



5E

THE HORRORS OF HILL HOUSE

FIFTH EDITION COMPATIBLE

Investigate a missing merchant's dilapidated mansion in this 5th-level adventure for the world's greatest roleplaying game

The Horrors of Hill House

The *Horrors of Hill House* is intended for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach halfway to 6th-level. A local merchant has gone missing, accidentally unleashing a demi-plane of oozes upon his household. This campaign takes place in Arden, although it can be set in your own world. Any party composition should be able to finish the adventure with intelligent play.

Background

Durgen Hillstone always wanted to be a wealthy man. He spent his formative years scrounging and scraping by and was determined not to live that way for the rest of his life. He started a small trading business in his teenage years and now, three decades later, Durgen lives a comfortable life with his wife and three sons. Recently though, a series of unfortunate events have caused Durgen to find himself on the precipice of bankruptcy. At his lowest, he used the last of his wealth to acquire a magic crystal, one that could be used to create beautiful gemstones. The unlikely purchase paid off and soon Durgen's home was overflowing with beautiful gems of various colors and clarities. Unfortunately for him, the crystal was actually a prison for an elder ooze, and every "gem" he created was actually a condensed piece of that ooze's essence. Over time, as the crystal was used more and more, its binding powers began to wane. One day, a portal opened between the two realms causing all the "gems" in the house to reanimate as oozes and attack Durgen and his family. Now it's been weeks since anyone saw Durgen. Someone was sent to his home to check on him, but they never returned. Fearing the worst, a reward has been offered for anyone who can provide information on the whereabouts of Durgen, his family, and the messenger sent to check on him.

Adventure Hooks

A Skeleton on the Road. The characters come across a half digested corpse on the road. On it, they find a letter and a map with instructions to go to a place called Hill House and check up on the owner who hasn't been seen in weeks.

Missing But not Forgotten. The characters heard that a prominent local, Durgen Hillstone, has gone missing. No one has seen him or his family in weeks. Fearing the worst, the characters offer to check up on him.

Concerned Coin. The characters are approached by a local merchant. He claims a good friend of his hasn't been seen in weeks. He fears something may have happened to him. He asks the characters to travel to the man's home and check up on him and offers them 250 gp each to do so. He would go himself, but an old war injury prevents him from moving very far.

Travel Encounter: Oozes on the Road

The road ahead leads deep into the hills. The trees here are dead and the grass is wilted and brown. Pools of a black tar-like substance simmer and bubble off to the side.

Encounter: Gray Death: Eight of the pools contain **oozelings**. They use the stat block of the **gray ooze** except they lack the Corrode Metal ability. They attack as soon as the characters get within 60 ft. They fight instinctively and without a sense of self-preservation. When they die, their forms sizzle and melt into the ground.

Hill House

The family home of Durgen Hillstone. It sits on a hill surrounded by trees. Overgrown hedges line the outside of the house and all of the windows are currently closed. The front door is unlocked.

Ceilings. The ceilings here are 10 ft. tall and made of solid oak.

Walls and Floors. The walls and floors are made of solid oak and are painted in various colors per room.

Lighting. Light filters in through the cracks in the shutters. Any room with a window is dimly lit.

Unusual Features. The entire house reeks of damp and mold. The floors are sticky. The bottom of each door leading into a room with an ooze is partially corroded. Whenever combat occurs, roll percentile dice for each ooze in the house. There is a 20% chance they're drawn to the noise.

Bathrooms. There are three bathrooms in the house. They each contain a **black pudding** in the bath tub.

The following locations are keyed to the map for ease of reference.

1. Living Room

A comfortable living room. Two large chairs sit before a fireplace. It has a cozy feeling to it.

The fireplace here is cold. It hasn't been used in weeks. The furniture is covered in a thin film of sticky goo.



2. Dining Room

A large dining room. A table dominates the center of the room along with six chairs. It appears as though someone was in the middle of eating and left in a hurry.

The table has half eaten and partially digested food on it. The silverware is also partially corroded. Durgen and his family were eating when the oozes attacked. Anyone who investigates the room can see there are signs of a struggle.

3A. Bedroom

This room contains a desk, chair, bed, wardrobe, and shelves. A fireplace sits cold against the northern wall. An unfinished letter sits on the desk.

The letter is to a cousin. It talks about a magic crystal that makes gems.

Encounter: Ochre Jelly. There's an **ochre jelly** hiding under the bed. It slithers out and attacks anyone who enters the room.

3B. Bedroom

This room contains a desk, chair, bed, wardrobe, and shelves. A fireplace sits cold against the northern wall. A Map and globe sit on the desk.

The map has a course plotted across it. It appears someone was planning a trip across the kingdom.

Encounter: Ochre Jelly. There's an **ochre jelly** hiding in the wardrobe. It attacks anyone who opens it.

3C. Bedroom

This room contains a desk, chair, bed, wardrobe, and shelves. A fireplace sits cold against the northern wall. A door sits on the eastern wall.

Encounter: Ochre Jelly. There's an **ochre jelly** hiding in the fireplace chimney. It attacks anyone who comes near it.

4. Master Bedroom

This bedroom is large. It contains a double bed, a desk and chair, a wardrobe, and two large armchairs in front of a dead fireplace. A door sits on the northern wall.

There is a letter and some notes on the desk. They detail an upcoming transaction where Durgen will be selling large gemstones.

Encounter: Ochre Jellies. There are two **ochre jellies** in this room. One is hiding under the bed, the other is under the desk. They attack anyone who gets close.

5. Study

Floor to ceiling bookshelves live the walls of this room. A desk sits against the window with a comfortable chair.

The books on the shelf contain information about different trade goods, sale prices, regions of rarity, etc. This appears to be where Durgen did most of his work.

Treasure: Hidden Scrolls. There are three spell scrolls of *magic missile* hidden in one of the books. They can be found with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

6. Armory

Racks of weapons and armor line one wall of this room. Blueprints sit on a desk against another.

There is one weapon and one suit of armor for each character in this room. They can be whatever types you want. As the characters fight the oozes, their weapons and armor will degrade. This room serves as a way for them to swap out their damaged gear once during the adventure.

Treasure: Unfinished Work. The blueprints are for a new type of sword. They're unfinished, but a craftsman would pay for them. They're worth 100 gp.



7. Kitchen

A cold oven sits against the north wall. A pantry and assorted crates of goods sit against the north and south walls, respectively. A door can be seen against the southern wall.

The food here has all rotted and the containers are partially digested.

Trap Door: Basement. There is a trap door to the basement in the small room to the south of the kitchen. It appears as though it was melted, and now there's just a gaping hole and a ladder leading down.

The Basement

Dark and damp, the basement is covered in cobwebs and full of old merchandise and supplies.

Ceilings. The ceilings here are 10 ft. tall and made of solid oak.

Walls and Floors. The walls and floors are made of stone.

Lighting. There is no light in the basement.

Unusual Features. The entire basement reeks of damp and mold. The bottom of each door shows signs of corrosion.

The following locations are keyed to the map for ease of reference.

1. Basement

Crates and cobwebs dominate this space.

The room is empty except for wooden crates and a small planning desk. It has notes about transactions on it.

2. Merchant Storage

This large room contains various crates. Cobwebs hang from the ceiling. A metal gate blocks an alcove on the western wall and a door sits against the eastern one.

Encounter: Gelatinous Cubes. There are four **gelatinous cubes** in this room. They remain motionless until someone steps into one of them, then they animate and try to engulf the characters. Force the characters to move around during this encounter. Try not to pin them into a corner. The cubes won't move through the crates so allow the players to leap over those to escape.

Treasure: Locked Chest. The gate is locked. It can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Inside is a locked chest. The chest requires a DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to pick the lock or a DC 15 Strength check to pry the chest open. It contains the following.

- 575 gp
- 428 sp
- 345 cp
- *eyes of minute seeing*
- *bag of holding*

3. Food Storage

Crates of rotten and partially dissolved food line the walls. Barrels that once contained ale have spilled across the floor. Against the southern wall, three large kegs can be seen.

Secret Door: Hidden Keg. There is a secret door behind the middle keg. Anyone who investigates the room can locate it with a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

4. Hidden Passage

The door behind the keg leads to a dark and roughly built passageway. It heads south before breaking off to the east and west.

The floor here is made of roughly worked stone. The walls are stable, but shoddily built. It appears as though this structure has been here much longer than the rest of the house.

5. Hidden Study

Bookcases line the walls of this room. A desk and table dominate the center of the room. The desk contains notes of some kind. The table is covered in scrolls.

The notes on the desk detail Durgen's attempts to get the magic crystal to work. There are blueprints for a machine that can extract gemstones from it.

Treasure: Scrolls. There are six spell scrolls on the table.

- *magic missile*
- *thunderwave*
- *guiding bolt*
- *inflict wounds*
- *shield*
- *shield of faith*



6. Hidden Machine

A large machine dominates the center of this room. Large gem-like objects can be seen piled up in front of it. On top, a massive glowing green crystal pulsates.

As soon as the characters enter this room, the crystal begins to arc energy. Have each character make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the energy strikes them and they are pulled into the crystal. A creature can also willingly touch the crystal. If they do, they are teleported inside of it.

Prison of the Elder Ooze

You stand upon a rocky island in a sea of swirling green liquid. It bubbles and moves as if it possess some sentience. The sky above is a starless void. In the middle of the island, you can see what appears to be a massive orb. It seems to contain remnants of corpses and items of varying sizes.

Encounter: Gelatinous Prisoner. The sphere is a **elder ooze**. A more intelligent and much deadlier version of the **gelatinous cube**. The crystal serves as its prison. It cannot speak and it understands no language other than the limited telepathy all oozes share. It lives simply to consume. As soon as the characters arrive, it attacks, trying to engulf as many of them as possible. It lacks a sense of self-preservation and fights to the death.

Treasure: Remnants of the Past. When the elder ooze is killed, the prison ejects the characters and some of the equipment that had been inside it. The following can be found on the ground around the characters.

- Twelve gems of varying shapes and sizes worth 100 gp each
- *+1 shield*
- *cloak of protection*

Aftermath

With the elder ooze destroyed, the remnants of it that existed outside the crystal prison dissolve and cease to exist. This means that any gems that were previously sold or traded vanish without a trace. This could cause someone to come looking for Durgen, only to find out the truth about what happened to him and his family. The sticky film that covered most of the house will dissolve over the course of 2d4 days, and more than likely someone will eventually move in not knowing what once happened there. The locals will mourn Durgen and his kin and thank the characters for their help in dealing with the oozes.



Elder Ooze

Huge ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	5 (-3)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Ooze Cube. The cube takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to the cube's Engulf and has disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures inside the cube can be seen but have total cover.

A creature within 5 feet of the cube can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the cube. Doing so requires a successful DC 14 Strength >check, and the creature making the attempt takes 21 (6d6) acid damage.

The cube can hold only one Large creature or up to nine Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.

Actions

Multiattack. The elder ooze makes two pseudopod attacks and then uses its engulf ability.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, Reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) acid damage.

Engulf. The cube moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the cube enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the cube. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw.

On a failed save, the cube enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 21 (6d6) acid damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 42 (12d6) acid damage at the start of each of the cube's turns. When the cube moves, the engulfed creature moves with it.

An engulfed 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 cube.



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