



# MODERN

## TEAM BRAVO:

## TOUCH OF DEATH



By Eric Cagle

A Short Adventure for Four 6th-Level Heroes

With the influx of Shadow into our world, musty tomes and relics imbued with mystic powers are beginning to surface everywhere. Many who desire power above all else go to great pains to find and use such items, regardless of the cost.

One self-taught Mage employed such a relic—a book of dark and arcane lore—to learn the secret of creating constructs from dead human flesh. Though he was able to meet most of his needs with the bounty of dead flesh stored at the local morgue, he discovered that certain body parts had to meet particular specifications, and murder was the best way to obtain those. So he launched a killing spree that lasted until one of his would-be victims turned the tables and slew him. Now that his creations are free, they will continue to act on his last commands until they too are stopped once and for all.

*TEAM BRAVO: Touch of Death* is an adventure set in the modern era, but it includes fantastic elements such as dark magic and blasphemous creations.

### PREPARATION

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* to run this adventure. To get started, print out this adventure (including the maps) and read it through. Familiarize yourself in particular with the flesh golem from the rulebook and the new creature called the crawling claw, which is presented at the end of this adventure.

Opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form in the areas where they appear. Any text in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players.

At least one of the characters undertaking this mission should have ranks in the Investigate skill, or at the very least, decent Search and Spot modifiers. Characters who are familiar with magic and the paranormal are also highly encouraged.

## BACKGROUND

Antoine Le Mere was always an odd child. Throughout his formative years, he displayed a remarkable intellect, a great capacity to absorb languages, and an insatiable curiosity about antiquities. Raised in a wealthy, insular family, Antoine was allowed to pursue his passions with little interference. His interest in odd, disturbing topics made him more than a bit antisocial, so he never developed any close friendships.

After his parents died in a mysterious accident, Antoine inherited the family fortune and estate. While combing his ancestral home for legal documents, he discovered an ancient tome that his father, who was well versed in ancient cultures, had hidden away. The wealth of arcane lore between its covers instantly fascinated Antoine, who devoted his every waking moment over the next several months to learning its secrets.

Over time, Antoine became a capable Mage. As he continued to plumb the information within the book, he began to learn dark, powerful spells, some of which could even give a semblance of life to dead tissue. Pushed beyond the brink of sanity by the book's corrupting content, Antoine decided to put his new knowledge to use by constructing a flesh golem.

The project would require a variety of unusual supplies, including several fresh corpses. After considerable research, Antoine found the perfect source—Dr. John Baker, an elderly coroner at the Old County Morgue who was down on his luck and low on scruples. Through bribes, threats, and intimidation, Antoine eventually convinced the coroner to provide him with the body parts he required for his project.

Eventually, however, LeMere decided that the corpses of those who ended up at the Old County Morgue were not always of sufficient quality to provide the parts he required, so he began augmenting his supply via murder. The corpses of LeMere's victims began to arrive at the morgue, missing various body parts. Over and over, Dr. Baker concealed forensic evidence that could have led the police to LeMere. Eventually, the coroner's psyche crumbled under the burden of covering up all these illegal and unethical acts, and he became nearly as delusional as his patron.

LeMere decided to ensure his privacy during the lengthy period it would take to assemble the golem by creating his own arcane "watchdogs" via another ritual described in his book. To that end, he began severing the hands of his victims before leaving the scenes of his crimes, and he convinced Dr. Baker to do the same with the corpses that came to the morgue. Once he had a large supply of these grisly trophies, Antoine used a spell from his book to turn them into twisted constructs known as crawling claws. These unspeakable creatures now roam his home, protecting his inner sanctum from intruders.

Because Antoine's victims are always missing their hands, the police have deduced that they are dealing with one or more ritual killers who mutilate the corpses of their victims in this way because of some demented psychological need or to meet the requirements of some dark and depraved religion. The authorities so far have no idea that the corpses of some indigents and elderly people are often missing their hands and other parts as well by the time the coroner has finished with them. Closed casket funerals are

always recommended in such cases, and so far the families (if any) have always complied.

LeMere recently completed one flesh golem, which he named Khaiba. It has been aiding him in his murder spree to gain body parts for others.

## SYNOPSIS

Pleased by his previous successes, LeMere recently became bolder in his attacks. When he spotted a man who met his specifications leaving a local club, he took up a position in an alley behind the establishment and ordered Khaiba to drag the target there. A struggle ensued, and the would-be victim pulled out a pistol and shot LeMere in the chest. Then he emptied the rest of his clip into the hulking figure that had attacked him. Enraged, the flesh golem lashed out, snapped the man's neck, and threw his body onto a fire escape.

With his dying words, LeMere instructed the golem to make its way back to the Old County Morgue, where most of its assembly had taken place, and to obey Dr. Baker. The golem lumbered back through the shadows to the morgue, and Dr. Baker hid it inside one of the refrigerated lockers where corpses are kept pending autopsy.

The heroes must investigate the murder scene, then go on to LeMere's mansion, where they are attacked by dozens of crawling claws. Within the mad Mage's mansion are his spellbook and a few clues leading to the Old County Morgue. When they arrive there, they must face LeMere's co-conspirator, Dr. Baker, and the flesh golem that now protects him.

## Character Hooks

As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

### Team Bravo in Your Campaign

**TEAM BRAVO:** *Touch of Death* is the third adventure designed for Team Bravo, a cadre of special police officers assigned to handle investigations of bizarre incidents. Team Bravo could also be a subgroup of Department-7 assigned to operate within an established law enforcement organization. In addition to their regular duties, the heroes could occasionally receive advice, resources, and assignments from Department-7. Their superiors there may or may not ask that the heroes remain quiet about their association with Department-7.

Alternatively, the heroes could be private investigators or paranormal researchers who routinely plunge into dangerous situations in search of the truth. Characters who are not police officers may have a bit more leeway as far as methodology goes in conducting investigations, but they are by no means fully protected under the law. Thus, they must carefully weigh the risks of investigative methods such as breaking and entering, assault, and other illegal acts.



- One of the heroes gets a report that an acquaintance was killed outside a nightclub that evening.
- While leaving a club one night, the heroes hear a strange whistling sound followed by gunshots. When they arrive at the scene, they find the bodies as described below. (Do not use the witness described if you decide to employ this hook.)

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins in the wee hours of the morning on the night of LeMere's death. If the heroes are law enforcement officers, they are called in for a briefing by their superior, Lieutenant Durth. If you have used some other hook to involve the heroes in the investigation, adjust the following material accordingly; otherwise, read or paraphrase it when they arrive for their briefing.

"Sit down," says Lieutenant Durth when you report for your briefing. "I'm sorry to disturb you all at this hour, but it's important that you view the crime scene as soon as possible. So I'll make this as short as I can.

"For the past few weeks, the police have been investigating a string of apparently ritualistic murders. So far, the detectives have deduced that there are no connections among the victims, except that all were males in excellent health. The murders took place in back alleys as well as private residences, indicating that the perpetrator spent considerable time stalking the victims in order to discover the best time and place to strike. Each victim was missing both hands, and many were missing other body parts as well. All of the amputations had been performed with extreme skill.

"Now there are two more bodies. Though neither of these is missing any body parts, the officers on the scene still suspect some tie-in with the previous murders—something about a knife, I believe. Because of the apparent ritual nature of the murders, the police have decided to turn the investigation over to a team that's experienced with such things. That's where you come in. Any questions?"

Lieutenant Durth answers any questions the heroes have to the best of her knowledge. She can provide all the police reports on the previous crime scenes. Once the heroes are ready, she gives them directions to the crime scene and wishes them well.

## A. THE KILLER'S LAST STAND

The murder scene is a back alley behind a nightclub called the Alchemy Room. The two officers at the scene have cordoned off the area with police tape. They are currently interrogating the witness who found the bodies. The corpses lie where they fell and have not been disturbed.

The murder scene is located in a rough part of town known for its clubs, bars, and extravagant nightlife. The lights of the patrol car parked in the alleyway illuminate

a gruesome tableau. Among the garbage that litters the alley lies the body of a young man in a trenchcoat, covered in blood. Hanging from a fire escape some 10 feet above him is the body of another young man, dressed in the latest fashion and dripping blood from his ears and mouth. His legs are caught in the bars of the fire escape, and his face is twisted with shock. How he could have ended up in that position is a mystery. An empty autoloader pistol lies beneath his outstretched hands.

If the characters use the Investigation skill, determine their results according to the table below.

### INVESTIGATE

DC	INVESTIGATE CHECK RESULT
10	The man on the ground was killed by a single gunshot wound to the chest. The man dangling from the fire escape died instantly when his neck was broken by someone very strong.
15	There was a struggle, and whoever fired the gun emptied the entire clip, although only one bullet struck the other victim. There are strange stains on the ground that are not blood.
20	In the mud and filth are several footprints that are far too big to have been produced by either of the two victims. They lead out of the alley but are soon lost on the hard concrete sidewalks.

The body on the ground is that of the would-be murderer (Antoine LeMere). His intended victim, Andrew Federson, is the man hanging from the fire escape. Federson shot LeMere once in the chest with the pistol that now lies on the ground, then emptied the rest of the clip into Khaiba.

**Creature:** If Antoine's body is disturbed, Shouit (the snake that was formerly LeMere's familiar) crawls out from underneath his corpse and attacks.

**Shouit:** CR 1/3; Tiny animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Mas 11; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; Defense 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural); BAB +0; Grap -10; Atk +5 melee (1d3-2 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3-2 plus poison, bite); FS 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft. (coiled); Reach 0 ft.; SQ low-light vision, poison, scent; AL none; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

**Skills:** Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +18, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +10.

**Feat:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

**Poison (Ex):** Shouit injects venom (Fort DC 11) with each successful bite attack. The initial and final damage ratings are the same (1d6 Constitution).

**Scent (Ex):** This ability allows Shouit to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

**Tactics:** Shouit remains on LeMere's body until forcibly removed, striking at anyone that comes near.

**Development:** If the heroes manage to deal with the snake, they can continue investigating the murder scene.

The young woman who found the bodies was leaving the club when the attack occurred. She claims to have heard a quiet, high-pitched whistling noise, followed by gunshots and a scream. She hid for several minutes before peeking into

the alleyway. Spotting the bodies, she ran back to the club and had the bouncer call the police. No one in the club heard or saw anything, and no one there knew either victim.

Anyone who checks the identification on the bodies can determine the identities of the victims. Federson's wallet holds some cash, a driver's license, an ID card identifying him as a professional security guard for a major software developer, and a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

The wallet in LeMere's pocket contains some cash and a driver's license, but nothing else. Tucked into his belt is a strange, gold-plated dagger covered with unusual markings. This razor-sharp blade is more akin to a surgical scalpel than a combat weapon. (Treat it as a masterwork dagger).

Around LeMere's neck is a gold chain from which hangs a strange pendant. It resembles a dog whistle but is crafted from gold and covered with hieroglyphics. When blown, it produces a strange, high-pitched shriek. This item is a *whistle of Set's command* (see the description at the end of the adventure) that LeMere used to control his flesh golem. It is twisted and dented on one side because it was damaged by the bullet that killed LeMere. Thus, it can no longer be used to control the golem.

After 20 minutes or so, additional officers arrive to help with the investigation and remove the bodies. They are transported to the Old County Morgue, where Dr. Baker puts them both into storage.

The heroes can get LeMere's home address from his driver's license. They can gain some information about his family from newspaper files and other public records, but to obtain any further clues relating to his death, they must visit his house. Go to encounter B when they do so.

## B. HOUSE OF THE CRAWLING DEATH

Armed with the clues from the murder scene, the characters should eventually make their way to LeMere mansion. There are no cars in the driveway, and the place seems vacant. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters arrive.

The LeMere residence is located in one of the city's older, more upscale neighborhoods. This once-grand mansion has definitely seen better days. It's obvious that no one has taken care of the exterior in a very long time, and most of the windows are boarded up. A rusted sign reading "No Solicitors" dangles from the front door.

**Development:** Any hero who talks to the neighbors gains the following information in response to appropriate questions (no check required).

- The LeMere family has lived in the mansion for as long as anyone can remember.
- They were very private people, and most of their neighbors considered them quite odd.
- The son, Antoine LeMere, still lives there, but no one has spoken to him in years.

It's obvious that the neighbors were vaguely frightened by the presence of the LeMeres, but they have no further information to offer.

The house is vacant except for LeMere's crawling claws, so there is no response to knocking. Each door (one front and one back) is locked and protected with an *arcane lock*



# THE ALTAR ROOM

## Plan View



One square equals 5 feet

(Disable Device DC 30). The entire house is dark, and all the light bulbs have either burned out or been removed. The gloom provides three-quarters concealment (30% miss chance) unless flashlights are used.

Every few minutes after they enter, the heroes hear scuttling noises and catch a brief glimpse of movement. A successful Spot check (DC 18) reveals one or more fist-sized, spiderlike forms moving within the shadows. These creatures are the crawling claws that roam the house. They are under orders to remain hidden unless someone violates the altar room (see below). No amount of searching reveals them before that time.

The aging mansion is in a general state of decay. Dust covers everything, and the entire house seems eerie and disturbing. The interior is decorated in an Egyptian theme, and Egyptian-style statues, plaques, books, and the like are features of every room. Dozens of stuffed animal heads hang on almost every wall, lending a macabre look to the place. The fine antique furniture, once the pride of Antoine's mother, is covered with sheets.

A brief check of the ground floor reveals a few signs—particularly in the kitchen—that someone still lives there. A small bit of food remains in the refrigerator, and piles of unwashed dishes are stacked haphazardly in the sink.

The only room of importance in the house is Antoine's altar room (see below). The rest of the mansion is typical for a wealthy townhome of yesteryear's vintage. There are bedrooms, bathrooms, dining rooms, dens, and a kitchen, all of which the GM may place and furnish as desired.

## BI. The Altar Room

The room that Antoine used as his main ritual room is located on the top floor, off of a bedroom. The door is locked (Disable Device DC 25) and trapped (Disable Device DC 30). A successful Strength check (DC 25) forces the door open. The trap consists of a small poisoned dart (blue-ringed octopus venom; Fort DC 15; 1d4 Con initial and secondary damage) that shoots from the lock and strikes anyone in front of the door. A small mechanism closes and locks the door 2 rounds after it has been opened, unless it's propped open. This device can be found with a successful Spot check (DC 25).

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the room.

The doors open to reveal a grand room that resembles a temple. A gold-plated statue of some Egyptian god surrounded by several huge pillar candles on stands dominates the center of the room. The floor is inscribed with a circle, crisscrossed by lines and framed by what appear to be hieroglyphics. Several small statues stand on marble pillars throughout the room, and a large tome sits on a fine teak podium. Along one wall is a huge bookshelf stuffed with books, papers, and ancient-looking tomes. The room smells vaguely of frankincense and other exotic incense.

As soon as anyone other than LeMere enters the room, a dozen crawling claws descend upon the intruders. Read or paraphrase the following.

Without warning, the strange sounds that you heard before become audible once again, originating from points all around you. Dozens of small creatures are scuttling across the floor in your direction. At first glance, they look like enormous spiders. As they draw nearer, however, you recognize them as hands—severed human hands—crawling across the floor on their own!

**Creatures:** Crawling Claws (24): hp 10, 10, 9, 9, 9, 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3. See the new monster description at the end of this adventure for details.

**Tactics:** The crawling claws divide themselves as evenly as possible among the available targets and attack from all angles. They do everything in their power to make their opponents fall prone so that they can inflict more damage. The crawling claws fight until destroyed, following the heroes throughout the house if necessary, though they do not leave the mansion.

**Development:** If the heroes manage to fend off the crawling claws, they can investigate the altar room and the rest of the house, if they have not already done so. A glance around the altar room reveals a notebook lying on a table (no check necessary). This notebook contains Antoine LeMere's notes about the creation of the crawling claws. In addition, there are vague references to another creation ("Khaiba, the ultimate work") that apparently required several corpses to create. "Baker" and "the morgue" are also mentioned repeatedly.

A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a shoebox filled with photos of corpses, apparently laid out on a forensics table. Handwritten notes along the sides of some of the photos say things such as "Hands only," "Left leg," and the like.

A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals faint stains within the circle on the floor. This substance, which smells like embalming fluid, is the alchemical mixture that gives LeMere's constructs their life force.

Any character who can actually read ancient Egyptian and bothers to examine the books and hieroglyphics notices many references to Set, the Egyptian god of evil, though the materials seem to cover many topics. The statue in the room also depicts the god Set.

### The Teachings of Set

The large tome in the altar room is LeMere's spellbook. It was too big for him to haul around during his murder sprees, so he prepared his spells ahead of time and left the book at home. The tome is written in ancient Egyptian (Decipher Script DC 30). It contains the following spells, as well as a ritual for the creation of flesh golems by a Mage of at least 5th level.

**Spellbook:** 0—*daze, detect magical aura, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st—*cause fear, ray of fatigue, sleep*; 2nd—*arcane lock, change self, invisibility*; 3rd—*create crawling claw\**, *halt undead, hold person*; 4th—*animate dead, bestow curse, fear*.

\*New spell; see description at the end of this adventure.

The book on the podium is LeMere's spellbook. It can be interpreted only with the aid of a *read magic* spell.

## C. THE OLD COUNTY MORGUE

Eventually, the heroes should realize that the Old County Morgue is their next stop. The morgue is an aging, decrepit building that is being transitioned out in favor of a newer facility. The old structure is slated for demolition as soon as construction of the new building is completed.

Only a small section of the morgue is described in this adventure. The areas not depicted on the map are typical offices furnished with desks, computers, and the like. Whole sections of the morgue are cordoned off in anticipation of the building's upcoming demolition.

Dr. Baker has hidden the flesh golem inside one of the body storage lockers in the forensics room and jimmied the handle so that it's difficult to open. He hopes this tactic will prevent other staffers from blundering into it by accident.

Dr. Baker is on duty only at night. No one who is here during the day can help the heroes or provide any information, though they do suggest that the heroes might want to talk to the night man. Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the characters arrive at the morgue during night hours.

The old morgue is a decaying and decrepit building that is being phased out in favor of a newer facility now under construction across town. Though small, this ancient structure is imposing, like others of its era. But there's something sad about its old façade, and decay and despair seem to pervade the very stones of the building.

A small sign above a button reads "Press for Service." There is a video camera mounted above the doorway.

### C1. Main Entrance and Hallway

The door is locked. Only Dr. Baker is on duty here at night. If the characters press the button, the door buzzes to admit them after a few moments. Read or paraphrase the following when they enter.

The hallway is poorly lit and dingy. It's obvious that the cleaning crew doesn't come here anymore. No one has emerged to meet you, but someone must have buzzed the door to let you in.

The video surveillance camera feeds to a monitor by the door, allowing a viewer to see who is outside. There is also a feed into the forensics room (area C2, below), allowing Dr. Baker to see who is at the door. A button next to the forensics room door unlocks the main entrance (Disable Device DC 20).

### C2. Forensics Room

When the heroes arrive, Dr. Baker knows that the gambit is over. He tries to lure them into the forensics room so that he can unleash the flesh golem on them. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters proceed down the hall.





An elderly man wearing a lab coat appears at the end of the hall. On the pocket of his coat is a tag reading “Dr. John Baker.” He does not look pleased. “I know it’s part of your job,” says Dr. Baker, “but I dislike these visitations. It intrudes on my work and I need peace and quiet for what I do! Don’t you think you could have waited until I got off shift?” As he talks, he leads the way into what must be the forensics room.

**GM Character:** Use the Mid-Level Crime Lab Technician on page 281 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for Dr. Baker’s statistics. He carries a Ruger Service-Six revolver in a concealed carry holster (Spot DC 13).

Dr. Baker uses a keycard (one of the few high-tech items in sight) to open the door to the forensics room. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter.

The forensics room is dimly lit and smells of formaldehyde and cleaning chemicals. Quiet classical music fills the room, echoing off the tiles. Lockers for storing corpses line one wall. A bank of video monitors on a table shows the front door, a block of offices, and the hallway that leads to this room. The images reveal no personnel other than Dr. Baker in the building. There is a body lying on one of the examination tables, covered with a sheet. Upon entering the room, Dr. Baker switches off the music and turns to face you. “Now, what did you want to know?” he asks.

Several shelves in the forensics room are filled with chemicals and supplies used for performing autopsies. A successful Knowledge (physical sciences) check (DC 15) reveals several vials of chemicals that could be used as weapons. Treat them as mild acid (see page 215 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) if used.

Corpses awaiting autopsy are stored in the lockers that dominate one wall of this chamber. At the moment, only four of the twenty-eight lockers are in use. The flesh golem is in the lower left locker, awaiting instructions.

**Development:** Any hero who questions Dr. Baker may attempt a Sense Motive check (DC 15). Success reveals that he’s doing his best to get the characters out of the building as quickly as possible, but that he is also very nervous.

Dr. Baker casually asks questions about the investigation, probing to find out what the heroes know and whether they have any leads. He denies any connection to the murders, although he does admit that the bodies were brought to the morgue for autopsies.

A successful Spot check (DC 20) reveals that Dr. Baker wears a gold necklace around his neck, under his shirt. The pendant is identical to the one worn by Antoine LeMere.

If at any point the characters draw their weapons or pointedly accuse Dr. Baker of being involved with the murders, he puts the *whistle of Set’s command* in his mouth and blows a long blast on it. The flesh golem pushes itself out of the body locker on the following round and attacks the heroes.

Otherwise, if the heroes seem to be getting too close to the truth, Dr. Baker changes the subject and asks the heroes to come and see another “victim” that might shed more light

on the situation. He leads them over to the storage locker where the flesh golem is hidden, opens it, and then blows the whistle around his neck to order it to attack.

When combat breaks out, Dr. Baker does his best to hide from the conflict, taking a few shots with his pistol if he can.

**(Khaiba) Flesh Golem:** hp 69; see page 236 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

**Weakness:** Khaiba has a weakness for classical music, and its effect is fascination. He ceases all attacks and movement upon hearing it. On a successful Will save, the fascination is negated and he can act normally again. On a failure, he can take no actions, and each foe gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against him. Any time Khaiba takes damage, he gets a new save to negate the fascination. Otherwise, it lasts as long as he can hear the music.

**Special:** If the heroes do not have magical weapons, ignore the flesh golem's damage reduction.

**Tactics:** The flesh golem lashes out at anyone other than Dr. Baker. He does not stop fighting unless ordered by forensic physician, or unless he hears the 1-2-3 signal from the *whistle of Set's command* (see sidebar).

### C3. Dr. Baker's Office

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters reach Dr. Baker's office.

This office is very messy and antiquated. Documents, files, and books are stacked everywhere. On the cluttered desk is a sign reading "Dr. John Baker."

### New Magic Item

There are two of these whistles in existence—one on Antoine LeMere's corpse and the other worn by Dr. Baker.

**Whistle of Set's Command:** This whistle is attuned to a single flesh golem. It allows the wielder to command the golem as if he were its master, as long as he knows the proper commands. A single, long whistle causes the flesh golem to attack, and a staccato 1-2-3 pattern causes it to cease attacking, although it is free to retaliate if assaulted again. The wielder gains a +5 bonus to Charisma for the purpose of regaining control of the flesh golem if it goes berserk.

The flesh golem must make a Will save (DC 15) to attack anyone who holds a *whistle of Set's command*.

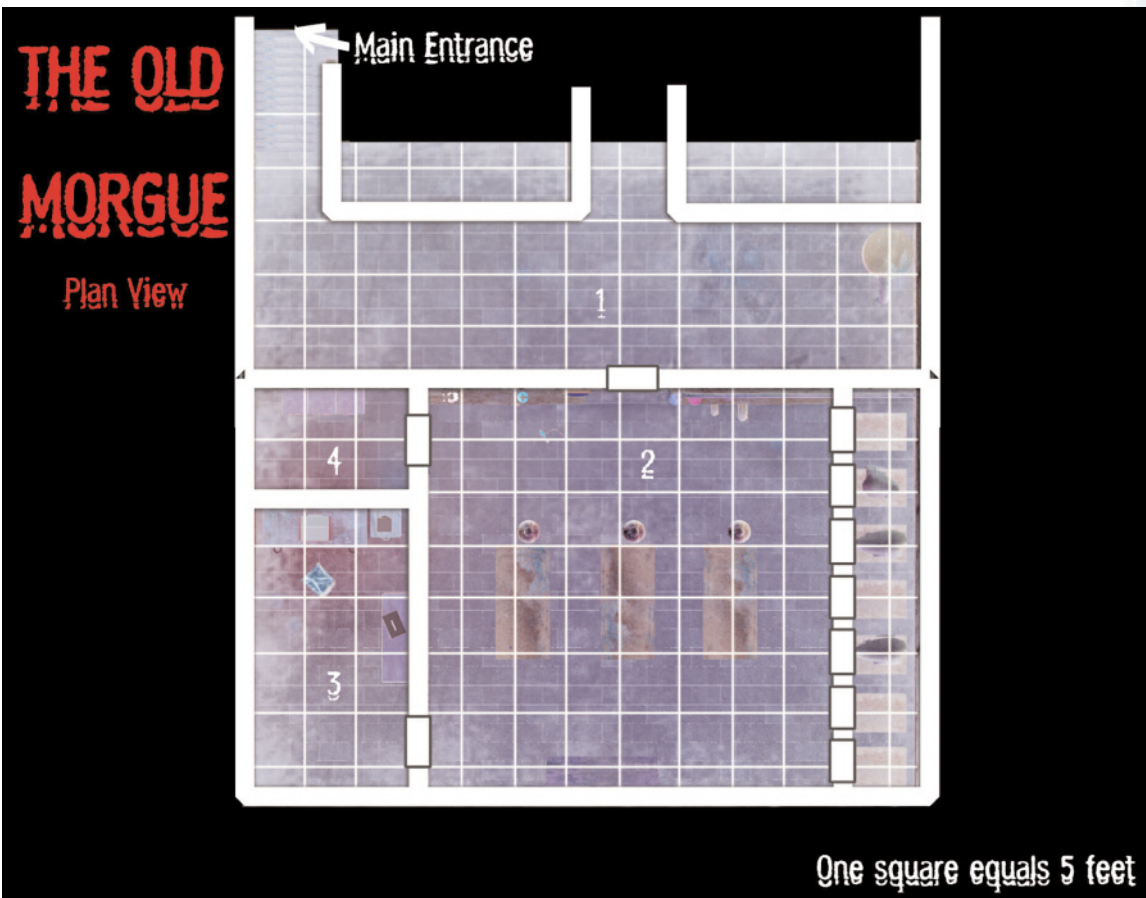
The whistle worn by LeMere was damaged and no longer functions properly, but Khaiba still must make a Will save to attack the wearer. Dr. Baker's whistle still functions perfectly.

*Type:* Wondrous Item; *Caster Level:* 3rd; *Purchase DC:* 21; *Weight:* —.

A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals several strange books dealing with Egyptian mythology and the mummification process, plus a journal describing the procedures required to remove body parts for the creation of a flesh golem. This latter tome is written in ancient Egyptian, but translated notes are scrawled in English along the bottoms of the pages.

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## C4. Chemical and Evidence Storage

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters enter this room.

This small room is filled with a variety of examination supplies, chemicals, and bits of evidence in plastic bags. It is harshly lit with a single, naked light bulb.

There are numerous chemicals in here that can be used as improvised weapons (see above).

## CONCLUSION

If the heroes manage to defeat the flesh golem and Dr. Baker, and they find the notebook in his office detailing the murders and the creation of flesh golems, they have all the evidence they need to wrap up the case. If Dr. Baker is captured alive, he confesses to everything, then later pleads insanity as his defense.

The police department (or Department-7, if the heroes are affiliated with that organization) quietly hushes up the event and has the crawling claws and flesh golem disposed of, if the heroes have not yet destroyed them.

## REWARDS

If the heroes do not tell their superior about the teachings of Set, they can keep the spellbook for themselves. Otherwise, it is impounded as evidence. In addition, they receive a +11 Wealth bonus for their assistance in ending the murder spree.

## NEW CREATURE

This adventure features the crawling claw, a new monster created for the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

### Crawling Claw

A crawling claw is a horrible construct made from the severed left hand of a human being. Animated by a mix of foul magic and strange alchemy, these creatures prowl the tombs of dead Mages and the lairs of necromancers. They move about by walking on their fingers in a spiderlike manner—in fact, they can easily be mistaken for large, grotesque spiders in darkness.

A crawling claw resembles a human's severed left hand. The stump drips a clear ichor that exudes the faint scent of formaldehyde and alchemical mixtures.

Though it is not intelligent, a crawling claw retains some of the personality traits of the human from which it was made. For example, a crawling claw made from an anxious person may constantly twitch and tap its fingers, while one made from an angry person might make rude gestures or knot itself up in a fist when excited.

A crawling claw attacks with its clawlike fingernails. While not much of a threat alone, the creature becomes more formidable in the company of others of its kind. Such a group, called an applause, swarms over any creature that enters its territory, attacking without mercy.

### Species Traits

**Blindsight (Ex):** Using nonvisual senses, a crawling claw maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant. The range of this ability is 60 feet. A crawling claw usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight ability.

**Construct:** A crawling claw is immune to mind-affecting effects and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, necromancy effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or the effects of massive damage. It cannot heal damage on its own but can be repaired using the Repair skill. A successful Repair check (DC 30) heals 1d10 points of damage to a crawling claw, and each check represents 1 hour of work. A crawling claw reduced to 0 hit points is immediately destroyed and cannot be repaired. A crawling claw cannot be raised from the dead.

**Gaze Immunity (Ex):** Because it lacks eyes, a crawling claw is immune to gaze attacks.

**Smite Fallen (Ex):** A crawling claw's attacks deal double damage against prone combatants.

**Trip (Ex):** A crawling claw that hits with a claw attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the crawling claw.

**Crawling Claw:** CR 1/3; Diminutive construct; HD 1d10; hp 5; Mas —; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 15, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 size, +1 natural); BAB +0; Grap –12; Atk +4 melee (1, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1, claw); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ blindsight 60 ft., construct, gaze immunity, smite fallen, SR 10, trip; AL any; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will –3; AP 0, Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 5, Cha 5.

**Skills:** —.

**Feats:** —.

**Advancement:** None.

## NEW SPELL

The following spell is the last part of the ritual required for a 5th-level Mage to create crawling claws.

### Create Crawling Claw

Transmutation [Evil]

**Level:** Mage 3; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** 1 hour; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Targets:** Severed human left hands within a 5-foot-radius circle; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** Yes.

You create a number of crawling claws up to twice your caster level. The hands to be transformed must all be within a 5-foot-radius circle. Once created, the group of crawling claws obeys your telepathic commands, so long as the instructions are very simple and you are within 100 feet of the group. If you give the crawling claws simple standing orders before moving out of range, they obey those to the best of their ability until you return and issue other orders.

## Credits

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Otherwise, they mill about aimlessly, attacking anything that moves into their space.

*Material Components:* Clippings from a ghoulish fingernails, and a ring that someone else lost.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eric Cagle is a freelance game designer working at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Recent credits include the *D&D Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Fiend Folio*, the *Ultimate Alien Anthology* for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, and the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* for the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*. He's a frequent contributor to both *DRAGON Magazine* and the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS website.