

# THE SPOOKIEST NIGHT EVER

IN A FORGOTTEN LAND OF DARK MAGIC, A GROUP OF ADVENTURERS GET DRUNK.

AN ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 4-6 CHARACTERS



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# WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT?

Caught by surprised by a ferocious storm in the middle of the night, the party was lucky enough to encounter a **Vistani** caravan, who promptly accepted to give them a lift and offer a warm shelter from the rain.

The **Vistani**, being in the middle of a mission, were going to stop through few domains before driving the party to their final destination.

Once inside the caravan the party got offered and gladly accepted a sip of the finest **wine** the Vistani were carrying, and much to everyone's surprise they got so mesmerized (and drunk) by its otherworldly savor that they decided to run away with few barrels while the Vistani were distracted... and that's how they got lost and ended up in the domain of Zuccavia.

Not too bothered about being in an unfamiliar forest, they indulged themselves first with the remaining wine, then with petty time killers.

At one point they walked backwards - don't judge, they were drunk - thus entering the Witches' Lair.

There, they met **Sybil** and **Ursula**, two hags who soon realized they could use the party for their evil scheme: they persuaded the party to sneak into the **Pumpkin Knight's** house, steal his head and then bring the trophy back to them. Who's the Pumpkin Knight, you may ask? Just the presumed **darklord** of Zuccavia.

The first half of the plan went smoothly, and the party stole the head without being noticed; it's only at that point that they decided to desert their duty and opted to reach the closest **village** instead.

There, they were welcomed by a cheerful crowd of villagers, who delighted and entertained the party for few hours.

Townsfolk are busy setting up the village for a forthcoming **festival**, and lots of stands are already operative even at that time of the night.

The party decided to sell the pumpkin to a local merchant, who gave them some **candies** in exchange: it goes without saying they did not realize that was the payment, and proceeded to eat everything without asking questions.

Then, confident of their own finances, the party started buying right, left and center, filling their bellies and offering drinks to everyone. What they did not know though was that in that village gold pieces are worth less than a rock, for the local currency is something a bit more... unique.

Forced to take a **debt** in order not to receive a dreadful "trick", they left the village in search of fortune... that is, an escape route, with no luck: the borders of the domain appear to be blocked by an impenetrable layer of vines. With no better options available, the players accepted their fate and started exploring the forest in search of cakes and sweets.

Highlight of this part was their encounter with "**Them**", evil beings that almost wiped out the party: not an unlucky twist of fate, for "Them" are often attracted by a specific object one player is carrying. From that point on they wandered in the forest looking for candies a bit more, met few individuals and eventually fell asleep in a pumpkin field.

# THE AWAKENING

*There it is, the blazing sun! Always shin... wait a sec, the sun here is not that blazing at all. Quite gloomy, on the contrary. Still, its feeble beams pierce your body like lances as you try to stand up and keep your eyes open. A vague sense of deja-vu resounds in your head - unless that's your brain shaking, of course. Anyways, where were you... Right, trying to stand up. One step at one. Your bottom is all wet and sore, yet in a better shape than the smashed pumpkin you were sitting on. Your breath reeks of wine and sweets - better wash your teeth whenever you can. The surrounding looks like your average pumpkin field, but you do not recognize the area: what appears to be a small village few miles from you, and a thick forest in each other direction. While your pals are trying to stand up with poor results, you're busy reflecting on a deep, philosophical question. "Why does it always have to end up like this?" Again, an interesting question, and you've yet to find a proper answer for it.*

The players wake up in a **pumpkin field**, all filthy and still confused. They reek of wine and **have no recollection** of whatever happened in the last few hours - **last** thing they remember is them traveling with some gypsies, harbored in their caravan. There are no wagons in sight, nor tracks on the field: most pumpkins are intact, with the few smashed ones being in that state most likely after something fell on them.

Describe the general situation, and then the **newly-acquired features** (more about them in a bit)

Lay emphasis on the fact they're still suffering the **after-effect of alcohol**: whoever tries to stand up or, worse, jump and walk instantly has to succeed a **DC10/15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) Check** in order not to fall on the ground and/or puke. Their minds hurt like hell and it's as if a giant hammer is constantly hitting their brain, making each kind of reasoning both hard to do and painful.

Depending on what action they may attempt to do in the following hours, the DM can decide to either impose **disadvantage**, or **add an unexpected event**.

If the players attempt to leave the domain (that is, the valley) it won't be long before they get lost in the fog and end up in a random spot within **Zuccavia**: apparently, leaving this place is not that easy.

**What if one player dies?** Long story short, they will "respawn" in the domain shortly after, still shocked after experiencing death. A creepy silhouette staring at them will be the first thing they see after reviving.

To quantify the "shortly after"... they respawn whenever you want, as there's not a fixed time for that. Same for the location, that's up to the dark powers after all.

If they die in a final battle you can consider keeping them dead for the remaining time, only to have them respawn inside the domain once the other party members have left already. Check "Them" paragraph for more details.

## PERSONAL FEATURES!

**Introduce one of them at time, making sure to specify which player is affected by it.**

Make sure to pick the funniest combinations available within your party!

### FEATURE NUMBER 1!

You wake up with a weird trinket in their pocket - a wooden disk with a weird silhouette carved on it.

The **disk** itself is harmless, but the same can't be said for what it foretells.

Check "**Them**" paragraph for more details about its nature and what it implies.

### FEATURE NUMBER 2!

You wake up and notice you're wearing your clothes inside out.

At one point the drunk characters decided to wear clothes inside out for whatever reason, coincidentally fulfilling one condition to enter the **Witches' Lair**.

Speaking of which, the ritual got completed once alcohol made them walk backwards in the forest - near an **old well**, to be more precise.

One character forgot to adjust their clothes before falling asleep, hence this feature.

If the characters investigate around that area they will notice lots of **footsteps** that presumably belong to humans who, at one point, started walking backwards before **disappearing**.

They can find out about that area from the **villagers**, who will in fact start the talk about it as soon as they meet the characters: they're **dead curious** to know what the players were up to around that unused area, since the party forgot to specify that last time they talked with the townsfolk.

**Reaching** the old well is quite easy: just a matter of following a small path going from The Village 'till that spot.

Check **The Village and the Party and Witches' Lair** paragraphs for more details.

### FEATURE NUMBER 3!

You wake up and have this weird feeling something new is inside you.

While wandering in the fields, the party bumped into a **phantom**, that is the soul of a dead man who could not find peace in a domain of dread. His real corpse is buried deep in the forest - he remembers how to reach that spot and could show it to the players - but he may forget to specify that's a hunting ground for **zombies**.

**Boredom** made the spirit possess one player - not a hard task, considering how drunk they were - and he intends to stick with them until he finds a better pastime. He does not remember his real name (which will change whenever he decides to introduce himself) and is eager to have some fun with his new friends.

**This ghost works slightly different from common ones:** he did not gain full control of the host, but rather can force his own will whenever he wants, possibly clashing with the original owner of the body if their intentions do not coincide. Whenever that happens, both the ghost and the player have to roll a **Wisdom Check**; the ghost adds +6, and can decide to roll with **disadvantage** if he's not too interested in the outcome.

He can talk through his host, but will not do it all the time.

If the ghost is **expelled** from his host, he will follow the party and try to possess a character whenever odds are on his side. If he's killed he will respawn where his corpse is and may decide to lure danger towards the players, or play tricks on them for revenge. He's not really mad though - just bored. Use the stat block of a **Ghost** if needed (remember that possession works differently though)

### FEATURE NUMBER 4!

You wake up and... that's it. You just woke up. Exciting, am I right?

Nothing to add to be honest.

It would be a pity if they were the **favorite target** for the villagers' **pranks** though, am I right?

Pranks aside, **dark powers** appear to have taken a liking to the target...which means that whenever an unlucky event happens that player will be the most probable target.

Stairs collapsing, trees inexplicably falling on the ground, their main weapon slipping from their hands during the decisive moment, a storm of famished crows ganging up against that player only... whatever happens, luck does not appear to be on their side.

Check "**The Village**" for more details.

### ANOTHER POSSIBLE FEATURE

You wake up with a sturdy ring made of hay on your ring finger.

Said player met and seduced a **scarecrow** in a pumpkin field: the two swore eternal love to each other, but one of them forgot this sacred promise.

The scarecrow, too shy and perhaps angered to approach the party, will first send multiple **gifts** (such as a cob) to the player with the help of mice and birds, but will eventually grow **impatient** and try to **kidnap** the player whenever the opportunity arises. To go where you may ask? Perhaps away from danger, perhaps in a pumpkin field to celebrate the **wedding** among animated pumpkins... as long as they're together the destination does not matter at all!

Use the same stat block as a **Scarecrow** as a baseline and raise its HP and statistics to a reasonable amount: it's a huge scarecrow!

*Bonus if the player is a kenku who reminds the scarecrow of a blackbird that used to sit on its shoulder in the past!*

# THE VILLAGE

Not much to say about it: your average village in the middle of nowhere. Being the **only human settlement** in the whole zone it doesn't even have a name - it is simply called "**The Village**".

Contrary to what you could expect, the villagers are unbelievably cheerful and optimistic: life is harsh, but as long as you don't give up and lose hope everything will be alright - just look at the bright side!

**Three places** are used in this adventure: the **old library**, the **herbalist's shop**, and the **main plaza**.

Of course, that does not mean you can't add new buildings as long as they make sense in the context, especially if the players need them: for instance, if the party decide they want to bake sweets they could use the kitchen in a tavern or in a house; perhaps they could even build a quick fire pit in a street and set up their own stand... either way, **adjust accordingly**.

Before talking about what may happen in the Village, it's necessary to digress a little and discuss about this domain's currency.

## THE CURRENCY: TRICK OR TREAT?

Money and gems have no real value in the village, as the official currency is the so-called "**Trick or Treat**": whenever you buy a good or receive a service, you can either pay the equivalent amount of sweets, or decide to risk and get a mischief (often called a "**trick**") of the same intensity. Tricks can vary from idle threats to serious actions with possible dread consequences depending on their value.

Once the "**culprit**" is done with the prank, they must shout "**Boo**" to inform everyone (mainly the victim) the **prank is over** and they will not do anything else.

Just to **illustrate the idea**, let's say you order a **mug of beer**: not a big deal, meaning that the related trick (if you chose that option) would be nothing but a harmless prank - put some bugs in your pants, for example.

If you buy a whole **sack of rice** and choose "trick", you could get tied up and left in the forest for few hours.

You seriously bought **three cows** and refused to pay for them? Well, I hope you'll get to escape from your stable when it burns down.

**The culprit** of a "trick" could be the person the victim made a deal with (for example, the cow seller), or another **appointed assistant or group designated before carrying out said trick**: one person cannot decide to play a prank or help in a trick on behalf of someone else without permission. Either way, the "**cow seller**" is the one **nominating** the assistant or group that will help them.

**No one can hold a grudge for a received trick**: as they say, you reap what you sow.

One **can (and should) try to save themselves** (and the involved goods) from the prank, but **cannot harm the culprit(s)**: you can try to leave the stable and save the cows, or extinguish the fire, but that's it.

The **culprit(s)**, on the other hand, is (are) **forbidden to take more actions than expected**: after "**Boo**" their active roles is done, and they can't intervene again, nor hinder the victim. Using the cow example, if a culprit screams "Boo" (one is enough) after setting the stable on fire, no one can lock the door once they see the victim is attempting to escape. They can do that before "Boo"ing, of course.

**Complex** pranks may last a lot, and the victim knows that something may (and will probably) still happen until the keyword is heard - paranoia is partly what makes "tricks" effective.

Victims can only suffer **one prank at time**: again, if you're locked in a burning stable by villager X, who has yet to "Boo", villager Y cannot barge in and free snakes inside the building, as the culprit behind a new "Trick".

Moreover, at least **15 minutes** must pass between a "Trick" and the following one. Remember, the "**Boo**" declares the legal end of a prank.

As specified earlier, villager Y can't take part of the current "Trick" either, unless that was decided **beforehand as part of the trick**; one could argue it's easy to cheat with such liberty, but the villagers are dead serious about **respecting this tradition** to the nth degree.

That's the **main gist** about "**Trick or Treat**": two options, the buyer decides which one to go for. It turns out I lied, and there's actually a **third, possible option**: in the unfortunate case someone is unable pay but do not want to receive a "trick", there's the possibility to delay the transaction until the debtor is able to settle the **debt** - an optional way to avoid serious consequences that may derive from choosing "trick".

The downside? The debtor will be the subject of "tricks", whose intensity will steadily grow with time: think of them as **installments** (plus interests, of course) With time, the tricks will keep getting nastier and nastier, until one of them becomes comparable to what the debtor would've originally received - if that happens, the debt is called off. The tricks would stop even in the case of the debtor paying the original debt - if that happens, the received tricks count as the interests: the faster you are, the less interests you'll have to pay! An individual or a group (e.g. a family, shop etc) can only have one active debt at time.

**Creepy idea**: one could technically talk about "**Them**" as a trick, at their own risk. See "**Them**" paragraph for more details.

Now we can go back and talk about

## THE VILLAGE AND THE PARTY

As soon as the party enter the village, everyone will greet them, alluding to what they did last night, and ask if they managed to collect the requested amount of sweets.

The party will obviously be **confused** about the whole situation, and that's a good point to (partly) explain how the unusual currency works, and why the party owe them quite a lot of sweets.

Actually, the best way to teach your players how "Trick or Treat" works is by letting them **experience a prank at first hand** - for example, they may be served a tart full of worms, the waitress "Boo"ing while serving the dish: your players will understand what that word means afterwards.

*Bonus if you play with this aspect in real life as well: for instance, serve some small tarts at your table right after this in-game prank, and stare at them with a big grin... will your players eat them, or suspect of their filling?*

Back to the adventure, make sure to emphasize villagers are not mad at the players - on the contrary, they're quite thrilled to have new visitors for the festival - plus having a debt is not a big deal.

Some peasants will suggest to **check the festival**: some exhibitors will need help for sure, and that may an easy way to gain sweets.

Plus, they sure can't miss the annual festival! Check the **Festival paragraph** for more details.

The village can be a great **source of information**: they can share their knowledge about the domain; the mysterious Pumpkin Knight; local flora/fauna if the players wants to hunt, harvest or if they're simply curious; the dragon in the graveyard; possibly even the hags if needed.

The first four points are **common knowledge**, but no one actually thinks that the pumpkin they had with them was a property of the Pumpkin Knight - let alone his own head - for the party is not strong enough for such a deed. At the same time they do not suspect that pumpkin was stolen from a field of theirs, because it was too big for their standard.

Everyone in the Village knows about "**Them**" as well, but no one dares to even mention that name - players in that case will clearly notice that subject makes them upset.

The **hags** are mostly treated as a bedtime story, and no one truly believes such evil beings live nearby; that said, some elders may know about them and how to supposedly reach their lair, if so you desire.

## ENCOUNTER WITH THE PUMPKIN KNIGHT

Once the party decide to leave the village, or when you think they have spent enough time in the festival, it's time for them to meet the **Pumpkin Knight**.

If the players are still in the village, a scared peasant will rush into the village, screaming that the knight wants to talk with the party; if the party refuse to go, the knight will come to them, spreading chaos across the streets. If the players leaves the village on their own, the knight will approach them shortly after.

*If the party start killing multiple villagers, the environment will change abruptly: a black sphere replaces the sun, the houses start crumbling down like sand castles and each life form turns into an indescribable sludge of pulsing flesh; just before their heads explode the characters will hear a jarring voice screaming "Heroes are supposed to defend the weak, not harm them!", only to find themselves nscathed, doing whatever they were doing few minutes before the hostile act. The villagers will remember nothing at all about the event.*

## FESTIVAL

Even though the domain itself is quite small this festival appears to be **somewhat famous**, and a fair amount of visitors are joining the villagers to celebrate.

The villagers are as joyful as usual no matter what kind of traveler they're in front of, be it a simple human or a more exotic being - everyone is welcomed in the Village. Most of the visitors are from the surroundings, with few travelers coming from other domains mixed in the crowd.

The **main attraction** is, as usual, a **giant wicker man** built in the main plaza that is going to be ignited at dusk: once the puppet has burnt to the ground few clergymen will bring a tribute to the dragon in the graveyard.

Considering that the adventure starts at dawn, it's a bit too early for that.

The Village's **burgomaster, Thomas**, will entrust the party to his daughter, **Sally**.

**Sally** is possibly the most carefree individual in the whole town, and is happy to guide the party around and show them the best stands. **Detect Magic** and similar spells will not reveal anything out of ordinary about her.

She is also the only one who does not get noticeably upset in the case players talk about "**Them**", and will not freak out if they show her the coin; on the other hand she will give them a cryptic reply, before going back to her cheerful self.

*I've seen these yellow coins before - a bad omen, most certainly. Their glittering glow is said to bewitch human minds, and they're used to trick and hurt people, reason why we do not like them.*

As for the various **stands and attractions**, I will now proceed to list **few of them**, although you can create your own personal proposal depending on your party and their interest; furthermore, **internet** is packed with some great examples of festival games and activities you may want to draw inspiration from.

While designing the festival make sure to remember the party will still be the main target of "**Tricks**", which could happen while they're taking part in a contest, or when they're walking around the village.

Their intensity can vary as much as you want, as long as it increases with time; whether you want the pranks to become actual threats or remain harmless it's up to you. Keep in mind the party may decide to split up and cover multiple stands at once.

Do notice players (or other NPC contenders) could attempt to **bribe**, intimidate or persuade the **crowd and judges**.

Most of the time I **won't include fixed DC tests**, nor specify obvious ability checks: it's up to you to make them harsher or not depending on what you're trying to achieve.

As an example, the weight lifting contest is (weird tricks aside) a Strength Check, and you can decide a suitable DC for it.

The following list's purpose is to **outline possible ideas** you can either ignore or develop to your liking – at that point you can decide whether you prefer to roleplay them or turn them into skill checks.

### **CAKE CONTEST:**

At the end of the day part of the sweets will be offered as a tribute to the dragon in the graveyard, with the "Best Cake of the Year" being the cherry on the top. The winner will be rewarded with lots of sweets, more than the value of the cake itself, and a lil crown made of marzipan. The players will start with zero ingredients, and will have to grab them from either the Village or the forest. If they borrow ingredients from townsfolk, they could find sympathetic villagers ready to help them for free, or greedier ones who may ask for a payment, possibly starting a new debt chain.

**Trick:** luring the players near a monster's nest if they're in the forest, placing obstacles on the road to give them a hard time carrying the cake without ruining it.

## **"OF EPIC TALES AND WONDERS"**

Competitors can sing ballad or tell a fascinating tale, both with the help of a musical instrument of their choice.

Decide beforehand what kind of crowd the contenders will play for, and apply a bonus/malus depending on the player's choice: if the crowd is mostly composed of kids and young folks they will not be too entertained with a religious song. The player can try to guess that with a **DC10 Wisdom (Insight) Check**.

Have the player rolls on **Performance** and **another ability fitting for the chosen theme**, then sum the amount to evaluate the final score. Give a bonus to the player if they are notably creative.

Multiple players can participate to the contest, but for obvious reasons **only one can win**.

The contest is quite popular and there are at least four other participants, some of which came from **Harmonia**, a domain famous for its great minstrels. In order for the players to reach the first place one player has to reach or surpass 30 points. Adjust the number if you so desire.

**Trick:** one string breaks few seconds after the start, meaning that the singer will have to put extra effort to win the crowd, with either magic tricks or pure charisma.

## **TEST OF MIGHT, MAGIC AND CHARM**

This attraction is meant to test various attributes, and is split into **three categories**: one contender can only apply to one, and cannot change their decision once they've signed in.

**Test of Might:** weight lifting contest, followed by an arm wrestling challenge between the two strongest contenders.

**Test of Magic:** crowd is bored, blow their minds with magic tricks! Then the two best contenders will have to face each other in the ultimate challenge: the copycat. Long story short, one of them will start and cast whatever they want, as long as it's not harmful against the challenger or the crowd. The other one will have to copy said magic trick in the best possible way. Sudden-death round to declare the winner.

**Test of Charm:** charm the crowd, make them love you. It doesn't matter how. Then the two best contenders will have to charm... a goat! What's more, a bad-tempered one!

**Trick:** names got swapped, meaning that the strong player will have to impress the crowd with their magic, the charismatic one will have to prove their strength, and the enchanter will have to mesmerize the crowd with their charm. Players will hear a "Boo" just before the presenter announces the competitors for each category.



## RODEO

Subdue a mighty **Giant Elk (Monster Manual page 325)** while trying not to get yourself killed!

The animal is kept in a round arena and has been fed with a local herb whose main effect is driving animals crazy.

The goal is to approach the crazed beast, jump on it and attempt to stay mounted as much as possible; it goes without saying the Elk won't be accommodating... throwing off mounted contestants, slamming them against the paddock or charging them once they're defenseless on the ground is the very least one can expect to see from this challenge.

It is possible to use ropes to help themselves, but harming the animal or knocking it out is strictly forbidden. It is technically possible, albeit really hard without the help of magic, to first calm the animal and then mount it.

One challenger at time can take part of this trial: the question is, are you brave enough?

**Trick:** Another Giant Elk (or a different beast, such as a **Boar**) is released "by mistake" inside the paddock when one player is facing the challenge.

**Other ideas:** Greased pig catching, The Hunt (whoever gets the biggest animal in the forest wins), evergreen drinking competitions and lots more!

## GAMBLING

Not a proper contest, but it won't be hard for players to find gamblers trying to make a fortune in the festival.

**All of them will cheat one way or another.**

Some may use magic to cheat.

**Few examples:**

**Guess the card!** A player draws a card from the deck, and the gambler will try to guess it. The gambler uses Detect Thoughts to guess the right answer (DC11 Wisdom Saving Throw to notice it if the gambler messes up and attempt to probe deeper)

**The question is not where, but how!** Gambler hides a small rock under one cup, then shuffles it with two other identical mugs for few seconds. The player has to guess which cup is hiding the rock. The rock is an illusion created with Minor Illusion, which is dismissed during the shuffling phase; the gambler is well trained and is able to conceal the somatic gestures while creating it.

Finally, consider that **the players may set up their own stand**, possibly following **Sally's advice**.

Fastest way to earn sweets if they have a cool idea in mind.

**How much do they party owe to the village, and how much do they earn from games?**

*It... doesn't matter that much, because that's not the endgoal of this adventure.*

*Trick or treat is more akin to barter, meaning that there's not a clear amount of sweets they have to deliver.*

*For the sake of simplicity, let's say they need to scrape together **at least** the equivalent of five big cakes and around twenty small tarts or desserts.*

*One big cake is about fifty small sweets.*

*Each stand in the festival should give a rather small amount of sweets, probably around five pieces or so (depending on the difficulty of the task, obviously; by the way make sure each challenge gives something else in addition to sweets to the winner - remember it's halloween, so pick appropriate trinkets!)*

*Either way, the Pumpkin Knight will interrupt them before they get to reach the expected amount of them, and once they're outside the village they will find out faster ways to settle their debt.*

# THE PUMPKIN KNIGHT

"You stole something precious from me, and I expect you to pay the debt.  
Bring me a suitable substitute for my head, and do so before I grow impatient and get yours instead.  
Say my name three times in a row, and I shall know you're looking for me.  
Waste my time and you shall be fertilizer for pumpkins.  
My name is Jack, do not forget it."

The **first time** they meet (check **The Village and the Party paragraph for more details**), he will leave before the players can ask him any question.

If the players opt to consign a **normal pumpkin** to the knight, he will feel insulted and leave again.  
The knight wants a **magical one**, obviously.  
Getting a normal one is easy, by the way: either in a field or in the village.

Disappointed about the players' ignorance, he will tell them, before leaving, that they would need a "**potion of xxx**" to enhance a normal pumpkin, were they unable to get an already magical one. He can't, nor wants to, provide other useful information.

## What to do then?

There are few ways to **obtain (or enhance) one**. Do notice some of them involve locations or NPCs that have yet to be properly explained: refer to the specific paragraphs for major details about those areas and/or NPCs.

## So, where to obtain one?

One magical pumpkin can be found within the dragon's hoard, in the **graveyard**; awakened pumpkins drop a pumpkin head when defeated, but one alone is not magical enough for the knight - the party will have to grab a lot of them, careful about not smashing the vegetable in the process. The knight can, at that point, fuse them into a new, magical head. Lastly, one member of "Them" wears what appears to be a carved pumpkin, although retrieving it may be a bit too difficult for the players.  
A normal (big) pumpkin can be magically enhanced either in the village or in the witches' lair.

The local herbalist in the village will be a bit hesitant due to the nature of the ritual necessary for that potion, but could accept if persuaded (or forced)

The **ritual** is quite complex and requires a multitude of **ingredients**:

- bones of an old corpse who could not rest in peace
- fresh nails of a hag
- anything else you think would make sense, if two ingredients are not enough for your taste

The **first ingredient** can be easily found in the **graveyard**, although undead or skeletons are not a rare sight in the domain - you decide which option you prefer, depending on your characters' actions.

The **ghost** remembers very well where his corpse is laying, but he may resort to reveal the location only if he took a liking to the party.

As specified, the corpse must be old, or the ritual won't succeed.

The **hags** are capable of creating such a potion as well. They won't ask anything at all and gladly accept the request, in the name of their friendship.

What they will ask for is the **blood of an innocent** - lots of blood - and **dragon's eyes**. The first one is needed because "**it's a dark ritual**" - they actually want another corpse for their colossus. They did not specify whether the innocent has to be a human, an animal or anything else - mostly because all they care about are bones and guts.

They do not need the eyes too, but their hope is that the players will bring the **heart** to them as a tool of gratitude. If the players have heard about a magical pumpkin in the graveyard, the hags will attempt to discredit that information, claiming that they can create a much better magical pumpkin.

**Remember:** the hags are lightning quick to make up lies or take advantage of every situation to gain something in return.

If the players bring the asked ingredient to them, **the hags will in reality use the very same ingredients that the herbalist would request** (they have everything they need for it already)

The hags will pretend not to know the ritual as performed by the herbalist.

The hags are too overjoyed to **connect the dots** and realize what the potion is for, but will surely create a **fake one** if the players mention the **pumpkin knight** or why they need it. The **pumpkin knight** will notice the potion used on the vegetable was completely wrong, as if the creator failed on purpose - it will probably be **too late** at that point.

# WITCHES' LAIR



ntering the witches' lair is not a cakewalk, nor it's leaving it unscathed.

**Ethereal and invisible** under normal circumstances, it's possible to enter that pocket dimension only if you wear your clothes inside out and walk backwards in

the forest.

It will only take few steps for you to **disappear** from the real world, only to find yourself amid a different, unusual place: naked trees, whose feeble branches hold up a mixture of dead mice and candies, adorn the whole area; an untarmacked road leads the way towards a relatively small clearing with an old, decaying house in the middle of it. That house is the dwelling of a **Hags' coven**, or rather what's left of it: indeed, one of them, Luna, has been **captured** and locked up by the **Pumpkin Knight**, as a way to destroy the coven and prevent the trio to make use of their most powerful spells.

The two remaining hags, Sybil and Ursual, are no match to it, but that's not stopping them from plotting **revenge** and trying to seize the domain for themselves.

Time passes **faster** inside their domain, and that gave them enough time to come up with and prepare a blasphemous ritual that would ultimately summon an appalling monster: the hags plan to animate a **giant colossus** made of bones and corpses they've been secretly sticking together in their **basement**.

Odds are such a creature may be able to defeat a weakened Pumpkin Knight, and, according to their plan, become the new darklord of the domain - a puppet darklord, something that the hags could control.

The missing piece was how to weaken the Pumpkin Knight, and that's what the party was for: while the hags were pretending to raid the prison to free their sister, the (drunk) party managed to sneak into Pumpkin Knight's bedroom and steal his pumpkin head, thus shrinking his power by a fair amount. Indeed, the pumpkin knight underestimated the hags and let his minions drive off the two crones, leaving himself defenseless.

After having retrieved the **magical head** the party was supposed to rendez-vous to the hags' house, but at the very last minute they decided to take another path - or perhaps they simply forgot their task - and ended up in the village.

The magical head was a fairly important piece for the ritual, but Sybil and Ursula are eager to complete the rite and summon the beast, even if that means unleashing a slightly weaker creature.

The two hags do not usually leave their domain, for they fear "Them", and it looks like "Them" can't reach their pocket dimension.

From time to time they trade goods with the village (they disguise themselves as human for that)

If the party get to reach their domain the hags, who can feel whenever someone sets foot into their area, will first act friendly towards them, but their behavior will soon change as soon they realize the party do not remember anything about the previous night: due to their evil and mischievous nature the hags will try to **exploit** the party again by lying to them whenever they have the chance.

One possible requirement could be to bring them a powerful **arcane object**, so that they could finally complete a ritual to free the land from the pumpkin knight's bane - that's not a lie, strictly speaking.

There's supposed to be a evil being in the forgotten graveyard, defeating it and bringing its heart to them would kill two birds with a stone... or so they say. Three actually, for the **hoard** could help them **settle their debt**.

If your **players are greedy** specify the hags care only about the heart, and everything else would be for them (chances are dragon scales, teeth and meat are valuable goods in their original plane)

Finally, the hags may **offer some candies** in exchange for the party's service.

In case the party is suspicious about a specific detail, **consider the following:**

"Do you have another sister?" "Nay, number three brings bad luck after all!"

They will **never** talk about their sister, for they know most adventurers are wary of hags' covens.

They could at most talk about **prisoners** inside **Pumpkin Knight's** house, feigning ignorance about anything else.

"But... you just look like a witch!" "As they say, hide a tree inside a forest! If you look like a fearsome witch threats will not come at you."

The hags do not bother using a **human disguise**, although they could - that said, in case the party have doubts about that, they will pretend that the witch's appearance is nothing but an illusion, and that their real aspect is that of two old grannies: it's only at that point that they will use their ability in an unconventional way, and cover themselves with the magical illusion that will make them look like normal human beings.

If the party get to notice the illusion once again the hags will try to justify their white lie ("Adventurers always assume hags are evil and kill them on sight, what were we supposed to do?")

"But... the dead mice outside!" "A charm to keep something away from here".

Their actual purpose is to **corrupt** the area and affect the candies they seldom trade with humans from the village, but that's another story.

The hags can be a good source of information regarding **"Them"**, although they are just as clueless regarding their origin, nature and power.

"How can we trust you?" "Ask the villagers if what we told you about the graveyard, "Them" or the prisoners is false, and then judge draw your own conclusion."

The villagers do not hate nor worship the dragon, but they agree the dragon has become more and more demanding with time.

Their house does not have any particular feature, feel free to design it as you like. Make sure to include an oven to cook candies and sweets.

The **basement** is under a hidden trapdoor in the kitchen, and requires a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) Check to be spotted.

The **giant corpse** is laying in a **semi-dormant state**, steadily growing in force and size and awaiting for its release. Abrupt actions may lead to an early awakening.

**Leaving the domain** is technically quite easy: just follow the path and leave from a glowing circle which can be found amid the naked trees- the **light** is quite strong and it's easy to spot it amid the dark; it's also possible to see the other side (that is, the real world) if close enough to the hole.

The **passage will close** once you end up in the real world, although other creatures inside the domain can still see and use it - that gate is simply a one-way journey, and to enter the witches' domain again you have to repeat the **"ritual"** (walking backwards etc...) from the start.

The hags, on the other hand, can **open and close a gate** wherever they want, as long as the portal appears in the forest (borders work too)

They cannot **forcibly** close the main gate.

*For the sake of simplicity, use the stat block of a Green Hag for these hags.*

# "THEM"

*One word of advice: if you're walking in Zuccavia and hear footsteps right behind you - don't turn around.*

Weird beings of pure malice, nothing is creepier than **"Them"**: pale kids wearing worn out masks that randomly appear whenever you least expect it. Or whenever you think about them.

Indeed, because the first rule is **"If you think about Them, Them will come for you."**

The merely thought of their existence - let alone whispering their name - is enough to feel a cold breeze on your back, and notice multiple yellow eyes staring at you from afar.

Such **silhouettes** will steadily get **closer and closer**, sometimes after disappearing from your view for a bit (a matter of minutes or hours) until their mouths are so close their breath can tickle your ears. Only the current target(s) will notice such presences.

One thing is sure though - once they've set their eyes on you, **it's just a matter of time before they get to you.**

What's surprising is that children born within the domain **implicitly** know about Them, and understand the danger behind such beings.

Still, it only takes one second to think about them by mistake. Perhaps because of the strong wind blowing outside, perhaps because of a weird shadow in a corner.

And when they strike once, fear and paranoia spread like a disease throughout the land.

"Them" are possibly the only **taboo** in the whole domain, and no one wants to talk or hear anything about them. If a party member attempts to initiate a discussion they will promptly be cut off and directed towards the **library**.

**Old books** about these strange creatures are covered by dust in the **old library** and can be found within few minutes: they have never been removed from the bookshelves, for touching them would be the same as asking to be found by Them after all.

According to the legends one of the earliest signs that "Them" are coming for you is the presence of a small **wooden disk** that keeps appearing on you.

There's a creepy silhouette carved on it, and even if the victim does not know anything about "Them" holding it is enough to receive a visit which will, as a result, start the sick chain of events involving "Them".

It doesn't matter if you throw it away, destroy it or pass it to someone else: a perfect copy of said item will **keep returning** to you.

One member of the party was given such a disk by a **hag**: the crone thought that by doing so the monsters would've dealt with the players in their stead - why get your hands dirty when something else can do it, after all?

It goes without saying that an identical disk appeared on her shortly after: the main reason why the hags rarely leave their pocket dimension is that it's the only safe spot they've found in the whole domain.

## WHAT THE BOOKS SAY

Their **modus operandi** is as follows: shortly after the victim attracts their attention, the unlucky person will spot, from time to time, various creepy figures staring at them from afar - they may be behind a tree in the forest, or in a back street staring at your window - it's not unusual to spot them slowly moving towards the target(s).

Interacting with these entities will be useless, and most of the time they will just disappear in a heartbeat, only to manifest themselves again a couple of minutes or hours later at a shorter distance.

Once they're close enough, the victim may notice new details, such as bloody hands, hidden axes and the like - "Them" will keep acting as usual.

Old books contain several interviews of people claiming they suffered **creepy hallucinations** as a side-effect of this pursue: insects emerging from their skins, limbs suddenly turning into mud and falling off, monsters appearing out of nowhere and dismembering someone nearby are only few of the countless depositions. Everything would feel so real and tangible that at one point **discerning reality became almost impossible** : imagine being attacked by a real monster, believing it's only in your head until it's too late.

Some scholars suggested these creatures **feed on fear**, hence their slow and stressful hunt; others claimed part of their power could be **turning delusions into reality**, thus explaining some otherwise inexplicable monster's attacks.

If "Them" get too close, their behavior will change for the worse: they will unleash their homicidal fury against the victim, chopping them off and tearing their limbs apart.

**Getting killed** by "Them" may sound like a mercy to some, but it's only the beginning of a **deeper nightmare**: the killed victim will find themselves still alive shortly after the attack, with vague memories about what happened just before their death. Wounds are generally healed, although some may endure even after the so-called "revival".

Each time someone is killed by these creatures, part of their memories and life force slips away, until the victim becomes an empty husk, suffering a never-ending torture.

Some may say that, if you're not from Zuccavia, dying too many times will first make you **forget about your previous life**, thus turning you into a proper **citizen** of the domain, but that's just a conjecture.

Perhaps becoming a citizen will, among other things, make you forget about "Them" for a while, thus letting you live in peace for a bit...

**Getting killed by something else or committing suicide** does not change the outcome, except that it apparently does not deprive the victim of life force; nonetheless, one could still argue that dying and resurrecting is shocking in its own way.

Most of the time it appears these creatures prefer focusing on haunting a single set of victims at time, although they continuously switch targets, sometimes leaving the persecuted untouched even for years - until the poor wretch remembers about them again, that is.

Finally, evidences suggest that the things may periodically undergo a hibernation phase, although the exact duration is still uncertain.

**Attacking** "Them" is useless, as they feel no pain at all, and what would normally kill can only slow them down and create a chance for the targets to escape while the creepy pursues regenerate their missing parts - a matter of minutes even for the direst blows.

Trying to **remove their masks** is madness, just like witnessing whatever dwells behind them: there are no explicit descriptions about that, but everyone agrees it must be something human mind can't withstand.

*A nice touch would be printing said information (written properly, with depositions and the like) and handing them out to the players as they read the various books in the library.*

**The players** have encountered "Them" already once, and it's only a matter of time before the masked monsters will appear again: indeed, "Them" have set their eyes upon the party for the time being.

**One player** having the coin does not mean the others are safe. Still, "Them" could have a predilection for the player carrying the coin, manifesting themselves mainly to them; they could also be the main target for illusions.

## HOW TO USE "THEM" IN YOUR SESSION.

Start with the entities staring at the party (and/or the selected player) from a remarkable distance, and gradually make them get closer.

Remember to play with the **illusion factor**, perhaps with hallucinations based on the targets' fears: moreover, make sure to turn some delusion into reality to further confuse your players (and potentially put them in a great danger).. illusions can be literally everything, from ferocious monsters to hazards (such as the floor becoming quicksand)

One cool way to mess with your party is to start describing something you know it's an illusion and then, once you're satisfied with the result - perhaps after oneshotting a player - simply change the subject and keep talking about what was happening before the delirium, faking ignorance to your players' questions regarding the matter.

"Me? I've never described such a scene, what are you talking about?"

## STATS

Giving "Them" stats would **defy** the whole point of their nature. Use them however you want to, but remember that they do not have to roll for a saving throw or an attack roll - and don't you even think of having them get charmed, blinded or whatever - slowing them down is the only possible outcome to whatever action the players may pick, and you get to choose if their attack was successful or not. For the sake of simplicity assume attack rolls above 5 always hit the target, although their usefulness may not be obvious.

Whenever a player is killed by one of them, remove **4 points** among their abilities - do consider giving them madness status of your choices after multiple deaths or delusions.

If a player gazes at what's behind their masks remove **8 points** among their abilities.

Bear in mind points can, and should, be taken from **multiple abilities**, rather than only one: the entity drains your life force as a whole, each aspect of it equally.

If a player dies inside the domain they will (may) respawn shortly after: while not getting killed by "Them" does not make them lose points, you can still apply madness effects or lingering wounds as a side-effect of this revival.

If a player decides to try a mask of Them's for whatever reason they become part of "Them", and lose their character.

*Idea:* if a character has respawned already they count as "undead", and thus suffer from Turn Undead and the like.

# THE GRAVEYARD

**D**ragons love surrounding themselves with treasures and riches, so it's only natural that in this domain a fitting hoard would be a huge pile of sweets. It's been a while since a dragon called **Peda** seized control of an old graveyard, claiming it as its new lair.

Much to its surprise, the dragon discovered about the local currency the first time it demanded a tribute to the village: few seconds after the initial astonishment Peda realized candies are a far better pleasure than gold.

The villagers are to pay a tribute **each month** in order not to incur into the dragon's wrath, with the amount of demanded sweets **increasing** as much as the dragon's belly.

Peda picked the **old mausoleum** as its new resting ground, and proceeded to reshape the main room to its liking: most of the ancient columns and statues have been either demolished or beyond repair.

After getting fatter and fatter at one point the dragon became unable to leave that room without destroying the whole structure, but still threatens to do so if it doesn't receive its monthly tribute in time.

The old mausoleum is the only big building in the whole graveyard, its main room is situated underground, and it's possible to reach the latter through a short and dark flight of stairs in a dirty, narrow hallway.

The entrance of this building stands out as the rest of the hill is adorned with modest graves and statues.

The dragon spends most of its time either eating or snoring, but always wary of potential thieves - not a single candy must leave its sanctuary!

## COMBAT

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When fighting against the dragon, remember that Peda will **always** focus whoever is carrying most sweets, let alone if said candies are from its hoard.

Furthermore, smashing even a single candy is a blasphemous act which must be paid with death.

The main room is supported by **six** big columns, some of which are partly buried by sweets, and is mostly covered by clusters of tarts and candies; those spots count as difficult terrain – if you want to spice things up sinking may be a concrete risk as well. Still, players can also use them to hide from the dragon, or cover from most of its stronger attacks.

**One** of them getting **destroyed** may entail part of the roof falling; destroying **all of them** will result in the room **collapsing** in few seconds, burying whatever is still inside it.

If the players **escape** with stolen goods the dragon will spend a lot of time digging a path to reach the surface (the hallway is too narrow for its belly) before spreading chaos throughout the domain.

If the dragon attempts to follow the characters outside of the main room, it will get stuck in the hallway, wasting two turns before getting free and going back to the main hall. While the dragon is trapped debris will fall from the roof, potentially hitting the characters (you may call for a **Dexterity Saving Throw** to avoid bludgeoning damage)

# THE FIELDS AND THE PUMPKINS.

**P**umpkins are, surprisingly enough, the main source of food in the domain. Lots of pumpkin fields are scattered throughout the land, and it's not too hard to find isolated farms while traveling in Zuccavia. Pumpkins can feel the **influence** of the pumpkin knight - reason why he usually does not get too close - and will slowly animate, developing their own consciousness.

The effect is even **stronger** in the village, because some tarts have been made with a piece of the knight. Few hours after the party arrive in the village pumpkins are **granted life** and start attacking people. Their goal? **Revenge** against humanity.

While all pumpkins share the same ultimate goal, their short-time objective may differ depending on the time and place. The pumpkins in the fields will set farms on fire, uproot their still dormant comrades from the earth, attack farmers and try to plant them, after knocking them out and digging a larger hole, in the wrong - a fitting punishment for peasants. The pumpkins in the village will capture as many villagers as possible, tie them up, and then reenact the festival in their own, morbid way. Some victims will become stuffing for tarts, others will be used as lantern, few may be imprisoned inside the wicker man, and so on. All the captured humans are hold in the plaza while the pumpkins are creating a giant bonfire in the middle to cook them finely.

The party may still be in the village when the pumpkins awake: in that case, it would be an all-out war - think of a zombie invasion, but with more vitamin A. Or they could be away and arrive only when the pumpkins are getting ready for the festival - if they care about the village's safety, that is.

*"The pumpkins are acting strange."  
A local folk*

Pumpkins have an incredibly keen mind, and can easily talk and negotiate in **Common**.

They usually do not fight until death and have a strong sense of self-preservation.

Even if they hate humans they could cooperate with them against a bigger threat, or if ordered by the Pumpkin Knight, whom they worship as a (possibly headless) God.

Lastly, the players may even pose as ambassadors for humanity and try to reach a compromise to make peace with the orange creatures (who may consider the offer, if deemed valid)



# UNITED WE STAND

"You have my axe! And my roots!"

While there are multiple individuals the party may clash with, the biggest threat is without any doubts the **giant colossus** the hags are harvesting: still **half-dormant** in the hags' basement at the beginning of the adventure, it won't be long before the monster gets released, one way or another... that could happen either by the hags' hand, or if the players disrupt its gestation, thus forcing its awakening.

The colossus' **objective** is to **destroy and assimilate**, its first target most likely the village, being the biggest source of food. Hags believe they can control it, but if they are not wary enough they may get themselves devoured as well.

The **awakening** does not happen at a fixed time, as it depends on various factors: when you think the time has come, just go for it. If you want the party to rest after, for example, having defeated the dragon they can rest in the Village or do whatever they prefer; remember they will not allowed to leave Zuccavia until the Colossus either destroys the Village or is defeated.

Similarly, the **colossus' strength** will vary, for it's altered by the "ingredients" the hags got to retrieve, that is the dragon's heart; dragon's eyes could possibly boost its power as well, although not as much as the heart. Then you got unexpected ingredients, such as the Pumpkin Knight's corpse, if the hags are fast enough to use it before it regenerates, or a large quantity of animated pumpkins.

These two cases would not happen under normal circumstances, but God only knows what the players may do and, as said, hags are smart beings who will adapt their strategy in a heartbeat.

Remember they can open a gate for the Witches'Lair - possibly to capture/kidnap ingredients - wherever they want, as long as they do it in the forest.

If the **hags** are still alive and well when the colossus awakes they will drop their facade, revealing their true plan and potentially **thanking the players** for helping them, if that's what happened.

Either way, whether to **enhance** the colossus' strength or simply **fake** it is up to you, and should also depend on the party that will have to face it: if you want to make it stronger consider boosting its damage, giving the core more hp and other nasty effects etc.

## WHAT WILL THE COLOSSUS DO?

Start its slow rampage towards the village, of course.

The presence of such a giant monster will not go unnoticed, and a quick glance will be enough to realize its potential destructive power: this may lead to armistices and temporary alliances among all those involved.

If the players need to take a rest, you can have the colossus stand still for a while, or have the pumpkins/Pumpkin Knight try to hold its advance while the party can recover.

The colossus looks nearly **invincible** from the outside, and no attack will be able to actually harm it: each major limb has a certain threshold (more about that later) that will cause the piece to fall off once exceeded, potentially slowing the colossus or depriving it of certain attacks. In a couple of turns the missing piece will grow back again, **fully regenerated and operating**.

The colossus will occasionally **lose parts** of its ever-mutating body and drop hordes of undead on the way.

If the players decide to target the chest, they will notice the central area is even sturdier than the rest, and emanate a deafening pulse every time it's hit - that's where the **core** is. Attacking the lower or lateral side of the torso will eventually open small gaps followed by a jet of gastric fluids.

The colossus will destroy everything on its way, be it a field, a farm or the village itself; there's nothing the villagers can do except for trying to burn it with fire, scream, despair and die. Its attacks will not be that strong at first, but its power will steadily grow with time, making it extremely dangerous.

If the players are helped by someone else, treat this aid in a narrative way: the pumpkins may help them severing a leg, or evacuate farmers in their stead, or keep the dropped undead busy and let the party focus on the big deal. If the players are inside the colossus pumpkins will also, from time to time, open holes in its torso so that the creatures inside it can catch a breath of fresh air.

Same for the Pumpkin Knight, except that his attack will be slightly stronger, and that if the colossus is in the middle of a pumpkin field, he can animate vines to immobilize it for two turns.

Both may suggest to oblivious players that perhaps they have to attack the monster from the inside, and could help them immobilizing the colossus' mouth so that the players can safely go down, or help them opening a hole in the torso; if the players are having a hard time some pumpkins can join them in the battle inside the colossus, or heal them from the outside whenever a hole is opened.

I'm sure they can help in other ways - if you can think of something cool, don't hesitate to add it (NPCs work well as deus ex machina if needed, am I right?)

The only way to defeat the colossus is from the inside, meaning that the players will have to reach it, one way or another: that can be achieved by entering from the mouth, from a hole opened in the chest, or by being swallowed.

Again, if you do not like this idea feel free to alter it to your liking.

## INSIDE THE COLOSSUS

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A **fetid jumble of flesh, bones and loam**, flooded by blood and gastric juices, perpetually trying to assimilate foreign bodies.

No matter how they ended up in there, the sight will be the same: a hell of flesh and blood.

If the players pass through the **mouth** they have to climb down the trachea before reaching the "main" room; on the other hand, getting there from the **torso** is much faster, but potentially more dangerous because of the continuous gastric fluid gougng out from the wound – deadly both because of its high acidity, and its strong intensity which could make them lose balance.

The stomach is filled with **acid**, and contains scattered "islands" that float on the liquid; a quick glance will be enough to notice that this space is much larger than what it could possibly be, as if space itself is being stretched and mutated by this creature's presence – they definitely do not want any of that to happen in the real world.

I've included a rough sketch for the area, you can use it as a starting point: pick one island as the arriving point from the trachea, and another one if they (or anyone else) enter the colossus from the torso.

In the middle of it a **spherical glowing core**, held midair by **four tethers** - not for a simple matter of equilibrium of forces, mind you, meaning that severing only one of them won't make the core bounce or move: the core does not appear to be protected by anything, and can be attacked - though the surrounding environment will do its best to prevent that.

If the core is attacked from afar a **flesh wall** will erect to absorb the blows and cover it from that direction, forcing the players to move to another island.

**Undead** will keep getting released from the walls to attack the players - apparently they love grabbing characters and throwing themselves into the acid - and the walls will sometimes attempt to devour nearby characters. The colossus may **gulp down** whatever it can to damage the characters (especially when they're still in the throat) or move abruptly to throw them off balance.

If **all the tethers are severed** the core, still floating but now movable, can be tossed inside the acid, making it suffer damage at the start of each initiative turn. It won't float, by the way.

If the **hags** are inside the colossus and alive they will attempt to stop the players from damaging it, although they are not exempted from occasional attacks from the "defensive system".

Once the core is **destroyed** the colossus will stop moving after few more turns, ceasing its rampage and going dormant again. Your choice if the undead keep moving or crumble as soon as that happens.

# ENDING(S)

If the players get to stop the colossus before it's too late townsfolk will be immensely grateful, just like the Pumpkin Knight, who will promptly take over as the **moderator** between the awakened pumpkins and humans to stop the animosity. He could consider forgiving the players even if they failed to deliver a new head to him, and let them leave the domain; in the event that they both brought it a new head and stopped the monster he could reward them with gifts and sweets.

Once the players reach the borders they will notice nothing is preventing them from leaving the domain, and just before walking away they will meet **Sally** for the last time. Read the following:

*The little girl is looking at you from afar, her silhouette getting lost amid the mist.  
As her contour becomes fuzzier another one appears right beside hers – the Pumpkin Knight, his knees on the floor as he wait for Sally to climb on his shoulders.  
Everyone hail to the Pumpkin King, now! Or so they say.  
But he's only a knight, and she's the queen of this realm.  
"The heroes defeat evil people and save the village, just like a fairy tale.  
But reality is harsher, and things do not always go the way you want.  
Thank you for making me dream a bit more –  
I hope to see you again next year, adventurers."  
The queen walks away, delighted by your unaware performance.  
The fake darklord is satisfied too, for the play pleased his lady and that's what matters the most.  
A ghostly voice echoes in your head.  
"Trick or Treat?"  
I guess you got tricked after all.  
FIN*

If the players **failed** to stop the colossus, died trying or fled it won't be long before silence embraces the domain, while fire silently burns the village to the ground.

If the players are dead they will revive hours later in the middle of a now devastated village. Either way it won't be long before they met the only survivor of this massacre, **Sally**. Read the following.

*"It does not matter if it's a dream or reality, heroes will never come and save me.  
This is my punishment, and you did nothing to relieve my pain.  
Go away now, I don't want to play anymore."  
That's what the once cheerful girl said before disappearing from your sight.  
You can perceive the faint glow of a shiny object half-buried on the ground, right where the girl was standing.  
As you get closer you immediately recognize it – a golden coin.  
A bad omen, that's for sure. It turned out the little girl was right, because the heroes she was waiting for have yet to arrive.  
FIN*

Either way, as they walk away from the domain a **thick fog** will eventually engulf them, making them wander aimlessly until a familiar caravan appears out of nowhere.

*We've been looking for you - do you even know how many domains we had to visit because of your idiocy? Now pick your faith: you can either choke in the fog, or pay your debt. Our lord is not too pleased by your actions, but he may still make use of you. Follow us: he is requesting you for dinner."*

New **Curse of Stradh**'s plot hook: the **drunk muddlers**.

## A QUICK RECAP

As written, the adventure should be divided into the following parts:

- The Awakening
- The Party visit The Village, and take part in the festival
- The Party meet The Pumpkin Knight
- The Party wander around Zuccavia in search of a magical pumpkin and/or a way to settle their debt
- ???
- The Colossus awakes
- ???
- The Party can finally leave the domain

With the incipit and final fight being the only guaranteed points - mid part can vary from one party (and DM) to another.

Each section can last as much as you want, and it highly depends on your team: if they're interested in interacting with the townsfolk and monkey around at the festival that portion of the adventure can take up more than expected - as long as you're having fun, all works.

Similarly you can decide to focus on specific plot points and scrap others if you do not like my configuration, or railroad your team with a more linear oneshot if that's your desire. As usual this document is only meant to be a sketch you can work on.

I've decided to create a mainly comical adventure with few slightly "creepier" elements, but it shouldn't be difficult to focus on only one of these two aspects depending on your goal: it goes without saying what's written in this adventure is nothing but my humble **recommendation**, and it is not by any means the only way to handle this adventure... so modify it to your heart's content, and make sure to spend a spooky evening!

The monster block is calibrated for level 5 characters, although it's possible to alter the stats to make them appropriate for a weaker (or stronger) team. Furthermore I did not have time to test them with multiple teams, meaning that some tweaks may be necessary... still, having lots of NPCs at your service you can always use them to help disadvantaged players; if, on the other hand, the team is stronger than expected, raising the damage output and resistance only takes few seconds, and you can insert nastier undead that will surely increase the difficulty.

Lastly, I'd like to specify English is not my native language, and that the reader is bound to run into a (hopefully contained) multitude of mistakes; nevertheless I do hope the general meaning will always be as clear as possible, and I'm available to elucidate possible confusing excerpts if needed.

Adventure written with The Homebrewery.

# APPENDIX: MONSTERS

## PUMPKIN KNIGHT (WEAKENED)

*Medium fey*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate armor)

**Hit Points** 180 (19d8 + 95)

**Speed** 33ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	13 (+2)	19 (+4)

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

**Damage Vulnerabilities** necrotic, fire

**Senses** passive Perception 16, blindsight 120 ft.

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Abyssal, Sylvan

**Revival** If killed the Pumpkin Knight gains a new body in 1d4 hours, regaining all his hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears wherever he wants.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The Pumpkin Knight makes two longsword attacks.

**Longsword** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

**Find Steed** at will.

**Hellfire Orb (1/Day).** The Pumpkin Knight hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Reaction

**Parry.** The Pumpkin Knight adds 6 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Pumpkin Knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

## COLOSSUS

*Huge undead construct*

**Armor Class** it doesn't matter

**Speed** 20ft.

**Condition Immunities** all of them

**Body Parts** The colossus is formed by 6 body parts: two legs, two arms, one head and the torso. Each part, with the exception of the torso, has 30 hit points, and it is destroyed once its hit points reach zero.

**Sturdier Torso** The area around the "heart" is indestructible; this property becomes obvious after trying to scratch it. The torso has 20 hit points and a small gap is created in it once its hit points reach zero. If that happens gastric fluid comes out from the wound: each creature standing on the liquid's trajectory must succeed on a **DC14 Dexterity saving throw**, or be hit by the flux and take **2d6 necrotic damage**. If a creature is climbing on the colossus when this happens it must succeed on a **DC14 Strength saving throw** or fall from it.

**Regeneration** Each missing limb will regenerate in two turns.

**Siege Monster.** The colossus deals double damage to objects and structures.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The colossus makes one Colossal Punch for each arm still attached to its body.

**Ravenous Hunger** *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* **2d6 piercing** damage, and the target is swallowed (it starts its next turn in the trachea)

**Colossal Punch.** *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* **3d8 bludgeoning** damage.

**Unpredictability** The colossus stops and does nothing for two turns, before starting its rampage once again.

**Disposable Pieces (Recharge 5-6)** The colossus tears a piece of its own body apart, throwing it towards a creature surrounding it. The target and all the creatures within 10 feet from it must succeed on a **DC14 Dexterity saving throw** or take **2d6 bludgeoning** damage and be knocked prone. A horde of zombie enters a space of your choice within 5 feet of the target.

## CORE

*Medium Undead Construct*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 142 (15d10 + 60)

**Speed** 0 ft.

**Immobile** The core can't move, and can't be moved unless the four **tethers** have been severed already. Each tether has an AC of 10 and 20 hit points. A creature touching a tether, or starting its turn touching them takes **1d6 necrotic** damage. Each tether is 10 feet above its corresponding platform (that is, 10 feet above that ground level if the island is currently emerged)

**Acid liquid** A creature that starts its turn inside the gastric fluids takes 2d8 necrotic damage. A creature that starts its third turn in a row inside the gastric fluids gains a level of exhaustion as well.

**Lack of Oxygen** A creature inside the colossus can't breathe properly and is suffocating. Each creature can breathe again as soon as a hole is opened in the colossus' torso; said gap will regenerate and close on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties)

## Reactions

**Countermeasure.** If the Core is hit with a ranged attack from an attacker that it's not on the central island, it can use its reaction to summon a **Flesh Wall** in the closest spaces to cover itself from that direction. If you're playing on a grid the Flesh Wall occupies 3 squares in a row. Whenever a Flesh Wall spawns each creature in the same space must make a **DC14 Dexterity saving throw**, getting grappled by it on a failed save.

## Lair Action

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	5 (-3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	13 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft.

**Languages** None

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the core takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the core can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The colossus gulps down various debris: each creature in its belly must make a **DC14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking **2d6 bludgeoning** damage and getting knocked prone on a failed save, taking half as much damage on a successful one.
- Undead start coming out from the walls, attacking stranger bodies. The undead appears wherever the core wants, as long as there's a free space for it.
- The colossus is shaking ferociously: each creature inside it must succeed on a **DC14 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone. A creature failing the check by 5 or more is pushed up to 10 feet towards a random direction instead.
- A bubble of gastric fluid and malice blows up: each creature inside the colossus must make a **DC14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking **2d8 necrotic** damage on a failed save. Covered creatures automatically succeed the roll.
- Tissues get flaccid, turning the whole area into difficult terrain. A creature inside the belly is targeted by skeletal hands coming out from the floor. It must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or be grappled by them (escape DC 14)
- Roll a dX, where X is the number of floating islands around the central one; the selected island starts trembling, and will sink on the next initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) Another missing island of your choice will emerge at the same time.
- Nothing happens.

## UNDEAD (EXAMPLE)

Roll Monster

1-4 **1d4+2 Ghast** (MM, page 148.)

5-8 **Skeletal Swarm** (GoS, page 254)

9-12 **Undead Bulette** (WDMM, page 90)

13-16 **Horde of Zombies**

17-20 **1d4-1 (min 1) Feral Undead**

## FLESH WALL

Large undead

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)

Speed 5ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned, charmed, frightened

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** None

**Immobile** The Flesh Wall can't move, nor be moved by anything else.

**Assimilation.** Creatures pulled inside the flesh wall have total cover. A creature within 5 feet of the wall can use their action to try and pull a creature out of the wall. Doing so requires a successful DC 14 Strength check. The wall can hold only up to two Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.

### Action

**Multiattack.** The living wall makes two claws attacks. In place of one of its claws attacks it can make a grab attack.

**Claws.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

**Grab.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is a Large or smaller creature. When the flesh wall starts its turn with a grappled creature, it can use its bonus action to assimilate the creature. While absorbed, the creature is blinded and restrained, can't breathe, and has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the living wall. At the start of each of the flesh wall's turns, an absorbed creature takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. An absorbed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the wall.

Optional: since the Flesh Wall occupies three spaces, you may ask the players which space they want to focus their attacks on; in that case that space becomes unoccupied after it's dealt 30 hit points.

## HORDE OF ZOMBIES

Large swarm of medium undead

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 66 (12d6 + 24)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	15 (+3)	15 (+3)	4 (-3)

**Condition Immunities** stunned, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.

**Swarm** The horde of zombies can occupy another creature's space and vice versa.

### Actions

**Multiattack** The horde of zombies uses its drag under the corpses ability if able, then uses two Slam attacks.

**Drag under the corpses.** The horde attempts to crush a creature under its weight. The target must succeed on a **DC13 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone and considered grappled (escape DC 13). This ability is available only if the horde has more than 33 hit points.

**Slam** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (3d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or be pulled into the horde space.

## ANIMATED PUMPKIN

medium plant

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 31(8d6)

Speed 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire, necrotic

**Senses** passive Perception 14, blindsight 60 ft.

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

### Actions

**Claws** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. **Hit 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing** damage.

**Seed Spit (1/day)** The animated pumpkin spits seeds in a 30 feet cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 3d8 piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Terrifying Glare.** The animated pumpkin targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the animated pumpkin, the target must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom saving throw** or be magically frightened until the end of the animated pumpkin's next turn. The frightened target is paralyzed.

**Variant:** *Animated Pumpkins as Innate Spellcasters. Animated Pumpkins are innately magical creatures that can master a few spells using this variant. The animated pumpkin's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 12, ), requiring no material components:*

*At will: Poison spray, Speak with animals, Purify food and drink*

*2/day: Cure wounds, Gust of wind, Entangle, Spike growth*

*1/day: Conjure Animals*

## FERAL UNDEAD

Medium undead

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75(10d8+30)

Speed 13ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft

**Deadly Explosion** When the feral undead dies it explodes. Each creature within 10 feet of it must make a DC14 Dexterity saving throw, taking **2d6 bludgeoning** damage plus **2d6 poison** damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The feral undead makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Claws** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. **Hit 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing** damage.

**Bite** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. **Hit 5 (1d8 + 3) piercing** damage The target must succeed on a **DC14 Constitution saving throw** or be paralyzed for one turn.

**Shriek (1/day)** Each creature within 60 feet of the feral undead that can hear it and that isn't an undead must succeed on a **DC14 Wisdom saving throw** or be stunned until the end of the feral undead's next turn.



## PEDA

Large dragon, chaotic hungry

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 127 (15d10 + 45)

**Speed** 20ft., flying 10

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Deadly Liquid** If a creature is grappled because of Sweet Shell at the start of the dragon's turn it starts drowning in the jam. A drowning creature is restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw** at the start of each of the dragon's turns or take 13 (2d8 + 4) necrotic damage. If the dragon moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The dragon can have up to two drowning creatures at a time.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

**Claw** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Tarts Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The dragon spits digested tarts and sweets in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 45 (10d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19(+4)	6 (-2)	21 (+5)	12(+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+2)

**Damage Resistance** Necrotic

**Senses** Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

**Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +8 whenever it hides within its hoard

**The Sweetest Dive** The dragon dives into its hoard to hide from enemies. The dragon takes the **Hide Action**. Spruts of smashed food splash in each direction. Each creature in sight who's not covered by something must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**. On a failed save the creature is blinded until the start of its next turn. Whenever the dragon is beneath its hoard it is blinded. A creature can actively look for the hidden dragon in its turn. In that case it must roll for a **Wisdom (Perception) check with disadvantage**: if the result is equal or exceeds whatever the dragon scored with its **stealth check**, then the creature succeeded in detecting the dragon's presence and can point it out to other creatures. The dragon can emerge from the hoard as a bonus action.

**Sweet Shell (1/day).** The dragon covers itself in a thick layer of expired jam. The layer has 40 hit points. Whenever the dragon takes damage, the layer takes the damage instead. If this damage reduces the layer to 0 hit points, the dragon takes any remaining damage. While the layer has 0 hit points, it can't absorb damage, but its magic remains. Whenever the dragon spends two turns hidden in its hoard, the layer regains 20 hit points up to a maximum of 40. A creature that touches the dragon or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it while the layer has more than 0 hit points is grappled (escape DC 16)

Each small platform is  
20 ft x 20 ft

The central platform is  
35 ft x 35 ft, the core is  
in the middle of it

Due to asymmetry the  
central platform is  
closer to the eastern  
platforms

