

# THE SECRET OF BLACKGATE FARM

by Steve Johansson and John McConnell



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## OVERVIEW

The “adventure” portion of this scenario is designed to be completed in a single session. The characters have a strict deadline of dawn to kill the demon before he is able to fully materialize. Should they dawdle excessively or retreat due to cowardice thinking they can simply rest up and replenish before completing the mission, they have made a grave (pun intended) error. Despite there being several formidable opponents on the grounds, it is not necessary to engage each and every one in mortal combat to succeed. Some may be overcome by roleplay while others are pointless distractions meant to grind down the battle-happy.

The module is free form, with the PCs having to make their way to several different areas around the farm looking for talismans that can open the door to a final encounter with the demon exerting his power over this farm.

The areas of the farm are The Farmhouse, The Barn, The Apple Orchard, The Windmill, The Vegetable Patch, The Wicker Man, and The Chicken Coop and Pig Sty. These areas can be explored in any order, however the barn and the wicker man will undergo changes as the night wears on. Recovering talismans will trigger the changes. After the PCs have gathered an initial talisman, the cultists will arrive to light the Wicker Man on fire and celebrate the coming of their new lord as described further in the Wicker Man entry. After collecting two talismans, a corn maze will grow up around the barn as described in the Barn entry.

Bear in mind that several creatures will be encountered singly. Piling on lone opponents presents numerous opportunities to overwhelm them by immediately being able to attack them with multiple allies from all sides. Per the *Hacklopedia of Beasts* (p. 15), such monsters should offer only half the EPV listed.

## BACKGROUND

The Remel family has been prosperous ever since their matriarch Dorata Remel took control of their vast farming estate as a teenager so many years ago after a mysterious farming accident left her as the sole heir. She has long since grown, had children, and become fairly addled in her old age. Even with her sons and grandsons now guiding work around the farm (questionable though their acumen may be), things still seemed to progress swimmingly. Crops were harvested, animals bred and sold, babies born, and many folk from neighboring plots came to work in a permanent capacity at Blackgate Farm. Things couldn't have been better for the Remels until this harvest season came. The lengthening nights brought with them strange happenings around the farm.

What the Remel family did not know was that not all of their prosperity was due to Dorata's sensibility and work ethic. Instead, their unlikely record of excellent harvests and quickly fattening animals were due to Dorata's affiliation with the demon Marbas. Dorata sacrificed animals (and the occasional infant), spoke incantations, and performed strange and otherworldly rituals in order to secure the patronage of her demonic lord. For years she maintained the illusion that her family's prosperity was of a purely mundane nature, concealing the truth even from her family. No man nor any woman not of her blood could ever take part in or know of these sacred rituals, lest it undo the power of the incantations. So, Dorata waited season by season to bear a daughter. When she bore only sons she waited again, this time for a granddaughter. But, although her sons were

fecund and lusty in their marriage beds, their wives too bore them only sons until the year came when Dorata's mind began to weaken and she lost hold of her memories and sense. In her befuddled state, Dorata forgot her responsibilities to pacify her infernal patron during the harvest season. He is now preparing to come into this world to claim what was rightfully his.

Marbas has corrupted this farmstead entirely. Through his influence, the once bucolic landscape has been remade into a perverse reflection of his own essence. The farmhands, servants, and even some nearby homesteaders have been mentally dominated by Marbas and have already completed the profane rites needed to begin summoning him into the world. By daybreak, the demon will have fully manifested itself unless it is destroyed by the PCs. All members of the Remel family are all either dead, in the hands of the cultists, or (in the case of Dorata) have been transformed into terrible creatures.

## **The Demon Marbas and the Ritual**

Marbas is a powerful demon with abilities to dominate minds and conjure magical effects in the material world. The extent to which it can manifest these powers is wholly a function of proximity and duration. As this malignancy has been hosted at Blackgate farm for decades, Marbas has substantial influence over the environment and has conjured a number of inexplicable phenomena. In general, these manifestations are not overtly baneful and tend to rely more on fear and illusion. Specific effects are detailed in the appropriate encounters.

Marbas' ability to prevail upon the consciousness of sentient creatures is too an effect of prolonged exposure. The farmworkers enslaved to perform its summoning ritual have toiled at Blackgate farm for years slowly making them susceptible to this dominance. Player characters cannot be so affected during their brief visit to the farmstead. The other malevolent creatures present on the site are either similarly minded villainous beings drawn to the foreboding spot or dark hearted individuals that Marbas has metastasized into a final twisted aberration after decades of living in his ephemeral presence.

After waiting more than half a century, Dorata Remal's dotage has spurred Marbas to attempt to fully cross over into the material realm and wreck inestimable evil. Doing so is a risky endeavor for he has invested much of his power merely to set in place conditions to facilitate this transference.

The barn has been enchanted into a *Temenos* in which a tiny material form of the demon has materialized. Its barn doors serve as a gate between this abysmal beachhead and the wider world.

Simultaneously with the creation of the *Temenos*, a set of four keys was generated permitting access to this demi-plane from the material world (a fifth was enchanted as a spare in case his mortal peons lost one...) These were distributed to his votaries such that they could bring him the human sacrifices he required to sustain his mortal form until released. With this evening being the night of the ritual, the keys were left in temporary possession of various guardians distributed throughout the grounds.

Passage through the gate can only be achieved if four magical green talismans are held before the door. Doing so will invoke a 10 foot diameter green sphere centered on the talismans - those within the sphere may cross the gate and enter the barn.

The preparatory rituals necessary to permit Marbas to enter this world have already been performed by the time the PCs are able to enter the farm. All that is required is for the sun to rise.

## **Integrating your Players**

This adventure has not been given a prescribed geographical location. Farmsteads such as the one in which this scenario occurs are ubiquitous in settled lands so integrating it in relative proximity to your campaign's current area of operations should offer no difficulty.

Despite the demon's interest in keeping the brewing cataclysm secret, rumors and gossip will invariably circulate when anything the least bit out of the ordinary occurs in a community not otherwise distracted by cable television and the internet. The following hearsay is currently circulating in the nearest community (available via roleplay or use of Glean Information skill checks). You may reveal this information as you see fit.

**1) "Strange that Blackgate farm hasn't brought their produce to market yet."**

This is a snippet of conversation between two farmers or between a customer and vendor at the open-air produce market.

**2) "My boy was out huntin' 'coons and he sez he saw a torchlight parade up near Blackgate farm."**

*This is a portion of a conversation between two villagers that may occur anywhere.*

**3) "Old widder Mokira's a witch I tell ye. Put a hex on my cow she did. Lost three calves already. Wishin' someone wit sum power over dem black arts would put a stop to da evil she's channeling ta dis here village."**

This story is courtesy of a somewhat rude and grubby farmer named Saketi. He is anxious to tell outsiders this tale in the hope that perhaps they can be duped into taking action against his enemy. While he sincerely believes the portion of the story he's revealed (and thus actually fears the widow), he has ulterior motives. When her husband and sons died of an illness some years ago, he hoped that she would either move on or starve to death thus opening up an opportunity for him to acquire her property. Unfortunately for him, she has managed to survive by raising chickens and ducks.

This can presage a free form side trek if the PCs wish to follow up on the allegation. Widow Mokira turns out to be a poor but remarkably friendly old woman. She is far too polite to disparage her neighbors though she has a pretty clear notion as to why the Saketi family bears such ill will towards her. Her good manners ironically make resolving the problem far more difficult.

The following skill checks may be useful in this micro-adventure:

- ▶ A difficult Glean Information skill check reveals Saketi's motivations. The villagers are reluctant to air their dirty laundry to strangers but someone may talk if plied with liquor or out of a desire to see this uncomfortable situation settled after nearly a decade.
- ▶ A difficult Animal Husbandry skill check will inform the examiner that the reason Saketi's cow has had several miscarriages is due to the very poor

diet it is fed. If the farmer wasn't quite so cheap and lazy and bothered to take proper care of his animals, this systemic birthing problem would disappear.

A story award of 100 EP is recommended for remediating this situation.

**4) "I got a new moldboard plow stting here fer a fortnight now. Farmer left a deposit but never picked it up. Say, you folks interested in settin' up a farm? There's plenty a good land round these parts and I could let you have this plow for a right reasonable price..."**

The proprietor of the general store relates this story. If engaged in further conversation, he reveals that it was the Remel family that has failed to pick up the new plow. He doesn't know why they would fail to pay the balance due as they are quite wealthy. He hasn't seen any members of the family or their hired hands in town for over a month.

As for setting up a farm... All of the prime land surrounding the town is already being cultivated. Any available acreage is of marginal quality.

**5) "Damn bear done got into my blackberry patch last week. Nearly scared the wife to death. Wish there was someone that that could do something about that varmint."**

This is a conversation overheard between a farmer and another towns person. If the farmer is approached, he is overjoyed to have a band of mercenaries take interest in his problem. His wife is badgering him to chase off the bear and disparaging his manhood for being unwilling to go out and confront the creature. Her accusations are cruel and unwarranted because the farmer is quite manly though hardly a match for an adult bear.

Bolan (the farmer) is willing to pay the egregious sum of 15 copper pieces to anyone willing to chase off the bear and ensure that it never returns. Should the PCs take him up on his offer, he is willing to put them up in his barn provided that one of their number keeps watch over his berry patch at all times. The black bear will return in d4p days.

**Black Bear** (417 EP): HP 42; Init -1; Spd 4; Rch 2';  
Atk +8; Dmg 2d6p+4; Def -1, DR 9, ToP 17; Trauma  
Save 11 Size L; Jog 20 ft./sec; Tenacity: Steady

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Should the bear fail a tenacity check, it will flee and never return. A story award of 50 EP should be given for saving Bolan's manhood.

**6) "Muh conies are goin' missing. Damn wolves 'er eating 'em."**

This story is revealed by eavesdropping on a conversation between two farmers.

The farmer is definitely open to outsiders investigating this mystery though he is unable to pay a reward. Upon directed questioning, he admits that the "wolves thing" is merely conjecture for which he has no proof.

- ▶ An average Scrutiny check of his rabbit coop reveals a small hole through which the conies are escaping. Five minutes of work will provide an adequate fix.

In point of fact, the rabbits *were* being eaten by wolves – but only after escaping from their cage.

**7) "It's the strangest thing. I been hearing moaning coming outta my barn at night."**

Farmer Molitor will apprehensively relate this story to any outsiders. He is reluctant to have this story become widespread as it would likely result in social shunning and boycotting of his produce.

Investigation of his farm, during daytime or night, will reveal nothing. He is genuinely puzzled by the absence of the haunting noise and adamantly insists he heard it.

In truth, he overheard the boisterous sounds of a tryst between two of his farmhands. The presence of strangers on the farm dissuades the young couple from engaging in any midnight rendezvous lest they be discovered – hence the absence of the 'haunting' noises.

**8) "The Kuwaki's windmill collapsed. Just toppled over he sez. Ain't natural I tell ye."**

This story is revealed by eavesdropping on a conversation between two villagers.

Should the PCs choose to investigate, they will

indeed find a collapsed windmill. However, the only thing supernatural about the situation is the quantity of beer the contractors drank whilst erecting the structure. The real wonder is why it didn't collapse sooner...

**9) "Aint nobody dat can beat Big Odil in an armwrestling match."**

This story is revealed by eavesdropping on a conversation between two villagers at a tavern.

'Big Odil' is a sizeable chap that frequents one of the town's more squalid taverns. He is quite strong (17/08 STR) but his mastery of armwrestling is also due to his *Armrestling Proficiency* (3 BP).

He is happy to engage in an armwrestling contest with any challengers though insists on a wager of a massive flagon of beer. The contest is a simple competing Feat of Strength check (though Odil receives a +4 bonus due to his proficiency at this very specific challenge).

Anyone besting Odil receives 1 point of Fame. From this point forward, substitute the victor's name for Odil's in this rumor entry.

**10) "Apples are mealy this year. I put it down to the damp spring."**

This information is gleaned from a conversation between two townsfolk. What they say is true. Any apples purchased in this town are mealy.

- ▶ An average botany skill check reveals that their supposition is correct.

**11) "I think the beer in the tavern is poisoned."**

This information is slurred by a *very* hungover man.

**12) There was two-headed goat born at P'Ligel farm. Portents an evil winter."**

This story is related by a townsperson questioned as to unusual occurrences in the area.

Traveling to the P'Ligel farm reveals a crude sign with a drawing of a two-headed goat. The farmer charges 1 trade coin per head to view the abomination. Anyone willing to pay will be taken to the locked barn and shown an actual two-headed goat! This is just a bizarre example of conjoined twins and no portent of evil.

### 13) "The new parish priest is strange. Don't trust him."

This story is related by a parishioner questioned as to unusual occurrences or the presence of evil in the area.

The local priest (GM's choice of religions though either the Church of Everlasting Hope or The Conventicle of the Great Tree is suggested) is new to the town.

- ▶ A difficult language skill check reveals a slight regional accent in his speech.

The priest hails from a town several leagues distant. This fact, and this alone, is the sole reason for any mistrust. He is a completely faithful pastor and dedicated to the tenets of his religion.

This parish priest can also serve as a prod to encourage the PCs to investigate Blackgate Farm. We recommend that this should be a backup plot device to be used only if the party is fumbling around aimlessly. If brought into play, he approaches the group with 'divine inspiration' that a supernatural evil force is manifesting at Blackgate farm. He cannot accompany them personally as his primary responsibility is the welfare of his congregants.

## The Journey to Blackgate Farm

The rumors table is meant to breathe life and a sense of quirky community. Many of the tales are red herrings as it's somewhat unrealistic that the focus of conversation would exclusively center around the very thing that your player are interested in.

At some point the PCs will (hopefully) trek out to Blackgate farm and follow up on hearsay about this location. However, the demon Marbas has veiled the property with a field of disorientation. During daylight hours, potential trespassers will invariably become confused and lose their way without ever reaching the farm. Tracking skill checks cannot overcome this power as the demon can manipulate vegetation to give the false impression that a pathway previously traveled appears to be different. In the extreme case of an aerial reconnaissance, Marbas simply implants false memories in the flier.

During the night of the ceremony, Marbas' powers

are weakened as he is obligated to channel his energies into other activities. PCs in the vicinity of the farm will witness a small group of brainwashed adherents journeying towards the compound. They are marching with torches held aloft and thus nearly impossible to miss in the darkness. If trailed, the characters can follow them directly onto the grounds.

Marbas' attendants will walk to the Wicker Man and mill about until they are joined by fellow revelers (see Wicker Man entry). Their minds are so completely addled as to be immune to any attempt at interrogating them. If pressed, all they will do is chant, "He comes at dawn. He comes at dawn..."

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**Marbas' Adherents (5 Human Laborers)** (25 EP ea):  
HP 27 ea; Init 5; Spd 10; Rch 2½'; Atk +0; Dmg d6p+d4p+2 (club); Def -1, DR 1, ToP 9; Trauma Save 7; Size M; Jog 10 ft./sec; Tenacity: Fearless

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## Blackgate Farm

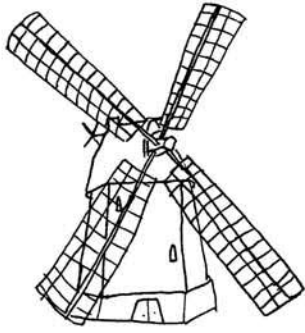
### THE FARMHOUSE

The harvest moon has risen high above the sagging gambrel roof of the farmhouse as you approach the structure. A dim and flickering orange glow emanates from the sole window visible from the porch side.

But for this light, the three floors of the house are otherwise dark and still. The grass beneath your feet is wet and a chill runs up through your body as an autumn wind whips by, seemingly urging you towards the front door.

### Overview

The farmhouse has four separate levels: the cellar, the ground floor, the second floor, and the attic. The house can be entered via the front door, the kitchen door at the back of the house or through the cellar door (which is chained shut). The primary encounters in the farmhouse take place in the kitchen and study, the root cellar, a child's bedroom, and the attic. The first floor of the house is the demesne of an animating spirit that will be encountered in either the study or the kitchen, whichever the PCs enter first.



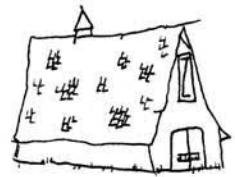
**Windmill**



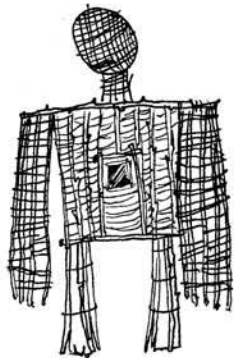
**Vegetable Patch**



**The Farmhouse**



**Barn**



**Wicker Man**



**Chicken  
Coop**



**Pig  
Sty**



**The Apple Orchard**

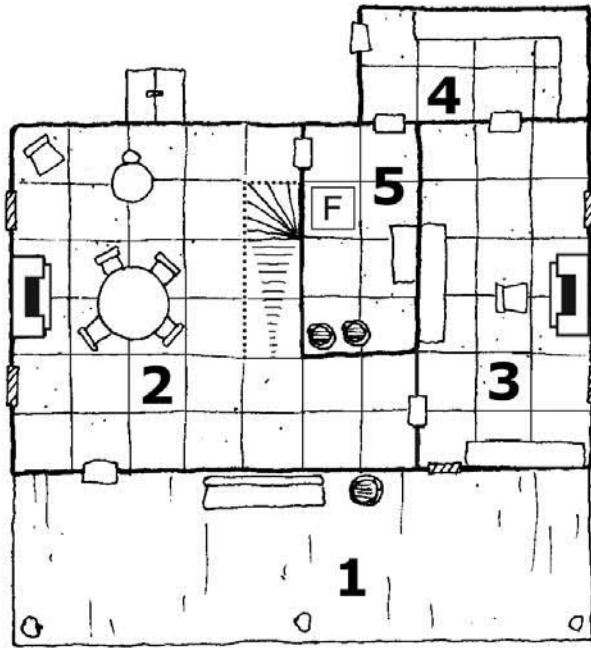
**Blackgate Farm**



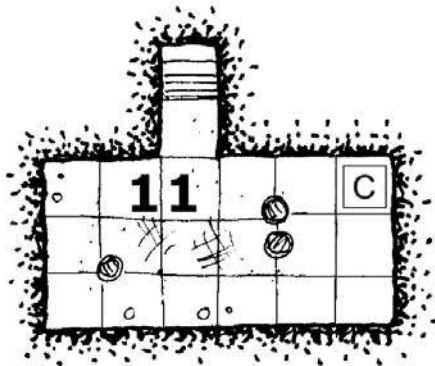
*route of  
torch bearing  
adherents*



## Farmhouse map



Ground Floor



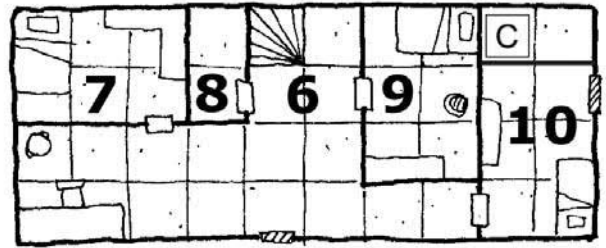
Cellar

### 1. Front Porch

The porch is unremarkable and appears similar to every other farmhouse porch you've seen since you were a toddler. A long wooden bench rests against the building's exterior wall with an oak barrel set aside it presumably acting as a small table.

- ▶ A character with average or better mastery in Carpentry/woodworking can ascertain that the porch is solidly built. With adequate illumination, he can also confirm that there are no pits beneath the porch by peering through the decking planks.

Characters are free to peer in the windows. If they do so, read the descriptive text of the appropriate room. If they decide to enter through the front door, read:



Upstairs

The front door of the farmhouse is painted a peeling green and creaks open slightly just as you reach for the tarnished brass doorknob.

The door opening is just the Animating Spirit having a bit of fun.

### 2. The Living Room

The living room is dark, dimly lit only by the moonlight flooding through the picture windows onto a faded rug. A small collection of chairs and a couch are circled around a low table where several cards have been laid out. Soft light flickers from beneath a closed door past the base of the staircase leading to the second floor.

The living room is uninhabited. Burnt out, melted candles sit helter-skelter all about the chamber. From this room the PCs can enter the study, the pantry, or ascend to the second floor.

- ▶ To anyone with average or better Arcane Lore mastery, the cards on the table have obviously been laid out in an attempt to perform some sort of divination, but were abandoned midway through the ceremony.



### 3. Behind the Chamber Door:

**Encounter:** Animating Spirit (492 EP)

**Potential Yield:** Talisman (raven's left eye)

The door opens into a well-appointed study. A high backed leather chair faces away from you towards the crackling fireplace that casts a long shadow of the chair up onto the interior wall. Bookshelves stretch from floor to ceiling, overstocked with heavy, leather bound volumes.

An animating spirit haunts the study (and alternatively the kitchen). It is able to possess inanimate objects and employ them to batter unwelcome intruders. Such attacks are made using the creature's combat stats. While possessing an object, the creature is subject to damage should someone purposefully strike at said object.

The dramatic focus of the room is what might be in the leather chair. This is a misdirection. After someone, beset with curiosity, approaches to glance at the empty chair, the fire in the fireplaces flares up (as the animating spirit prepares to launch the largest log and stirs up the embers in so doing). Immediately thereafter (i.e. the next count), it propels this burning timber at the individual closest to the fireplace.

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**Animating Spirit** (492 EP): 39 HP; Init -4; Spd 3 (in practice 11 given tactics); Rch 1'; Atk +8; Dmg 2d4p; Def +6; DR 9; ToP n/a, Size M; Jog Speed 5 ft./sec

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If the players resist the lure of immediately checking out the chair and conduct a more thorough visual search, read:

The bust of a helmeted woman, itself the perch for a large, stuffed black bird sits on a shelf above the doorframe you entered through.

This particular spirit is a poltroon and more interested in maintaining the haunting charade than maximizing the destruction it could render. As such, it will only conduct a single attack with any particu-

lar object. Upon the attack's completion, whether successful or not, it will immediately begin the 10 second long process of releasing itself from the material object and seizing control of another rather than attacking again at a 3 second interval. During this lull it is extremely vulnerable to attack (rolling only d8p for defense) *but only if its adversaries realize that it is constrained within the hurled object and direct their attacks at it.* The spirit is banking on them crediting the flying objects to some other source.

Assuming that the animating spirit hasn't been surmised to be the source of the attacks, it will inhabit and launch a new object at 11 second intervals. In order, these attacks will consist of: the bust above the doorframe, a heavy book, the chair set before the fireplace, an additional burning log and then additional books continuing for as long as the party remains in this room. It will pursue them into the kitchen making use of the bevy of utensils there to continue its harassment but will not enter any other rooms.

Animating Spirit (as presented)			
SPEED	11	INIT	-4
ATTACK	+8	DMG REDUCTION	9
DEFENSE	d8p	DAMAGE	2d4p
REACH	0 ft	TOP SAVE	n/a

The second attack (with the bust of the helmeted woman) dislodges the raven perched on it dropping it to the floor. If it is even cursorily searched, its left eye will be seen to be emanating a very faint green light. This is one of the talismans required to gain access to the barn.

**The Raveneye:** This small green fluorite stone is valued at 100 sp. However, peering through it permits the viewer to invoke an effect identical to the Mage spell *Bird's Eye View* (at baseline efficacy) once per day.

Should the spirit's ruse be discovered and the party decides to concentrate their firepower on the animated object, the animating spirit will dispense with its elaborate deception and continue its assault with the last inhabited object (now doing so every 3 seconds) until it is reduced to 15 or fewer hit points. It will then attempt to dislodge itself and avoid further contact whilst incorporeal.

Note that the animating spirit *is* subject to being turned by a cleric. However the priest must direct his turning attempt at the object the spirit inhabits to have any chance of success. Blindly trying to turn some “evil spirit” will meet with failure.

#### 4. The Kitchen

Going around to the back of the farmhouse, you locate the door leading into the kitchen.

If the PCs attempt to force the door, read:

Attempting to push open the door, you find it is blocked by a huge weight.

The entrance to the kitchen is blocked by a stack of crap the animating spirit placed in front of the door to dissuade access. Opening it requires a Feat of Strength check (vs. d20p+8). If the pile is successfully moved out of the way, proceed to the kitchen entry.

Read the following only if the party enters through the study or pantry:

The kitchen has an exterior door, but is blocked by a bizarre stack of nearly every item in the kitchen; the table, chairs, pots, pans, utensils, plates, and cups are all stacked to the ceiling in an precariously balanced tower.

As for the kitchen itself:

A bulky cast iron stove dominates the far wall of the kitchen, along with a washbasin, and a dozen or so cabinets.

Although the animating spirit primarily haunts the study, it can also enter this room. The initial encounter with this spirit will occur in Area 3 but may continue into the kitchen if the PCs retreat here without having formulated a means of halting the barrage of hurled objects. The room contains a great number of things for the animating spirit to throw including chairs and the heavy table as well as knives, forks, and iron cookware.

See “Area 3: Behind the Chamber Door” for instructions on running the animating spirit.

#### 5. The Pantry

This room is clearly a pantry as shelves filled with crockery pots, bowls and glass jars line the walls. At floor level, several large burlap sacks and a couple of barrels are stacked against the wall.

However, amongst all this humdrum domestic paraphernalia one incongruous and disturbing element stands out. Namely the trapdoor held shut by heavy chains and nails pounded into the floor.

Permit the players a few moments to contemplate this. If they remain in the pantry, read:

A grandmotherly voice coos to you from beneath the trapdoor, “Please undo these chains. Let grandmother out. I’ve just baked a fresh pie, sweethearts.”

The trapdoor is the only entrance to the root cellar other than the cellar doors in the back of the house. Removing the rather substantial protections placed on it requires the proper tools – a battleaxe is not going to cut it so to speak. Should the players be in possession of carpenter’s tools or a crowbar/prybar and a person with at least novice mastery in carpentry/woodworking to direct them, they can remove the chains and nails in 10 minutes time.

There is the distinct possibility that some players will insist that warhammers, maces and battleaxes are perfectly adequate substitutes for construction tools. So be it.

Given an hour’s time, warhammers and battle or hand axes may be used to batter and chop away the floorboards and portions of the underlying joists to extract the egregiously long nails used to secure the chains and trapdoor.

Note however that using carefully tempered and balanced weapons in the place of purpose-designed demolition tools is a foolish idea. Not only are weapons poorly designed for chopping wood requiring far more dulling strokes but invariably the blade or head will strike a nail, chain or some other embedded metal and nick the blade. Any weapons used to perform this task will be damaged (assess a permanent -1 attack & -1 damage to the weapon thereafter).

## The Second Floor:

### 6. Stairway and Hall

The old staircase creaks noticeably under your feet as you ascend. Portraits of solemn faced landowners glower out at you from the wall, their faces frozen in time.

As you reach the second floor landing, you find a hallway containing four doors. Directly ahead of you is a dormer with a single window overlooking the grounds. Off to your right sits a long table with a chair parked aside it evidently revealing its purpose as that of a desk or workbench.

A cursory search reveals nothing more than what's stated above. All four doors are closed but none is locked. The table is dusty implying it hasn't been used in awhile.

Soon after characters walk into the hall, the small dog living in the attic hears their footsteps and begins to bark. This annoying yapping will continue incessantly as long as the PCs remain upstairs.

There is some sort of high-pitched barking noise coming from above the ceiling.

### 7. The Bed That Eats:

**Encounter:** Mimikos (520 EP)

A burgundy four-poster bed rests on the wall on the far side of this room. Its well-stuffed feather mattress and puffy pillows make it appear very comfortable. The corner directly in front of the door contains some empty shelving.

To all appearances, nothing in this room seems abnormal. However, the bed is neither soft nor comfortable as it is actually a hibernating **mimikos** (*see monster description in the appendix of this adventure*).

If left undisturbed, the monster will remain in cataleptic stasis. However, if prodded, it will begin to awaken (roll d12+10 to determine how many seconds this will take). If touched (or impulsively leapt upon by a ridiculous attention-seeking player), they will find themselves stuck to the improbably firm surface (requiring a Feat of Strength vs. d20+12 to break free). This too stirs the creature to wakefulness.

As the creature awakens, the bed's form begins to slowly change seemingly melting. Once revived, it extrudes a pseudopod and flails at the nearest opponent.

Anyone struck by a 'pod will be held fast as above. They suffer a 2 point penalty to their combat stats (Attack, Defense, Damage & Speed) and cannot execute combat maneuvers premised on their ability to move freely (e.g. give ground). Note that anyone employing a shield for defense will see this defensive ward ensnared even on a failed attack by the mimikos (that is, should it miss by less than 10). Users have the option to remove the shield (an action requiring d4p seconds) else they are held as if they were successfully attacked. In addition, an ensnared shield no longer contributes to a character's defense bonus.

The mimikos will extrude another pseudopod with which to attack should it snare an opponent. It is entirely possible for an individual combatting a mimikos to be restrained by multiple appendages. In such instances, the disabling effect is cumulative.

The creature is resilient to damage inflicted by crushing and puncturing weapons. As such, its Damage Reduction rating is dependent on the type of implement used to harm it. Crushing weapons face a DR of 12, Piercing 8 while Hacking weapons contend with a mere 2.

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**Mimikos** (520 EP): 54 HP; Init +10; Spd 8; Rch 3'; Atk +9; Dmg 5d4p; Def +2; DR *varies by weapon*; ToP n/a, Size L; Jog Speed 2½ ft./sec  
*Special Abilities:* adhesion

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If slain, the mimikos leaves behind an amorphous corpse with the consistency of moist clay.

## 8. The Washroom:

**Potential Yield:** mirror

This room has a small privy and a mirror hanging above a washbasin on the wall. There is also a deep, claw-footed bathtub in the corner.

The washroom is unoccupied, but the first PC that looks into the mirror will see his melting face caught in a silent scream. Looking away or touching his face will cause the effect to cease. No subsequent PCs who look in the mirror will experience this hallucination.

The mirror is 18" x 24" and can easily be removed from the wall should looters find it of interest.

## 9. Bedroom

**Potential Yield:** 2 fine silk outfits (20 sp resale value)

This room contains a twin bed to your right and large wardrobe to your left. A round pedestal table sits between them on the opposite wall.

The wardrobe contains two outfits of matching fine silk garments sized for an obese man. Although well cared for and undoubtedly very expensive when

purchased, second hand clothing retains little value. Of course, PCs may not be aware of this so let them find out after they've expended significant effort to carefully protect these delicate clothes during the harrowing trials they face this evening.

▶ A character with any mastery in Appraisal: Textiles is well aware of the fact that used clothing usually sells for only ten to thirty percent of list price. What can you say – people are squeamish...

## 10. A Child's Room:

**Encounter:** Monster Under the Bed (see text), Yapper (12 EP)

**Potential Yield:** animal companion

The door at the end of the hall opens silently. A bed, too small for an adult human, sits in the corner of the room. On the floor is a small, soft rug with some wooden toys scattered on top of it. On the wall opposite the bed is another door. It is unusual in that it is painted white – contrasting sharply with the others doors in the house.

Looking beneath the child's bed from a distance will reveal nothing underneath it, but the first PC that gets within a foot of the bed will have to dodge out of the way of a pale, spindly tentacle grabbing at his ankles (i.e. succeed at a Defense vs. d20p+8). If grabbed, the arm will try to pull the PC under the bed towards a pair of glowing, yellow eyes. Escaping its grasp requires a Feat of Strength (vs. d20+13). Only one attempt is permitted before the character is dragged beneath the bed.

Any PC that is pulled under the bed will be teleported into the cellar (see Area 11 for details).

*Note: The tentacle will only make one attempt to grab a PC. Should it fail in its initial strike or should the victim escape its grasp, it is disappear. Flipping over the bed or otherwise searching under it will reveal nothing but the floor.*

Opening the white closet door causes the barking sound to grow louder. In the ceiling is an obvious trapdoor that, if opened, reveals a set of attic stairs

attached to its topside that facilitate access to the topmost story.

The high-pitched barking will become incessant should anyone climb the stairs but no creature reveals itself. Once a character reaches the top, a small dog that stands off about a foot all the while yapping up a storm will confront him. The yapper will not attack and attempts to remain beyond arm's reach if approached.

- ▶ A character making a successful (average) Animal Empathy skill check may approach the yapper. Should he subsequently attempt to pet the dog, it will submissively roll on its back waiting for its belly to be vigorously rubbed. The yapper will thereafter attempt to follow this character wherever he goes. It whines morosely if left in the attic.

---

**Yapper** (12 EP): 8 HP; Init -2; Spd 10; Rch 0'; Atk +0; Dmg d3p; Def +7; DR 1; ToP 4, Trauma Save 6, Size T; Jog Speed 15 ft./sec; Tenacity Steady

*Notable Skills:* listening (90)

---

The attic is otherwise unremarkable.

## 11. The Cellar Door

**Encounter:** Grandmother (360 EP)

**Potential Yield:** Talisman

A rusty iron chain and a fat padlock hold the cellar door shut. The warped wood of the door bulges noticeably and a sickly sweet smell emanates up from below.

Once a PC gets within two feet of the cellar door, read:

Something behind the cellar door begins banging on and straining against it. The banging abruptly stops, and a grandmotherly voice coos out, "Undo these chains and come in for fresh pie, dears."

- ▶ Though the lock appears formidable, it is actually quite easy to pick requiring but a trivial Lock Picking skill check.

You are able remove the chains and pull open the cellar door. Some rough, wooden stairs lead into the darkness below.

If the PCs choose not to go down into the cellar and leave the door alone or try to bar it again, then Grandmother will appear (skip ahead to the initial encounter with her). If the PCs choose to go down into the cellar then continue on with this text:

The cellar has a dirt floor and fieldstone walls. The ceiling is festooned with dry, hanging corn stalks. They hang thickly about the cellar and obscure the rest of the room.

In order for the PCs to explore the cellar, they'll have to push their way through the corn stalks that hang down about six feet from the ceiling. As they transit the cornstalks, the PCs will come across two hanging corpses: an obese middle aged man with sunken eyes and a large moustache and a young serving girl whose entire upper body is horrifically burned.

If a player was nabbed by the monster under the bed (see area 10: A Child's Room), he will be found here – unconscious but otherwise unharmed and will revive in 10 minutes.

Upon this grisly discovery, the Grandmother will appear at the foot of the stairs leading back up, the dirt floor at her feet disturbed, as if she had burrowed up from under the ground. She is gray haired, stooped, and has a kindly face that never stops smiling. In her oven-mitt covered hands is a fresh pie. She produces a knife out of her apron to cut the pie with and sweetly offers a slice to the PCs. As she cuts, blood wells up from within the pie and the PCs can see that the proffered slice is full of gore. It also glows with a green light as it is one of the talismans.

Offering up the talisman she's been charged with guarding is a final act of defiance on the part of Dorata Remel. She's vaguely aware despite her

Alzheimer's that Marbas is to blame for her transformation and the other depravities foisted upon her beautiful farm. By providing the talisman, she hopes that the mercenaries she gives it to can use it to somehow deliver a measure of payback to the demon.

If the PCs refuse to take the pie, the Grandmother becomes enraged, transforming into her hideous true form and attacks the party.

Any PC that eats the pie must save versus a virulence factor 13 poison or sicken and shrivel up like dry corn. If the PCs take the pie slice and simply walk away with it, the Grandmother lets them go on their way. If the PCs perform any actions triggering a fight, then read the following aloud:

The placid face of this old matron twists into a hideous grimace, revealing rows of sharp, broken teeth. Knife-like talons pierce through the tips of her fingers. Her body transforms into a pale gaunt form as she lets loose a ear-splitting shriek!

---

**“Grandmother” (special ghoul)** (360 EP): 38 HP; Init -1; Spd 3; Rch 1'; Atk +8; Dmg 2d4p/2d4p/2d6p; Def +1; DR 3; ToP n/a, Size M; Jog Speed 15 ft./sec; Will Factor 6

*Special Abilities:* fearful scream, any hit requires a Wisdom check (vs. d20p+6) or the victim is paralyzed with fear for 2d4p minutes

---

Grandmother's shriek is equivalent in effect to an Angawa Battle Cry (see *Player's Handbook* p. 144). Those hearing it (including Grel) must make a morale check if applicable. For most Player Characters (save those with the Coward quirk), this is a non-issue as they cannot fail morale. NPC associates or animal companions though are susceptible.

<b>Grandmother Dorata</b>			
SPEED <b>3</b>	ATTACK <b>+8</b>	INIT <b>-1</b>	DMG REDUCTION <b>3</b>
DEFENSE <b>+1</b>	DAMAGE 2d4p (x2) 2d6p		TOP SAVE <b>n/a</b>
REACH <b>1 ft</b>			

“Grandmother” is an unusual ghoul in that she retains some memory of her past life and is more

intelligent than the norm for such creatures (benefiting her attack bonus). She may be turned away by a cleric as a typical ghoul but will retain the talisman pie if the turning occurs before she is permitted to offer it up.

## THE APPLE ORCHARD

**Encounter:** Evil Crabapple Ent (650 EP)

**Potential Yield:** 1 Talisman

Apple trees creak and bend in the moaning wind. Crickets and night birds sing out from the boughs and roots of the orchard as the occasional soft thump suggests that these fruits have reached their ripest stage.

The apple orchard is the domain of a cruel and twisted ent drawn to the site by the evil emanating from the barn.

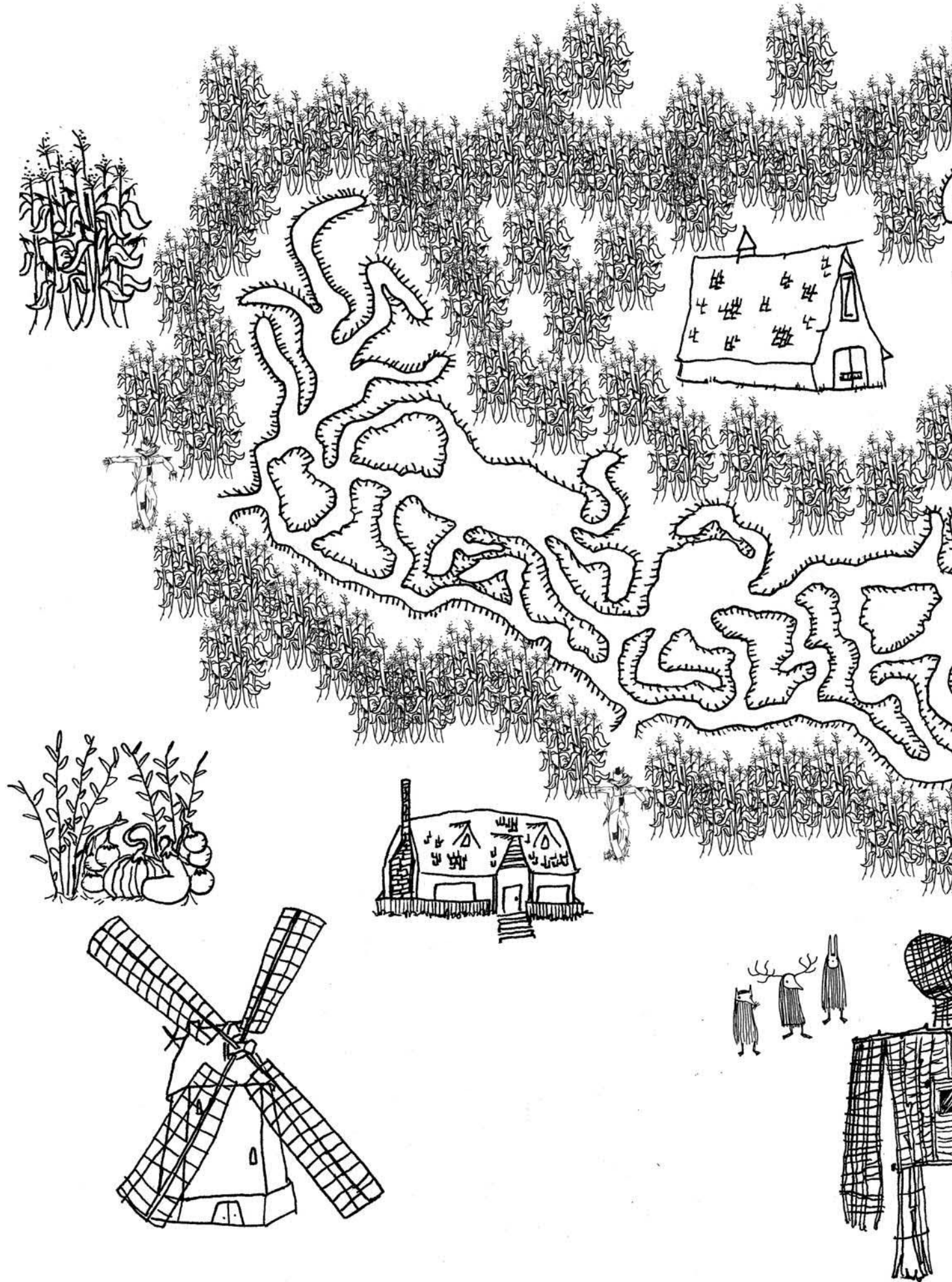
- ▶ Anyone with average or better mastery in botany or forestry who thinks to employ the skill will notice that a crabapple tree (*Malus coronaria*) is present amongst the ordinary apple trees (*Malus domestica*). This is very unusual as its fruit is small, sour and unfit for anything but to make vinegar of. Its presence should connote that something is wrong in the orchard. Anyone specifically aware of this tree should roll a d4 for Initiative should combat occur.

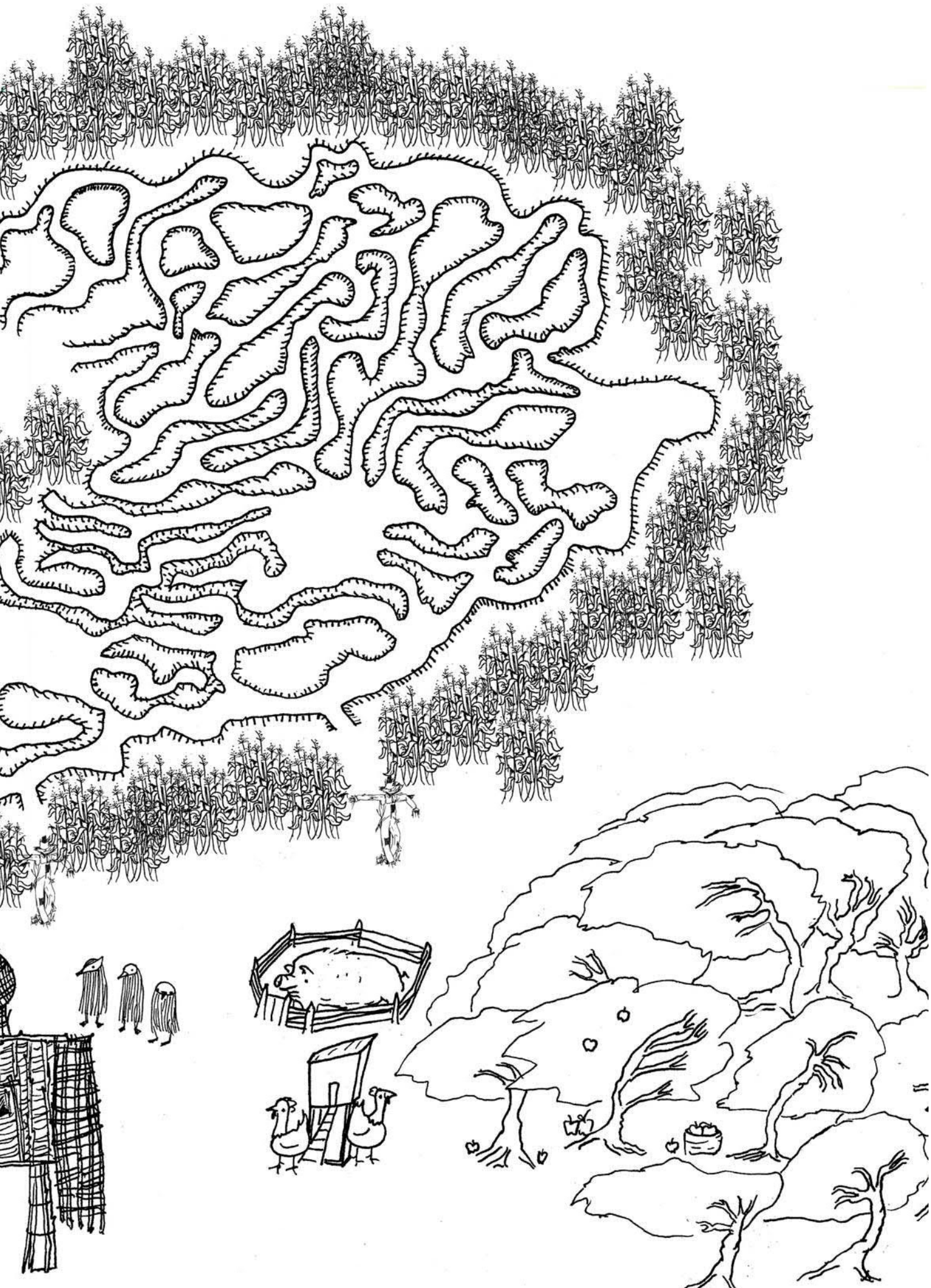
If the PCs enter the orchard, read:

Wandering your way through the apple orchard, you come upon a particularly grisly tree. It reeks with the pungent aroma of rotten fruit and its trunk is covered in blackened, necrotic lesions. Near its top, shrouded in the branches is a faint, greenish glow. You don't have time to look any closer, however, before the tree is uprooting itself and loping forward! Soon others are inexplicably leaning towards you and jabbing with their branches...

The evil ent is concealed as an ordinary crabapple tree but will animate to destroy anyone that dares

# Blackgate Farm transformed







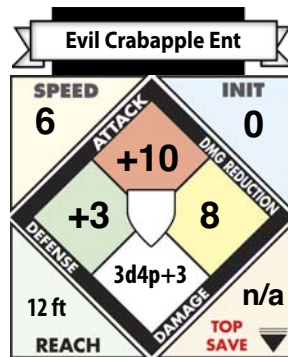
venture into the orchard. This particular ent is both literally and figuratively rotten to the core. It is also relatively small for a treant. As such, it is far less formidable an opponent than a standard tree shepherd. Despite, or perhaps because of these shortcomings, it is very evil and will ruthlessly pummel any human interlopers.

---

**Evil Crabapple Ent** (620 EP): HP 60; Init 0; Spd 6; Rch 6'; Atk +10; Dmg 3d4p+4; Def +3, DR 6 (4 vs. *Hacking weapons*), ToP n/a; Size H; Move 15ft./sec

---

As an ent, it has the ability to animate other trees but this ability – like the rest of its powers – is far less potent than normal. It can command three apple trees to animate. However, they are not capable of injuring anyone. They will menacingly lash out with their branches for a spooky effect but their attack routine is merely an application of the Hold at Bay special combat move. If the evil ent is killed, the animated apple trees become dormant.




---

**Animated Apple Trees** (0 EP): HP 53; Init 0; Spd 6; Rch 6'; Atk +10; Dmg 0 (*keep at bay*); Def +4, DR 8 (6 vs. *Hacking weapons*), ToP n/a; Size H; Move 15ft./sec

---

PCs who hack away at the Crabapple Tree Ent, will discover that its heartwood is rotten and mildewed. In the topmost branches of the ent is one of the talismans: a large, glowing green apple.

Anyone taking a bite from the glowing green apple must make a save vs. a VF 17 toxin. Failure results in the character immediately vomiting for 2d3p minutes and suffering 2d4p damage. If successful, the PC vomits only once and sustains 1d4p damage.

*Eating the apple ruins its powers as a talisman. It will cease glowing as a visual indication of its impotence.*

## THE VEGETABLE PATCH

**Encounter:** 20 killer tomatoes (360 EP)

**Potential Yield:** 1 Talisman

The soil of this vegetable patch is well tilled and damp. A fresh, earthy smell invades your nostrils and the soil compresses under your boots. Before you is a harvest of vegetables as you've never seen. There are towering trellises of pole beans, club-like cucumbers, snaking vines of looping pea-pods, and heavy, plump tomatoes redder than red. From somewhere within this teeming bounty you notice green light shimmering past the wall of vegetation.

The vegetable patch houses one of the talismans, a pumpkin-sized, green tomato. To get to it in the center of the patch, however, the PCs will have to make their way past a bevy of living killer tomatoes that will do their best to tear the adventurers apart.

Pressing onward through the patch is like cutting through a thicket. The trellises and gourds grow larger and larger as you cut your way through the jungle of vegetables. Just as you seem to be nearing the source of the green glow, there is a rustling amongst the beans and pumpkin vines. All around you the patch becomes enspirited as large tomatoes fly towards you, with pointed fangs barred!

As the Killer Tomatoes (see new monsters at the conclusion of the adventure) arrive in formation to attack, the pumpkin vines will begin slithering around the PCs' ankles. This is comparable in effect to the clerical spell *Tangle*. Everyone in the vegetable patch must attempt a Feat of Strength check (vs. d20p+4). Those failing are held fast as the vines creep up their torso and bind their arms. Individuals that succeed by 0 to 4 points are slowed by 1 movement category (i.e. they must jog to move at walking speed).

The Killer Tomatoes will focus their attacks on individuals that have not been captured by the pumpkin vines. They will swarm two opponents dedicating 10 tomatoes each. As the killer tomatoes attack from all sides, a shield may only be used to

block half their number. The balance will attack from the rear (for which only a d8p defense die is applicable).

Although at first contact the killer tomatoes may seem overwhelming as they swarm opponents, bear in mind that the damage die does not penetrate. As such, this encounter is likely to be more scary than dangerous for characters in medium armor. Note also that the tomatoes do not have to inflict tangible damage for their poison to come into play. However, those bitten may receive a bonus to their toxin save. *For example, a fighter in chainmail (DR 5) is bitten by a killer tomato for 2 hp damage. Since his armor had a 3 point buffer (5-2), he receives +3 to his saving throw versus the poison.*

Killer Tomatoes			
SPEED	5	ATTACK	+0
DEFENSE	+10	DAMAGE	d3 + poison
REACH	0 ft	DMG REDUCTION	0
		TOP SAVE	n/a

**20 Killer Tomatoes** (18 EP ea): 3 HP; Init 0; Spd 5; Rch 0'; Atk +0; Dmg d3; Def +10; DR 0; ToP n/a, Size T; Fly Speed 20 ft./sec  
*Special Abilities:* VF 5 poison (see monster description)

Once the tomatoes are all slain, anyone not trapped by the vines may march to the center of the vegetable plot and grab the talisman. As soon as it is touched, the entangling vines will all release.



## THE CHICKEN COOP & PIG STY

**Encounter:** Giant bandy tailed fighting cock (650 EP)

A flimsy ramp leads up towards this red chicken coop. It has a gambrel roof and it seems to have been built to resemble a miniature version of the estate's farmhouse. Fifty feet or so to the left of the coop is a wide, muddy sty full of some of the largest hogs you've ever laid eyes on. Their skin is pink with odd black spots, but details are hard to come by as they're covered in mud and all eating voraciously from a trough on the far side of the sty. The chickens begin squawk and cluck more loudly from inside the coop.

The trough that the pigs are feeding from contains a grisly mixture of slop and human remains, but these pigs just eat whatever is placed in front of them. Other than this strange meal, they're totally normal. If a PC approaches within fifteen feet of the chicken coop, then out will leap a **giant bandy-tailed fighting cock** (see new monsters in the appendix) ready to attack all comers. There is no talisman in this area.

Read the following aloud if a PC tries to search the pig sty:

Peering into the trough you can make out the usual food scraps: rinds, stale bread crust, and turnips. Just as you're losing interest, a human arm comes bubbling to the surface of the deep trough and the pigs begin to squeal and jostle to be the first to take a bite. Their beady eyes go wide as they rip the flesh from the arm in a greedy frenzy. All of the activity causes other human body parts to churn to the top.

Read this text aloud if a PC gets within fifteen feet of the chicken coop:

Drawing near to the chicken coop, a fat hen mounts the top of the ramp and eyes you for a moment before, spooked, she scrambles back into the coop squawking shrilly.

From within the coop comes a deep-throated crowing as a massive four-legged rooster pushes his huge frame through the coop's door. His cock-comb is a fiery red and his long, cruel talons slice easily through the wood of the ramp as he spreads his orange wings and leaps into an attack!

The fighting cock is primarily interested in defending its territory – a matter of great concern given all the weird activity occurring on the farm. Should the adventurers immediately flee, it will not pursue them. Likewise, it does not Aggressively Attack (q.v.) until its third to-hit roll. If purposelessly engaged in mortal combat, it will fight to the death.

Bandy-Tailed Fighting Cock			
<b>SPEED</b> 3	<b>ATTACK</b> +12*	<b>INIT</b> -1	
<b>DEFENSE</b> +4*	<b>DMG REDUCTION</b> 4	<b>DAMAGE</b> 7	
<b>REACH</b> 2 ft	2d4p+4 (x2), 2d10p		<b>TOP SAVE</b>

---

**Giant Bandy-Tailed Fighting Cock** (650 EP): 58 HP; Init -1; Spd 3; Rch 2'; Atk +12 (\* +17 w/ *Aggressive Attack*); Dmg 2d4p+4/2d4p+4/2d10p; Def +4 (\* +2 w/ *Aggressive Attack*); DR 4; ToP 24; Trauma Save 7; Size L; Jog Speed 25 ft./sec  
*Special Abilities:* *Aggressive Attack* (see monster description)

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## THE WINDMILL

**Encounter:** Haunted Windmill, scary jack-o'-lantern (50 EP)

**Potential Yield:** Talisman

A tall, stone windmill sits on the far edge of the farm. Its four sails spin in slow, creaking rotations and their cloth is tattered and stained. The sails are impressively long, reaching nearly to the ground before they begin their slow journey back up. There is a small wooden door near the base of the windmill, slightly ajar. Near the top of the windmill, where the sails protrude from, a green glow gently pulses.

Any PC who approaches the windmill will observe the cap rotating to face them directly. Once within 100 feet, the sails of the windmill begin to spin rapidly, creating the equivalent of a *Storm Force Wind* (q.v.). Those within this 100-foot wide area of effect suffer 4d12p damage for knock-back purposes only. PCs may attempt a saving throw (vs. d20p+13) to mitigate the effect (knock-back damage is reduced to 2d12p). Anyone knocked back by the wind cannot succeed at approaching the windmill while those not repelled may only make forward progress at crawling speed.

The roundhouse will rotate to match the approach vector of anyone trying to reach it. However, it can obviously only blow in one direction. If multiple individuals simultaneously approach from different directions, it will blow towards the greatest concentration of people. Clever players could thus employ several members of their party as a distraction, while the others head for the door.

Making your way through the door of the windmill you can see the massive millstone spinning wildly. A rickety ladder leads upwards towards the trestle where you had seen the glow emanating from. Drifting down from the mass of gearing is a frightful guardian – a hovering jack-o'-lantern. Green light emanates from its interior illuminating the monstrous face carved into it. A lilting laughter quickly grows into a demented chortle as it bobs above your heads. You can feel the maddening laughter invade your brain, turning your blood to ice water!

The jack-o'-lantern radiates a fear effect similar to the mage spell *Panic* albeit it with a far longer duration. Anyone viewing it (except those with over 50 hp at full strength) must succeed at a mental save versus d20p+13 or flee in terror for (1d4p+3)x10 seconds. In addition, they will refuse to enter the windmill for 30 minutes.

A PC who is able to overcome the fear effect of the jack-o'-lantern could smash it easily with any successful attack from a crushing or hacking weapon, as physically it's only a flying pumpkin. Puncturing weapons will pass through the gourd leaving a small

hole but failing to rupture it. In practice, this requires either a throwing axe or a hacking-type polearm (bardiche, bill-guisarme, fauchard, glaive, guisarme-voulge, halberd or voulge) as the pumpkin will hover out of reach of shorter weapons.

If the jack-o'-lantern is smashed, all those affected by its fear are immediately restored to their normal courage. Inside the gourd is a large green garnet that sheds verdant light with the luminosity of a candle.

**The Gem of Marbas:** This garnet is worth 500 sp as a gemstone. However, in addition to acting as a talisman permitting access to the demiplane in the barn, its luminousness is *permanent*. It will shed (green) light equivalent to a candle forever.

Even after the scary pumpkin is destroyed, the windmill will continue to blow away trespassers. It can be disabled by climbing up to the trestle via the rickety ladder (which is actually quite safe) and jamming a rigid metal object such as a crowbar or sword into the gears. This will stop the sails – at the cost of wrecking the object used to obstruct the machinery.

---

**Scary Jack-o'-Lantern** (50 EP): 1 HP; Init -3; Spd n/a; Rch 0'; Atk *none*; Dmg *none*; Def +5; DR 0; ToP n/a; Size S; Fly Speed 5 ft./sec

*Special Abilities:* Fear effect, Flight, not significantly damaged by puncturing weapons

---

## THE WICKER MAN

A towering, hollow statue of woven sticks, vines, and twigs stands out disturbingly in this otherwise bucolic estate. The wood is damp and aromatic and the interior is lined with fresh cedar boughs and juniper berries.

The wicker man is empty until the PCs have gathered a talisman. This action compels the demon Marbas to initiate the sacrificial ritual. A strange procession of hooded figures marches towards the wicker man chanting in an unknown language and leading three white robed young people with them.

Read the following if the party visits this site after they've recovered one of the talismans:

The cold breeze seems to whip up as you catch the first lines of a droning chant sung in a language you have never heard before. A crowd of twenty hooded figures has formed in front of the wicker man, their dark robes trailing on the ground. The chanting grows louder and louder, reaching a fever pitch as the hooded figures begin to sway and shriek in a terrible ecstasy. From amongst the crowd, one of the figures steps to the front and thrusts his hands up into the air. The gesture silences the crowd immediately. Slowly, he lowers his hood and the others in the crowd follow in kind. The robed figures are all human beings, men and women with no particularly outstanding features amongst them.

The man at the head of the crowd begins to speak in a strong, resounding voice tinged with the accent of country laborer, "Brothers and sisters, tonight will be a night of revelry! Our holy work is completed and by morning our great lord will walk amongst us, a titan upon the earth, as he is a reaper in the field. Let us come together to usher in this new world with joy and the offering of our sacraments!" With this, three white robed figures are led out from the crowd.

The two young maidens and a strong-limbed young man are all red-haired and beautiful. They smile doubtfully as they are ushered into the wicker man and the door is fastened shut after them. As if on cue, the robed men and women produce grotesque masks from inside their sleeves in the forms of woodland animals. Their faces shrouded behind stags, hares, foxes, ravens, robins, and wolves, the cultists come forward and kindle a fire below the Wicker Man. The wind fans the flames as the entire structure is engulfed in towering fire. Screams of pain can barely be heard over the calamitous cheering from the crowd. Large barrels are uncorked and they begin a vile, orgiastic revelry.

These cultists are actually innocent villagers whose minds have been corrupted by the demon Marbas. They are not in control of their own actions and will remember nothing of the night if the demon is defeated. The young people that have been led into



the wicker man to be burned are one of the grandson's of the Remel family, his wife, and his brother's wife. The cultists will not leave their revelry or notice PCs unless attacked, which they will respond to with violence in turn, using cudgels as weapons.

---

**Marbas' Adherents (20 Human Laborers)** (25 EP ea):  
HP 27 ea; Init 5; Spd 10; Rch 2½'; Atk +0; Dmg  
d6p+d4p+2 (club); Def -1, DR 1, ToP 9; Trauma Save 7;  
Size M; Jog 10 ft./sec; Tenacity: Fearless

---

Note: The Burning Man sacrificial ritual is, in effect, an 'after party'. The ritual necessary to bring Marbas into this world was performed at dusk and requires only the passage of night to complete. As such, while it may be virtuous to rescue the human offerings to the demon, doing so will not stop the progression of events.

Should Marbas be released, his first action will be to consume the hearts of everyone that participated in this ceremony. This event is actually preparing *them* for sacrifice as lusty, drunken murderers.

## THE BARN

The south side of the farm is dominated by the presence of a prodigiously large barn. The roof is a thickly woven hay thatch and the walls are stone. The entire structure glows and shimmers with an eerie green light. From a distance, the double barn doors look to be inscribed with a curious collection of symbols.

The barn is where the demon Marbas is hiding himself as his transference into this world is completed (see "The Demon Marbas and the Ritual" on page 2 for more information). The barn is warded against intruders with a seal that can only be undone by presenting four or more talismans. The symbols inscribed into the barn doors are incomprehensible linguistically, but of all of them, there seem to be four larger glyphs of seemingly greater importance.

Once the party has recovered two talismans – thereby identifying them as a threat – Marbas will

expend the remaining portion of his magical reservoir to invoke a protective corn maze that encircles the structure.

## The Maize Maze

**Encounter:** 1 Scarecrow at each entrance (86 EP ea) & the ax murderer (466 EP)

Your eyes widen in shock as you glance towards the barn and realize it now completely surrounded by a thick field of corn. The eight-foot tall stalks of corn stand like a palisade wall, so close to each other that pushing directly through them would prove a daunting task.

Something else catches your eye, though, as you notice a narrow path leading into the field. The path continues in for a few feet and then branches off in two different directions. At this branching point hangs a ragged scarecrow on a pole, its button eyes staring out blindly from its lopsided head.

The PCs will discover that an immense corn maze has sprung up around the barn while they were otherwise occupied. The corn maze obfuscates the route back to the barn. It is absolutely impossible to hack or burn through the maze's barriers, as they are supernatural in origin.

The maize maze can be entered at any of the four points indicated on the map. However, a **Scarecrow** (see new monsters) guards each ingress.

Anyone (save those with 50 or more hit points at full strength) that enters the maze may be subject to the warding Scarecrow's ability to frighten him. They must succeed at a mental save (vs. d20p+4) or flee in terror for (d4p+3) x10 seconds.

If trespassers remain intent on entering the maze, the scarecrow attempts to block access. If approached, it strikes out at the prospective infiltrator. Such attacks cause no physical harm. However, a successful attack will reduce the defender's tenacity (or morale) by one step. In the case of Player Characters (who barring certain quirks possess "Hero" morale and thus are never compelled to check

tenacity regardless of circumstances), the initial blow of a scarecrow reduces them to 'Fearless' tenacity (see *Hacklopedia of Beasts* p. 12) and subjects them to possible compulsion to involuntarily flee if a trigger event occurs. Subsequent hits reduce their morale in stepwise progression.

Compromised tenacity is restored at the rate of one step per hour.

Given the nature of their construction, scarecrows cannot be measurably harmed by piercing weapons. Crushing weapons, while able to inflict ancillary knockback effects (against which scarecrows are considered size S), are also unable to damage these pliable constructs. Hacking weapons are fully effective.

---

**Scarecrows** (86 EP ea): HP 20 ea; Init 0; Spd 8; Rch 0'; Atk +1; Dmg 0 (*special*); Def +1, DR 0, ToP n/a; Size M; Jog 10 ft./sec; Tenacity: Fearless

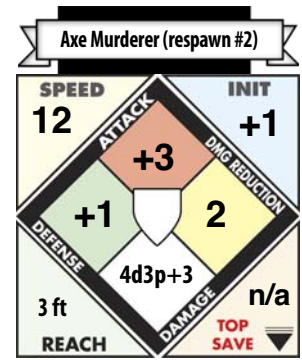
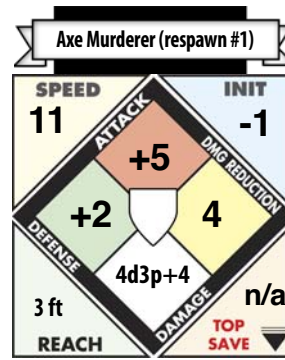
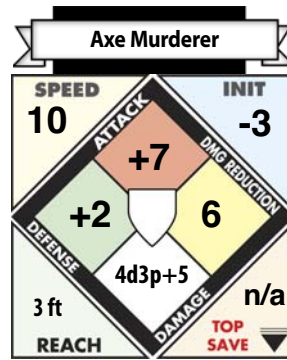
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Lurking in the cornfield is the final villain the characters must confront before they are able to access the barn. This creature is a minor demonic entity that whilst mortal was a violently insane axe murderer. He now prowls the maze with a quality **battle axe +2** and a mask of human skin.

The axe murderer is imbued with the power to pass through the maze's barriers and thus can suddenly and inexplicably emerge from the corn to attack the party's flanks or rear. It can also conduct a fighting retreat back through the corn leaving his pursuers unable to follow. Note that the axe murderer is *violently insane* and will not intentionally flee an engagement. Any seeming retreat is simply an opportunity to maneuver into a better position from which to murder an adversary.

The creature's tactics are to follow the party and conduct repeated ambushes as they wander through the maze. Since he is stalking the PCs and aware of their exact location when he chooses to attack, he always rolls a d4 for Initiative.

- ▶ The axe murderer may pass through the corn but cannot do so completely silently. A successful (difficult) Listening skill check will pick up his movements and permit that individual and any others he



warns of the imminent approach of the murderer. Forewarned characters may roll a d4 for Initiative.

Like a villain in a slasher movie, he will keep coming back, even if he has seemingly been killed. The first two times he is slain, his body (and ax) will dissipate as he respawns. This provides a ten-minute respite before he is once again on the hunt.

The axe murderer may respawn twice but each time becomes progressively weaker. The third time he is killed, his body will not vanish. Examination of the corpse reveals a gaunt humpbacked man wearing a mask comprised of strips human skin crudely sewn together. His axe is ferociously sharp and eminently useable by a character not creeped out by its history (47 innocent people were murdered with this implement).

---

**Axe Murderer** (466 EP): HP 44; Init -3; Spd 10; Rch 3'; Atk +7; Dmg 4d3p+5; Def +2, DR 6, ToP n/a; Size M; Jog 15 ft./sec; Tenacity: Fearless

**Axe Murderer (respawn #1)**: HP 36; Init -1; Spd 11; Rch 3'; Atk +5; Dmg 4d3p+4; Def +2, DR 4, ToP n/a; Size M; Jog 10 ft./sec; Tenacity: Fearless

**Axe Murderer (respawn #2)**: HP 28; Init +1; Spd 12; Rch 3'; Atk +3; Dmg 4d3p+3; Def +1, DR 2, ToP n/a; Size M; Jog 5 ft./sec; Tenacity: Fearless

*Possessions*: **Battle Axe +2**, mask of human skin

---

You may read the following passage as flavor text presaging the initial encounter with the axe murderer:

The scarecrow has left you a bit on edge and the twisting and turning of this corn maze have done nothing to assuage that sense of uneasiness. Turning a corner, you find a freshly skinned rabbit lying in the dust, its blood just beginning to seep into the dirt.

Without warning, an awful chorus of gurgling and heavy panting reverberates from within the corn maze when leaping out comes a hunch-backed creature brandishing a battle axe in his hand. A disgusting mask made of sewn together strips of flesh obscures his face. His movements are ungainly, but preternaturally fast and with a throaty rasp he lunges forward, brandishing his axe.

Once the PCs make it through the corn maze with possession of at least four of the talismans, they are able to enter the barn. The talismans, if within ten feet of the door/gate will spontaneously produce a large colored sphere that the occupants of can cross over to the demi-plane contained within the barn. Once the players have done so, read:

You are met with an acrid blast of irritating sulfurous fog as you pass through the barn door. The pungent smell burns your nostrils as you peer into the brimstone mist. An evil presence pervades the barn causing the hairs on your neck stand up on end.

A large and menacing creature strides out from behind a large pile of hay bales in the center of the barn. It is nine feet tall and dusky red in color. Lean and vaguely reptilian with long white horns curling forward from its skull, this is surely a demon.

“Who dares disturb my respite? Leave your offerings and be gone.”

This is all theatre meant to cow his human attendants into submission. The “fearsome demon” is merely a hologram enacted by Marbas from his perch atop an oak barrel near the rear of the barn.

The hologram demon is insubstantial and any attacks directed against it will pass right through the creature. Characters may attempt to “disbelieve” the apparition but doing so will not in any way cause it to disappear. Marbas will control the image in such a way as to intimidate intruders. It refrains from directly advancing to melee, as it is aware that this will surely reveal the ruse for what it is.



Marbas  
(actual size)

Once it becomes apparent that the hologram has lost its power to intimidate the party (such as if a PC simply walks through it unharmed), Marbas will employ it as a distraction hoping to keep the mercenaries focused on it instead of him. This will require some improvisation on the part of the GameMaster. He is stalling for time waiting for dawn to arrive.

At this point, Marbas has expended every last bit of magical power he possesses and is effectively helpless. The three-inch tall demon’s only trick left is to attempt to hide.

- ▶ If the party befriended the dog in the farmhouse attic and acquired it as a faithful animal companion, the yapper will quickly home in on Marbas and chase him into a corner whilst yapping ferociously.

Barring canine assistance, the PCs will end up having to play a game of hide and seek to track down Marbas. Any successful (difficult) Observation skill check will reveal the presence of a diminutive version of the demonic hologram. Once spotted, he is not fast enough to escape.

When confronted in his true form, he attempts to bargain by squeaking out all kinds of promises of wealth and power he can offer to those who will serve, or *partner* with him. Naturally, these are all lies that will never be honored.

Simply stepping on him can easily kill Marbas. With his death, the evil presence washes away from the farmstead. The ghosts and monsters all retreat back into the darkness from whence they came and



they cultists regain their true personalities, completely oblivious to the events of the past few days.

---

**Marbas:** HP 1; Init -4; Spd 5; Rch 0'; Atk +0; Dmg 0, ToP n/a; Size T; Jog 2½ ft./sec; Tenacity: Nervous

---

Searching the barn reveals a baker's dozen of corpses hidden in the hayloft. Each is a teenager or young adult and all have had their hearts cut out. The rest of the barn contains several pitchforks and other implements necessary for farm work.

However, amongst these tools is an extraordinary set of carpenter's tools once owned by one of Dorata's sons. Anyone with some skill at carpentry/woodworking will immediately appreciate the phenomenal quality of these tools, as they are unusually lightweight, precisely milled and rustproof. Their use awards a +10% skill check bonus or a 20% bonus to a carpenter's productivity. If sold, they will fetch 65 sp but a master carpenter willing to pay this exorbitant sum may only be located in a large town.

## AFTERMATH

The entire Remel family has perished leaving no legal heirs to the estate. The village elders, upon being informed of the night's events, retire to consider what to do. By morning they have reached a conclusion. Wishing to avoid a lengthy and disruptive court battle over disposition of the estate, they have decided to award title to the mercenaries responsible for vanquishing the demon. This keeps potential claimants out of their hair leaving them to harass the PCs over the title. It also provides a sizeable reward to the presumably dangerous adventurers without compromising the village's finances.

If the players wish to dispose of the property, it will fetch 700 SP at auction. If they would rather stay and develop the site, this is left to the GameMaster to flesh out.

### Adventure Synopsis

#### Treasure Yield:

- The Raveneye** (100 sp resale value)
- 2 fine silk outfits (20 sp resale value)
- The Gem of Marbas** (500 sp resale value)
- Axe Murderer's **Battle Axe +2**
- extraordinary set of carpenter's tools (65 sp)
- Title to Blackgate Farm (700 sp value at auction)

#### Story Awards:

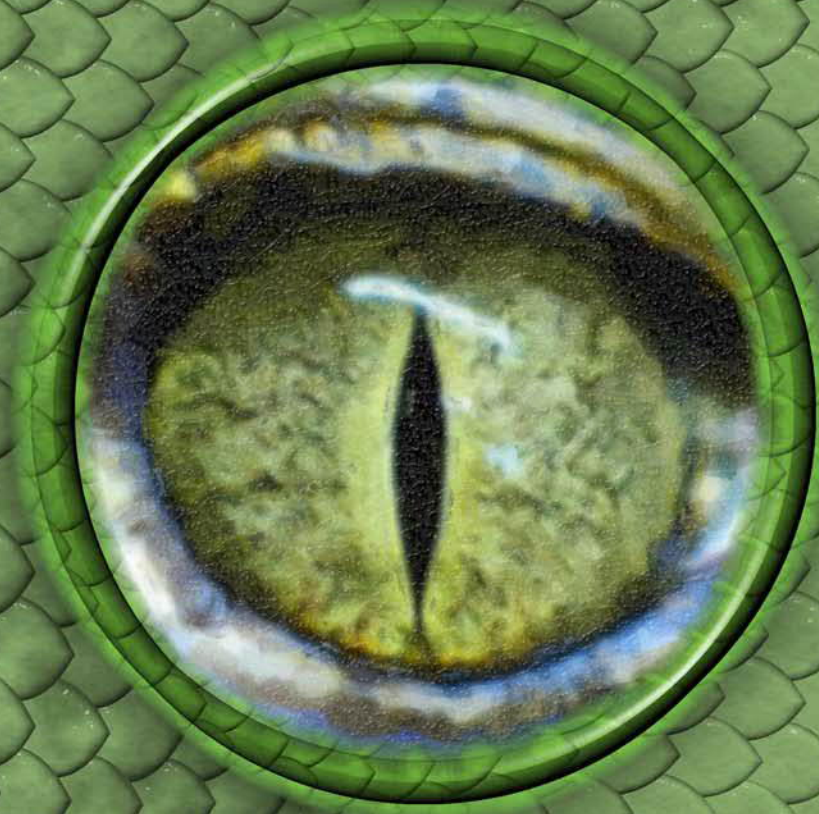
- Resolving feud between Widow Mokira & Saketi (100 EP)
- Chasing bear off Bolan's farm (50 EP)
- Killing the demon Marbas (3000 EP)

## CREDITS

**Authors:** Steve Johansson and John McConnell

**Cartography:** John McConnell and Craig Zipse

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# The Bestiary

# BANDY-TAILED FIGHTING COCK

B

When I was first coming up in the world, it was often my pleasure to travel into the countryside and listen to the old farmer's tales of the strange creatures that, every now and again, would come wandering into their villages. In one such place, there was a tavern I often frequented that had a gargantuan rooster head mounted above the bar. The owner of the head, the barkeeper, Grandfather Larch, would only tell of its acquisition when sufficiently drunk. During one of my visits around the New Year, I was lucky enough to find him in such a state and he related the tale. When Larch was a young brewer of about twenty-three winters, making moonshine in secret stills, there was an unusually hot summer. Crops withered, animals sickened, and the entire pace of life seemed to slow considerably, even for the countryside. On an especially humid day, Larch was sitting with some other farmers in the shade of a tree, passing around a jug of hooch. "It was too darn hot t'work," he reminded me several times before continuing. While languishing, Larch spotted something on the edge of the forest. It looked to him like a rooster of some sort. "Only, it had faahr legs, understand? Damn-nest thing y'ever did see." As the wild rooster began to head towards them, it became apparent, however, that apart from its unconventional locomotive configuration, it was also of prodigious size. "Taller than three men on each other's shoulders! And the way it moved, by gum! It broke into a gallop and we scattered immediately, a'course. Damn thing busted open my still and guzzled down all the mash! Then it went mad! Tearing up an' down flying onto treetops, only to jump down again, crowing and cuckooing like it were fightin' some other rooster that weren't there at all! Then, all of a sudden, it jes' keeled over. We waited a spell before we approached, but there it was—stone dead. I guess you kin' say that big critter did me a favor, that mash could have ruined my health."



Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks are large quadrupedal, rooster-like birds infamous for their extremely aggressive and territorial behavior. The giant birds stand six and a half to seven feet tall and weigh in excess of 350 pounds. There are many varieties of Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks, but the most common coloration consists of bright red coxcombs and waddles, bright orange neck and head feathers, mixed black and orange wings, and iridescent tail plumage of alternating black and white stripes from which the creature's moniker derives. Other specimens have been sighted that have entirely black plumage save for the tail feathers.

Each of the creature's four legs has a set of sharp claws with the foremost pair featuring a particularly cruel spur used for fighting rival males and disemboweling opponents. The beaks of the Giant

Fighting Cock are also extremely dangerous as the creatures can rip out huge chunks of flesh thanks to their heavily muscled necks.

## Combat/Tactics:

Giant Fighting Cocks are flightless but exceptional runners able to outdistance most predators with ease. Their large keen eyes and acute hearing combine to make them difficult to get the drop on.

Unlike most prey species, fighting cocks are temperamentally biased toward fight rather than flight. Despite their speed advantage, they often will face down predators rather than making the rational choice to flee. Such orneriness has engendered a healthy respect for the beast amongst hunters but undoubtedly contributes to their relative scarcity in the wild.

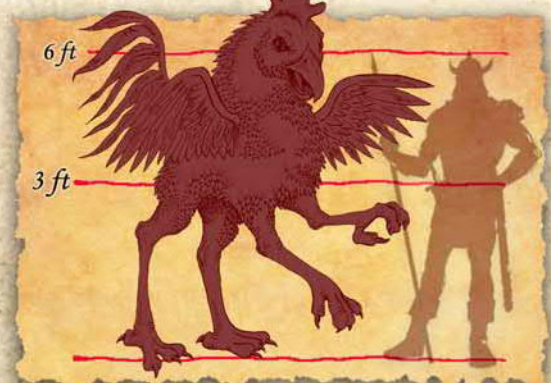
SIGN/TRACKS



RANGE ON TELLENE



SIZE COMPARISON



Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks assert dominance within flocks through infighting. The birds leaping at one another with outstretched claws and spurs to lacerate their opponent typify such battles. Generally, the fights only last as long as the lesser bird's tenacity holds out, so they're rarely to the death.

When confronting other adversaries, they make use of this same instinctual style. However, what might be a glancing blow for a fellow Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cock, could disembowel a human being or cripple a hunting dog. Should their initial slashing strokes fail to drive off an adversary, they will commence tearing at their enemy with their hooked beak (a tactic never employed when sparring with rivals).

If prodded to employ their full offensive capabilities (rather than ritualized fighting against other cocks), fighting cocks will always use the Aggressive Attack special combat move (gaining +5 Attack but suffering -2 Defense). When so enraged, they can be extremely dangerous as their rapid movement prevents most creatures from countering this onslaught by giving ground or scampering back.

### Habitat/Society:

Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks are very social animals. Alpha males maintain a harem of smaller hens, which they mate with exclusively. Within the flock, the Alpha is at the top of the pecking order and any males that he perceives to be a threat to his dominance are driven out via intimidation and ritualized attacks.

Males expelled by an alpha tend to congregate together in rogue flocks. These gangs may pose a threat to anyone unlucky enough to wander into what the birds consider their territory. Such danger zones are difficult even for local hunters to precisely define as a rancorous flock may expectantly shift locations in response to unknown environmental stimuli. Conversely, flocks headed by an alpha male tend to reside in a fixed abode. This no doubt stems from the fact that a dominant male can command prime territory.

A mature alpha may be larger and stronger than the younger males, but is generally content to protect his flock and prevent encroachment on his chosen locale. Simply driving off any interlopers, rather than killing them will usually satisfy alphas.

Bandy-tailed cocks and hens are able to communicate to one another via a modest vocabulary of distinct calls and songs. While this does not approach the complexity of human language, it is sufficient to convey adequate information to permit the creatures to act in tandem.

### Ecology:

These gigantic birds can be found in vast plains where small game and wild grains are plentiful. Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks may also encroach on human farmlands owing to the ready supply of food and inability of most farming communities to drive them off. Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks will eat small mammals and birds, large insects, as well as cereals.

Farmers that live in close proximity to a flock of Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cocks have learned to never drop their guard when a flock may be moving by. Certain areas have formed militias whose sole purpose is to band together into a shelter of ten or twenty men in order to drive the creatures away with long pikes.

An apocryphal story describes a Giant Bandy tailed Fighting Cock that swallowed an entire chest of gems in order to better help it digest. These birds certainly have been observed swallowing stones to aid in mastication and such behavior is no doubt the source of this story.

### On Tellene:

Giant Bandy-Tailed Fighting Cocks are native to central and southern Svimohzia. Some have certainly been captured and occasionally can be encountered as exotic fighting beasts in gladiatorial arenas. That a specimen may have escaped and gone feral is undoubtedly possible.

## Giant Bandy Tailed Fighting Cock

HIT POINTS:	33+5d8
SIZE/WEIGHT:	L/375 lbs.
TENACITY:	Brave
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal, High
FATIGUE FACTOR:	-2

SPEED	3	INIT	-1
ATTACK	+12	DMG REDUCTION	4
DEFENSE	+4	see below	7
REACH	2 ft	DAMAGE	TOP SAVE

### MOVEMENT

CRAWL:	5
WALK:	15
JOG:	25
RUN:	30
SPRINT:	35

### SAVES

PHYSICAL:	+10
MENTAL:	+9
DODGE:	+11

**ATTACK:** Fighting cocks initially swipe with their clawed forelegs inflicting 2d4p+4 damage on a hit. Should they fail to drive off their combatant, they begin an *Aggressive Attack* on all subsequent strikes. This begins with the beak which inflicts 2d10p on a successful bite.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:**  
very fast movement

## General Info

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
NO. APPEARING:	1-6
% CHANCE IN LAIR:	100% (alpha males) or 0%
FREQUENCY:	Unusual
ALIGNMENT:	Non
VISION TYPE:	Standard
AWARENESS/SENSES:	Keen eyesight & hearing (Improved Initiative - 1 die)
HABITAT:	grasslands
DIET:	Omnivore
ORGANIZATION:	flocks
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical to Temperate

## Yield

MEDICINAL:	nil
SPELL COMPONENTS:	nil
HIDE/TROPHY:	nil
TREASURE:	nil
EDIBLE:	yes
OTHER:	nil
EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:	650

# KILLER TOMATOES

Also Known As: Devil Tomatoes

**W**hen I was a lad of, maybe, fourteen years? I can't remember. We'll say fourteen years. Well, one night myself and a few other ne'er-do-wells decided to conduct a little moonlight raid against Old Farmer Remel's vegetable garden. Under the cover of darkness we slipped into the vegetable patch and began to gather up into our pails as many cucumbers, radishes, and tomatoes that we could carry. I was particularly looking forward to those tomatoes. As I picked them, however, I noticed another vine nearby. The tomatoes growing off of it were enormous, the size of a cantaloupe, at least. There was also an unusual amount of mold growing on them all. A friend of mine, Minon, let out a cry of pain and as I whirled to face him I saw him being swarmed by... by tomatoes! Tomatoes with eyes and mouths! They flew through the air, eyes bugging out of their heads and jaws agape, biting and flying off. Those tomatoes were huge, as well. Nearly the size of... I turned slowly back to the tomato vine I had been standing next to. I watched, paralyzed with fear and curiosity as dozens of sets of eyes opened up on the rotten fruits. I hurled my pail at the vine and squished some of the creatures outright. They never had a chance to come for me, however, as I was a smart lad in those days and took off a-running as fast as I could back to town. The others boys followed after us. Minon's mother was furious the state he was in, all covered in cuts and tomato juice, and she demanded to know what had happened. We lied and said a dog had come after him or something like that, which seemed to satisfy her. It was a calculated risk; I knew what Minon's mother was like when she thought she was being lied to. But, what other option did we have? Tell her flying tomatoes attacked us? I'd take the killer tomatoes over one her beatings any day, that's for sure.



FRAIM

**K**iller Tomatoes are very large sentient tomatoes. On the vine, they appear as ripe heirloom varieties displaying pronounced ribbing. Most have evidence of moldy blight. Individual fruits possess bulging green eyes and a maw filled with razor sharp teeth but these are difficult to perceive when the tomato is inactive as they blend in with the berry's natural asymmetrical indentations when closed.

## Combat/Tactics:

Devil's Tomatoes are attuned to the scent of herbivorous and omnivorous animals and awaken from their dormancy upon catching a whiff of potential foragers. When so aroused, they detach

from their vine and hover near the plant awaiting intruders.

Killer tomatoes usually wait until potential feeders have approached near to its vine (usually about ten to fifteen feet) before mounting an attack. However, there are occasions when the tomatoes are feeling particularly surly and may preemptively launch an assault. In the latter case, they are likely to emerge from a nearby woodline or under cover of darkness rather than fly brazenly across an open field in broad daylight.

When attacking, devil's tomatoes are clearly recognizable as abnormal and possibly demonic plants. Their protuberant eyes belie a hint of malicious intelligence that is reinforced by their high-

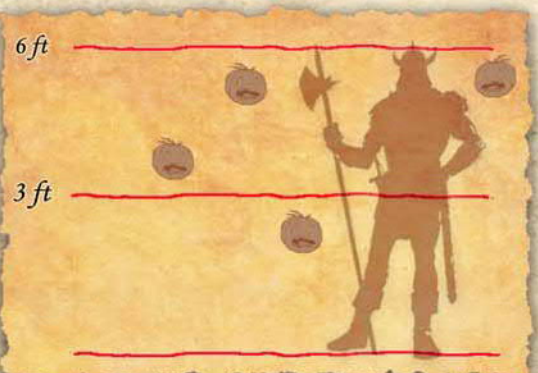
SIGN/TRACKS



RANGE ON TELLENE



SIZE COMPARISON



pitched twittering as they communicate amongst themselves.

In flight, the tomatoes have excellent maneuverability being able to jink with the speed of a prizefighter. As such, they are very difficult to swat out of the air. Killer Tomatoes attack exclusively by biting and tend to attack a single target en masse from all sides in an attempt to overwhelm the victim as quickly as possible.

While their bites seldom inflict fatal wounds (this damage does not penetrate), they can be disproportionately painful for their size as the tomato's highly acidic juices inflame the wound. Of greater concern is that any bite risks poisoning by nightshade toxin. Each wound sustained compels a check versus VF 5 poison with failure causing -1 to Attack, Defense and Damage for 2d4p hours. Multiple poisonings are cumulative.

Killer tomatoes rely on ambush and speed, as they are as susceptible to knives and other slicing implements as a mundane beefsteak tomato. If destroyed with a crushing weapon, they burst apart like a juicy piñata splashing everything within a five-foot radius. Anything splattered by this intense acidic juice takes one point of damage. A bursting killer tomato will also spread five to ten viable seeds onto the ground in that same radius. If undisturbed, the seeds can germinate and mature into a new vine within three weeks, making extermination of the tomatoes difficult.

The most assured way to halt the spread of a killer tomato vine is with fire. If scorched by flame, seeds will not be able to germinate. Take care not to eat the tomato itself, as it is, of course, highly acidic, foul tasting and toxic. A hard fought battle against a large vine may well prove to be a mere tactical victory should it simply grow back weeks later.

Note that as plants, killer tomatoes are immune to spells that require an animal mind to effect.

### Habitat/Ecology:

It is unknown exactly what the origins of the killer tomato are. The only certain thing about them is that their vines only seem to grow around areas of supernatural malevolence. Wherever a demon or other creature may have been summoned from another world, wherever a powerful undead being may maintain its demesne, wherever mortals truck with infernal powers, the killer tomato may germinate.

Killer tomatoes vines grow around persistently evil sites in subtropical to temperate climates with adequate rainfall to sustain vegetable crops. They can grow in nearly any type of soil, so long as the area has sufficient water nearby. A single vine can support up to twenty killer tomatoes. Because seeds mature so quickly, killer tomato vines tend to expand if left unchecked.

The tomatoes depend upon their vines for nutrients and sustenance and cannot survive for long alone. They will never fly more than a furlong's distance from their vine. Killer tomatoes are able to reattach themselves to their host stem after being roused and detaching from the plant. Damaged fruits can completely regenerate all tissue damage in 24 hours.

### On Tellene:

Killer tomatoes are usually considered to be little more than wild stories meant to frighten children and other gullible nuisances away from respectable vegetable patches. The reality is that killer tomatoes are not only real, but also a serious threat contained only by their rare, usually remote points of germination. Stories persist of chapels dedicated to evil gods that, once abandoned, become the spawning ground for huge numbers of vines. In these huge patches, the vines are said to be thicker than a man's leg, able to produce hundreds of tomatoes, each with the seeds to grow new vines. Some assert that they have seen other killer vegetables, squash and strangulating string beans, but these stories are too absurd to merit retelling.

## Killer Tomatoes

<b>HIT POINTS:</b>	3
<b>SIZE/WEIGHT:</b>	T/8 lbs.
<b>TENACITY:</b>	Fearless
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Slow
<b>FATIGUE FACTOR:</b>	n/a

<b>SPEED</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>INIT</b>	<b>+0</b>
<b>ATTACK</b>	<b>+0</b>	<b>DMG REDUCTION</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DEFENSE</b>	<b>+10</b>	<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>d3</b>
<b>REACH</b>	<b>0 ft</b>	<b>TOP SAVE</b>	<b>n/a</b>

### MOVEMENT

<b>CRAWL:</b>	—
<b>WALK:</b>	—
<b>JOG:</b>	—
<b>RUN:</b>	—
<b>FLY:</b>	20

### SAVES

<b>PHYSICAL:</b>	-2
<b>MENTAL:</b>	immune
<b>DODGE:</b>	+4

**ATTACK:** Killer Tomatoes fly in bunches towards their adversaries and tend to swarm and surround a single opponent rather than dispersing themselves evenly across all possible targets. Bites are rarely severe (*damage does not penetrate*) but they carry a weak poison (see text).

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:**  
flight

## General Info

<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any (always active)
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	d20+8
<b>% CHANCE IN LAIR:</b>	100%
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Scarce
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	non
<b>VISION TYPE:</b>	standard
<b>AWARENESS/SENSES:</b>	standard
<b>HABITAT:</b>	alluvial plains
<b>DIET:</b>	photosynthesis
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	vines
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	subtropical - temperate

## Yield

<b>MEDICINAL:</b>	nil
<b>SPELL COMPONENTS:</b>	nil
<b>HIDE/TROPHY:</b>	nil
<b>TREASURE:</b>	nil
<b>EDIBLE:</b>	no
<b>OTHER:</b>	nil
<b>EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:</b>	18

# MIMIKOS

I've heard of plenty of poor bastards who have had bad enough luck to run afoul of a mimikos. It's because of these stories that most people think mimikos only take the form of a fat chest of gold coins or maybe a door, but the truth is that they can look like nearly anything. Case in point, about a week ago I found myself in need of a hiding spot. There had been a misunderstanding with a local prefect and laying low for a few days seemed like the thing to do.

I managed to evade the guards by dipping into the tangled alleyways of a slum and it wasn't long before I found a boarded up shack and slipped in. I could hear them rooting about outside and knew I needed to keep quiet. Hardly a problem for me. Turning to scan the environs, I was delighted to spy an overstuffed leather chair in the corner. My legs were aching from the pursuit and a nice sit seemed like just the thing. I quietly and cautiously plopped myself down into the seat, being careful not to scrape the legs against the floor. The feeling was like heaven, I sank into the soft leather and prepared to have a nap while I waited out the patrols. Only, I didn't stop sinking.

The chair seemed to be drawing me deeper and deeper into itself. As I tried to rise, I found that my limbs and torso were stuck firmly to where I had let them rest on the lounge. I struggled to stand and the chair began to pummel me with suddenly emerged pseudopods! Unable to defend myself, it was all I could do to keep quiet as the thing gave me the thrashing of a lifetime. Blow after blow rained down on my face and the demon chair creaked and hissed. I could see rows of small barb-like teeth closing about me as I continued to sink. I could stand it no more and cried out. The guards heard my voice and tore down the front door. Their two snarling faces turned at once to shock and the last thing I saw before I sank down into the creature's gullet was their brandished weapons against the flailing pseudopods of the carnivorous armchair.

I was enveloped by darkness and felt the burning digestive fluids of the gut begin to consume me. I gathered my strength and with a final wrenching effort, I broke free from the sticky embrace. Jolting up out of the clinging morass, I saw the beast was slain. It was strange to look down on it sprawled out on the ground, something between inanimate object and newly dead cadaver. The guards, too, were dead. Their skulls had been dashed against the floor and their blades and hands were still firmly adhered to the mimikos' sticky hide. I relieved them of their purses and as I left, I happened to catch my reflection in a puddle outside. My beautiful face was so swollen and bruised from the beating I'd taken that I could scarcely recognize myself. With this realization I gave a chuckle and strode down the high street to spend the guards' money.

**T**he mimikos is an amoeba-like creature possessed of a remarkable skill in mimicry. This creature can imitate the form of many inanimate objects ranging in size from doors and statuary to large pieces of furniture.

## Combat/Tactics:

When typically encountered, a mimikos is hibernating and slowly metabolizing an object it has enveloped. Unless touched or prodded, it will remain asleep, as it is unresponsive to sound or light whilst in this state.

Scrutinizing an inactive mimikos may reveal inconsistencies permitting the observer to conclude with relative certainty that the 'object' in question is not what it appears to be. Obviously this must be done without touching the object for so doing will reveal **with absolute certainty** that it is counterfeit when the creature arouses!

Revealing the true nature of an unconscious mimikos requires some appraisal skill vis-à-vis the object it is imitating.

For a master, this is a trivial Scrutiny skill check. For those of lesser skill, the following Scrutiny checks are required: Expert=Easy, Advanced=Average, Average=Difficult and Novice=Very Difficult.

If physically touched, the mimikos will awaken from its cataleptic state. It cannot do this instantaneously hence its significant Initiative penalty. However, it is not completely defenseless until it regains situational awareness. Its outer skin is impregnated with a very sticky adhesive similar in effect to the clerical spell *Pine Tar* (q.v.). Anyone who touched the mimikos is held fast unless they can succeed at a Feat of Strength (vs. d20+12). Such persons suffer a 2 point penalty to their combat stats (Attack, Defense, Damage & Speed) while ensnared and cannot execute combat maneuvers premised on their ability to move freely (e.g. give ground).

As a mimikos regains consciousness, its mimicked form will gradually transform into an amorphous blob - the creature's

true form. This process may take several minutes to complete. While mutating forms, viewers will see incongruous pseudopods materialize from the object. The creature employs said protrusions to flail defensively at what it perceives to be predators.

These pseudopods strike with appreciable concussive force but also bear the same adhesive that coats the creature's membrane. Anyone struck by a 'pod will be held fast with consequences to martial ability as above. Note that anyone employing a shield for defense will see this defensive ward ensnared even on a failed attack by the mimikos (*that is, should it miss by less than 10*). Users have the option to remove the shield (an action requiring d4p seconds) else they are held as if they were successfully attacked. In addition, an ensnared shield no longer contributes to a character's defense bonus.

The mimikos will extrude another pseudopod with which to attack should it snare an opponent. It is entirely possible for an individual combatting a mimikos to be restrained by multiple appendages. In such instances, the disabling effect is cumulative.

The creature, like others of similar composition, is resilient to damage inflicted by crushing and puncturing weapons. As such, its Damage Reduction rating is dependent on the type of implement used to harm it. Crushing weapons face a DR of 12, Piercing 8 while Hacking weapons contend with a mere 2.

### Habitat/Ecology:

Mimikos are detritivores that have the ability to metabolize lignin. They feed primarily upon wood but can readily digest meat or plant based carbohydrates if available. It is theorized that they can even maintain life functions by oxidizing noble metals or carbonate rock.

Mimikos digest materials by initially flowing over the object in question. Once an object is enveloped, the creature forms a rigid outer skin that exactly replicates the item being devoured – albeit it somewhat larger than the original. This skin hardens over a period of days and pigmentizes such that it forms a veneer that replicates the underlying object. Quite unwittingly, it forms a duplicate of the thing it is consuming.

Digestion occurs over many days or weeks depending on the nature of the object being consumed. Once a mimikos has completed 'eating' an object, it enters a period of hibernation during which it slowly processes the material it enveloped.

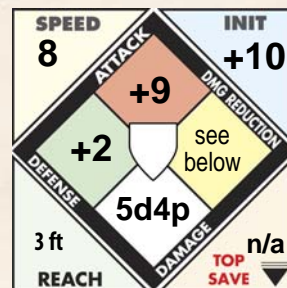
As a mimikos spends most of its life in metabolic hibernation, this is the state most are encountered in.

### On Tellene:

As these creatures can be found anywhere with ambient temperatures above 20°F, it is difficult to offer advice on how best to avoid being duped into provoking one of these creatures. Given their proclivity for hibernation, one assumes that they are disposed to seeking concealed locations with little foot traffic.

## Mimikos

<b>HIT POINTS:</b>	30+5d8
<b>SIZE/WEIGHT:</b>	L/650 lbs.
<b>TENACITY:</b>	Fearless
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	non
<b>FATIGUE FACTOR:</b>	n/a



### MOVEMENT

<b>CRAWL:</b>	2½
<b>WALK:</b>	2½
<b>JOG:</b>	2½
<b>RUN:</b>	2½
<b>SPRINT:</b>	2½

### SAVES

<b>PHYSICAL:</b>	+9
<b>MENTAL:</b>	immune
<b>DODGE:</b>	+6

**ATTACK:** A mimikos' outer membrane is sticky and able to hold fast anything touching or touched by the creature. Forms pseudopods to flail opponents for 5d4p damage. Can generate additional 'pods to continue attacking while holding opponents with other protrusions. DR dependant on weapon employed (see text).

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:**  
mimicry of static objects, glue

## General Info

<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any (typically hibernating)
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>% CHANCE IN LAIR:</b>	100%
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Exotic
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	non
<b>VISION TYPE:</b>	n/a
<b>AWARENESS/SENSES:</b>	touch only
<b>HABITAT:</b>	any
<b>DIET:</b>	any
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	solitary
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	any

## Yield

<b>MEDICINAL:</b>	nil
<b>SPELL COMPONENTS:</b>	nil
<b>HIDE/TROPHY:</b>	nil
<b>TREASURE:</b>	nil
<b>EDIBLE:</b>	no
<b>OTHER:</b>	nil
<b>EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:</b>	520



# SCARECROW

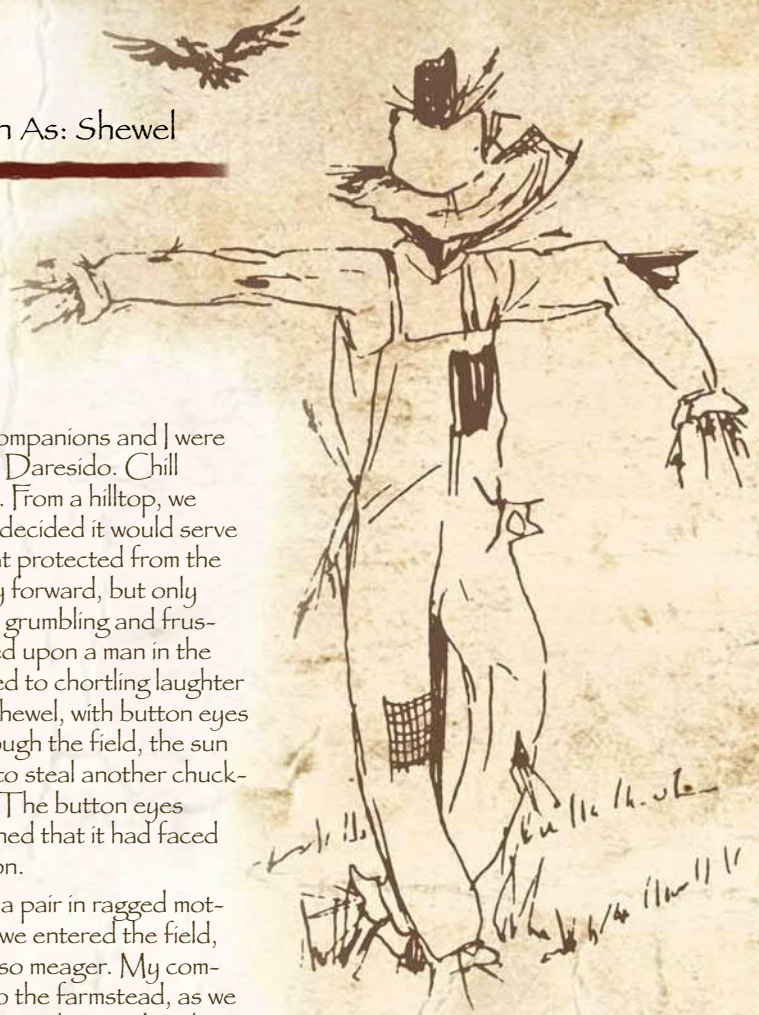
Also Known As: Shewel

**B**eware o wanderers! Beware the insidiousness of evil men, for all the world wouldst they pervert. From the highest offices to the lowest echelons, they labor to make anew a world of restless shadow. Wickedness does not nest only in the crypt, the labyrinth, and the forgotten places of the world. Evil seeps in wherever men are unwary and let close unwatchful eyes. Lo, even Arcadian fields might find themselves benighted by malevolence.

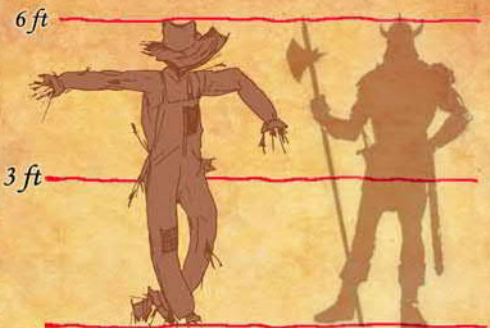
It was during the height of the harvest season when my traveling companions and I were caught in an autumn gale a few days march from the eastern edge of Daresido. Chill winds buffeted us and as rain threatened as we searched for shelter. From a hilltop, we espied a rustic homestead in the distance amidst a field of corn and decided it would serve well our needs. Retreating into the tall corn stalks, we were somewhat protected from the buffeting wind, but quickly became disoriented. We stumbled blindly forward, but only seemed to succeed in further confounding our passage. Amidst the grumbling and frustration of our predicament, we were thoroughly startled we happened upon a man in the field! Our "valiant" warrior let out a falsetto cry, which quickly turned to chortling laughter as we realized this "man" in the field was nigh more than a crofter's shewel, with button eyes and a lolling, stitched head. In higher spirits, we pushed deeper through the field, the sun now descending in the cooling air. I turned back towards the shewel to steal another chuckle at the lopsided face, but saw that it was facing toward our group. The button eyes looked blindly forward over our heads and into the field. I had imagined that it had faced the other way, but I simply blamed my overtiredness and continued on.

It 'twas not long before we ran into more shewels. This time it was a pair in ragged motley, swaying in the breeze. We had not seen these scarecrows when we entered the field, we agreed, and wondered what farmer could need three for an area so meager. My companions stopped a moment to wonder how much farther it must be to the farmstead, as we had now been marching for a turn of the hourglass. I uncorked my water skein and took in our surroundings and nearly shrieked when I turned around. The first shewel was still behind us, but now not twenty feet away, planted firmly where we had trodden down the corn only moments before. Spinning back to alert my companions, I did scream, for the two shewels in motley had pulled themselves down from their posts to canter toward us on silent feet of straw. Instinct conquered surprise, and we came to blows as the three horrors closed in on us. Our warrior laid a mighty blow with his hammer, but the shewel seemed to take no notice. The motley pair lashed out swiftly, but merely touched the warrior. No sooner did their raking straw fingers make contact, he began to scream as unto a babe and collapsed into the mud below. Our dwarf, cunning as his kind are with flame, plunged his torch into the flank of the shewel and it went up like a fresh wick.

The fire jumped and caught the other shewel aflame as well. Wind whipped through the field and the dry stalks began to alight all around us. The shewels leaped and spun like tops as they burned. I watched transfixed for a moment, before I regained my senses and bad the dwarf to follow our trail back. We were running in a frenzy to escape the field as the growing light of the holocaust revealed more shewels creeping through corn with uneven, prancing gaits like vile marionettes. Racing back, retracing our path with the dwarf close at my heels, the first shewel loped towards me with its outstretched, crooked arms. I ducked in time to avoid its reaching touch and ran until the field was little more than a point of light, flickering and blazing in the distance.



## SIZE COMPARISON



As befits their name, a scarecrow's powers are limited to frightening the living.

**WILL FACTOR**  
**4**



Scarecrows are animated mannequins enlivened by dark energy. No two shewel look exactly alike, but they all tend to share a few similar qualities. All scarecrows are generally humanoid in shape and are constructed from easily obtainable components, be it straw, rope, parchment, sacks of leaves, wicker, reeds, or other similar materials. Some may even be built from papier-mâché and purposefully replicate the appearance or serve as a caricature of an individual, monster, demon or divine avatar.

It is rumored that to imbue a scarecrow with *élan malfaisant*, the creator undertakes a complex series of rites as he constructs the body of the creature. This involves dressing the dummy in the clothing worn by a sapient sacrificial offering. Upon the conclusion of the ritual, the victim is murdered and his blood sprinkled upon the inanimate scarecrow thereby providing it motive 'life'.

Scarecrows do not possess intelligence per se, they must be directed in their actions. However, the enchantment provides for some degree of situational processing and adaptation to circumstances meaning that orders can be broad stroke – “Let no one pass unless they are with me” or “Let no one pass unless they bear this mark” being some examples of this. Given their peculiarities, Scarecrows are frequently deployed as warding guards rather than shock troops.

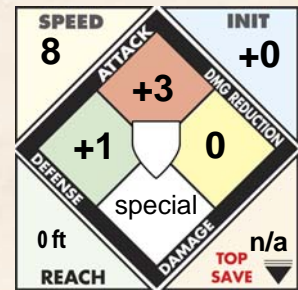
### Combat/Tactics:

Scarecrows may derive substantial deceptive camouflage due to their essential indistinguishability from crude human mimics of the sort frequently employed by farmers. This is particularly true in agricultural regions where such effigies are commonplace. It is not unusual for animated scarecrows to be positioned amongst straw dummies so as to deceive observers as to their true nature or numbers.

As befits its moniker, a scarecrow's powers involve frightening opponents not physically disabling them. Every scarecrow radiates an aura of palpable fear similar to the mage spell *Panic*. Anyone, save those with 50 or more hit points, approaching within 15 feet of one of these creatures must succeed at a mental save

## Scarecrow

HIT POINTS:	16+1d8
SIZE/WEIGHT:	M/50 lbs.
TENACITY:	Fearless
INTELLIGENCE:	Non
FATIGUE FACTOR:	n/a



### MOVEMENT

CRAWL:	2½
WALK:	5
JOG:	10
RUN:	15
SPRINT:	20

### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Radiate Fear in 15' radius; touch lowers tenacity

### SAVES

PHYSICAL:	0
MENTAL:	immune
DODGE:	+3

### SPECIAL DEFENSES:

Immune to puncturing weapons, largely immune to crushing weapons

## General Info

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any (always active)
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
% CHANCE IN LAIR:	100%
FREQUENCY:	Scarce
ALIGNMENT:	non
VISION TYPE:	standard
AWARENESS/SENSES:	standard
HABITAT:	any
DIET:	n/a
ORGANIZATION:	n/a
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	any

## Yield

MEDICINAL:	nil
SPELL COMPONENTS:	nil
HIDE/TROPHY:	nil
TREASURE:	nil
EDIBLE:	no
OTHER:	nil
EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:	86

(vs.  $d20p+4$ ) or flee in terror for  $(d4p+3) \times 10$  seconds.

Should this effect fail to ward off trespassers, scarecrows will attempt to physically prevent passage. They will interpose themselves to block progress through the area or towards an aperture they are charged with guarding. If approached, they will strike out at the prospective infiltrator.

Clearly such pillowy assaults are unable to inflict measureable injuries. However, a successful attack will reduce the defender's tenacity (or morale) by one step. In the case of Player Characters (who barring certain quirks possess "Hero" morale and thus are never compelled to check tenacity regardless of circumstances), the initial blow of a scarecrow reduces them to 'Fearless' tenacity (see *Hacklopedia of Beasts* p. 12) and subjects them to possible compulsion to involuntarily flee if a trigger event occurs. Subsequent hits reduce their morale in stepwise progression to Brave, Steady, Nervous and Cowardly. Should their morale drop below Cowardly (perhaps abetted by a pre-existing Coward flaw), they are compelled to immediately surrender when faced by a hostile aggressor.

Compromised tenacity is restored at the rate of one step per hour.

Given the nature of their construction, shewel cannot be measurably harmed by piercing weapons. Crushing weapons, while able to inflict ancillary knockback effects (against which scarecrows are considered size S), are also unable to damage these pliable constructs. Hacking weapons are fully effective.

Scarecrows are, unsurprisingly, extremely vulnerable to fire. Boldly thrusting a torch at one will compel it to keep its distance. Should a scarecrow incur fire damage, it will be set alight and suffers  $1d3p$  damage every 5 seconds until consumed. However, while so ablaze, any successful attack the creature makes inflicts a  $1d4p$  hit point burn in addition for its morale weakening effect. Armor DR provides no reduction to this damage. A burning shewel can also be an ignition point for secondary fires - particularly if inflammable materials are located in the immediate vicinity.

### Habitat/Ecology:

Scarecrows are automatons whose powers are fueled by dark energies. In the role of warders, they are supernaturally efficient at scaring away the curious trespasser. A distinct advantage they possess vis-à-vis other automaton undead (to wit, skeletons and zombies) is that they are unlikely to rouse the suspicions of those that hear tell of such an encounter. The walking dead are the subjects of ubiquitous folk tales such that the mere hint of the presence of such creatures is sufficient to inspire rabid gossip if not an outright call for immediate action to seek out and eliminate the threat. Conversely, relating how was spooked by a scarecrow is likely to elicit nothing more than a guffaw.

Shewel are subject to deterioration owing to the perishable material with which they are constructed. Those left exposed to the elements may rot within a couple fortnights in a humid climate subject to frequent rains (e.g. the tropics).



# YAPPER

a.k.a. Yip dog, Skitter Terriers, Temple Dogs

In my day, I have slunk past owlbeasts on the snow-locked slopes of the Krind. I have bypassed watchful elves in the forests of Nezer'Dan. I have nimbly avoided all manner of goblin traps in countless abandoned mines and never once did they suspect my presence. In short I have confronted all manner of terrors and outwitted, and outmaneuvered them all.

And yet, I swear to you by all that's true: the creature I dread most? The common, Yapper — those small dogs no higher than the straps on my boot. Call them what you will, yip dogs, ankle bitters, skitter terriers, these infernal creatures are the bane of my profession, or any man who desires a small measure of quietude in his life.

Their ear-piercing rapid barking, “Yip! yip! yip! yip!” is enough to drive anyone mad, and indeed I have heard from certain nobles who share a wall, or even a street with such a cur that it does! One swore up and down to me that he had come down with a case of the “yips” and could hear phantom barking day and night no matter where he journeyed. It had left him a tangle of nerves and cost him many nights of sound slumber.

They seem to take notice of the lightest footfall or the slightest flicker of a shadow, and make the arts I practice all but impossible. Unless you manage to get close to them and drop some poisoned cheese before they've detected you - the situation is hopeless. The only effective method for dealing with a Yapper I've ever seen was when a mage friend of mine conjured up a chewy round ball which it was content to play with as I relieved his owner of some smaller valuables. —✘



**Y**appers are small dogs originally bred to serve as an early-warning system in temples and manor houses. In more recent years many noble women have begun to keep them as a sign of status, often carrying them about town to show their prestige.

Their disparaging and all too accurate name comes from the unmistakable yips and yaps they make whenever they hear or see, hear or smell intruders, family members, neighbors, other dogs, horses or in some cases falling leaves or a passing cloud.

## Combat/Tactics:

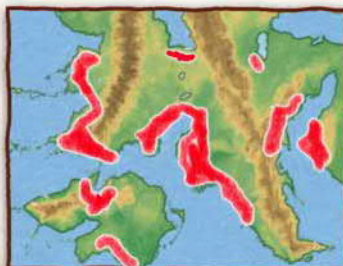
Unlike normal sentry or guard dogs, they rely solely on making as much noise as possible to attract attention to a possible threat. And everyone is a possible threat. The dogs do not discern between friends and enemies and will bark at the slightest provocation. Kept in packs, the sound is formidable and many a thief has reconsidered his intentions upon hearing their telltale yammer.

Their large pointed ears stand on constant watch for threatening noises, from the sound of a key in the lock to the unwrapping of a round of cheese. These possible dangers are met with a formidable, high-pitched bark

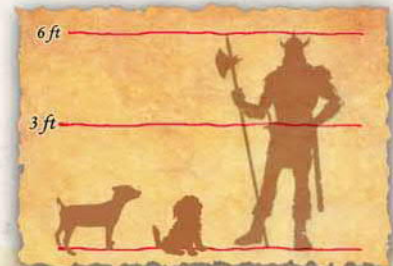
SIGN/TRACKS



RANGE ON TELLENE



SIZE COMPARISON



loud enough that some might think the source to be a much larger dog. The dog will bark until ordered to be silent by its master. It is not the dog's appearance that is frightening—it is the level of noise even one such animal can produce.

When engaged in combat, the dogs will give ground and continue to bark, running around and about their foes and staying maddeningly out of reach, yipping loudly the entire time. It is a difficult proposition to hit one with a blow, as they move so quickly and are so small. They are unafraid of almost anything, seemingly believing themselves to be much larger in stature than they truly are, and will not back down from any foe.

If they are cornered or find themselves in the grip of an attacker, they will struggle and bite furiously. Luckily for their attackers, however, this is a dog whose bark truly is much worse than its bite.

If gravely injured, Yappers will not attempt to fight to the death, but will yield, adopting a posture of shame, tucking their tail between their legs and whimpering softly. However, should their enemy take this as a sign that she has bested them, the dog will immediately begin its torrent of yaps as soon as its assailant turns her attention elsewhere.

In packs Yappers work together to surround their enemies, moving in a slow circle around them, and attempting to herd them into areas where guards or their master will be. In such a circle the dogs will nip at a threats ankles from the rear, while those in front of the trapped individual continue to bark.

Miscreants will often run, but in a pack, these little dogs can provide enough of a distraction to slow the intruder long enough for help to arrive. Skitter Terriers will follow an intruder (or guest) right to the edge of their familiar territory, but are loathe to leave it. If the person in question remains in their sight, they will continue their barking incessantly.

In larger manors or temples, a single dog will be trained to constantly patrol the house and ascertain the location of family members. It will continue this patrol as long as needed. If they cannot find the family member they are looking for, a torrent of yapping will erupt from that part of the grounds.

The only thing that might distract a temple dog from its watch is a bit of cheese. City thieves often keep a few bites of the stuff in a pocket as a last ditch measure. The best way to avoid a temple dog is not to set it off in the first place. Once the alarm has been sounded, a fast escape is the best option. Owners of these small charismatic animals tend to be quite protective of them and will arrive with due haste to investigate any clamor.

## Yapper

HIT POINTS:	6+1d4
SIZE/WEIGHT:	T /15 lbs
TENACITY:	Steady
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal, High
FATIGUE FACTOR:	-3

<b>SPEED</b>	<b>INIT</b>
10	-2
<b>ATTACK</b>	<b>DMG REDUCTION</b>
0	1
<b>DEFENSE</b>	<b>DAMAGE</b>
+7	6
d3p	
<b>REACH</b>	<b>TOP SAVE</b>
Short	▼

### MOVEMENT

CRAWL:	5
WALK:	10
JOG:	15
RUN:	20
SPRINT:	25

### SAVES

PHYSICAL:	-1
MENTAL:	+2
DODGE:	+4

**ATTACK:** Temple dogs always give ground when attacked. They are adept at reading an attacker's intentions and will try to stay out of reach at all times in order to keep up their barking alarm. They will only struggle and try to bite if grabbed.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:**  
Listening 90%

## GENERAL INFO

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
NO. APPEARING:	1+ (dictated by owner)
% CHANCE IN LAIR:	100%
FREQUENCY:	Ubiquitous
ALIGNMENT:	non
VISION TYPE:	Extreme Low Light
AWARENESS/SENSES:	Extremely keen hearing/smell
HABITAT:	Dictated by owner
DIET:	Omnivore
ORGANIZATION:	Individual (occasionally pairs)
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Dictated by owner

## YIELD

MEDICINAL:	none
SPELL COMPONENTS:	per dogs
HIDE/TROPHY:	no
TREASURE:	no
EDIBLE:	yes
OTHER:	nil
EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:	12

**Habitat/Society:**

Yappers are pleasant enough to look at, with a face to melt the heart of most noble ladies. They are often kept as lap dogs and constant companions. It isn't unusual to see a princess with her pet dog along for the trip in a specially designed basket. Many a noble lord has lost his heart to one of these dogs as well. They are as fiercely loyal and protective of their owners as the mightiest war dog—and tend to think of themselves as such. Since their main job is to raise an alarm, they make good indoor companions.

As they have proliferated noble society, the number of “accidents” that these dogs fall prey to has increased steadily. It is not uncommon for neighboring nobles to be in a longstanding feud over the amount of noise the dogs produce, and there have even been duels in particularly heated moments when a passerby has insulted a particularly hot-tempered noble's pup. It is also, sadly, no longer uncommon for such a dog to “go missing,” or for an owner to find their Yapper lying motionless next to a poisoned water bowl.

**Ecology:**

Temple dogs were originally bred as unobtrusive guards. Upon first glance one would not consider this dog a threat. They are small in size, standing about 10 to 15 inches at the shoulder. The fur comes in a range of colors from light tan to dark brown. A ridge of longer fur stands along the back and top of the head. The underside of the chin and around the muzzle is white. Some dogs have white patches on the chest as well. They reach sexual maturity in under a year, and live from about 10 to 12 years. Large carnivores such as big cats, dire wolves or alligators are natural predators of dogs and regard them as a food source. They are primarily carnivores, though they are known to accept almost anything from the hand of their master, and are almost as unscrupulous about treats received from strangers.

**On Tellene:**

The nobility of Kalmar has fallen in love with these small dogs, and renowned breeders can fetch a good deal of silver for a stout Yapper with a good coat and a strong voice. Nobles often breed their dogs with one another, and it can be an important sign of respect, friendship, or a peace offering to one's enemies. Outside of Kalamar these dogs do not see much use beyond their originally intended purpose, and in more wild areas of Tellene they are rarely seen at all, as their natural predators have little trouble making a meal of them.