



# A NIGHT AT THE SEVEN STEEDS

FOR 4 PCS OF  
6TH—7TH LEVEL

A 5E WARLOCK MIDGARD ADVENTURE  
BY JON SAWATSKY

# A NIGHT AT THE SEVEN STEEDS

*In his lonely tower, far-flung from the courts of the Shadow Fey, the old King went mad.*

*It is said, even his own shadow avoids his company.*

## Background

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This scenario is set in a coaching house north of Zobeck. The Arnsdottir family have run the place for nearly two decades with the friendly and capable daughter, Ava, set to take over the business from her ailing grandfather. Unbeknownst to the family, the coaching house sits above a dark river flowing far below the streets. Uncharted, the twisting caverns and old chambers below the Seven Steeds are filled with things both earthly and otherwise.

Several nights ago, up from the basement, there arose a shadowy humanoid figure. The shadow had no true substance and brought a deep chill as it stepped through the half-full inn. The shadow has taken up residence in the grandest guest room on the top floor, where its continued presence stokes a strange madness in the occupants of the

inn. The madness is subtle, and its effect provokes absolute terror at the idea of leaving the inn. So the women and men who witnessed the shadow arrive stay, unable to leave, but unable to voice the reason why. Creatures that were not present when the shadow arrived are immune to its effects.

In truth, the shadowy humanoid is the **detached shadow of the Moonlit King**\* (see page 6) who has escaped the mad King's tower (ToB, p. 184) to make a go of it on its own in Zobeck. Since its arrival, several dark things have been drawn to the shadow and lurk in the chambers of the upper level. The **Queen of Night and Magic** (ToB, p. 192) has sent two **hounds of the night** (ToB, p. 251) to retrieve the errant shadow; the hounds are hungry and care little for the lives of those trapped in the inn.

\*unless otherwise noted, monsters appearing in **bold**, and items and spells appearing in italics can be found in the SRD.

ToB = Tome of Beasts.

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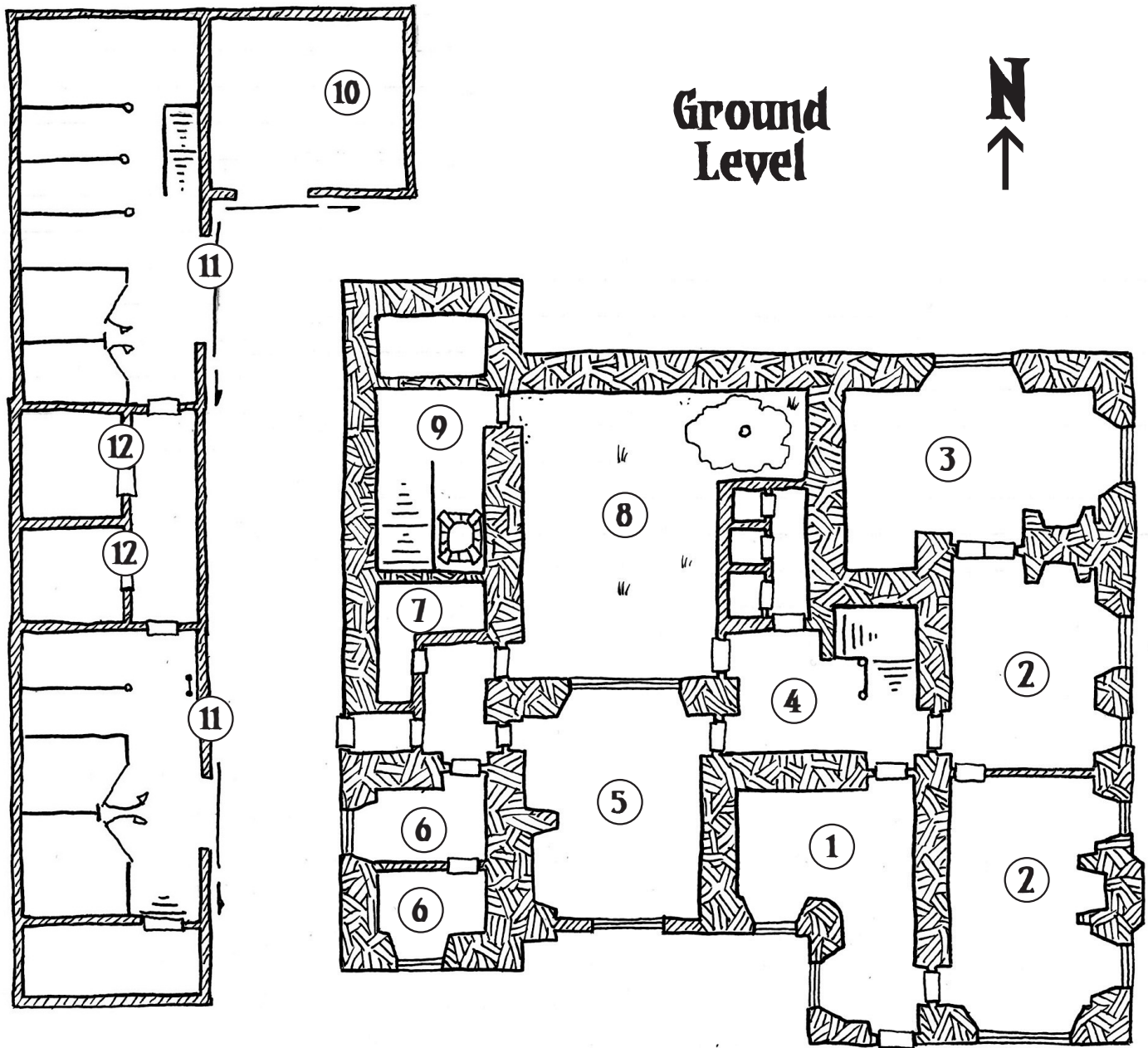
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## Sharp Hooks and Enticing Stories

- A rich merchant in Zobeck is tired of waiting for his shipment to arrive. He received word that his wagon had reached the Seven Steeds Coaching House several nights ago, but he has heard nothing more from its driver. He offers 250 gp to investigate and bring the shipment to him.
- The characters arrive at the Seven Steeds Coaching House in the course of their travels to and from Zobeck. A well-run establishment, the place was recommended to them by a trustworthy NPC. The inn is ideally located within a day's ride of Zobeck, and by reputation, it offers the best stewed lamb in the region.

## Arriving at the Seven Steeds

The ground level of the coaching house is occupied by the owners and travellers. They wander about acting entirely normal. They eat at the appropriate times and hold friendly conversations with one another and with the characters. The occupants of the inn offer reasonable explanations for staying longer than necessary. An investigation of the lower level reveals makeshift beds in the kitchen, stables, and larder. Trapped by the madness, the occupants do their best to make-do though food is beginning to run low.



## The Madness

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The madness can be detected with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Confronted about the madness, the guest or family member retreats in silence to the dining room where they become catatonic—their terrified eyes transfix on the ceiling. A *remove curse* spell frees the person from the madness, and they will flee screaming about the “shadow on the stairs.”

## The Detached Shadow

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A heartless being of pure shadow, the creature has made a comfortable home for itself on the upper floor. It can be spoken to, but it refuses to leave. The entire coaching house is uncomfortably cold, despite the fires roaring in area 2. The cold is magically intense on the upper level, and the characters must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw every fifteen minutes that they remain on the upper level, or gain one level of exhaustion on a failed save.

## The Queen's Hounds

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As a complicating factor, the hounds arrive when the game master (GM) wishes them to. They arrive via a *dimension door* in area 8 and begin searching for the shadow. They likely stop to snack on other occupants of the inn, and they will certainly attack the horses in area 11. The hounds sport jewelled collars worth 250 gp each.

## Area Descriptions

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### 1. ENTRY

The characters are greeted by Ava Arnsdottir, who explains the inn is quite full, but offers them a meal and some drinks if they'd like (standard prices). She offers them beds in the coach house for a silver piece per night.

### 2. DINING ROOMS

These rooms are filled with the affected guests. They look poorly rested, and their clothes are dishevelled. They offer normal conversation but are loathe to move about the inn.

### 3. TAVERN

More guests sit here drinking and singing though they seem weary and a bit tired of the drink.

### 4. COMMON AREA AND TOILETS

The toilets lead to the caves under the inn. They are well maintained. A young woman (**commoner**) cries quietly in one of the stalls, but she stops when spoken to.

### 5. KITCHEN

Several family members prepare meals from the dwindling larders. They seem tired but amicable. The meals are plain and small portioned.

### 6. LARDERS

The larders are remarkably bare. A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the food is a bit old, and some of it beginning to stale.

### 7. LOCKUP

The door to this room is locked (DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick) and the shelves inside contain some valuables of the guests. A total of 390 gp can be found in small chests and boxes assigned to the guests. The boxes also contain keepsakes and other small items considered valuable to their owners.

### 8. YARD

An open area with a small pond toward the rear. Several simple wooden benches have been placed here. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a pair of corrupted **water elementals**, drawn by the evil shadow, that linger in the pond. Half of any damage dealt by the creatures is necrotic.

### 9. WELL

A simple well continues to keep the family and guests from being dehydrated. The well is partially frozen due to the shadow's presence above it.

### 10. COACHING HOUSE

Two wagons sit in the coaching house. One is of noble design, and the other appears built for carrying expensive goods. The wagons are empty of their cargo. This shadowed place is currently occupied by **cloak** that has hung itself alluringly from a post on the fancier wagon.

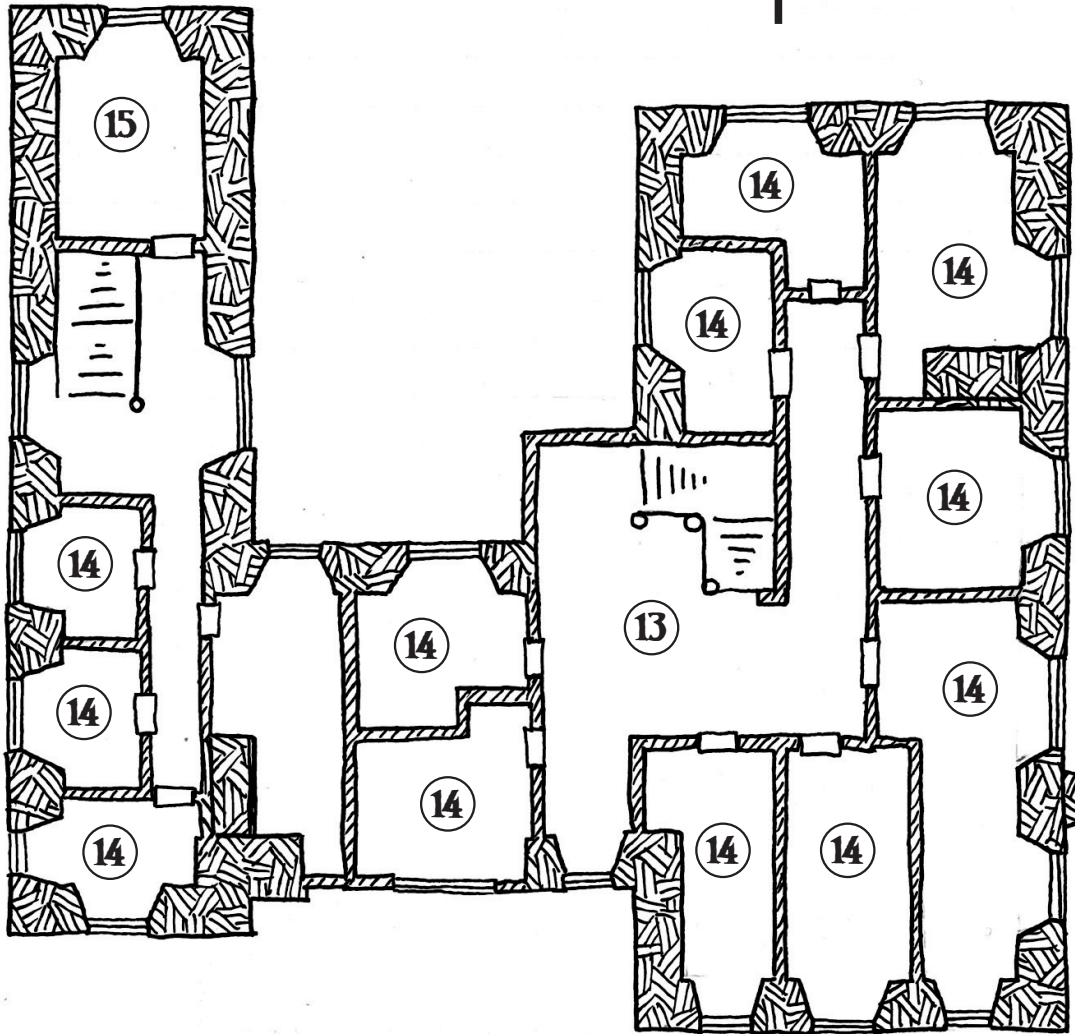
### 11. STABLES

The ten horses kept here belong to the wagons and travellers in the inn. They look poorly tended to and are easily frightened. They have not eaten in a day. If spoken to using magic, the horses communicate the presence of the shadow.

### 12. STORAGE

Saddles, bridles, and blankets are stored in these rooms. Grandfather Arnsdottir lies dead in one of the chambers, his heart having given out from the strain of the experience. If his spirit is spoken to using magic, he will explain precisely what is happening though he does not know the true identity of the shadow.

## Upper Level



### 13. UPPER LEVEL HALLWAY

This hall is coated in rimy frost. Characters can see their breath here. Their own shadows do not move in unison with their bodies.

### 14. GUEST CHAMBERS

Some of the guest chambers are empty. Others can be filled with atmosphere appropriate scenarios. Invent your own, and use the following:

- A travelling merchant (**zombie**) sits frozen and frost covered on the bed. He moves his head to show his pupil-less eyes. A DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check reveals the shadow's origin. He cracks into frozen pieces after speaking.
- A room filled with evilly animated furniture (3-4 **mimics**).

- A pack of fey assassins has taken up residence in the room (3-4 **vile barbers**, ToB, p. 401) with plans to murder an unsuspecting noble in Zobeck. They might stalk the characters as they explore the upper level, attacking them at an advantageous time.

### 15. CHAMBER OF THE SHADOW

Approaching the door, the characters must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is frightened of the king's shadow for five minutes. This chamber is filled with shifting drifts of ice and shadow. The drifts move like waves back and forth within the room. Creatures who begin or end their turn inside the room must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature falls prone. The detached shadow of the

Moonlit King relaxes atop one of the waves. He will become angry if the party disturbs him. He can be convinced to leave if he receives a rare magic item as a gift. Otherwise, he must be slain, whereupon he returns to his plane and once again attaches to the mad king. Once he is killed, the shadow's immaterial crown takes a physical form as a *helm of telepathy*.

## Conclusion

Once freed, the patrons and owners of the coaching house are elated but traumatized. They collectively offer the party 300 gp as a reward.

## Detached Shadow of the Moonlit King

The Moonlit King's detached shadow is a humanoid shaped mass of angular and erratically shifting shadow-made substance. Its form shifts constantly, but it hints at a figure dressed in noble's clothes. Though the mass has no features, a faint blue visage resembling the morphed face of the Moonlit King sometimes appears at its center.

**Aspect of Evil.** While the **Moonlit King** (ToB, p. 190) himself is a good-hearted madman, his shadow has soaked up the King's darker aspects. It is sentient and possesses its own sort of intelligence, but it neither cares for living things nor is concerned with harming them.

**Out for a Good Time.** The shadow has escaped the King because it finds living in the tower dull and joyless. It has come to this plane to pursue its own version of pleasure, which currently involves staying at the inn and terrifying the occupants.

### DETACHED SHADOW OF THE MOONLIT KING

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 190 (20d8+100)

**Speed** fly (hover) 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (+3)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	0 (+5)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Wis +9

**Skills** Perception +9, Stealth +6  
(+9 in dim light or darkness)

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, slashing and piercing from nonmagical attacks



**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Amorphous.** The shadow can move through a space as narrow as one inch without squeezing.

**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Sunlight Weakness.** While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.



**Prone to Tearing.** Once the shadow drops below half its hit points, it loses its damage resistances.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The shadow of the Moonlit King makes two raking grasp attacks.

**Raking Grasp.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d8+3) cold damage and that creature must succeed a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. If a target's Strength is reduced to 0 by this attack, it falls unconscious for a day and can only be

revived by a *greater restoration* spell. If that unconscious creature is not restored within a day, it transforms permanently into a **shadow**.

**Shape of Nightmares (1/day).** As an action, the Moonlit King's shadow chooses one creature it can see. It then takes a shape that embodies that creature's fear for one hour. As long as the creature can see the shadow at the beginning of each of its turns, that creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

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