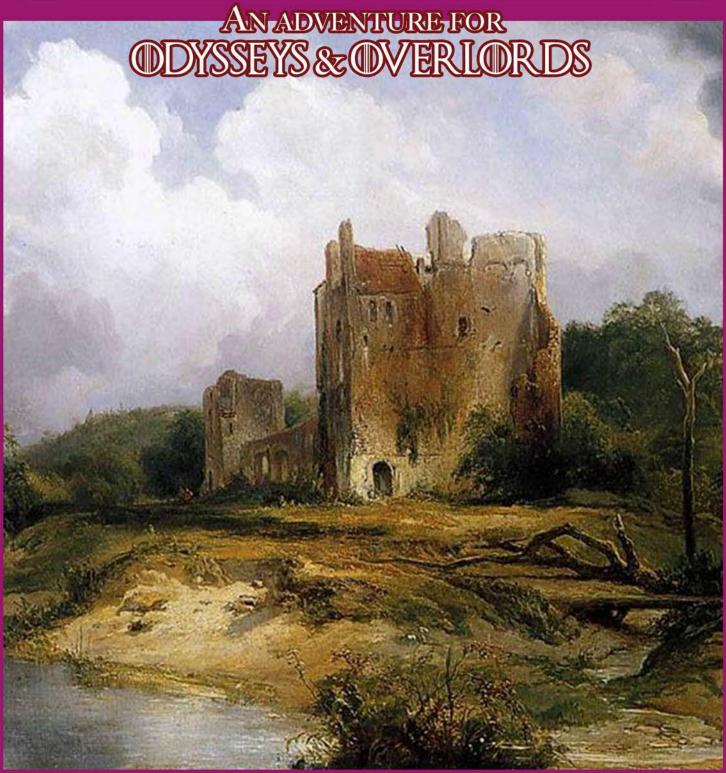
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MISTHOLLOW CASTLE





SUITABLE FOR 4-6 CHARACTERS OF 5TH TO 10TH LEVEL



An Adventure for

ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

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ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

In the ancient times, the Gods watched over humankind. This was a golden age of learning and peace. Humans revered the Gods, living in harmony with the divine and the companion beasts. Magic flowed freely allowing the learned and the faithful to alter their forms, prevent aging, and preserve health. The wild folk were born of this time as humans and companion beasts united in love. While most of the Gods rejoiced at this development, Ragnar, the God of Conquest was jealous and appalled by the humans choosing the animal companions as mates instead of the Gods. This caused a divine war during which the Gods who agreed with Ragnar tried to kill the other Gods. The first casualty of this war was Ember, the Goddess of knowledge. When Ember died, her scholar-priests, the Keepers of the Arcane were caught in a magical backlash creating the spellscorched. This war of Gods, called the Schism, raged for 1000 years, during which time the followers of Ragnar courted the worship and love of as many humans as they could. From these unions, the Abysskissed were born. After a long and bloody conflict, Ragnar and his followers were defeated. The Gods who fought them dragged Ragnar's followers into the Abyss where they are believed to still be fighting to this day. Only Ragnar and Chandra, the Goddess of the moon and nature remained among mortals. Declaring a cease fire, Ragnar retreated with a small retinue of cultists to the Tower of Wretched Wroth. Chandra and her highest clerics went to the Crystal Library on the surface of the northern Moon. Mortals were left to determine their own fates. The magic that had bound the souls of humans and the companion beasts shattered, though wild folk were already numerous enough to persevere. The spellscorched taught the ways of arcane magic sparingly, protecting the art nearly to extinction. Clerics of Chandra and Ragnar spoke of worship, but most mortal kingdoms rejected all gods and magic, relying on steel and blood to determine righteousness and rulership.

Now, the mortal lands are divided. A dozen kingdoms lie scattered across the world, separated by dangerous wilds filled with bandits and monsters. The bravest mortals act as adventurers, guiding travelers between the kingdoms, killing monsters to thin their numbers, and plundering ruins in search of the lost treasures of the golden age. This is the world of **Odysseys & Overlords!**

MISTHOLLOW CASTLE

SUMMARY

Standing on a lonely, bare mound in the bottom of a dell full of swirling fog, a castle from the time of the Schism crumbles, forgotten. Inside, treasures—and terror—await.

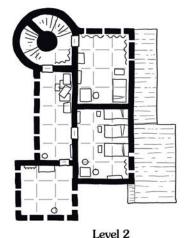
THE TASK

A writ of salvage has been posted in Chandra's Haven: 500 gold coins to the brave adventurers who find Misthollow Castle and secure it for Salamon Castos, a wealthy merchant. Castos claims to be the scion of the noble family which ruled Misthollow and built the castle generations ago. Castos grudgingly agrees to allow the characters to keep whatever they find in securing the castle, though he insists on right of first refusal on anything of value.



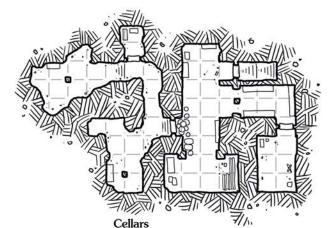












THE CASTLE

Salamon Castos has a map which depicts the location of Misthollow. If the map be true, the castle is about 3 days travel away.

According to tales whispered around the fire, Misthollow Castle is infested by spirits. Something happened to the family who lived there, something awful. Their screaming souls remain, haunting the castle ever since. It is said that in the last hundred years no living creature has set foot in Misthollow Castle and returned alive.

IN THE GAUNTLET

As the heroes travel through the wasteland, use the Wilderness Encounters tables in the Odyssey's & Overlords Gamemaster's Guide. Use Inhabited Territories for the first day, Woods or Forest for the second day, and Mountains or Hills for the third day. The heroes arrive at Misthollow as night falls on the third day.

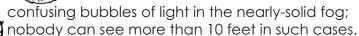
THE A PPROACH

Read or paraphrase the following:

The light is failing, and the air grows cold. Tendrils of fog wrap around your feet. At the side of the road is an ancient sign on which is lettered "Misthollow". One end of the sign is carved into a hand, index finger pointing deeper into the fog. That way, the fog thickens as the old road slopes downward. Suddenly, from somewhere ahead, you hear a blood-curdling scream.

If the characters turn back, the story is over. If they continue, the further they continue into Misthollow the thicker the fog becomes, until it gets to the point that the heroes can barely see each other.

Night falls swiftly, and characters who don't have darkvision won't be able to see. Characters with darkvision can't see more than 10 feet. Lights make things worse, as lamps or torches make



Every few steps, another scream rings out, closer and closer. Build the suspense for a bit. Then read or paraphrase the following:

The path falls beneath your feet before leveling out. The fog is thick as fish chowder, making it obvious why this place is called Misthollow, and the screams are getting louder and louder. Off to your left you can hear a brook splashing over stones. The path begins to climb again, and then the dripping-damp stone walls of Misthollow Castle loom out of the fog.

There are no windows on the ground floor, as befits a castle. There are narrow windows on the Levels 2 and 3, more arrow slits than windows, but they are dark.

Have each character roll a d6. On a result of 1, the character sees a dim, flickering, green light in one of the Level 3 windows of the square tower (to the left of the front doors on the map).

Contrary to everything you'd expect about a castle, the front doors are open! The two heavy oak doors are slightly ajar.

THE CASTLE

General Notes. None of the rooms in the castle have been entered in decades. Dust and cobwebs cover everything. Textiles crumble when touched. Wooden crates are haphazardly packed with various household items, as though many years ago someone was packing to move in a hurry and never finished. None of the doors are locked, nor is there any treasure (unless otherwise noted in the room descriptions).

GROUND FLOOR

Inside the front doors is what must once have been an impressive foyer. Tattered tapestries cover the west wall and two closed oak doors lead out of the foyer.

As soon as all the heroes are inside the foyer, read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as the last of you enters the foyer, the front doors slam shut with a boom! You also hear locks click tightly shut. At the same time, the door in the north wall creaks open invitingly. It's as if someone—or something—doesn't want you to leave.

This happens no matter what the characters do, short of taking the doors off their hinges. The doors won't open at all. Let them do all the Bend Bars rolls they want. Axes bounce off them. Magic is negated.

As soon as the characters start trying to mess with the front doors, the door leading to Area 4 creaks open as though someone spent ages specifically tailoring the creak to be as creepy as possible. See General Notes for all areas of the castle not specifically described in the following paragraphs.

As they move through the Ground Floor, the heroes keep seeing misty humanoid shapes out of the corners of their eyes, but when they turn to look, they're gone. If the characters try to keep the figures in the corner of their eye, they note the figures are barely-substantial apparitions of a family of two adult humans (a man and a woman) and three little girls. The apparitions appear to be repeating the actions of packing the various crates, walking through closed doors. If a character tries to interact with an apparition, it dissipates in a wisp of smoky mist.

Every few minutes, they hear the far-away sound of a little girl giggling, interrupted by her horrific scream. When they hear the giggles, they smell the faint aromas of flowers and soap, and when they hear the screams they smell blood and urine.

Dining Room. (Square tower) The table is laid as though for dinner. The settings are in disarray, as though something interrupted the meal. On the table is a set of 6 silver goblets worth a total of 50 gp. Each goblet is engraved with a coat of arms under which the name "Castos" is scribed.

Spiral Staircase. (Northwest corner) As the heroes near the round tower on the Ground Floor (and Level 2), the sounds and smells get louder and stronger. They increase as the heroes mount the stairs.

Stairs to Cellar. (Northeast corner) The storeroom contains shelves (mostly empty, except for a few jars of fruit preserves) and stacks of crates.

Kitchen. (Southeast corner) The kitchen is mostly packed, except for a few pans and utensils still in the long-cold hearth.

LEVEL 2

Level 2 is the family quarters. The room with one bed is furnished like a master bedroom, the square tower room is a library, and the hallway is scattered with moving crates.

Master Bedroom. Tattered tapestries cover the windows. Chests and trunks lie open, filled with moth-eaten clothing. In the bottom of one trunk is a fine wool cloak lined with silk worth 25 gp.

Hidden under a pile of womens' clothes in another trunk is a small, locked chest. The lock is rusty (-10% to Open Locks rolls) and also trapped with a poison needle (save or die). Inside is a potion of healing, a potion of undead control, and 500 gp in assorted coins.

Library. Crates of books are piled in the center of the room. The shelves are empty. If the characters take the time to search all the crates (unlikely, as you'll be increasing the frequency and insistence of the screams and giggling), they find 1d6 books of obscure ancient lore worth 1d10 x 10 gp each to the right sage.

Children's Bedroom. In the room with 3 beds, the heroes find a nightstand next to one of the beds. The nightstand has a small painting on it. The painting shows three children standing with two adults. The adult man bears a striking resemblance to Salamon Castos. The people in the painting are wearing clothes that have been out of fashion for at least 100 years.

LEVEL 3: THE LITTLE GIRL

When the heroes enter Level 3, read or paraphrase the following:

A blood-curdling scream splits the air as soon as you step off the stairs. It comes from the south.

Level 3 was servants' quarters when the castle was occupied. The large rectangular room is empty. The hallway has a couple of cots with threadbare blankets.

The door to the room in the square tower is locked. Incessant screams come from within, and the smell of blood and urine is almost overpowering. If the characters can't pick the lock, treat the door as stuck (*Player's Guide* p 41) or let them bash it to pieces (AC 14, 25hp).

When the heroes enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The door opens into what must have at one time beer a bright, cheery nursery or playroom. The plastered walls were once painted pale pink, though the plaster has fallen off the stone in many places. A wooden rocking horse lies on its side near the west window. Standing by the south window is a little girl. She's facing away from you, clutching a rag doll, and she's crying. Unlike other little girls, she's slightly transparent and glowing slightly green.

If the heroes try to speak with her, she demands they leave her alone and continues sobbing. If the heroes persist, make a Reaction Check (*Player's Guide* p 45). If they treat her haughtily or harshly, the heroes have a -2 penalty on the check roll. If interact with her gently, the heroes have a +2 bonus on the check roll.

If the result comes up Unfavorable or below, she says:

I've been here all alone for so long. Won't you play with me?

Then her eyes turn pure black, her face distorts into a hideous rictus, and she lets out a deafening scream as she attacks. (See The Ghost Attack, below.)

If the result comes up Favorable or above, she reveals the following information in your creepiest little-girl voice:

They're all dead. Mummy, Daddy, Clarice, and Margit.

The Dark Man got them.

I don't remember my name anymore. I've been here all alone for so long.

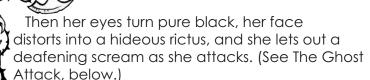
When the Dark Man came, Nursie and the other servants ran away.

This is our house, but we're moving soon. The Dark Man wants us to move.

The Dark Man is in the basement, through the door behind all the stuff.

If the result was Favorable, once she's done relating the above bullet points, she starts to cry again, telling the heroes to leave her alone. If they persist, she says:

I told you to go away and LEAVE. ME. ALOOOOONE!



If the result was Very Favorable, she offers to show the heroes where the Dark Man lives. She takes the character who treated her most nicely by the hand and leads them out of the room. Her touch is icy cold; the character holding her hand must make a saving throw vs. Paralysis or take 1d6 damage from the cold.

THE GHOST ATTACK

The little girl is a **ghost** (GM's Guide p 30). When she screams in the room, each character who hears the scream must make a saving throw vs. Death Magic or be stunned. A stunned character can neither move nor take action for the remainder of the current round and all of the next one. She doesn't try to possess the characters at first, preferring to strike with its icy touch.

If reduced to below half her hit point maximum, she tries to possess the powerful-looking armored character and run away. If she succeeds, there's a 50% chance she falls down the spiral stairs in the round tower, perhaps breaking the possessed character's spine or neck. Allow a saving throw vs. Paralysis to avoid dying from such an injury. If the character dies, she ceases possessing the corpse and flees into the cellars.



THE CELLARS

The door at the bottom of the stairs is unlocked. A character listening at the door doesn't hear anything, but smells the faint aroma of brimstone from behind it.

General Notes. The cellars are mined from the stone on which the castle was raised. Chisel marks are clearly visible in the walls and ceilings, which vault to 20 feet high in the center of each room. The floors are tiled with flagstone. There is no light other than that which the characters bring with them. Like most "dungeons" under fortified houses, most areas in the cellars are for storage. The long room south of the stairs, for example, is floor-to-ceiling wine racks.

Food Storage. (Southeast corner) This room holds a few barrels and crates of perishable foodstuffs, all long rotten. They look like the same kind of barrels and crates piled up before the Blocked Passage.

Blocked Passage. (Main room) Barrels, crates, scrap lumber, and other heavy detritus have all been heaped into a great pile. A character who peers behind the pile sees the door. It takes 6d10 minutes to clear away enough material to let the door swing open (it opens toward the characters). Characters clearing away material note the smell of brimstone is quite evidently coming from behind the door.

South Chamber. Clearly hollowed from the stone as burial chambers. Niches in the walls hold generations of Castos family members, each shrouded in linen. There are 2d12 niches; none of the bodies have any treasure.

West Chamber. The hallway leading toward this area is suffused with the reek of brimstone, death, and decay. Red light flickers on the roughly-hewn walls ahead. Stairs lead down to a shrine, perhaps once dedicated to one of the gods but now defaced and defiled. Near the altar (depicted by the rectangle on the north wall) is a pile of tangled bodies. Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor turns a corner. Steps lead down to a roughly-hewn chamber. Dim flames gutter feebly in a brazier in the center of the chamber, near a foul altar. A pile of bones lies between the brazier and the altar. The shadows near the brazier are vaguely human-shaped, and move as though animated by pure malevolence.

The malevolent shadow is the Dark Man attacking. When the Dark Man is reduced to less than half its hit points, it animates the corpses of the Castos family, creating 4 **wights** (GM's Guide p 45). Read or paraphrase the following:

The infernal grunts in pain and spreads its shadowy wings. Blood-red light glimmers in its eye sockets, and the bones near the altar shiver, shudder, and clatter together into a disgusting imitation of life which lurches toward you, claws extended.

Treasure Room. The small room to the far north, off the West Chamber, is the Castos vault. The door is locked and trapped with **Monster-Attracting Spray** (see GM's Guide p 17). Inside the vault is the following loot: 1,500 cp, 2,900 sp, 1,800 ep, 2,600 gp in individual chests; a small chest of gems worth a total of 2,300 gp; a coffer containing a scroll of protection from evil, 10' radius and 3 potions of healing; and in the corner is a suit of +1 chain mail on a stand. The armor is also magically treated against rust.

THE DARK MAN

Armor Class: 18‡ Hit Dice: 12

No. of Attacks: 1 touch or 1 spell

Damage: 2d6
Movement: Fly 180'
No. Appearing: 1
Save As: Thief: 14
Morale: 9

Treasure Type: E XP: 665

The Dark Man is a Shadow Fiend. A shadow fiend is an insubstantial infernal that feeds off the fears, doubts, and nightmares of living creatures. When seen in well-lit areas it appears as a horned and winged humanoid figure whose lower body trails off into nothing. It lacks any facial features, and its body appears to be composed of dense smoke. It is subtle for an infernal, and can remain hidden among populations of humanoids or monsters for years without being detected. It prefers abandoned homes, old ruins, dark sewers, and tunnels as lairs.

When in darkness a shadow fiend is effectively invisible as per the spell. Regardless of whether it is in darkness or not, it moves in complete silence; only the stirring of the air is a hint as to a shadow fiend's passage.

A shadow fiend that hits a living target with its touch attack deals the listed amount of damage and at the same time regenerates the same number of hit points.

A shadow fiend has the power to move objects up to 10 pounds up to 50 feet away from itself via magic. It can move said objects about 5 feet a round. It will typically use this power to open and close doors, knock over objects, or throw small objects about. The goal is to terrorize and demoralize creatures it is "haunting", to induce fear and paranoia.

In addition to this ability a shadow fiend can cast darkness and phantasmal force each once per day. However, a shadow fiend caught in areas of bright light (such as the area of a light spell or a torch) takes 1d6 damage per round as the light burns away its shadowy form.

Due to its insubstantial nature, a shadow fiend is immune to poison, acid, and cold. It only takes half damage from lightning or fire-based attacks. Magical weapons are required to hit a shadow fiend in combat.

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