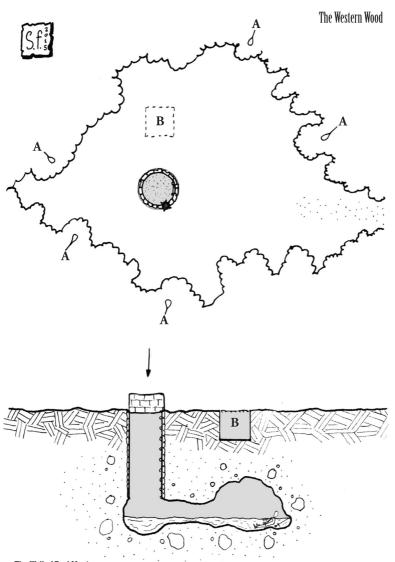
Passing through the gaps between the trees triggers such a trap 4 in 6, with a *saving throw versus* paralyse to jump out of the way in time. Anyone caught is lifted into the air, upside down, to dangle a foot off the floor. It takes a full round to cut the rope, or another *saving throw* to struggle free. This also alerts the creature in the well;

Pit Trap (B): a shallow pit trap (5' deep) covered by twigs, grass and soil. Anyone moving onto the pit must make a *saving throw versus paralyse* or fall in. No damage is taken, but that round of actions is lost, and the noise again alerts the creature in the well.

Stolen Goods

Balanced on the lip of the well is the sack of coins and gems that were stolen from the caravan guards.

There are 53 cp, 23 sp and 3 gp in loose coins, and a cloth pouch holding three moonstone gems (worth 10 gp each).



The Well of Foul Magic

The Well of Foul Magic

This old well of crumbling stone reeks of decay. A patch of grass all around it, spreading out five feet, looks scorched. The soil is barren, the grass black and brittle, and anyone entering the circle (or the well) feels claustrophobic (henchmen and retainers must make *Morale* checks or avoid the area).

At the bottom of the well is black sludge, and a shallow cave. The cave is home to a creature born of chaos, which is polluting the land with its presence. It considers the well and surrounding woods to be its domain, and anyone entering the well, or spending more than a turn in the clearing, attracts its attention: it climbs out and attacks any and all intruders, fairies included.

Treasure

Partially submerged in the sludge covering the cave floor is a gnawed skeleton, still dressed in brittle leather armour (worthless) and travelling clothes (shredded and stained with blood). Beneath the skeleton is a leather pouch with 23 cp, 12 sp and 5 gp, and also a magical sword.



The Blade of St Gerald

This plain looking short sword was once owned by the farmer-turned-crusader, Gerald of Appleby. He became a Saint of the Prophet after following her on a pagan-hunting quest in the nearby hills. There they fought against the cultists of a demon-god, slaying the demon's worshippers and vanquishing an avatar of the demon-god itself.

During the battle Gerald fell, but not until he had delivered the fatal blow. He was declared a Saint soon after, and his name is evoked by warriors fighting against dark forces. His sword was blessed by the Prophet and passed down to his son, who in turn passed it on to his son, and so on down the generations. It disappeared three years ago, carried by one of Gerald's descendants.

The sword is most useful against creatures of Chaos, specifically demons and their kin.

The blade glows blue whenever a Chaos aligned creature is within 30'; the brighter the glow, the more powerful the entity (dim for upto 5 HD or Levels, moderate upto 10 HD or Levels, and bright for anything higher).

Against such creatures it grants a +1 to hit and does extra damage equal to the user's Level or Hit Dice.

Only characters of Neutral or Lawful alignment may use the sword; it burns any associated with Chaos, inflicting a point of damage and forever branding them with a star-shaped mark (not even healing magic will remove it; only a *Remove Curse* followed by a curative spell will work).

Part Three: New Monsters

The Fir Darrig

These small fairies are Fir Darrig; as large as a young child (2' tall), resembling rat-like humanoids dressed in ill-fitting frock coats and flat caps. Their leaders tend to wear better clothes and top hats, often worn and battered. They delight in mischief, practical jokes, and laying traps. They have a cruel and wicked sense of humour, love to cause chaos, and especially enjoy harassing Clerics and other Lawful types.

Generally, the Fir Darrig do not seek to kill their victims; after all, where would be the fun in that? What they will do is cause harm, be it physical, mental or emotional (ideally, all three); but they are more than happy to let others kill for them, so long as it is entertaining and their traps and jokes are the preludes. For example, while they will not try to kill the Party, they are happy to lure them to the cursed well and watch (and laugh) when

the creature inside comes out to rip them apart.

They are poor fighters, but will defend themselves and their kin, and if cornered and their lives are threatened they will do whatever they have to in order to survive, including killing.

Armour Class 4 (leather, size)

Hit Dice 1

Movement 50' (150')

Attacks 1 (bite or weapon)

Damage/Attack 1d3

Morale 0 (average)

Alignment Chaos

Special: take minimum damage from mundane weapons; take normal damage from magic or cold iron weapons, holy water and divine spells; +2 to all saves against arcane spells; immune to charm, sleep and hold magic.

Items: small swords (as dagger), blowguns with small darts, frock coats, flat caps, and some loot.

Treasure carried: roll on the table on the following page for each Fir Darrig looted.

1d10	Loot
1	2d12 cp, 2d8 sp, and 2d6 gp;
2	2d8 cp, 2d6 sp, and 2d4 gp;
3	2d6 cp, 2d4 sp and 1d4 iron
	rations wrapped in sack cloth;
4	2d4 cp, 1d4 sp and a half
	-eaten loaf of stale bread;
5	1d4 cp, a red apple, 2d4
	acorns, and a hunting knife;
6	a ball of string, a bunch of
	wild flowers, and a dead bee;
7	2d12 rose petals, and 2d6
	raven feathers;
8	a scroll containing 1d4
	random 1st Level spells (1-2
	divine, 3-4 arcane);
9	a short sword with an ornate
	eagle's head pommel (worth
	double its value);
10	roll twice and combine the
	two, ignore further rolls of 10.

All treasure found is stuff that has been looted from farms and travellers during the fairies time in the mortal realm. They have little use for it themselves, but like stealing shiny things.



Ratkin: the Fir Darrig boss

Ratkin is slightly larger Fir Darrig (nearly 3' tall) with a red frock coat that has seen better days. He wears a top hat perched on his rat-head and has a monocle over his left eye (just for effect). He carries a cane that conceals a thin-bladed sword (treat as a rapier).

As their leader, Ratkin also has the powers of a 1st Level Mage, but requires no spell book. Armour Class 4 (frock coat, size)
Hit Dice 2
Hit Points 15
Movement 50' (150')
Attacks 1 (bite or rapier)
Damage/Attack 1d4 or 1d6
Morale +1 (brave)
Alignment Chaos
Special: take minimum damage
from mundane weapons; take
normal damage from magic or cold
iron weapons, holy water and divine
spells; +2 to all saves against arcane
spells; immune to charm, sleep and
hold magic.

Spells memorised (once per day): *Charm Person, Enlarge*, and *Spider*



The Brethren

These large fairies are insatiable, filled with a hunger for mortal flesh and blood. They kill and eat any mortals, be it human or demi-human, or animal. They look like fat humanoid toads, with thick warty hides and huge saucer-like eyes the colour of blood. Their mouths are wide and full of tearing teeth. The brethren dress in monkish robes, often a dark green or deep brown. Despite their bulk and size (7' tall, over 300 lbs) they are nimble creatures.

Armour Class 5 (hide, bulk)

Hit Dice 3

Movement 40' (120')

Attacks 2 (bite & punch)

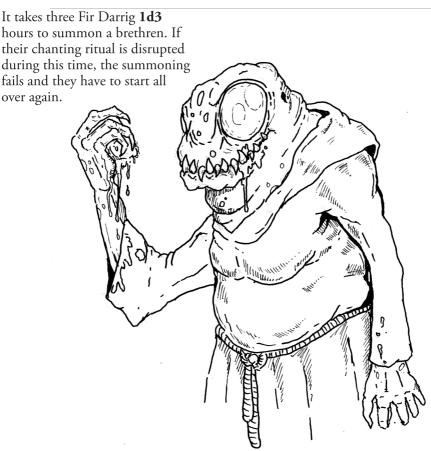
Damage/Attack 1d6/1d4

Morale +2 (elite)

Alignment Chaos

Special: take minimum damage from mundane weapons; take normal damage from magic or cold iron weapons, holy water and divine spells; +2 to all saves against arcane

spells; immune to charm, sleep and



hold magic.

The Creature Born of Chaos

This malignant creature was born from chaos and was trapped on the mortal realm. It lives a tormented existence in the cave in the well, venturing out at night to feed on small animals and anything larger that comes its way. It is humanoid in shape, featureless, made of thick black sludge with bits of bone sticking out in odd places. It oozes it way across the ground, but climbs exceedingly well.

Armour Class 3 (hide) Hit Dice 2

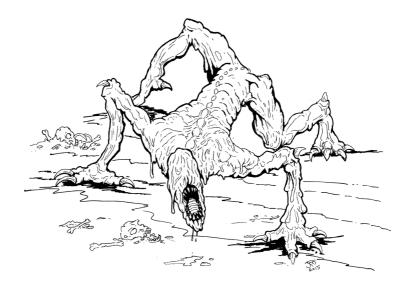
Movement 30' (90') on any surface # Attacks 3 (bite/claw/claw)

Damage/Attack 1d4/1d4/1d4

Morale +2 (elite)

Alignment Chaos

Special: immune to charm, sleep and hold magic of arcane or chaotic nature, not immune to spells cast by Lawful characters, such as Clerics; on a successful hit the creature turns living flesh to a black sludge: if a save versus magic is failed, the character loses 1d4 points of Constitution and Charisma (recover at a point per day with rest).



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