

FEAST

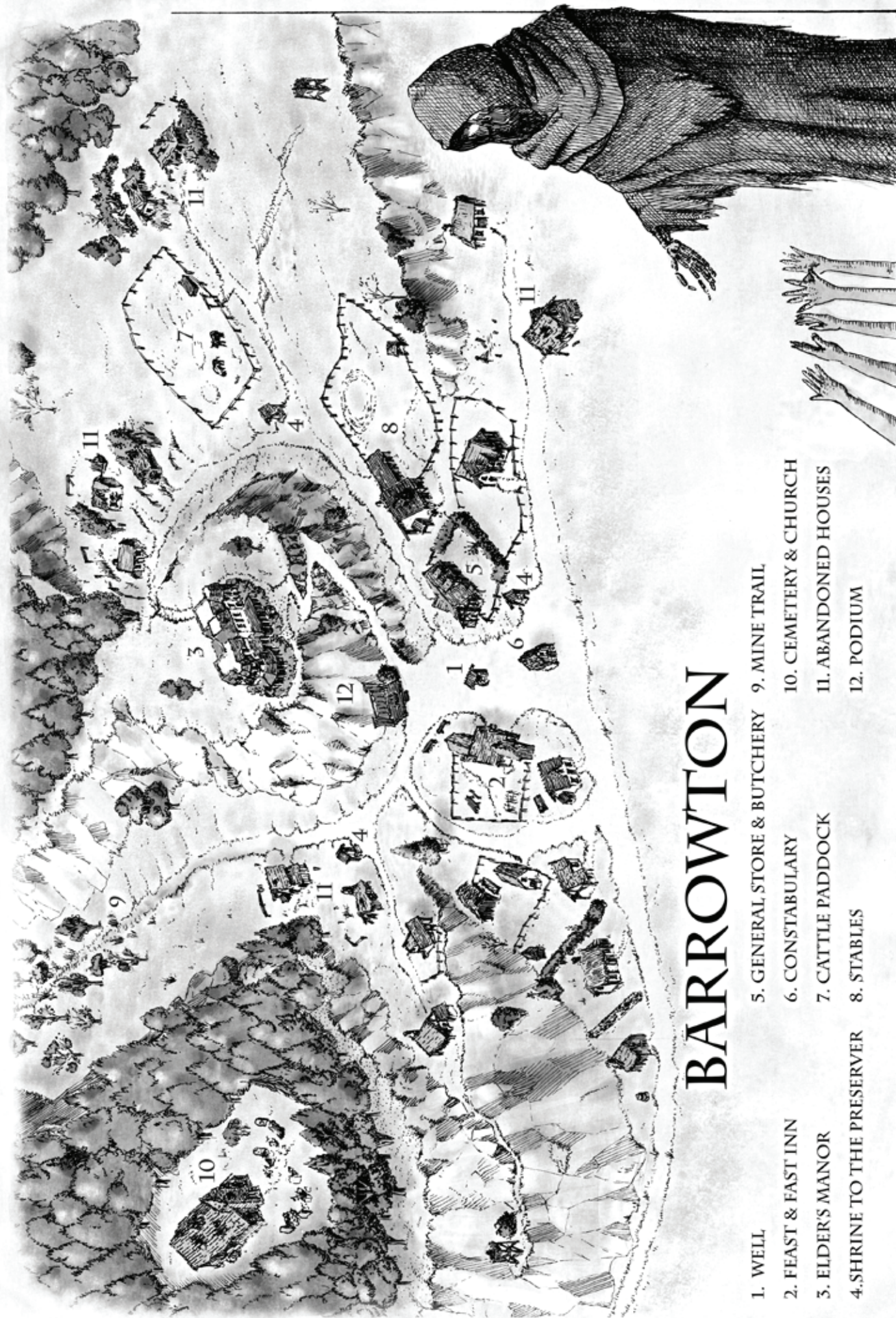
OF THE PRESERVER



COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

David W. Fisher
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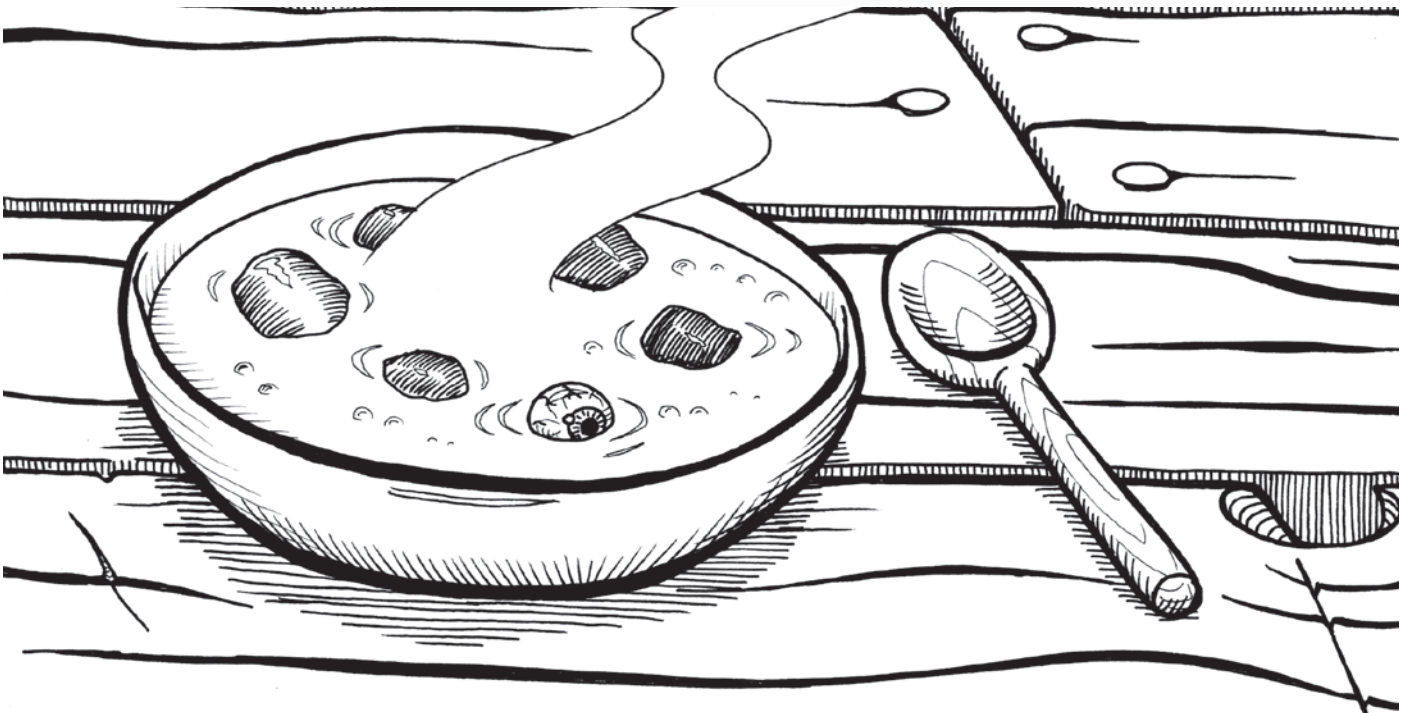
BARROWTON

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. WELL | 5. GENERAL STORE & BUTCHERY | 9. MINE TRAIL |
| 2. FEAST & EAST INN | 6. CONSTABULARY | 10. CEMETERY & CHURCH |
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FEAST

OF THE PRESERVER



Feast of the Preserver is an adventure designed for a group of 5 to 8 Characters of levels 3 to 4. Judges should read the adventure through at least once before running the adventure.

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Introduction

Feast of the Preserver is a horror-based adventure for PC levels 3 to 4. There is a very real threat of the entire party being annihilated by the residents of Barrowton, if they don't use their heads to solve the mysterious illness that has befallen the small mining town.

Barrowton was once a thriving mining village. The mines in the foothills of the Crumbling Mountains once provided the richest source of silver in the region. For a time, life in Barrowton was pleasant and prosperous but a beast was awoken in the mines and lay siege there. Eventually, the mine was closed down and many families moved on.

Some, however, decided that life in Barrowton was worth fighting for and stayed on to keep the town alive. One *visitor* would change their definition of *alive* forever.

The tale of Scrimage the Preserver

Cedric Scrimage was a cruel miser and a very wealthy one at that. He was also a very successful lawyer. The secret behind his success, of which even he was unaware, was a latent psionic power that enabled him to manipulate others in his favour. Fortunately and unfortunately for his clients, Scrimage won every case he took on. Alas his fee was a large percentage of his clients' settlements and, even though his clients were overjoyed at winning their cases, the excessive fee Scrimage charged overshadowed that joy.

Ironically, the very greed that forced them to seek the lawyer's service was the same greed that made Scrimage so wealthy. As Cedric Scrimage never lost, some suspected wizardly arts played a role in his success but he lacked the usual wizardly accoutrements. His ability to prove a case in law befuddled even the judges of Trisdeus the Tri-God (any compatible lawful deity will suffice) who could detect no magical effect at work.

Scrimage lived and worked from an unkempt manor in the city of Montaigne (or any major city in your campaign world). As a miser he refused to pay for its upkeep. He hired a single servant at a time to serve him and he used his persuasive abilities to retain them for as long as possible, often abusing their rights. Confused at being manipulated by Scrimage, and suffering unexplainable headaches, the servants eventually left, often never to work again. Eventually, he exhausted the supply of servants in Montaigne, or so he thought. The Guild of Servants and Maids had blacklisted Cedric Scrimage and he was forced to look after himself.

One fateful evening, Scrimage retired to read in his library before bed. He wanted a book from the top shelf so, clumsily, he used the bookcase itself as a ladder. Predictably, the bookcase toppled and Scrimage was trapped beneath the heavy bookcase.



Scrimage cried out for help but no one heard his cries. Or at least no earthly power heard his cries. Days passed and Scrimage grew weak with hunger and thirst. He began to hear voices in his head, and whilst the old miser believed himself to be hearing things, in reality his psionic telepathy was clawing for help through the minds of passers by. Those whose minds were probed became momentarily nauseated and some developed nose bleeds but it wasn't enough to draw their aid.

He was dying and in his coat he found a pouch of gold coins, the only thing he had on him. In a madness born of hunger, he tried to eat the gold coins. He choked on them and died. As his life ebbed from its mortal coils, a dark power offered Scrimage a second chance. Foolishly, Scrimage accepted.

The next night, Scrimage came back to un-life as a ghoul. His newfound un-dead strength allowed him to free himself and he walked out onto the street, ravenously hungry. He attacked the first person he saw, trying to bite him. Onlookers rushed to the man's aid and frightened Scrimage off. Fearing he would get caught and suspecting what he had become, the newly born ghoul fled south from Montaigne.

Eventually, he reached the remote village of Barrowton and waited until nightfall to sneak in. As Scrimage skulked in the shadows, he heard a commotion and saw torchlight; a band of adventurers approached. Fearing they had been hired to hunt him down and destroy him, Scrimage leapt into the village well. In truth, the adventurers had just been passing through and, having just left the tavern, were quite drunk. They did not hear Scrimage break his neck on the way down and land in the water.

Alas the fall and injury did not end the un-dead existence of Scrimage. It only paralyzed his body and he remains, fermenting, starving and quite insane at the bottom of the well. But from his insane mind, tendrils of evil influence have taken sway over the hapless folk of Barrowton. The insidious influence from his submerged tomb has become so powerful, that he has, by all intents and purposes, become a dark patron in his own right. To his followers he is *The Preserver*. At this point in time, only Lucian Bargas has the power to invoke *The Preserver's* ghoulish, mental power. Like all evil, Scrimage seeks to not only rise but to rule.



Playtesters

Julian Bernick, Victoria Carmac, Jon Carnes, Leah E., Soriah Esquivel, Adam Fischer, Chris Folkerts, Michael Groat, Trevor Hartman, Juan Ladron, Chris Lease, Stacy Lease, Cody Mazza, Dougal McGuire, Tim Mulry, Brandon Newberg, John Payne, Tom Prettyman, Candi Schaaf, Lucas Skrdlant, Brenda Wolfe, Jesse Wolfe, Nikolaus Wolfe

Patrons

Joe Crocono, Simon Forster, Paul Wolfe.

The Fate of Barrowton

Unaware that a ghoul lay at the bottom of their well, the villagers took water from it as normal. They could not know that the water was now tainted with *Ghoul Fever*. One by one, the villagers began to be infected by the disease. Those who succumbed fully to the foul water died, became ghouls and started to attack and eat those that had resisted.

Amongst those who resisted was the village's leader, Elder Lucian Bargus. Lucian was an intelligent, charismatic man who dabbled in necromantic magic as well. He was not driven mad by the ghoul fever, instead he saw endless possibilities in being immortal. His necromancy made him the perfect thrall to be influenced by the insane mind of Cedric Scrimage and whilst bathing one evening the two minds *met*. A powerful bond formed between the two corrupt minds.

The village cleric, Judge Zachariah, the only villager wise enough to realise the water supply had been tainted, began transforming into a ghoul. Horrified at what he was becoming, the strong-willed priest convened an urgent meeting with the village Elder. Outraged by Elder Bargus's acceptance of the affliction, Zachariah swore to leave the village for help. His oath to seek help was, sadly, his death sentence. As the young cleric turned to leave, Lucian plunged his evil dagger, *Skinner*, deep into the back of the young, taint-afflicted cleric. As his life bled from him, he was powerless to stop Lucian from tying a noose around his neck and hoisting the dying cleric's body from the church rafters. Instead of resting peacefully in death, Zachariah could not depart this world. His guilt at not being able to help the villagers, combined with his desire to wreak vengeance upon Lucian, doomed him to a ghostly existence, trapped in the very place he was murdered, the church.

Using a combination of magic and strength of character, Lucian gathered the surviving villagers who had not become completely monstrous and together they subdued the *feral*, as they called them, and dumped them down a shaft in the disused silver mine. Unfortunately, the villagers who remained found they too were no longer fully human. They could no longer stomach normal food. They soon discovered that they were now creatures caught somewhere between humanity and ghoul-dom: living ghouls, and the only sustenance they could find was eating decaying flesh, preferably human. Their repulsive appetite was not their only physiological transformation. They found their fingernails and teeth now secreted a toxin that caused paralysis in their human prey. Those who refused to eat became ravenous, mindless and un-dead ghouls. Occasionally, a villager becomes *feral* and needs to be removed to the mines.

Throughout this time, Elder Bargus discovered a way to keep his cursed village *alive*. He discovered a sympathetic new patron, *The Preserver*, who rewarded fasting and suffering with grand feasts. Desperation, influence from Scrimage and their ghoulish appetites made the villagers complicit and faithful to Lucian's teachings. These teachings included the necessity of eating the flesh of travellers to live and that those who came were sent for that very purpose by their god. Whilst bathing, Lucian had visions and heard voices from *The Preserver*, insisting the way things should be.

This worship of *The Preserver* explained the villagers' emaciated appearance to visitors before those visitors became *Endfast* meals. They would only capture lone travellers and young adventurers: people nobody would miss. The occasional merchant wagon would also be taken but they would do everything possible



to avoid an armed force or powerful adventurers investigating the disappearances. In this way, the village could appear to run as it always had.

Having sensed the vengeful ghost of the former priest in the church, Scrimage convinced Lucian to have the church boarded up and since it was away from the village centre, in the cemetery grounds, it was easy to disguise. The graveyard, however, became very useful to the villagers. Preferring the taste of decaying flesh, the villagers would bury their guests for several days before digging them up for a feast. Elder Bargus, as he further succumbed to the insane influence of Scrimage's dark mind, even buried some captured folk alive, enjoying hearing their terrified screams through the earth until they expired, decayed and then ended up on the dinner table.

And so the village of Barrowton continued on as always but where once their food would come from the land, now it came from the boxes in the ground. Only through the purging of Scrimage can the village return to a *normal* existence.

Invitation to Barrowton

Over time, the village of Barrowton has been forgotten. Over fifty years have passed and the village no longer appears on maps. This works for and against the ghoulish occupants. It provides them with the secrecy they need to survive but it also severely limits the amount of *dinner guests* passing through. As a means to attract unwary travellers, Elder Bargus occasionally sends a *healthy* looking villager to the North Road to invite *guests* to a religious feast in the village.

Unfortunately for the last inviter, a ghoulish 'youth' named Jed, the travellers he chose were a band of chaotic brigands led by Jared Maugard, a barbarian with a vicious reputation and a price on his head to boot. Maugard promptly slew Jed after torturing the location of the promised feast from him and decided he and his band would hold the 'starving zealots' to ransom by stealing their food. In a surprise raid, they did just that, riding off with sealed boxes of dismembered corpses, demanding a ransom for its return.

Two days have passed when the player characters find the slain *youth* lying in a ditch by the road. Parchments with invitations to the feast litter the area around the body.

The PCs may have been hired by a local lord to hunt down Maugard and his band of cutthroats leading them to the discovery of the slain Jed. Or the heroes could just be travelling the right road at the wrong time. Either way this is the PCs' invitation to Barrowton.

“Come one and all to the Endfast Feast of our beloved Preserver. Witness the miracle of his followers' yearly rebirth. You will love our home so much, you may not ever leave. Elder Lucian Bargus.”

A small map on the flyer shows the path to Barrowton. PCs easily locate the shady path that leads west off the North Road. It might never have been noticed had the PCs not made this gruesome discovery.



Arrival

For the duration of the adventure, the weather in Barrowton is abysmal. Dark clouds hang low over the village during the day and it rains without fail every evening. PCs should be encouraged to find a way to keep themselves dry. The weather clears when the player characters leave the village.

Barrowton appears to be a quaint country village nestled in a wooded valley. The village has no wall around it and, whilst a little run down, the village seems homely and the laughter of children carries through the cool forest breezes. The village itself is comprised of a single main road that runs the length of the township. In the centre of the village, sitting squarely in the middle of the crossroads of the main road and a smaller carriageway is the village well. The well is a sturdy stone affair, with a winch, rope and bucket built above it. Near the well is a wooden podium, resembling a stage, where town meetings are held. Faded banners decorate the stage.

Scrimage is immediately aware of strangers in town. The influence of *The Preserver* prevents or hinders certain magical abilities in Barrowton. Scrimage is not detectable through magical means and attempts to do so prove negative as he uses his mental powers to alter the detector's perceptions (see *New Patron: Scrimage the Preserver*).

As the PCs wander into town, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

You arrive in the small village of Barrowton. Villagers dressed in modest, homely clothing, wander the paths and streets before you. On noticing you, they seem a little suspicious and whisper to each other as you pass. There is something alarming about the appearance of these poor villagers. They are gaunt and emaciated. It looks like the village has seen a poor harvest and food must be scarce. An imposing manor looms over the village from a bluff above. The low hanging clouds give everything a cold grey appearance.

The PCs can do some exploration at this stage. Judges can use the map and associated NPC information to flesh out encounters with NPCs. Villagers are quiet but polite to strangers – they know better than to scare a potential feed out of town. The inhabitants of Barrowton are NOT completely un-dead and it is important that judges note that, whilst they are cursed and abominable, these people are not fully-fledged

ghouls (yet) and ultimately, they are not beyond saving. Not that they deserve salvation. Since the living ghouls are not completely un-dead, they are 75% immune to being turned. The regular ghouls encountered can be turned as normal (see *DCC RPG rulebook* pg. 96). If successfully turned, the villagers throw up their hands crying “Sacilege!” and move away as per normal turning. Living ghouls cannot be destroyed through turning.

Unless stated otherwise, the villagers have the following game stats:

Living ghouls of Barrowton: Init +2; Atk claw +1 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.



1. *The well*

In the middle of town, at the intersection of the only two roads in Barrowton, sits the village well. It is a well-maintained stone structure and appears to be situated in the centre of the village. As the source of the village's water, it is likely PCs see villagers coming to fill buckets of water from the well.

In the dark depths of the well, the bloated, water logged Scrimage the Preserver *rests*. Judges who want to immediately heighten the threat level of the adventure may choose to use the following optional ghoulish taint rules. It can potentially eliminate PCs before the adventure has even commenced so it is advised these rules be used only if the PCs lack motivation to solve the mystery of *The Preserver*.

Characters drinking from the well find the water pleasant tasting and refreshing. Judges wishing to use the ghoulish taint rules need to make a DC 13 Fort save for PCs who drink the water. Judges may wish to keep this roll secret to avoid the PCs immediately suspecting the well of contamination.

PCs afflicted with the taint now have an extra motivation to find a cure to the village's woes. Another option to build suspense, urgency and desperation during the adventure is to have the PCs show symptoms of the taint at inopportune times.

If a player character succumbs to the tainted water, roll on the following table to determine the effects.

Roll 1d6	Taint
1. Terminal ghoulish fever	The PC contracts terminal ghoulish fever. The judge needs to note the passage of time and its effect on the PC. After 12 hours, the PC is wracked with fevers and associated pains, taking 1d6 stamina damage. The character then loses a stamina point every two hours (every four hours if the PC is resting) until their stamina reaches zero. At this time, the PC dies. 1d4 hours later the body reanimates as a ravenous, 'feral' ghoul.
2. Regular ghoulish fever	The PC has contracted regular ghoulish fever. The judge needs to note the passage of time and its effect on the PC. After 12 hours, the PC is wracked with fevers and associated pains, taking 1d6 stamina damage. The character then regains a stamina point every two hours (every four hours if the PC is resting) until their stamina is back to its original state. At this time, the PC seemingly recovers none the worse. However, the PC has transformed into a living ghoul, the same state as the inhabitants of Barrowton. The gravity of this condition becomes apparent when the character attempts to eat. They take 1d4 stamina damage and vomit any food other than rotting flesh (preferably human). They must eat within 1d3 days or be affected by starvation.
3. Lethal poison	The PC has ingested lethal poison. 3 hours after the poisoning, the PC makes a Fort save DC 13 or becomes paralyzed by excruciating stomach pains. If the PC makes the save, they suffer the effects of nausea (see below) as well as 1d4 stamina points of damage. If the save fails, they lose 1 stamina point per hour until they are either cured or they die.
4. Poison	The PC has ingested poison. 3 hours after the poisoning, the PC makes a Fort save DC 13 or becomes paralyzed by excruciating stomach pains. If the PC makes the save, they suffer the effects of nausea (see below) as well as 1d4 stamina points of damage. If the save fails, they fall unconscious for 1d4 hours. Upon waking the effects of the poison are over.
5. Nausea	The PC feels nauseous 1d3 hours after the taint occurs. At this time the character starts vomiting uncontrollable for 1d6 rounds.
6. No effect	The PC's constitution is strong enough to avoid any ill effects of the taint... this time.

2. *The Feast and Fast*

To the west of the well is a quaint little country inn. The sign swinging above the open doorway reads *Feast and Fast*. Outside of this location is where the PCs meet Lucian Bargus for the first time (see *Meeting Lucian*).

Inside the inn on ground level is the village tavern. The tavern serves an assortment of beverages usually found in taverns. It also serves a menu of pottage-styled broths. The water from the well taints the food from the inn and, whilst tasty at first, the chunks of beef in the broth aren't beef. The owner of the *Feast and Fast*, Jedadiah Smeed, has a pantry stocked with preserved, salted *beef*. The meat has been cured and salted but a little too long after it spoils. The cooking disguises the unusual scent of the meals. Dishes range from 5 cp to 2 sp. The house special is the *Traveller's Feast* (a feast made of travellers), costing 1 sp. Those who eat at the tavern are likely to be eating a previous guest and thus risk being afflicted by *Ghoul Fever* (see optional Taint table in location 1 for details). The Fort DC is improved to 10 thanks to the cooking process.

Other than its unique cuisine, the *Feast and Fast* serves standard tavern beverages. Drinks range from 2 cp for ale, to 1 sp for vintage wines. Lodgings at the inn can be acquired for 5 sp a night.

3. *Elder's Manor*

(See *The home of Lucian Bargus*).

4. *Shrines to The Preserver*

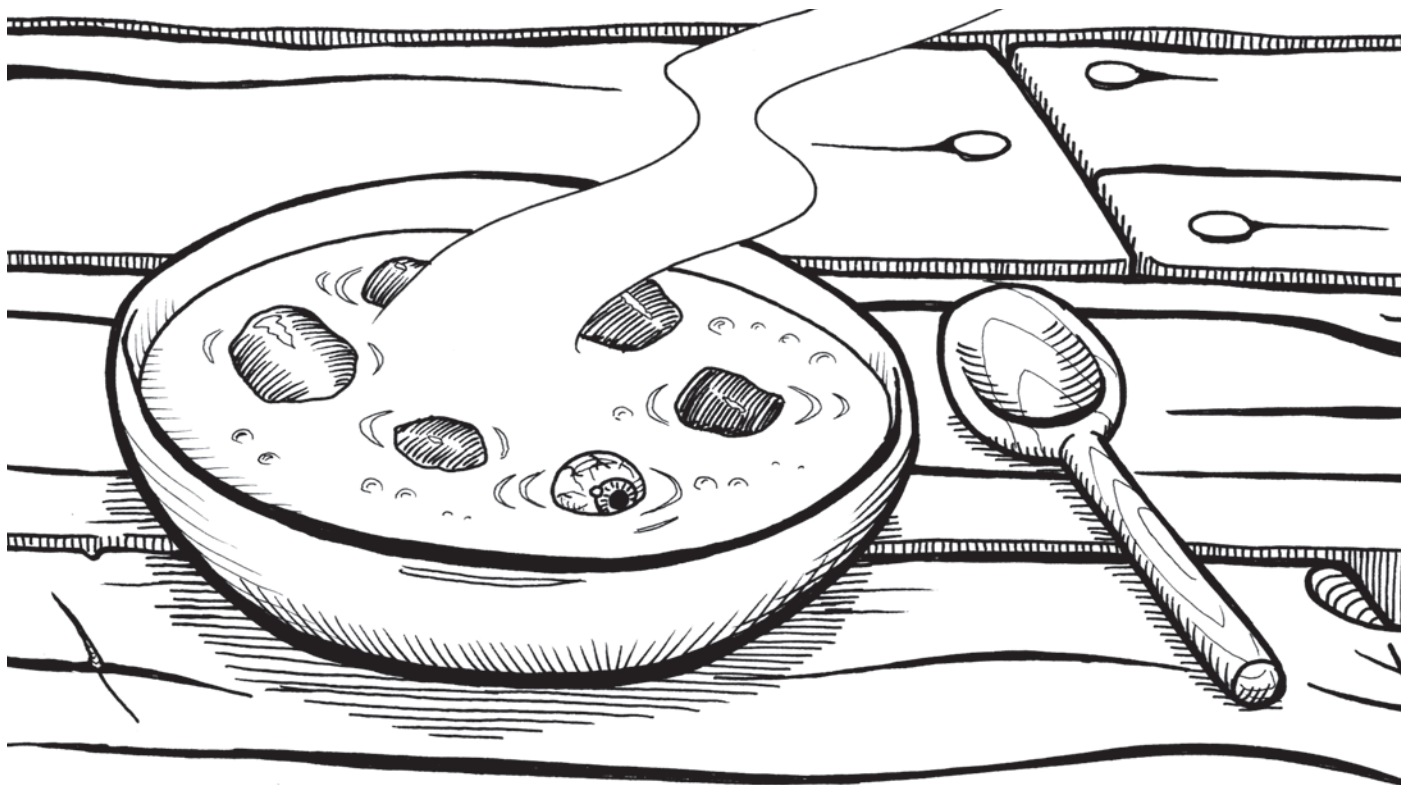
These are wooden signs with paintings depicting a cloaked being pouring food over a hungry crowd. The faceless *Preserver* appears disturbingly like the Grim Reaper. PCs examining these signs note that they are built over pre-existing shrines to Trisdeus – the Tri-God.

If asked about the conflicting faiths, villagers decry a charlatan judge of Trisdeus named Zachariah. He promised them justice and law but was stealing from the village. Elder Bargus ran him out of town for perverting the followers of *The Preserver*.

5. *Pottsman General store and butchery*

This small store sells general provisions found in the *DCC RPG rulebook* pg. 73. Bilgus Pottsman, the store's owner, also does a fair trade on meats that are carved in his wife's butchery in the rear of the store. The meat has an acquired taste, as it is more akin to beef jerky, except for the beef part.

The butchery has smooth white walls and strong wooden tables with grooves carved into the tables for draining blood from the meat. Hooks on chains dangle from the ceiling.



Bilgus' wife, Katarina, is a strikingly beautiful woman and she is the epitome of a professional when it comes to her job. She wears a leather butcher's apron and usually has a butcher's knife at her hip. If engaged in conversation, she makes small talk about the village then slowly introduces the topic of how demanding her husband is and she hints that there is domestic violence in the relationship.

Katarina focuses her sob stories on any PC that seems sympathetic to her plight. Eventually, she tries to convince a PC to take her away with them. Ideally, if she can arrange a secret meeting with a PC, she attempts to paralyze that character and plant them in the cemetery (see *Buried alive*).

Katarina Pottsman: Init +1; Atk butcher's knife +3 melee (1d4+1) or claw +1 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 13; HD 3d6, HP 12; MV 30'; Act 1d20, Crit Die/Table: 1d14/II; SP Backstab +7, Sneak Silently +8, Hide in shadows +6, un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

6. Constabulary

The constabulary is a crude single story building. The village constable, Erik Farkas, is usually found sitting at a worn desk inside this somewhat run-down building. Farkas is a short, rotund individual with a balding head of red hair and a matching moustache running from jowl to jowl. His trusty club rests on the desk before him.

Farkas complains about the theft of the feast but directs the PCs to Elder Bargus for information. Farkas is well aware he is useless in the scheme of things, except for storing pre-slaughtered meat.

Constable Farkas: Init +1; Atk club d4+1 melee (1d4-1) or claw +1 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; HD 2d12, HP 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

Behind the desk are four 5' x 5' barred cells. As decrepit as these cages appear, they are sturdy affairs that are used more regularly than one would expect for a secluded village. To unlock the cells without keys requires a successful DC 13 pick lock check.

7. Cattle Paddock

There are five scrawny cows wandering around in this paddock. They play no role in this adventure unless a PC decides to enter the paddock. If so, the cows meander over to the character, then savagely attack.

Ghoul cows (5): Init +2; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d2 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; HD 1d6, HP 5 each; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

If this occurs and the PCs seek answers from the village, they act shocked, claiming it is *The Preserver* punishing them for losing the sacred feast.

8. Stables

Tending the stables is a *young* maiden who, despite her gaunt physique, is quite attractive. For 5 cp a day, the girl, who is mute, cares for the PCs' mounts. The PCs' horses may be reluctant or spooked by the girl. The stable currently houses one dark stallion that is secured safely within a locked pen. It is a fine animal and belongs to a young traveller named Bran (see *The Home of Lucian Bargus*).

The girl, Desnara, bats her eyelids at any flirtatious PCs. She tries to coax amorous adventurers to an intimate rendezvous by passing suggestive notes to interested characters. After all, it has worked for her in the past. If she has the opportunity to get a character alone, she wraps her arms around the unsuspecting lover and passionately claws their back in an attempt to cause ghoulish paralysis.

Judges should not inform the players why they are making the saving throw. It is suggested the player is told the roll is to determine how well their PC *performs*. If she is successful, and the PC is alone, it is possible the character will never be seen again. They awaken buried alive in the cemetery (see *Buried alive*). Only some clever detective work can save the character from suffocation and then becoming part of the feast.

Desnara: Init +0; Atk claw +3 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; HD 4d6, HP 17; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100', thief skills: Backstab 8, Sneak Silently 8, Hide in Shadows 7; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

9. *Overgrown road to the mines*

The road to the mines has not been used on a regular basis for many decades. As a result, trees have started to grow up on the road itself. PCs examining the road see tracks of a horse drawn wagon that has recently left Barrowton by this path.

10. *Hidden cemetery and church*

To the northwest of the village, on a rise that once allowed the judge within to overlook his flock, sits a now hidden church and graveyard. Trees and foliage have grown up around the grounds of the church, making it invisible from the main village (see *The hidden churchyard*).

11. *Empty houses*

These houses have boarded up windows and doors. The PCs could barricade themselves in these houses in the final act as the villagers lay siege at the doors and windows (see *Night of the Living Ghoul*s). The contents of some of the abandoned houses are described below if the PCs decide to explore within.

One of these empty houses contains the portrait of a rugged man standing by the fireplace with his family: a rotund lady and two infants. The man is missing his right leg from the knee down. It has been replaced by a wooden peg leg. Inscribed on a brass plate beneath the portrait is the name 'McCollough'.

Another house is in complete disarray. Chairs and tables are upturned and the bedroom door lies smashed on the ground. Several dark stains are evident on the mouldy mattress. Shreds of a torn floral garment are also strewn around the room.

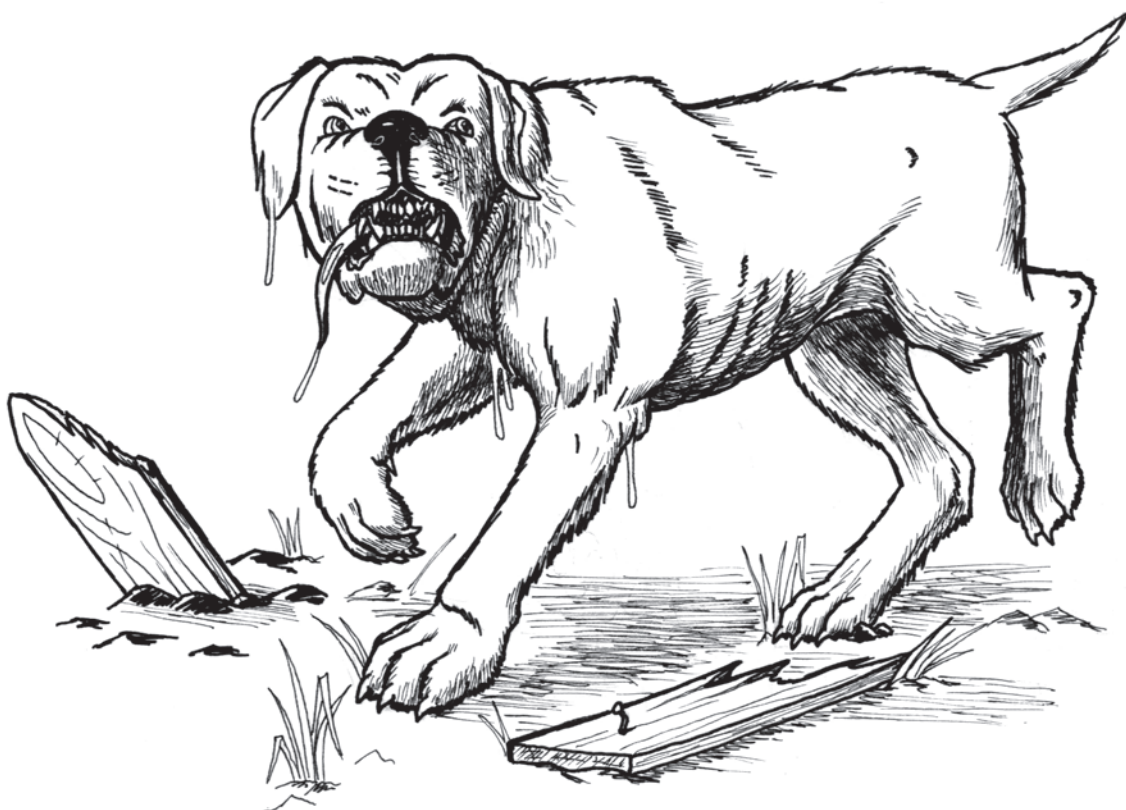
Judges should feel free to flesh out the interior of any of the abandoned houses in the village. These two are described as their occupants, or the remains of them, can be found in the silver mine.

One particular house has become the lair of a trio of ghoulish hounds that attack anyone on entry. Lucian uses these beasts to hunt any 'guests' that flee the village. He locks them up in this house until they are needed.

Ghoulish hounds (3): Init +5; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d6 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 14; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

12. *Podium (10. on Players' Map)*

A sturdy wooden podium stands here. Village meetings and celebrations take place around the podium.



Meeting Lucian

Read or paraphrase:

As you near the centre of town a slender, well-dressed man struts out of the 'Feast and Fast', the village's only tavern. He smiles and marches over to greet you.

The man is Lucian Bargus. After introducing himself, he invites the PCs to visit his home (see *The home of Lucian Bargus*). There, Lucian explains that the village is a religious settlement following *The Preserver*. According to Lucian, *The Preserver* is a benevolent patron who rewards suffering with bountiful harvests. All good things come from sacrifice and commitment to your beliefs, he professes. The village strictly follows an edict from their faith. Once every year, in honour of their deity, the villagers fast for several weeks in preparation for a wondrous feast prepared to honour their patron. Whilst many grumble about surviving on minimal food during the fasting, they all feel the celebration at its end is worth the suffering.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The revelry seems to drain from Lucian's face and he quickly adopts a more serious tone. He says:

"My people need you, as dire circumstances have befallen us. Our mighty patron, the great Preserver, keeps our village safe and provides us with our worldly needs, so long as we are faithful and complete the fasting once a year. As you may have noticed, my people take the edict of fasting very seriously. In years past, some have even been reaped before the feast. For many weeks my people have gathered and prepared foods for our annual 'Endfast'. We deprive ourselves of fulfilling nourishment for weeks, drinking only from our sacred well and eating meagre quantities of jerky to sustain us before the feast. So weakened do we become that upon feasting it is as if we are reborn."

He looks at you gravely and sighs, "Tomorrow evening beneath the harvest moon, we were meant to celebrate the 'Endfast' but two days ago a blasphemy beyond belief occurred: our peaceful village was raided by cutthroats! They stole our 'Endfast'. They loaded up their wagon with our banquet and rode out of town laughing at what will befall us if our food is not returned. They demanded we pay them a hundred gold pieces in exchange for the feast. We were going to try to collect the ransom but The Preserver has sent us you!"



Lucian tells the PCs that the bandits' leader, a ruthless giant of a man named Jared, sent a demand that he would exchange their feast for the gold at the old disused Barrowton mine, a half-day's ride north. If the PCs agree to retrieve the feast, the Elder offers them the ransom money. If the player characters agree to capture the brigands to face the village's justice, Lucian offers to further reward them with a magical family heirloom, which has been in his family for at least a century. Lastly, he offers them a horse and cart to carry the feast back. He will insist that all **five** crates be returned with their ceremonially prepared food intact.

Lucian has two motives for recruiting the PCs. Primarily, to gauge their prowess by their ability to defeat the brigands and bring back the *sacred crates*. *The Preserver* has taught him well that seasoned adventurers are not to be trifled with. He assumes the brigands will weaken, if not kill, some of the PCs, reducing their threat and improve the village's chances to consume them. He is also aware of the Arachnaefiend (see *The Old Barrowton Silver Mine*). It too may potentially weaken the PCs enough to make them more palatable.

His secondary motive is just as he has stated. If the PCs return the boxes, and any captured brigands to the village, and Lucian believes no tampering with the crates has occurred, he might let the PCs leave in one piece. Might...

Buried alive!

If a villager paralyzes a PC, they awaken in a pine box buried 2d4' beneath the surface of the cemetery. Upon awakening, the character has 1d6X10 minutes of breathable air available to them. After this time expires, the interred PC must make a DC 10 Fort save to remain conscious. The save must be made each round with an accumulating +1 penalty to the save. If the character fails a save, they are rendered unconscious and die in the PC's level rounds later. If the dead PC had contracted Ghoul Fever, they transform into ravenous ghouls.

Without physical or magical assistance, it is near impossible for a character to escape their grave. Breaking the pine box only hastens the PC's suffocation. Characters can attempt to break the lid of their makeshift coffin. Each round a PC can inflict 1d2+strength bonus damage to the lid of the box. The damage is small due to the restricted space the character has. The lid can sustain 10 hp of damage before it breaks, allowing the earth to pour in on the PC, causing crushing damage. The damage is determined by multiplying the depth the PC is buried by 1d6. For example, if the character is buried 6' under, the crushing damage is 6d6. Once the PC has broken the coffin, they immediately deplete the oxygen they had remaining. They must make a DC 10 Fort check with the penalties described above applying as time passes.

Luckily, having only been dug recently, the soil is not tightly packed and characters can push their way to the surface. To do so, the PC must make a successful DC 12 strength check for each foot of earth the character has to push through. It is not an easy task.



The rules for Bleeding out (*DCC RPG rulebook* pg. 93) can be applied in this instance, if a companion recovers the victim's body in the given time. Character's unearthed within the hour suffer a permanent 1d3 Intelligence point loss due to oxygen deprivation, in addition to the stamina loss.

PCs erupting from the grave find themselves in the secluded graveyard near the hidden church described in *The hidden churchyard*.

If PCs report their (attempted) interment to any of the village authorities, they feign shock and horror and swear to bring the PC's attacker to justice. If confronted about the secluded churchyard, the villagers claim it is haunted and unused.

The Road to the Mines

Anyone with the ability to track finds recent wagon and horse tracks leading north into the woods, towards the foothills of a mountain range. Further inspection reveals an overgrown path that hasn't been used regularly since the mines were in operation. The PCs may become suspicious about Lucian's story about Barrowton being a religious colony, considering the age of the old mine road but suspicion isn't a bad thing considering the true nature of their predicament. On average, the passage through the woods to the mines takes 6 hours.

The north woods are dark and foreboding even in the brightest daylight due to the shadows cast by the thick canopy of the trees. Saplings have sprouted in some sections of the old road and a tracker can see how the wagon needed to be carefully manoeuvred to get through.

The close nature of the wooded road causes many to get disorientated. PCs must make DC 12 Intelligence checks each hour to avoid becoming lost.

Random encounters from the table on the next page can be used or judges can select from the encounters as they see fit.

The Wolves

After an hour in the woods, the PCs must make DC 15 Intelligence checks. Those who succeed get the feeling that something is watching them from the woods. A mournful howl confirms this suspicion.

Two hours into the woods, it becomes deathly quiet.

Roll	Description	Stats
1	Wolves – 1d4 wolves leap from the foliage to attack.	Wolves (1d4): Init +3; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6, HP 5; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.
2	Ghoulish wolves – 1d2 wolves that have eaten cattle from Barrowton have transformed into un-dead predators.	Wolves, ghoulish (1d2): Init +3; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours); AC 12; HD 1d6, HP 5; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.
3	Dire wolves – 1d2 dire wolves roam these woods as alpha predators.	Wolves, dire (1d2): Init +5; Atk Bite +6 melee (1d6+2); AC 14; HD 2d6, HP 10; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL L.
4	Crazy lost traveller – a crippled man who has escaped from Barrowton wanders through the woods babbling crazily. He pays no attention to the PCs unless they try to stop him, then he attacks them with his walking stick screaming, “You’ll not eat me!”	Crazy lost traveller: Init -2; Atk Walking stick -1 melee (1d4-1); AC 9; HD 1d4; HP 3; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref -2, Will -1; AL C.
5	Ghouls – 1d3 ghouls who escaped from the mines are wandering in the woods. They stalk the PCs looking for an opportune time to attack.	Ghouls (1d3): Init +1; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.
6	Slaughtered bear – the carcass of a large bear lies in pieces amongst the bushes nearby. It appears to have been torn to shreds and partially eaten by something a lot more powerful than it. The Arachnaefiend was roaming outside of the mines several days ago looking for food. It found some.	

It is here that a pack of wolves start to circle the party from a distance. Any PC who stops to concentrate on the woods has a chance (DC 15 Intelligence check) of seeing glowing yellow eyes in the darkness of the woods. Three wolves try to pick off the character taking up the rear of the party by attempting to trip them and drag them into the woods. The remaining wolves distract the other PCs by attacking from in front. There are ten wolves in this pack (a dire wolf or two might be added if wolves aren't enough of a challenge for the PCs).

Wolves (2d6): Init +3; Atk Bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6, HP 5; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL L.

Wolf, dire: Init +5; Atk Bite +6 melee (1d6+2); AC 14; HD 2d6, HP 10; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL L.

When at least two party members have been bitten the sound of galloping hoof beats and crashing foliage scares the beasts away.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The frenzy of snarling and snapping is suddenly interrupted as the wolves prick up their ears and look to the west. They turn and flee to the east. A large horse clears some foliage to the west and thunders toward your group. The rider just manages to reign in the mount before it is upon you.

The rider, cloaked and wearing a tricorne hat that hides his face in shadows, looms above you.

The rider is Justinian Irvin, a wealthy and famed ranger lord from Montaigne. He has a finely crafted longbow across his back and, on his belt, a longsword. He is a skilled combatant and his air of confidence should not go unnoticed by the characters. After glaring at them for a while, Justinian dismounts and offers the group aid.

He pays particular attention to the wounds of those bitten. He says that the wolves raided some of his farms recently and he has been tracking them since. Irvin is, in fact, hunting a werewolf that killed his wife and son over a year ago. He doesn't share this information but he tries to gather as much information as he can about the PCs and their plans in case they have contracted the curse of lycanthropy. Justinian Irvin and his battle against lycanthropes is detailed further in the upcoming adventure *Die beast, die!*



Justinian has no knowledge of Barrowton. If the PCs bring it to his attention, he promises to investigate Barrowton on his return. He does know that an abandoned silver mine is in the mountains to the north and can point any wayward group in the right direction. After his brief attention, Justinian quickly mounts his charger, *Platinum*, and gallops off into the darkness after the wolves.

Justinian Irvin – Ranger Lord (4th Lvl Warrior):
Init +4; Atk longsword d6+1 melee (1d8+1), Atk +1 longbow d6+2 ranged (1d6+2); AC 13; HD 4d12, HP 32; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L.

Gear: Studded Leather Armor, Longsword, +1 Longbow, Quiver with 20 arrows, Sack with 8 cp, Gold ring worth 10 gp

The old Barrowton Silver Mine

Eventually, the woods open up to a small clearing at the foot of the Crumbling Mountains. Rubble and boulders are strewn throughout the area. Clearly the mountains are aptly named. A wagon sits empty a short distance from the mine opening but there are no horses or bandits visible.

Another cause of the boulders and rubble is a two-headed giant that lives further up the mountain. The giant is a rather gentle creature who only kills when hungry. Its diet has subsisted of forest animals up until two days ago, when some bandits left two delicious horses tied up at the foot of the mountain. After crushing the horses' skulls with its bare hands, the giant dragged them up to his cave. With meat for at least a week, the giant is quite content to sit in his cave and sing (yes, sing).

When the PCs approach the mine entrance they notice blood spatters against the mountainside and on the ground. There are drag marks in the blood leading up the side of the mountain. A PC can determine the blood is only a day or two old on a DC 15 Intelligence check. DC 20 reveals that the blood is from a horse as there are clumps of horse mane amongst some of the blood.

If the characters choose to investigate the fate of the horses, they can explore the blood-stained mountain path.

The Giants' Lair

A roughly hewn path zigzags up the mountainside. Due to the rocky and unstable nature of the Crumbling Mountains, adventurers need to make three DC 12 Reflex saves to reach the opening of the giant's cave safely without dislodging any rocks. These checks occur at 10-minute intervals on the climb. If they fail their save, a wrong step dislodges a rock, causing a rockslide down the mountainside.

The PC causing the collapse must make an additional DC 12 Reflex save to avoid tumbling down the mountainside with the rocks. The damage for falling is the same as the damage for those caught in the rockslide below +1d6. Any PCs below must duck for cover (DC 10 Reflex save) or be smashed by the rocks. The damage is determined by the PCs progress up the mountain. If the slip occurs at the first Reflex save the rockslide damage is 1d12, 2d12 at the second Reflex save and 3d12 at the third.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

After climbing for half an hour, you hear a strange, yet melodic rumbling coming from an open cavern ahead. As you move closer, it becomes apparent that the occupants of the cave are singing a duet in deep, not unpleasant, baritone voices.

Littered around the entrance of the cave are the splintered bones of many woodland animals.

If the characters choose to be stealthy in their approach they easily avoid detection by keeping low behind the rocky protrusions around the entrance. Or a more confident or foolhardy group may just choose to wander in. In either case the group see:

Sitting in a roughly circular cave is a large, bald, two-headed giant. It is singing a melodious tune, each head harmonizing wonderfully with its partner.

If the characters pick a fight, the giant is quite willing to oblige. He defends his home to the death. If the PCs choose to talk with the giant, he will be suspicious yet friendly to them. He knows nothing about the brigands but he warns the characters that a monster lives in the mines. If asked further the giant points to a large boulder that it uses as a door. The boulder is marked by deep claw marks.

Two-headed Giant: Init -3; Atk club +6 melee (2d6+6) or hurled stone +3 ranged (1d6+4, range 50'); AC 14; HD 5d10; hp 40; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision, crit on 20; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +3; AL N.

Collected animal pelts that are in excellent condition, are the only items of value in the lair. The skins could be used to craft clothing or be sold to leatherworkers for a premium price.

Into the mines

Two days ago, when Jared Maugard arrived at the mines, he ordered his men to unload the *food* and tie up the horses. He and his right hand woman, a fierce elf named Alexis, lit torches and began to explore the mine. They noticed that there had been some recent activity in one of the tunnels and on venturing in they found a circular chamber with a decrepit winch system over a boarded up pit. Immediately, they became aware of the horrible stench from below. As they moved closer to examine the hole, they heard the miserable cries of the *villagers* who had been tossed below.

Maugard's instinct was to leave the fools to their fate but, trying to impress and finally woo Alexis, he decided he and his band would free the poor trapped victims of whatever *evil* had trapped them there and then demand from them a reward. He lowered one of his men down the pit. Before Maugard could react to his screaming henchman, a dozen ravenous ghouls had scaled the rope. Seeing his folly, and responding to the atrocious gurgling sounds of death below, Maugard cut the rope, dropping dozens of clambering fiends back into the pit. There was a brief scuffle, during which the brigand leader was bitten. Then, grabbing Alexis' hand, he and two surviving brigands rushed back to the chamber where they had secured most of the villager's food (location 9 on the map).

The ghouls have had the brigands under siege since then.

The Arachnaefiend

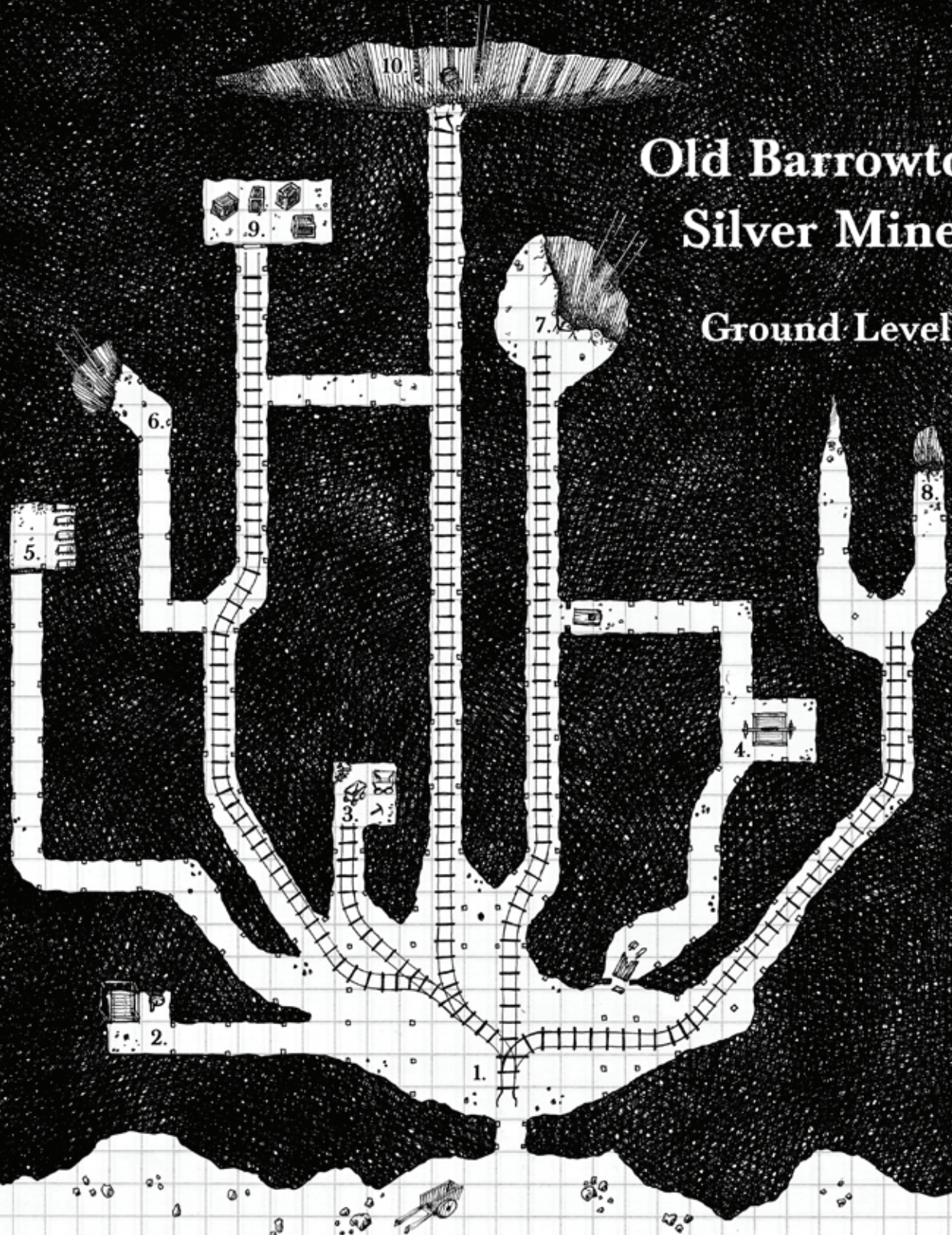
Long before silver was discovered in the caves beneath the Crumbling Mountains, an ancient evil called this place home – the Arachnaefiend. Originating from an unknown layer of hell, the Arachnaefiend was conjured to the world accidentally by a follower of *Ptah-Ungurath* (for further information see *Angels, Daemons and Beings Between* from *Dragon's Hoard Publishing*).

The wizard and his companions, who were battling goblins at the time, were unceremoniously dismembered along with the unfortunate goblin clan. This did not return the demon to hell. Confused and enraged, the Arachnaefiend found its way to the Crumbling Mountains and took shelter in the abyssal caves below. For over a century it called the caves there home.






As was part of its lifecycle, the Arachnaefiend cocooned itself in a deep hole and lay dormant for almost a century as spawn developed in its bloated abdomen. Whilst in its dormant state, the Barrowton mines were created above the oblivious demon. This was convenient for the creature as it awoke ravenously before spawning. It drove the miners away and laid its eggs around the mine. The creature itself still lurks not far from its eggs.

The following encounters occur at the locations indicated on the Old Barrowton Silver Mine maps.

Old Barrowton Silver Mine Ground Level



□ One square equals 10 x 10 feet

-  Mine cart
-  Mine cart track
-  Support beam
-  Crates
-  Rubble

The Old Barrowton Silver Mine

The Crumbling Mountains were not given their name without reason. The Barrowton miners must have been a brave lot for as the PCs explore the mines regular tremors occur, dislodging dust and debris from the ceiling of the tunnels. Thankfully, the Barrowton miners were capable engineers and even after over 50 years, the beams installed to support the mines are still holding. Unless PCs go out of their way to knock the supports down, the mines will remain structurally sound. If, however, the beams are burnt or deliberately destroyed, judges may inflict dire consequences on the player characters.

Ground Level

1. Entrance

This large chamber is roughly 80' X 100' in size. Much of this area is natural rock formation but some sections have wooden beams supporting the ceiling as well as framing tunnel entrances that lead deeper into the mountain. Soil and debris regularly falls from the ceiling alerting the PCs that the mine isn't entirely stable.

Rusty metal tracks on old wooden sleepers indicate some of the tunnels utilized mine carts to carry minerals and supplies back and forth from the entrance to the diggings.

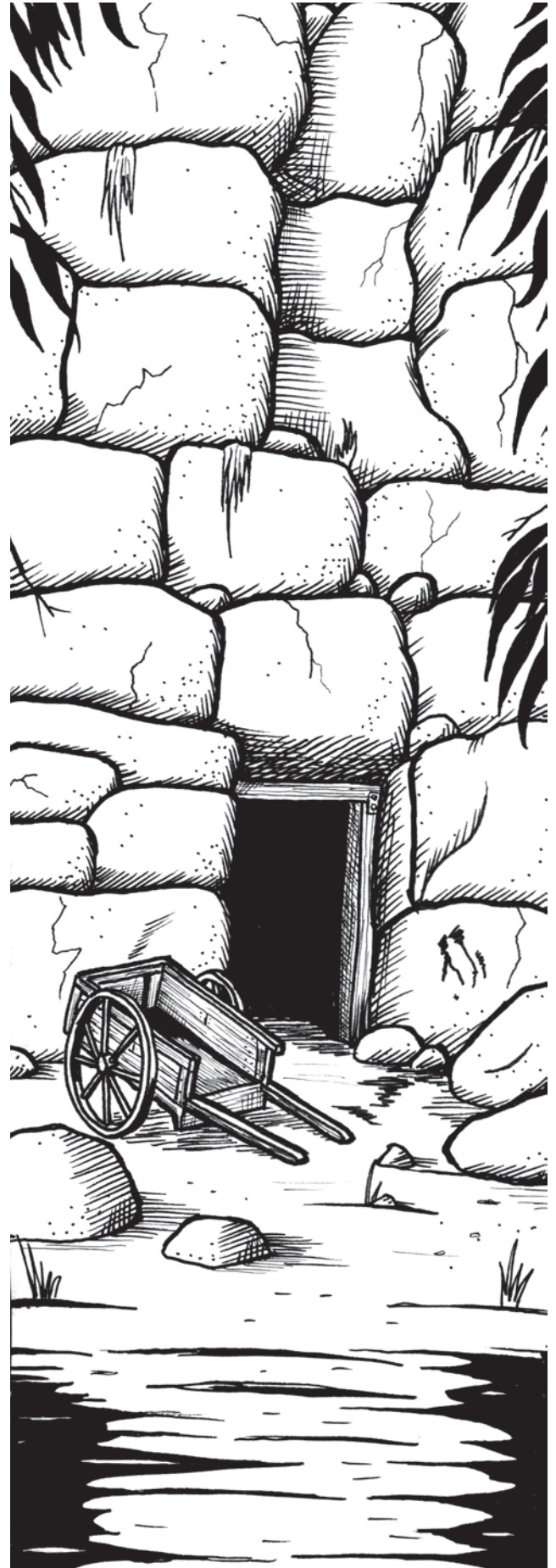
There are eight tunnels branching off from this chamber. Five of these passages have mine cart tracks. One tunnel, second from the right, once had a door bolted into place. It now lies smashed and broken on the floor thanks to Maugard. On close inspection, the door is much newer than the rest of the mine and the door was locked with a key. The key is on Lucian's key ring.

2. Lift mechanism

This 20' X 20' chamber houses a wooden lift and winch system that can lower passengers to the sub levels of the mine. The winch can be turned with a total strength of 15. The winch is only on the ground level, so to operate it, a PC (with the required strength) needs to remain behind to lower it and find their own way down after doing so.

The age of the lift is a concern. Each time the PCs use the lift, judges must make a DC 10 strength check for the mechanism. A -2 penalty accumulates each time the mechanism is used.

If the check fails, the winch snaps, sending those on the lift falling to the bottom of the shaft into area 21. The depth of the fall is approximately 40' causing 4d6 points of damage (note the rules for falling on pg. 96 of the *DCC RPG rulebook*).



3. *Storage chamber*

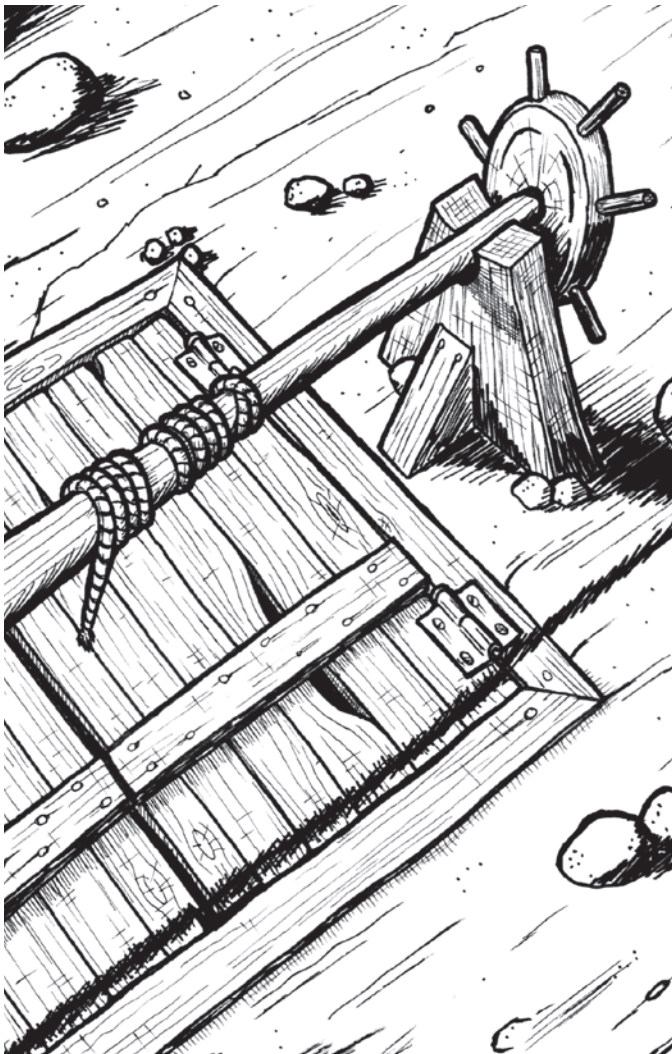
Mine cart tracks lead into this 20' X 20' room. Within are two rusty mine carts, five picks and assorted mining equipment. Hidden under rubble (DC 15 Search check) in the northwest corner are two burlap sacks containing approximately 200 gp worth of unrefined silver.

4. *The ghoul shaft*

This 20' x 30' chamber has exits to the north and south. Opening up to the east, the dominating feature in this area is a closed trapdoor in the floor. A hand-cranked winch is positioned over the trapdoor and from it a recently cut rope dangles. A foul stench lingers over the trapdoor.

The pit beneath the trapdoor drops 40' down into area 23. Opening the trapdoor allows five ravenous ghouls, that managed to cling to the shaft when the rope was cut, to leap out and attack the PCs.

Ghouls (5): Init +1; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.



PCs can descent the 40' into area 23 by climbing or being lowered by the winch. Those exploring the northern exit to this room discover a shattered door at the T-junction that leads north to area 7 and south to area 1.

5. *Bunk room*

This 20' X 20' room appears to have once been used for miners to rest in. 5 wooden bunk beds line the east wall of this chamber. There is a long-abandoned oil lamp hanging on the north wall. If refilled it functions well and can be taken.

If the beds are searched (DC 10), a long lost journal is bundled under the mattress of the top bunk in the southeast corner. Age and dampness have all but destroyed the pages of the book but the following excerpts can be discerned:

... so we weren't sure whether to proceed. Bargus insisted we break down the wall but the stench overwhelmed those who tried until we improvised some wet cloth masks to make the air less foul. We knew it was a mistake. There's something down there.

... then that we saw it. At first we thought it was the shadow of men returning from the chasm. The stench was what I remember the most. When it came upon us, we were helpless. As it carved into Svenson, Bargus and I got out of there. The best way I can describe the creature is it looks like a giant, red spide...

... to abandon the mine. Ebenezer, Raul and Josiah are still missing. The smell usually indicates the beast is coming. Our only hope is to barricade the doors and pray to the Tri-God. Those who live through the night will leave this forsaken mine tomorrow. Forever.

6. *Fissure*

The mine tunnel turns to the northwest and after 25' the floor disappears. PCs not using a light have a 75% chance of falling into the bottomless fissure. A DC 13 Reflex save enables the PC to avoid falling by grabbing onto the ropes and harnesses dangling from the ceiling of the chamber.

Miners used to hang over this area to mine the still visible veins of raw silver. PCs with the courage to strap into the harnesses may endeavour to remove some of the silver from the walls. There are three harnesses.

Unfortunately, after being strapped into the harness for 2d4 minutes, the ropes snap, sending the would be miner to the depths below.

7. *Open mine*

The mine tracks lead into a circular chamber approximately 30' in diameter. The entire north-eastern floor of the chamber has collapsed into the abyss beneath the mountain. Miners have secured ropes and harnesses over the opening, enabling the mining of the walls as well as the ability to abseil down to area 16. PCs or objects falling here are lost forever if they fail Reflex DC 10 to catch the ledge or rope.

8. *The hole*

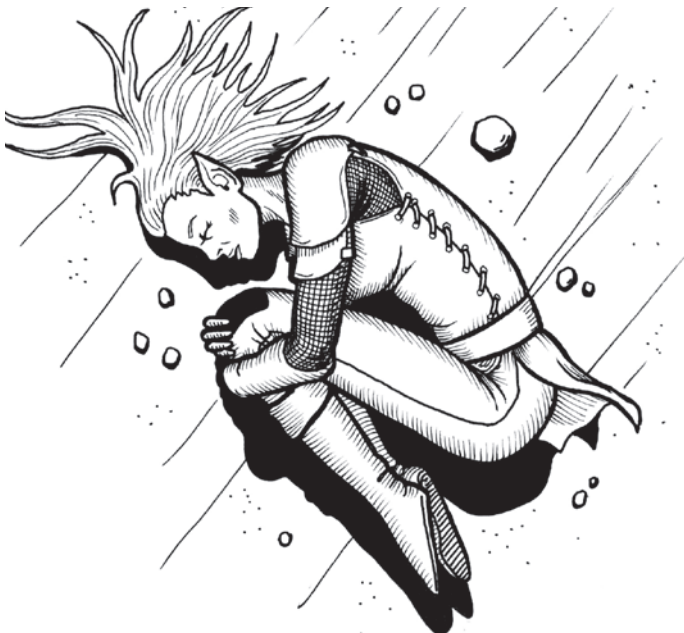
This passage abruptly ends in a 10' diameter hole. A single rope dangles into the darkness, allowing a character to climb down to area 18 below. Again, this hole sends anything or anyone to a bottomless grave. The Reflex DC to save oneself is 10 thanks to the rope.

9. *Maugard's finale*

The size of this chamber is 20' X 40'. It was once the mess hall of the miners who occasionally slept at the mine. Outside of this barricaded chamber are five ravenous ghouls who claw determinedly at the apparently thick wooden door.

Ghouls (5): Init +1; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

If the adventurers clear the ghouls from the chamber where Maugard and his fellow brigands were holed up, they are unable to gain immediate entry. They need to force the door open (DC 15 Strength check) to succeed.



Sadly (or not), Maugard's bite wound became infected and in the early hours of the morning he succumbed, becoming a ravenous ghoul. He easily slew the two brigands within but Alexis managed to cut the un-dead bandit down, as his toxic bite had no affect on the elf. Her sanity, however, has fled and she babbles incoherently until sufficiently rested and healed. Alexis lies curled in a foetal position in the southwest corner of the room behind a 5' square crate.

If a PC has died, Alexis may be used as a replacement by having the player roll up a 4th level elf.

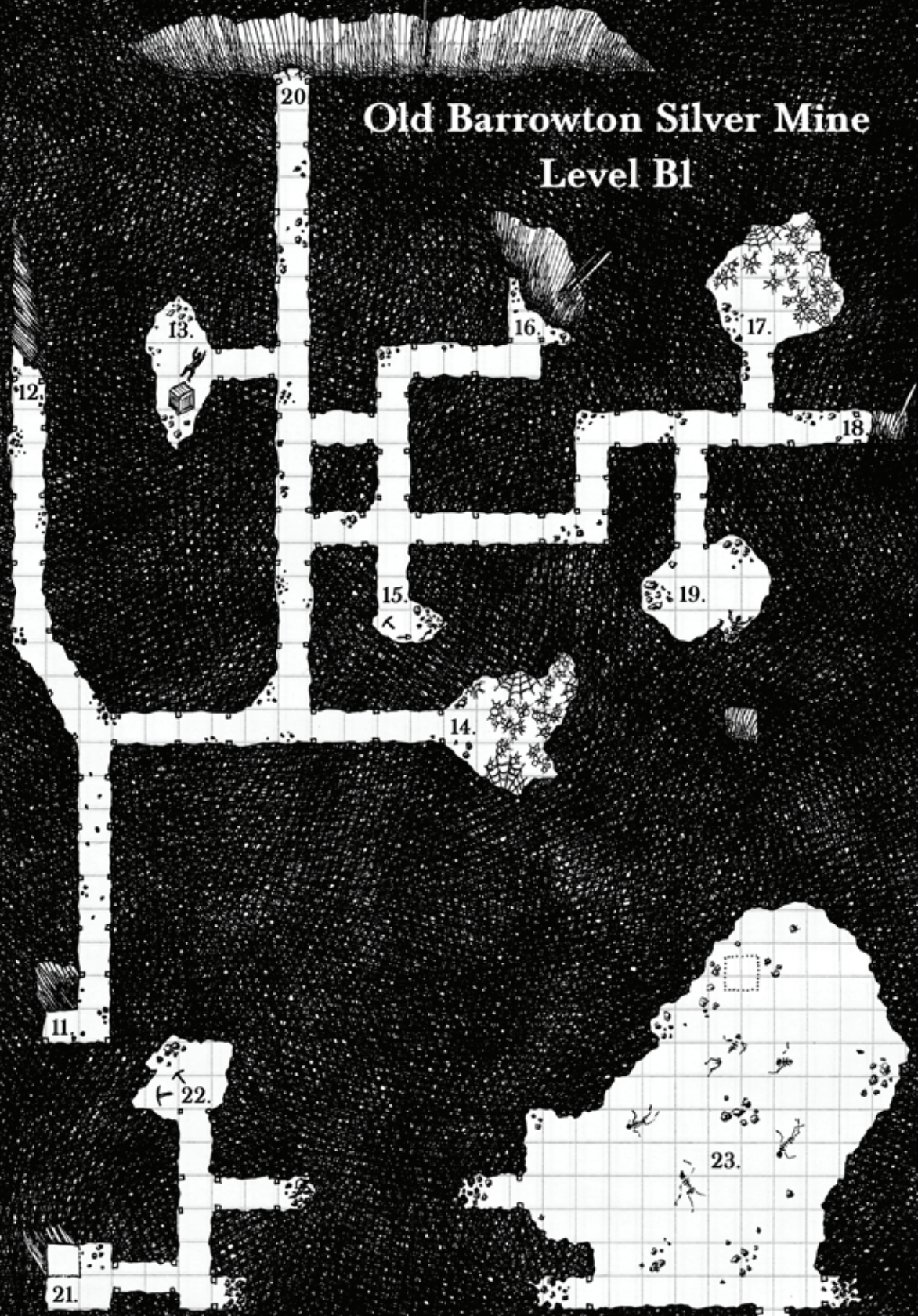
The crate and three others like it are the *Endfast* meal stolen from Barrowton. There are only four present. They have not been opened. PCs who investigate the contents find gruesome desiccated and dismembered bodies. The parts are not clearly identifiable as human but a DC 15 Intelligence check will confirm the cannibalistic nature of the feast.

10. *The chasm*

An immense opening, measuring 160' wide and 10' to 20' across, marks the extent that the mine reached in its hay day. Ropes with buckets, harnesses and various suspended mining tools dangle over the large, dark opening. A cool draft wafts from the bottomless pit.

This is the location the Arachnaefiend emerged those many years ago, forcing the miners to abandon the silver in favour of their lives.

Old Barrowton Silver Mine Level B1



Old Barrowton Silver Mine Level B2

Level B1

11. Lift chamber 2

The lift mechanism from area 2 can be stopped at this level here. The 20' X 20' chamber is bare, save for the lift in the northwest corner. The same rules apply for the lift mechanism here as it did in area 2. If the lift falls to area 21 from here the distance is only 20', causing 2d6 points of falling damage.

12. Fissure 2

The passage north from the lift chamber ends at the fissure from area 6 above. PCs capable of climbing could scale the fissure back into area 6.

13. Veins of silver

This roughly fashioned 20' X 40' chamber is unremarkable in low light. But if a strong light source is directed at the western wall, veins of solid silver ore are visible. The fifth *Endfast* crate is here. When PCs first enter this chamber, two ghouls are gnawing on the remains of a bandit. They attack immediately.

Ghouls (2): Init +1; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

The bandit has little of obvious value. 5 gp can be found in his belt pouch and he also wears an intricately carved platinum ring. A family heirloom, the ring appears to be in the shape of a turtle and could fetch around 300 gp from the right buyer or perhaps an even greater reward from a family member. A beaten up longsword lies nearby.

14. Egg chamber

This oddly shaped 30' X 30' chamber seems to be unnaturally dark, even with the use of magical or non-magical light. Leathery spheres the size of melons are webbed to the floor, walls and ceiling of this chamber. They emanate a chilling, dark energy. There are over forty of them.

When disturbed from its deep lair those many years ago, the Arachnaefiend proceeded to slaughter the miners. After it had its fill and the lucky amongst the miners fled, the Arachnaefiend spawned these foul, dormant eggs. These eggs will remain dormant until fertilised by a male of the fiendish species.

This is unlikely to occur anytime soon. Demon eggs are quite rare and could sell for over 500 gp each.



If interfered with at all, the eggs emit a high-pitched, subsonic whine that summons the Arachnaefiend from the depths. Only elves can hear the sound, so if there are no elves, the only way PCs can know something is amiss is if they notice the eggs vibrating (DC 15 Intelligence check).

It takes the creature 10 rounds to reach the chamber. If the eggs have been harmed in any form, she hunts those responsible. Judges need to determine where the best place for the creature to attack is. If the PCs leave the eggs unmolested there is still no guarantee that she won't hunt them for sport anyway.

Arachnaefiend (Type I Demon): Init +0; Atk Claws x2 +6 melee (1d8+6) and Bite +7 melee (1d8+7 + poison DC15 Fort or 1d8 stamina); AC 16; HD 4d8+8; hp 30; MV 30, Climb 30'; Act 3d20; SP Demon traits, Poisonous bite, Spider web; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +6; AL C.

The Arachnaefiend attacks firstly with its claws. If it scores two successful claw attacks on the same opponent, it utilizes its bite attack. The Arachnaefiend bite injects a virulent toxin that rots the victim from within. Only magical healing can restore someone poisoned by the Arachnaefiend.

Once every 5 rounds, the Arachnaefiend can hurl a woven net of its silk at opponents occupying a 10' area. The attack functions the same as the spell *Spider Web* (DCC RPG rulebook pg. 196). At will, the Arachnaefiend can ignite the webs causing 1d6+1 damage to anyone trapped within – this also frees them.

As a Type I Demon, the Arachnaefiend has the following traits common to its kind: Infravision, darkness (+4 check), half damage from fire, critical threat 20. Due to its long stay on this plane, the Arachnaefiend has lost its resistance to normal weapons and takes full damage from them.

The Arachnaefiend can fight standing on ceilings and walls as easily as it does the ground. When hunting prey, the fiendish spider likes to hurl its webs from above before dropping down to finish its intended victim.



15. *New tunnel*

This chamber appears to have been the start of a new tunnel. Rocks and various tools lie abandoned on the floor.

Miners were working here when the Arachnaefiend emerged those many years ago. The skeletal remains of an arm lays partially buried in the northeast corner.

16. *The open mine 2*

The ropes and pit from area 7 continues through this opening.

17. *Egg chamber 2*

This area is similar to area 14, although there are only twenty-two eggs here.

18. *The hole 2*

The hole from area 8 continues down through here.

19. *Collapsed passage*

This chamber is approximately 20' X 30' in size. On the southern wall is a collapsed tunnel that once led to the shaft that descends into area 23. A skeleton is half buried in the rubble with its upper torso protruding from the collapse. If excavated, the skeleton has a pouch containing 1d10 x 10 gp worth of silver ore.

20. *The chasm 2*

The passage opens up to the chasm from area 10.

Level B2

21. *Lift chamber 3*

The bottom level of the lift mechanism is located in this 20' X 20' chamber. A tunnel exits to the east.

22. *Shelter*

This 20' X 30' chamber has not been used since the mine was abandoned. It is a safe place for PCs to rest. It is only accessible via the lift shaft. The tunnels leading into to the rest of B2 have collapsed.

23. *Ghoul dump*

Accessible only through the shaft in area 4, this spacious chamber has been used by the people of Barrowton as a dumping site for citizens who devolved into ravenous, un-dead ghouls. When feeling magnanimous, Lucian dumps *leftovers* down to the ghouls and takes credit for caring for the unfortunate, *feral* villagers. There are still seven ghouls trapped within if PCs are brave/foolish enough to descend.



Ghouls (7): Init +1; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

Within this vast chamber, the following things can be found that may reveal a disturbing origin for these creatures. A gnawed upon peg leg is located amongst the filth. A discarded, shredded floral nightgown is also crumpled on the ground in the room. Judge's can include any other Barrowton possessions including toys and weaponry in their description of this area.

There are scattered skeletons of human and ghoul alike down here. When the ghouls grew hungry enough, they devoured their own.

If the PCs search the cavern thoroughly, the following treasure can be found: a mouldy backpack containing a still sealed scroll case. Within are three clerical scrolls of *Cure Paralysis*. One of the seven ghouls wears a magical ring – it is a *Ring of Wilfulness* and whilst worn, the wearer is imbued with +2 to all Will saves.

The road back.

See the random encounter chart from (*The Road to the Mines*).

The hidden churchyard

If the PCs have not yet discovered the abandoned churchyard, the overgrown path back is an opportune way for judges to lead them to the rear entrance of the church. If the PCs navigate very carefully, they can follow their trail back and miss this area completely. This makes them becoming a meal much easier for Lucian. Unless they state otherwise, assume they come across the churchyard.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The path ahead looks unfamiliar. It's almost as if you have veered completely off-course. As you push through some foliage, you find yourself in a clearing that you must have missed when you left Barrowton. Ahead of you lies a small graveyard and what appears to be a long-abandoned church. The church appears to have once been dedicated to Trisdeus the Tri-God but it now sits decayed and overgrown.

This is also the location paralyzed PC and traveller alike are buried alive to die horrific, suffocating deaths. If the PCs investigate the graveyard, they find that most graves have been disinterred and recently at that. It appears someone has systematically dug up all of the graves. Headstones indicating the graveyard has not been used in half a century have fresh earth on them, as though the deceased have only recently passed. The following inscriptions can be found on the crumbling headstones, if the PCs bother looking.

Roll	Inscription
1	Maree Smyth: Taken too soon. Leaves behind son Duke. May Trisdeus bless her and keep her.
2	Danik Jones: Lost an argument to a pack of wolves. May what was found rest in pieces.
3	Cyril Condorsi: Friend to many, but not to the cutthroat who wanted his silver claim. May the justice of Trisdeus find the knave.
4	(First name obscured) Bargus: Beloved wife. May she rest without further attempts by her husband to revive her.
5	Territon Frienricksen: A boy of 9 who learnt the hard way that he couldn't fly. Missed dearly by his parents.
6	(Four names have been crossed out and written over in what appears to be chalk) Tristan/Manse/Deborah/Olvar/Necroniar: Came to visit stayed but awhile. Never left. Gave so much for so many. Bless <i>The Preserver</i> .

There are many older headstones but the writing on them has deteriorated making them illegible. Judges are encouraged to add names known to the PCs. Perhaps an NPC encountered in a previous adventure has since run afoul of the residents of Barrowton.

The church

The church is a single story affair, resembling many small country town churches. Constructed completely of wood, what once must have been an attractive place of worship now sits rotting and covered in unkempt vines and flora.

Gaining access to the interior is not difficult. Any attempt to open the door results in it disintegrating on the spot. Inside, the PCs are immediately confronted by the gruesome sight of a long dead cleric hanging from the neck and swinging in the breeze that blows through the holes in the walls and roof. These are the mortal remains of Judge Zachariah. The missing planks and shingles also allow daylight to filter into the musty church.

Upon the PCs' entry, a cool breeze springs up from the floor beneath the hanging cleric, swirling around the church until it coalesces into the translucent shape of a man. The being stands before the group, determining which adventurer looks sturdy enough to complete its last mission. It then violently hurtles itself at the PC it chooses (determine randomly). The ghost continues to harass the PCs until it succeeds in 'occupying' one of them or is reduced to zero hit points, in which case it reappears 1d12 hours later, still confined to the church.

Ghost of Judge Zachariah: Init +2; Atk special (see below); AC 10; HD 2d12; hp 20; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons, banshee scream (1d4 sonic damage DC 12 Fort to resist), possession (+6 melee DC 12 Will save to resist); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

A possessed character relives Zachariah's terrible death. Judges should describe the scenes mentioned in the *The Fate of Barrowton* to the possessed character's player as if their character were living the events of Zachariah's demise.

During this time, the PC falls prone on the floor, occasionally shaking spasmodically. When the vision ends, the PC awakens. The PC is now host to the spirit of Judge Zachariah. PCs making DC 10 Intelligence check notice the affected PC has piercing blue eyes now. At present the spirit is passively watching the goings on through the PC's eyes but at the first sight of Lucian or the well, he takes over the PC's body. If the PCs near the well, the possessed character starts to insist they investigate the well. Zachariah even attempts to climb down into the well to find the source of the contamination. If the possessed character sees Lucian, Zachariah will launch an immediate attack against the village elder, which could result in a difficult end battle. One benefit of being controlled by the ghost, however, is complete immunity to ghoul paralysis.

Either judges can run the possessed character or give the player of the possessed character Judge Zachariah's abilities – including spellcasting.

Ghost of Judge Zachariah Character Possession (Cleric 5th level): Init +2; Atk PC's weapon +3 melee; AC PC's; HD 5d8; hp 39 or PC's if better; MV PC's; Act 1d20; SP Clerical Spells (Spell check d20+5); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; AL L.

Spells

1st level: *Blessing, Detect Magic, Paralysis, Protection from Evil, Resist Cold or Heat, Word of Command*; 2nd level: *Binding, Cure Paralysis, Neutralize Poison/Disease, Restore Vitality, Wood Wyrding*; 3rd level: *Exorcise, Spiritual Weapon*



Uncertain fates

There are several ways to conclude this adventure, depending on the actions and suspicions of the PCs and the whim of the judge. Following are some likely conclusions but judges are free to shape the end of the adventure to better suit their group.

Returning the Feast

If the PCs return the feast in a relatively unscathed manner, Lucian considers the adventurers too formidable to openly attack. When the PCs enter the village, Lucian awaits for them on the podium near the well, surrounded by villagers. If they have Alexis with them, Constable Farkas steps forward demanding she be turned over to face the village's justice.

Lucian is all smiles and he warmly thanks the PCs for their aid. He asks the PCs to tell their heroic tale, listening carefully for any indication that the PCs know the true nature of the village or the contents of the crates. If he is satisfied that the PCs are oblivious to their predicament, he thanks them by presenting them with a bag containing 5d20 gp and a finely crafted gold ring valued 2d4 gp. He will insist the ring is magical but unless the judge decides to award the PCs with a magical ring, this one is not. Lucian bids the PCs farewell and allows them to leave the village. Once they are gone, he unleashes his ghoulish hounds (if they still live) from one of the abandoned houses. He then sends 2d10 villagers off after them to either kill them or paralyze them for burial. Characters may take refuge in some outlying abandoned houses to escape being hunted (see *Night of the Living Ghouls*).

If the PCs discovered the truth behind life in Barrowton and/or a PC is possessed by Judge Zachariah and starts a fight and/or if they failed to bring back the village's feast, Lucian and the villagers decide the PCs make fine substitutes for their lost feast. They emerge from their homes and gather in the town centre to 'greet' the PCs. PCs easily notice the inhuman hunger in the villagers' eyes as a group of 3d10 villagers attempt to circle the party. Lucian announces from the town podium that whilst the meat is fresher than they like, *The Preserver* has provided the PCs for their meal. Some villagers run and hide or gather to watch any combat that occurs. If commanded to attack by Lucian, an additional 2d4 villagers join the attack. Judges should mention that some of the attackers are children. The potential for TPK during this battle should be high.

If the judge is feeling particularly generous, Justinian Irvin, the ranger from the woods, might charge in to battle by their side. The players must fight or flee (see *Night of the Living Ghouls*).

Lucian only engages the party from behind the mob. Since the villagers have un-dead immunities, he will cast *Choking cloud* amongst his own people knowing they will be unaffected – after all, they don't need to breathe. As the battle intensifies, Lucian withdraws up the hill to his manor. He will bark commands to the villagers before entering his home to commune with *The Preserver* (see *The home of Lucian Bargus*).

If he is slain, as a dying action he hurls himself down the well. A bolt of lightning then strikes the well causing 5d6 damage to anyone within 10' of the well (DC 15 Reflex for half). The upper well is destroyed (see *Rise of Scrimage the Preserver*).

Night of the Living Ghouls

If the PCs decide discretion is the greater part of valour and take flight (which is probably their wisest course of action), judges should use the ghoulish villagers to corral the PCs into a vacant building. Here the PCs can fend off an onslaught of ghouls by barricading windows and doors with furniture or conveniently available hammers and nails (the owner of the house was apparently a carpenter). The villagers attempt to reach into any available 'gaps' to claw and paralyze the PCs. Player characters can climb to the loft if the doors are breached and so on. Judges are encouraged to make this scenario as suspenseful or action-packed as they like.

Eventually, after a loss of 3d6 villagers or if a stalemate is reached, Lucian decides to torch the building. It takes 2d4 minutes for a villager to arrive with a lit torch. Once there, it takes 1d6 rounds for the torchbearer to set the building alight. When lit it only takes another 1d6 rounds till flames and smoke begin to affect the PCs. Judges are encouraged to allow players to come up with means of escape. If they decide to wait till the building is well and truly burning before making their escape, they will need to make DC 12 Reflex saves to avoid catching fire (see *DCC RPG rulebook* pg. 96).

Whether the PCs exit the building fighting or sneak away covertly, they will see Lucian standing on the porch of his manor smiling, before turning and entering the building.

Ghoulish hounds (3)

Init +5; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d6 plus paralyzation); AC 14; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; HD 2d6, HP 10 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

Living ghouls of Barrowton (32)

Init +2; Atk claw +1 melee (1d4 plus DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 12; HD 2d6, HP 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

Carmina

Init +5; Atk blackjack d7+1 melee (1d3+1) or claw +5 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; HD 5d10, HP 34; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

Desnara

Init +0; Atk Dagger +3 melee (1d4+1) or claw +3 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; HD 4D6, HP 18; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Backstab +8, Sneak Silently +8, Hide in shadows +7, un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

Katarina Pottsman

Init +1; Atk butcher's knife +3 melee (1d4+1) or claw +1 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 13; HD 3d6, HP 12; MV 30'; Act 1d20, Crit Die/Table: 1d14/II; SP Backstab +7, Sneak Silently +8, Hide in shadows +6, un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

Gear: Leather apron, butcher's knife.

Constable Farkas

Init +1; Atk club d4+1 melee (1d4-1) or claw +1 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; HD 2d12, HP 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

Gear: Padded armor, club.

Lucian Bargus (5th Lvl Living Ghoul Necromancer): Init -1; Atk dagger +3 melee (1d4+1) or claw +3 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 9; HD 5d4, HP 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100', necromantic affinity, spellcasting (+7 spell checks); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

Spells

1st level: *Chill touch*, *Choking cloud*, *Color spray*, *Invoke patron*, *Spider climb*; 2nd level: *Arcane affinity*, *Ray of enfeeblement*, *Scorching ray*; 3rd level: *Animate dead*

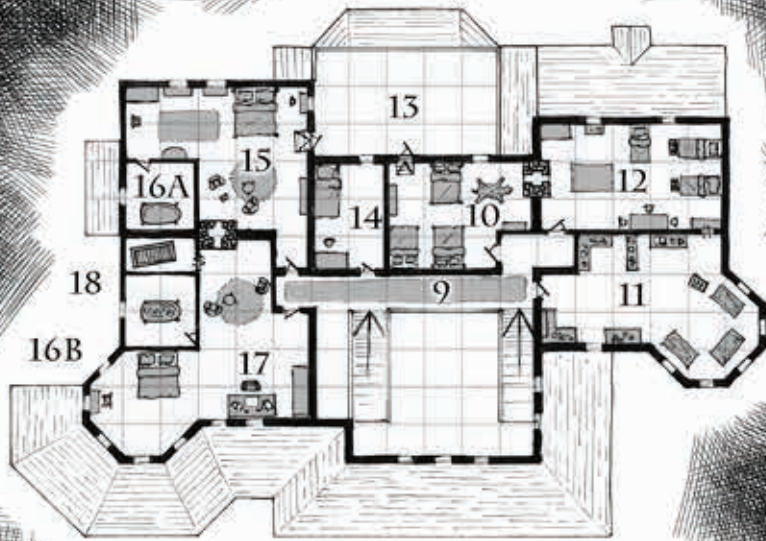
Gear: Key ring, Spellbook (spells as above), Silver amulet of *The Preserver* (100 gp value).



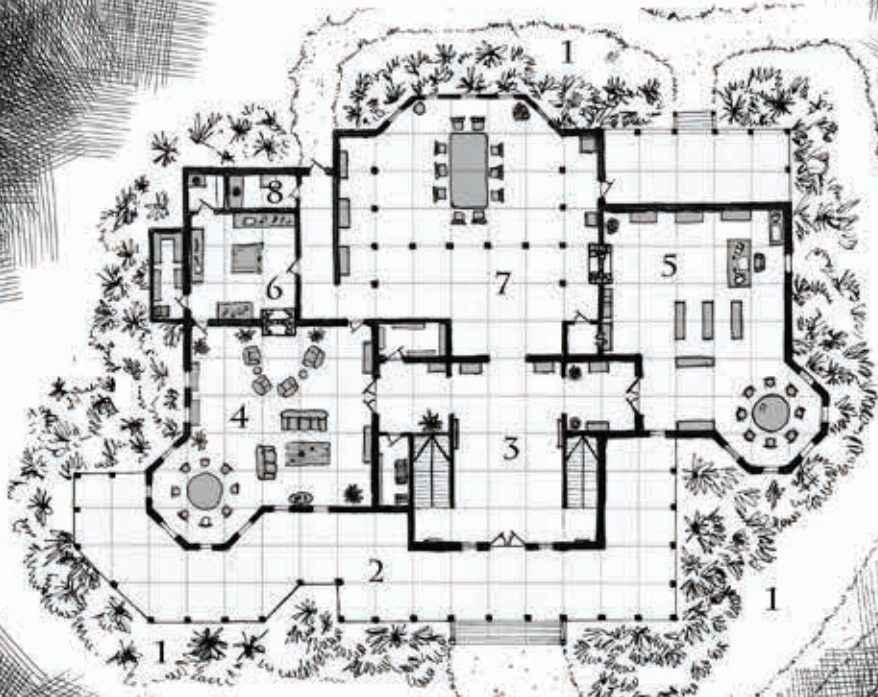
BARGUS MANOR



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



1 SQUARE
EQUALS 5 FEET

The home of Lucian Bargus

At some point during the adventure, the PCs may wish to investigate Bargus Manor. This manor house is a little more grandiose than the other village homes. It has two stories and has a wide porch leading to a sturdy looking front door.

1. Garden

Lucian Bargus has maintained a neat little garden around his home. The garden is 5' wide around the house with breaks only for the front and rear entrances. Purple, fragrant flowers grow from thorny bushes in the garden beds.

The flowers are actually vampiric blood lilies, created by Lucian and his necromantic magic to add security to his home. On Lucian's command, thorned vines lash out up to 5' from the garden bed. He activates the blood lilies each evening when he retires or during the day, if he is particularly suspicious that his possessions are at risk. Otherwise the plants lie dormant. If pursued by the PCs to his home they are immediately animated.

Blood Lilies (1 per 5' square around house): Init +0; Atk Thorny lash +0 melee (1d3); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP Ensnare, Blood drain; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; AL N.

Blood lilies are unique vampiric plant hybrids, a ghastly combination of botany and necromancy. They appear as bushy vines covered with purple lily-like flowers. These flowers deepen to dark red when the plant feeds. Remember that the plants can lash out 5' from its location, effectively letting up to 3 plants attack an individual character.



Ensnare: Any character within 5' of a blood lily bush can be ensnared in the lashing vines of the vampiric plant. A DC 15 Reflex save enables a character to leap free and out of range of the lashing vines. Those who fail this initial save are quickly wrapped in vines and leaves and are then vulnerable to the plant's blood drain power. An ensnared character suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and -4 penalty to agility. A DC 15 Strength check will enable a character to tear free from the vines but they will suffer 1d6 points of damage doing so.

Blood drain: The barbs of the leaves and vines of the blood lilies suck the blood of an ensnared victim. The victim suffers 1d3 Stamina points every round until they are freed. If drained to zero Stamina, the victim's lifeless corpse is dragged beneath the soil to act as fertilizer for the plants roots.

2. Porch

The porch is 10' wide and 80' across, running almost the width of the front of the manor. It is constructed of wood and leads to a pair of impressive wooden doors. The doors are always kept locked, even when the manor is occupied, and Lucian keeps the key with him at all times.

If the PCs knock upon the door, Lucian's servant, Carmina, opens the door to greet them. She does nothing to disclose any of her master's business. If Lucian is home, she asks the PCs to wait in the parlour whilst she retrieves him. If he is away, she tells them so and asks them to leave.

3. Entry hall

The entry hall is 25' across and 25' deep. Archways are positioned to the east, west and north leading deeper into the manor. The chamber rises 35' to a sturdy raked ceiling.

PCs (particularly thieves) should note the opulent decorations and finely carved wooden features of the walls and stairs. Carved murals depict a giant, cloaked being standing over a joyous crowd of people. Food rains from the bony fingers of the giant figure. The murals appear to be much newer than the walls they adorn.

On the east and west walls, just inside the entrance doors, are two beautifully crafted wooden staircases that ascend to the first floor. From the entry hall, PCs can see there is an open landing running above the northern archway.

4. *Parlour*

This 25' X 25' chamber is Lucian's entertaining room. Guests and villagers who wish to meet with the town elder usually do so in this luxurious room. This is where Lucian takes the PCs to seek their help. A circular bay window 10' in diameter dominates the south-western corner of the room. Cushioned chairs are arranged before a large marble fireplace. A portrait of Lucian sits above the fireplace. In the painting he appears more vibrant and less gaunt. If asked, he claims the painting is of his father.

Carmina ushers the PCs into this room if they come calling independently of Lucian. Whether invited or visiting on their own volition, she presents them with goblets of wine. It is untainted wine of excellent vintage – a wine merchant decided to accept the villagers' invitation to a celebratory feast.

5. *Library*

This is a lovingly cared for library. Bookshelves line the walls and stand independently taking up most of the space in this 25' X 30' room. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The south-eastern corner of the room features a circular bay window that looks over the town below. A round reading table sits within this space. An expensive looking hardwood desk is positioned in the north-east corner of the room. On it is Lucian's town ledger and his writing implements. The ledger deals with loans and meat sales amongst the villagers. In a locked drawer is a leather bound book entitled *Revelations of The Preserver*. It is Lucian's attempt to create a holy book on his newfound faith. The key to the drawer can be found on Lucian's key ring or it can be picked, DC 15.

The book deals with immortality and sacrifice. It is evasive on the cannibalistic nature of the feast but it does refer to followers feasting on the sacrifice of the chosen. The preface to the book outlines how *The Preserver* first spoke to Lucian whilst he was submerged in his bath (area 16a). His communions with *The Preserver* all seem to have taken place in the bath.

On the shelves are books dedicated to necromancy and other schools of magic. There is double the number of necromancy books than those of other schools. Spellbooks from travelling wizards also line some the shelves. Judges can include spells of their choice if a PC decides to permanently borrow from Lucian's library.

Amongst Lucian's priceless collection of books, are many, many journals written by travellers. Should any PC decide to peruse these journals, they notice they all conclude with the writer deciding to visit Barrowton for some reason or another, including being invited by a 'youth' named Jed. The dates in the journals date from the current year back 40 to 45 years ago.

Because of the nature of these particular books, Lucian does not invite strangers into his library. He is incensed if he discovers PCs here and it is likely he will decide the PCs are good enough for the table when the time comes. If asked about the journals or spellbooks, Lucian claims he is a collector and purchases journals and spellbooks from adventurers, like his father did before him.

6. *Kitchen*

A functional kitchen sits in this 15' X 15' room. A tidy stovetop oven dominates the south wall. A workbench sits along the north wall of the room and above that hangs pots, pans and cooking utensils. Bubbling on the stove is a large pot of meaty broth. There are doors to the north, south, east and west. To the west is a walk in pantry and storage room. A 5' X 5' privy is accessible from the kitchen.

Amongst the utensils are a finely crafted set of knives and cleavers. They are beautifully crafted and could sell for 100 gp.

Carmina is usually present in the kitchen during the day. If the PCs enter the kitchen uninvited, she is sharpening a particularly brutal looking cleaver and singing a song to herself with glee.

*Chop goes the cleaver,
Chop! Chop! Chop!
Off go the hands,
And the feet too lop!
The stranger looks around
But is beaten by a blow,
Then into the oven,
The meaty bits will go!*

If confronted about the bizarre lyrics, she claims it's a harmless folk song her parents taught her. She says nothing further about it and demands the PCs leave her kitchen, waving her cleaver as she does so.

7. *Dining hall*

This 35' X 30' room is an elegantly decked out dining hall. In the centre of the room a long wide dining table sits. There are 10 seats in all around the table, which is decked out with plates and fine silverware. Lucian likes to host dinner parties for the villagers with mystery meat dishes that follow the disappearances of strangers in town.

A bay window dominates the north wall, looking at the wooded mountains that rise around the valley. A door leads to an outdoor balcony situated on the north-east corner of the manor.

8. *Privy*

This is a washroom for guests and the servants.

9. *Landing*

The grand stairs from the entry hall rise twelve and a half feet to an open landing 5' wide that runs east and west 35'. At the western end it branches south 15'.

10. *Guest bedroom 1*

This is a 20' X 15' guest bedroom. There are three four-poster beds within, two along the southern wall and one against the north. A bearskin rug sits near the entrance before a fireplace on the east wall. A door opens to the north, revealing an upper balcony that overlooks the northern rises and woods.

The room appears to have housed many visitors in its time. It is neat, however, and would probably make for a nice sleep. Or so many guests have thought.

PCs spending some time searching this room find the following: under the bearskin rug there are scratch marks gouged across the timber floor towards the door. A torn fingernail protrudes ominously from one of the scratches.

11. *Laboratory*

This large room is Lucian's laboratory. It is always kept locked. Lucian has the only key but the lock can also be picked DC 20.

It is dark at most times due to heavy shutters blocking daylight from entering. The walls are lined with tables and benches of all sizes. Mortars and pestles, flasks and funnels are neatly arranged along the tabletops. Upon one of the tables is a scroll with the spell *Animate Dead*.

There is also a journal outlining Lucian's experiments on the source of the villagers' longevity. Anyone reading the journal realises: Lucian is brilliant but quite insane at the same time.

In a 10' alcove in the south-eastern section of the lab are three tables with their contents covered by white sheets. Beneath the sheets are the corpses of villagers that Lucian decided needed experimentation. Two of the corpses are lifeless. The third is a ravenous ghoul who plays possum until a PC moves close enough to take a bite out of. He is strapped down but these straps break after 3 rounds of him awakening. If the PCs are here covertly, the snarls of the ghoul attract anyone else in the house.



Ghoul: Init +1; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d4 plus DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours) or claw +1 melee (dmg 1d3); AC 12 (8 whilst strapped down); HD 2d6, HP 10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

In the northeast corner of the room a sliding panel hides a secret door into room 12.

12. *Guest bedroom 2*

This 25' X 15' room contains three single beds. Lucian uses this room to house guests he wants to study in his lab. He usually drugs his chosen subject before dragging them through the secret door in the southeast corner.

13. *Upper balcony*

An outdoor balcony 25' X 15' in area is situated at the rear of the house. From the west of the balcony, the top of the hidden church (area 10 in the village map) can be seen. Anyone who sees the church must make a DC 15 Will save or be overcome with a feeling of foreboding as the ghostly eyes of Zachariah has looked upon that PC. This only occurs if the ghost of Judge Zachariah has not yet been encountered.

14. *Servants quarters*

Carmina's 10' X 15' quarters are neat and functional. The only furnishings in this room are a single bed and a dressing table.

15. *Lady Bargus's quarters*

A layer of dust has settled over this 25' X 20' L-shaped bedroom. The feminine décor combined with the magnificently carved four-poster bed, can leave no mistake that this chamber once belonged to the lady of the house. Above the fireplace on the south wall is a portrait of both Lucian and his late wife. She was an exquisite beauty. A door on the east wall exits to the balcony.

16a. *Bathroom*

This 10' X 10' bathroom is dusty and unused. There is a distinct feminine feel about this chamber.

16b. *Communion bathroom*

A large central tub dominates this 10' X 10' bathroom. The tub hasn't been emptied in decades and the smell in here is nauseating. A layer of scum floats on the surface of the salty, stagnant bath soup.

This chamber is a holy room for Lucian. The water, drawn from the well almost half a century ago is, according to Lucian, holy water of *The Preserver*. When submerged in the bath, Lucian receives visions from Scrimage.

PC's reckless or insane enough to submerge themselves in the bath see the following:

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The bathwater is thick and slimy. As you submerge your head beneath the surface of the brackish mix, a pain suddenly pierces your brain. You try to sit upright but you cannot move. Panicking, you open your eyes and to your surprise the water around you is clear and fresh. You are in an underwater tunnel and a bright light shines from ahead. Again, you try to move in the hope of reaching the light but you cannot.

The PC who has braved the bath is now seeing through Scrimage's eyes. But unlike Lucian, the PC needs to breath and soon starts to drown. Unfortunately, the PC is paralyzed, so the normal indicators of drowning, such as struggling and screaming are absent. If no one pulls the PC from the bath, the following drowning rules apply.

A character can hold his breath for double his Stamina score. After this time the PC must make a DC 10 Fortitude save every round with an accumulative -1 penalty. When the PC fails this save, they have started to drown. Falling unconscious beneath the water. If the PC remains under the water for greater than their level in rounds, they drown and come back as a ghoul in 1d4 rounds.

The paralysis wears off after the character is removed from the tub.



17. *Lucian's quarters*

This is Elder Lucian Bargus's bedchamber. It is roughly 30' X 25' in size. It is finely decorated with hand carved wooden furniture. Silver decorations, hand mirrors and such reveal further the wealth this man has. A circular bay window, 10' in diameter dominates the south-western corner of this chamber. It overlooks Barrowton.

If Lucian is pursued by the PCs, this is the chamber where they find him. Having tried to consult Scrimage, he is saturated from leaping into his bath. The PCs invading his home have drawn him from the bath. He feebly barricades the door (DC 15 Strength check to open) and prepares to unleash his offensive spells. He casts *Spider climb* in preparation to flee through the windows when the player characters start to break in. He then attempts to invoke *The Preserver* to unleash his mind blast against the party (see *New Patron: Scrimage the Preserver*). Carmina attempts to flank the player characters during combat.

If facing defeat, Lucian hurls himself out of the window, clammers down the wall and races to the village well. PCs in pursuit see Lucian throw himself down the well.

A bolt of lightning strikes the well at this point, shattering the raised stone structure of the well. Any character within 10' of the well suffers 5d6 damage DC 15 Reflex for half (see *The Rise of Scrimage the Preserver*).

If the player characters slay Lucian, the house shudders as lightning strikes the well in the centre of town.

Lucian Bargus (5th Lvl Living Ghoul Necromancer): Init -1; Atk dagger +3 melee (1d4+1) or claw +3 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 9; HD 5d4, HP 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100', necromantic affinity, spellcasting (+7 spell checks); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.

Spells

1st level: *Chill touch*, *Choking cloud*, *Color spray*, *Invoke patron*, *Spider climb*; 2nd level: *Arcane affinity*, *Ray of enfeeblement*, *Scorching ray*; 3rd level: *Animate dead*

Gear: Key ring, Spellbook (spells as above), Silver amulet of *The Preserver* (100 gp value).

Carmina

Init +5; Atk blackjack d7+1 melee (1d3+1) or claw +5 melee (1d4 plus paralyzation DC 12 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours); AC 10; HD 5d10, HP 34; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP un-dead traits (75% immunity to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100'; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

In a locked coffer beneath Lucian's bed is the magical dagger, *Skinner*. It is a vile artefact but also a useful weapon for the chaotic wielder or budding furrier (see below). The key is with Lucian on his key ring. The pick lock DC is 20.



Skinner

Physical Description

Skinner is a magical dagger, crafted by someone with a dark soul. The blade of the dagger is 8" long and cruelly curved. The grip curves in the opposite direction, giving the weapon a slight 'S' shape. The grip itself is bound in the skin of a slain child. When gripped by a lawful being, the skin bleeds the innocent blood of the child murdered for its creation.

Magical Properties

+2 to attack and damage.

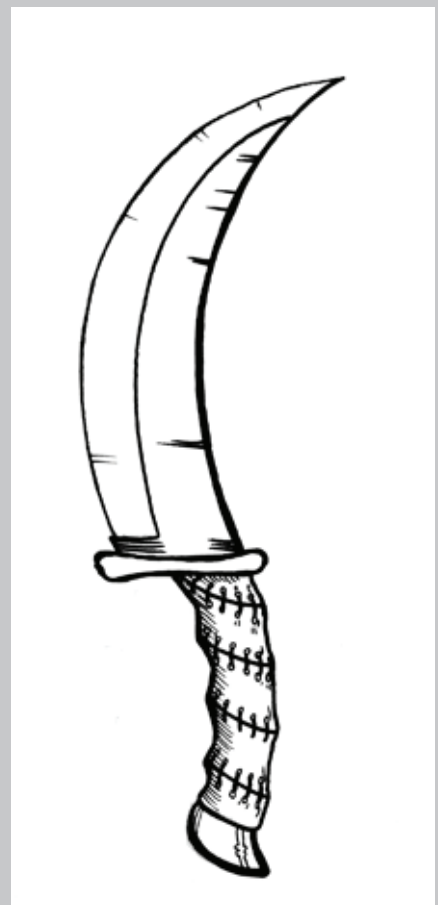
Characters of chaotic alignment only can wield *Skinner*. If a Lawful character unsheathes *Skinner*, the grip commences bleeding profusely. Blood spatters on the ground and over the character until sheathed and put away. Whilst there are no other ill-effects, lawful PCs may find being spattered by child's blood uncomfortable at best.

Bane

When wielded against humans, on critical hits, *Skinner* deals an additional 1d10 damage, stripping 1d4 square inches of skin from the inflicted wound. These wounds continue to bleed causing a further 1 hp of damage (cumulative) per round until magically healed. For example, three critical hits will result in 3 hp of damage per round from bleeding. To add to the injury, if not magically healed within 5 rounds, the victim loses 1 Personality point and then an additional point every 5 rounds due to the horrible scarring and loss of confidence the wound causes.

Special Purpose

Skinner can strip a dead creature or person's skin in 2d10 rounds. The wielder finds they are master skinners when attempting to skin something with *Skinner*.



18. *Secret study*

This 5' X 10' concealed room contains a pine box. A terrified traveller is locked within. He is bound and gagged in the box. If rescued, he informs the PCs his name is Bran and the last thing he remembers was travelling the road from Montaigne. He has a bump on the back of his head where an assailant rendered him unconscious.

He inquires about his companions he travelled with. He is unaware they have already been buried in the cemetery. Whilst not detailed in this adventure, judges may wish to allow the PCs to rescue Bran's companions.

Dealing with The Preserver

PCs who have pieced together the cause of the Barrowton curse need to purge the well's unearthly occupant in order to 'cure' the village. There are some serious obstacles to achieving this end.

The first obstacle is Scrimage the Preserver himself. Scrimage is more than just a rotting corpse in a well. His psionic powers enable him to sense living beings in Barrowton and probe their thoughts.

He is also telepathically linked to Lucian Bargus when Lucian is submerged in his bathtub. The link with Lucian has created a mystical bond between the two and should Lucian die, his shared consciousness will enter Scrimage, empowering him to rise.

Until Lucian is slain, Scrimage is immobile. PCs must find a way to remove him from the well. Characters willing to risk it all can easily be lowered into the well and locate the paralyzed ghoul. The PC will be subject to a barrage of Scrimage's mental blasts during the process. Another, less dangerous approach would be to dredge the well with a grappling hook. Judges should allow their players to come up with their own ingenious methods to pull the un-dead patron free.

If the PCs manage to draw Scrimage from the well without Lucian being destroyed, the ghoulish patron can only lie in the mud launching mental blasts to defend himself until the characters hack him to pieces.

If Lucian is free, he will rush to his patron's aid, calling for the villagers to assist (see villagers statistics in *Night of the Living Ghouls*).

The rise of Scrimage the Preserver

If Lucian dies and his essence reaches Scrimage, a bolt of lightning strikes down from the heavens, levelling the above ground structure of the well. Anyone within 10' of the well must make a DC 15 Reflex check or suffer 5d6 points of damage, save for half. Any villagers present will drop to their knees in supplication.

Read/paraphrase the following:

An eerie glow emanates from the remains of the well. Then, a sound begins to rise from the well. It is an incoherent mix of chattering and laughter. Before your eyes, a horrific being floats out of the well and hovers above it. It is a soggy, bloated apparition of a man. His skin droops from his mangled form. The most sickening aspect of this creature is the way its head droops limply from its clearly broken neck. The eyes of that demented, chattering face dart rapidly around until finally, they fix on you!

Scrimage the Preserver will immediately launch waves of mental blasts at his enemies. He stays over the well making melee difficult. Those who engage Scrimage in melee must make DC 16 Reflex checks to prevent themselves tripping into the open well.

Scrimage the Preserver (Ghoul Lord Patron)

Init: +7; Atk 2 claws +10 melee (1d4+4 plus paralyzation DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d6 hours); AC 18; HD 6d12, HP 45; MV Special; Act 1d20+1d20; SP un-dead traits (Immune to turning), paralyzation, infravision 100', psionic powers; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; AL C.

Psionic powers

Mental bombardment. Every 3rd round Scrimage can unleash a devastating mental attack. Rippling waves of mental anguish tear from the insane patron's decayed brain striking every sentient creature within a 60' radius. All those within range must make DC 14 Will save or suffer 1d4 Intelligence damage.

Levitation. By sheer force of will, Scrimage can lift his body or the body of others from the ground. This operates the same as the 2nd level wizard spell with a +10 casting check (*DCC RPG Rulebook* Pg. 176).

If/when the PCs slay Scrimage, his body vanishes in a burst of light. An eerie chuckle echoes in the PCs' minds. Finally, Scrimage is free of his mortal coils and able to spread his dominion beyond Barrowton.

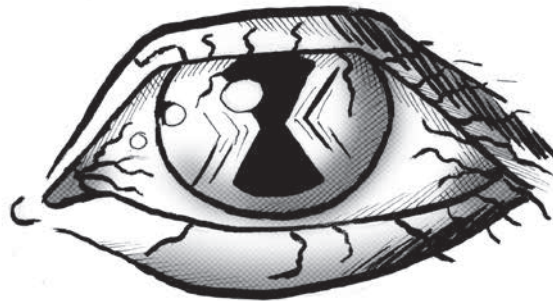


To be human again?

Upon the destruction of Scrimage's body, the villagers writhe in agony as they are at long last freed from their ghoulish curse. Fifty years of age returns to them, instantly killing 2d12 of the wretched beings. Children grow to middle age in seconds. If Lucian still lives, he disintegrates on the spot. The ghost of Judge Zachariah is freed to join his beloved Trisdeus and if possessing a PC, he departs, completely healing the character of any malady and awarding +1 Luck to the PCs. For the first time since the adventure commenced, the clouds part, and the sun once again shines on Barrowton.



What becomes of the surviving villagers is at the discretion of the PCs and the judge.



New Patron: Scrimage the Preserver

In the lost village of Barrowton, deep beneath the surface of the village well, lurks the insane psion, Scrimage the Preserver. Trapped within the undead shell of a paralyzed ghoul, Scrimage now uses his powerful psionic mind to manipulate the affairs of mortals and immortals alike.

In life, Cedric Scrimage was a miserly lawyer who unwittingly used powerful telepathy to win each and every court case he became embroiled in. He was not averse to using his 'legal skills' to free criminals who were clearly guilty of great evil. Despised for this, his gold-coveting ways, and his ability to manipulate others, Scrimage lived a solitary life in his dilapidated mansion in the rich city of Montaigne, until the fateful night he toppled a heavy bookcase on himself. Trapped and starving, he eventually choked to death on gold coins that he had desperately tried to feed upon.

But that was not to be his end. Evil had gotten hold of Scrimage a long time ago and the chaotic patron known as Entorpus 'gifted' Scrimage with un-life – making the lawyer into the embodiment of his ways; a ghoul. Terrified at the prospect of being slain, he fled to the small village of Barrowton. Trying to avoid approaching adventurers, he leapt into the village well, snapping his scrawny neck and leaving himself paralyzed at the bottom. Fermenting below, his powers grew.

The Preserver is depicted as an emaciated figure wearing a cowl. From his skeletal fingertips he is seen in artworks pouring food to his faithful. Depending on the events of the adventure *Feast of the Preserver*, Scrimage's mortal form may be destroyed, increasing his ability to interfere with the living beyond the borders of Barrowton.



The patron bond ceremony must take place in the village of Barrowton. Those wishing to do so must imbibe water from the sacred well then submerge their body in water to commune with The Preserver. The Preserver welcomes all followers but particularly welcomes potential psions.

Invoke patron check results

12-13	The Preserver notices his follower needs assistance but believes his followers must prove their worthiness to serve. He grants the caster +1 to all saves for 1d6 rounds.
14-17	The caster channels the insane patron's mental energy at one target. The target is bombarded with mental agony having to make a DC 10 Will save or suffer 1d2 Intelligence damage. The caster develops a headache 1d3 hours later.
18-19	As 14-17 except the caster targets up to 1d6 sentient beings. Targets minds are torn with pulsing waves of mental anguish. They must make a DC 12 Will save or suffer 1d3 Intelligence damage. The caster suffers a headache and blood seeps from her/his ears.
20-23	The caster unleashes a devastating mental attack. Rippling waves of mental anguish tears from the insane patron's decayed brain and is channeled through the caster's own. Every sentient creature within a 60' radius must make DC 14 Will save or suffer 1d4 Intelligence damage. The caster is stunned for 1 round as his/her brain recovers.
24-27	The caster unleashes a more devastating mental attack. The rippling waves increase in intensity, affecting all creatures with brains, sentient or not, within 60'. All must make a DC 16 Will save or suffer 1d6 Intelligence damage. The caster suffers a migraine headache and is unable to act for 1d2 rounds.
28-29	As 24-27 except the range increases to 80', the Will save increases to DC 18. The caster is hurled back 1d4 feet and sustains 1d3 Stamina damage, unable to stand again for 1d4 rounds.
30-31	As 28-29. Will save increases to DC 20. The caster sustains 1d4 Stamina damage as his/her nose starts to bleed uncontrollably for 1d6 rounds. Magical healing is required within that time or the caster falls prone, unable to act until the bleeding is staunched.
32+	At its most devastating level, the Preserver's mental bombardment affects all life within 100'. Beings with brains must make a DC 25 Will save or suffer 1d8 permanent Intelligence damage. Furthermore, those affected are knocked 1d6' away and remain prone for 1d4 rounds. All other lesser life in the area, including plants, shrivels and dies. The caster falls comatose for 1 day and must make a DC 16 Will save to awake each morning or remain comatose for another day till successful.

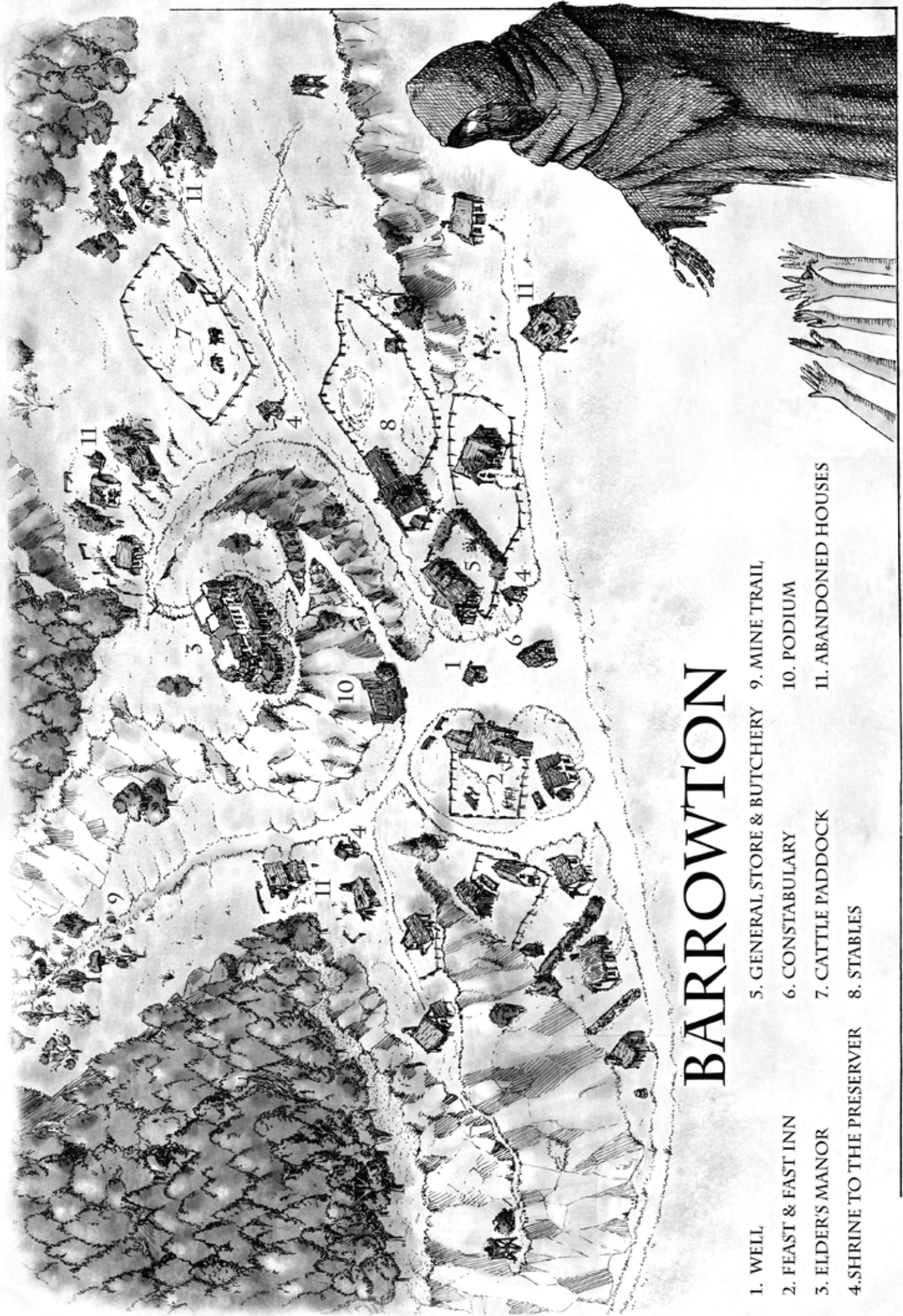
Patron taint: Scrimage the Preserver

When a patron taint is indicated, roll 1d6 on the table below. When a caster has acquired all six taints at all levels of effect, there is no need to continue rolling any more.

Roll	Result
1	The follower of the Preserver takes on a deathly appearance. Pale skin with bluish rings under the eyes.
2	The follower suffers headaches every 1d6 hours. This has no in-game effect unless combat is undertaken in which case the follower must make a DC 10 Will save or suffer -1 to all saves. Any magical healing eliminates the headaches for 2d20 hours.
3	The follower loses feeling in her/his extremities. Roll 1d6 to determine: 1) right hand, 2) left hand, 3) right arm, 4) left arm, 5) right leg, 6) left leg. The follower still functions as normal but cannot feel any sensation in the effected areas. He/she could have an effected limb severed in their sleep and they would be unaware until waking – or bleeding to death.
4	The follower feels cold to the touch and they cannot feel warm no matter what they try.
5	The follower begins to get cannibalistic urges around others. This manifests particularly in combat where the follower insists on licking wounds or stealing severed limbs for their rations.
6	The follower's head starts to twist to one side. Each time this taint is rolled, the caster's head rotates to the side 45 degrees until it hangs upside down upon the casters chest at which point it can twist no further.

Patron spells: Scrimage the Preserver

Rather than patron spells, The Preserver unlocks psionic potential in his followers. Judges can create their own psionic rules to govern how these abilities work or, if psionics are not part of your campaign, judges are free to design their own spells to accompany this patron.



BARROWTON

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. WELL | 5. GENERAL STORE & BUTCHERY | 9. MINE TRAIL |
| 2. FEAST & FAST INN | 6. CONSTABULARY | 10. PODIUM |
| 3. ELDER'S MANOR | 7. CATTLE PADDOCK | 11. ABANDONED HOUSES |
| 4. SHRINE TO THE PRESERVER | 8. STABLES | |

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Feast of the Preserver is a survival horror adventure designed for a group of 5 to 8 characters of levels 3 to 4.

*"Welcome traveller to the quaint village of Barrowton.
You've arrived just in time for the annual Endfast Feast!"*

Something is amiss in the isolated village of Barrowton. Only courage, wisdom and a lot of luck can aid the adventurers in facing the horror that has taken hold of this once idyllic place. Can the adventurers save the village from a terrible fate or will they become the *Feast of the Preserver*?

