

Something

**Stinks**

in  
**Stilton**





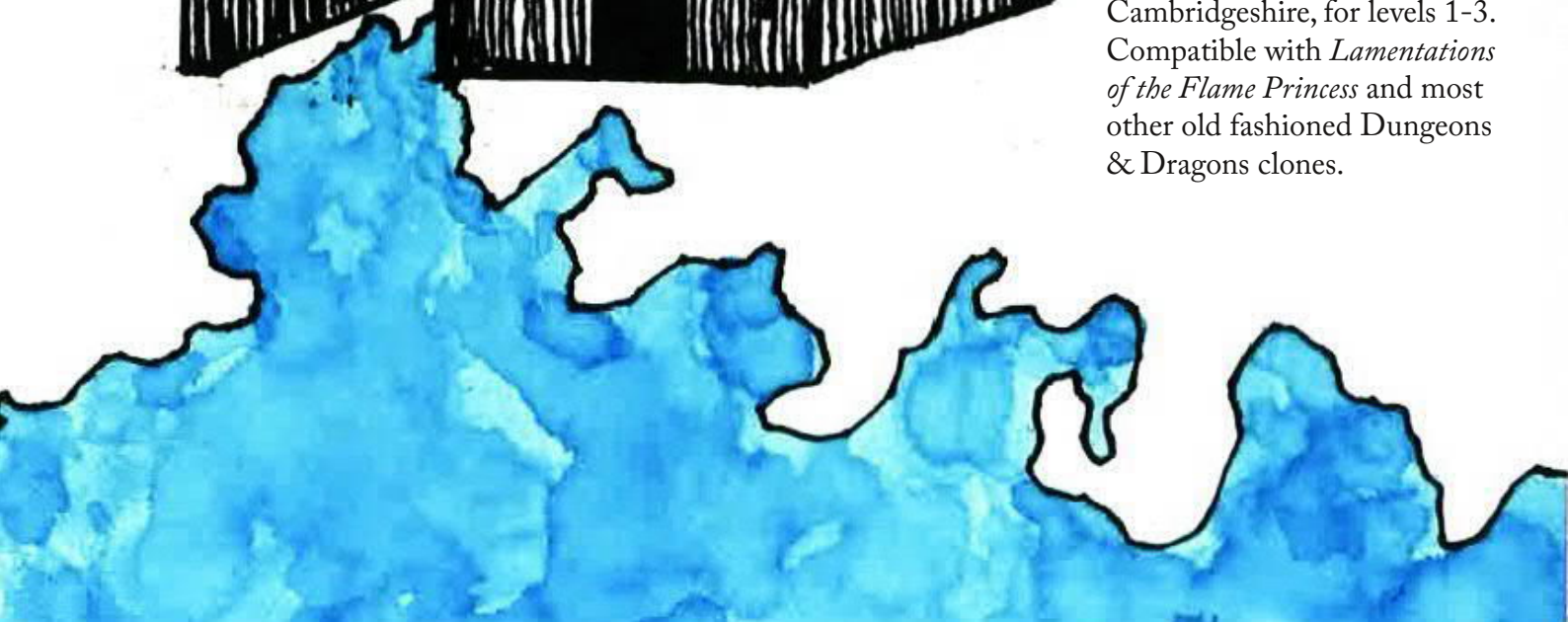
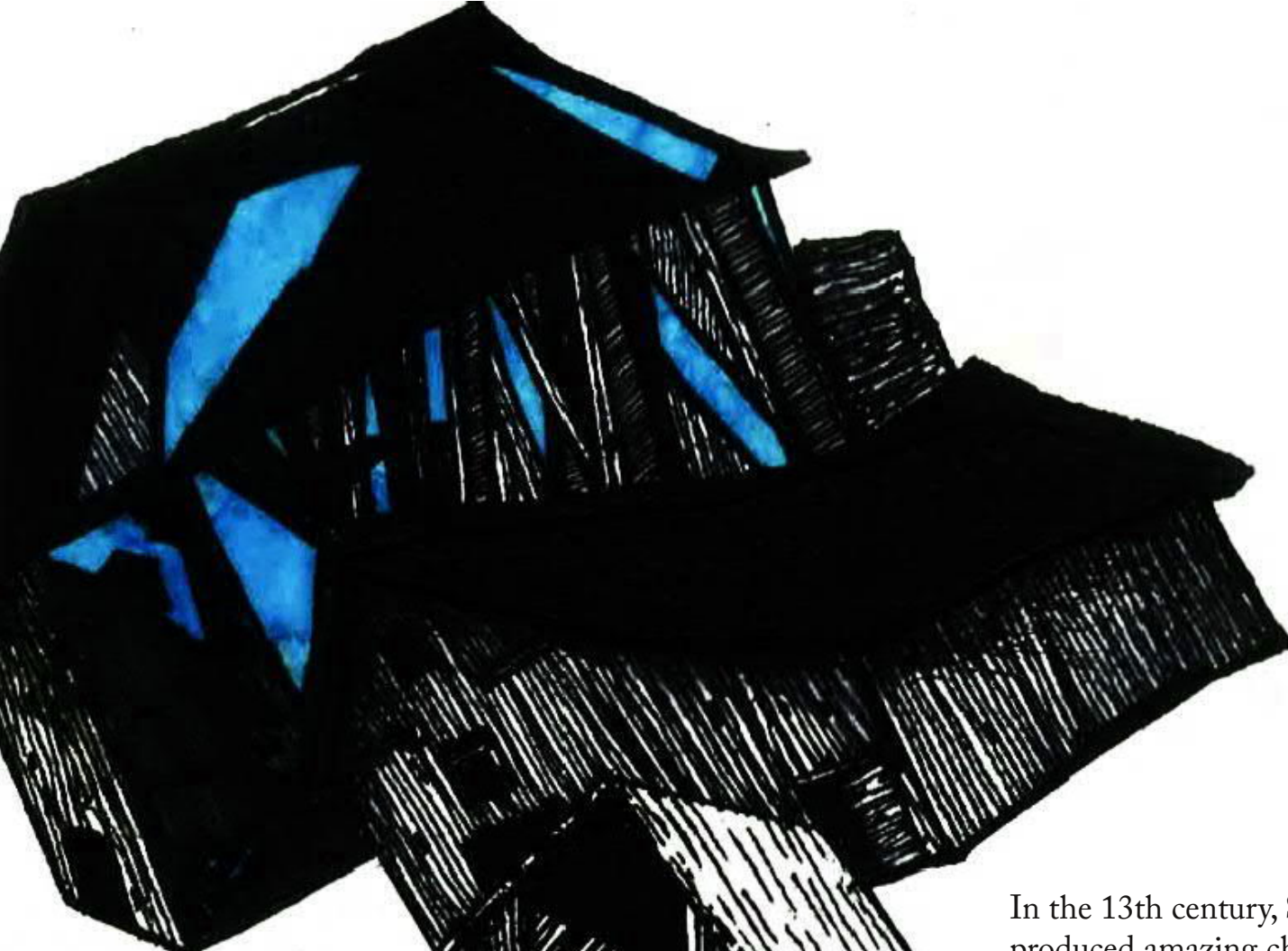


Melsonian Arts Council, 2015

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In the 13th century, Stilton produced amazing cheese. Then the Church came and suddenly the cheese trade died out. Now it's 1730 and the village of Stilton has started producing great cheese again.

You intend to find out why.

An adventure into darkest Cambridgeshire, for levels 1-3. Compatible with *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* and most other old fashioned Dungeons & Dragons clones.



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# A STRANGER HOME

Should have shut the door.  
Slam it in his face, mash his  
foot, but no. Oli lives here now.

He's moved the furniture, hung  
curtains, laid carpet, upturned my  
grey garden. I'll get him out  
soon enough.

Right quick quick.

From the  
spaces left I  
say: this is  
as it means  
to go on  
and  
oh

I hope we're happy.  
Living in the  
crawl-space,  
comfort  
comes  
and  
goes.

Wedge and  
damp with  
frost

- Daniel Sell



# Something Stinks in Stilton

In the 13th century, Stilton produced amazing cheese. Then the Church came and suddenly the cheese trade died out. Now it's 1730 and the village of Stilton has started producing great cheese again.

This adventure is intended for level 1-3 characters using Lamentations of the Flame Princess or other compatible OSR games, and is in essence a small dungeon crawl. Players will explore a basement consisting of a couple of rooms with some disturbing contents. For the most part it's possible to avoid combat.

*Many thanks to those who play-tested this and encouraged me: Sarah Schiff, Kathryn Jenkins, Victoria Allin, Lucy Fricker, Scott Dorward, Matt Sanderson, and Tiffany Sanderson.*

*Extra many thanks to Scott Dorward for his assistance in making this considerably more readable!*

**Oli Palmer**



# Backstory

It had been a night of heavy drinking in Cooper Thornhill's tavern, the Bell Inn. The doors had long since been locked, the keg had ran dry and they had switched to a special bottle of whiskey that Cooper kept for situations like these. His brother, Frances, was visiting to celebrate his 10th wedding anniversary.

Drunk, Cooper confessed that the dwindling profits of the Bell Inn made him worry for the future. Frances advised him to get into dairy farming. Frances, a keen dairy farmer himself back home in Wymondham, near Melton Mowbray, assured his brother that it was reliable work, and with no other dairy farmers in the area he'd surely make a killing.

The more Cooper thought on the idea the more he grew to like it. There was even an old abandoned barn not far from the inn, along with some empty fields. He made some enquiries and learned the land was owned by the local church. He spoke with the minister who was bewildered as to why the church owned the land in the first place and so happily took a generous donation to the church's coffers to seal the deal.

The barn had been surprisingly difficult to get into. The doors on either side were barred with heavy timbers, and once inside Cooper found mounds of earth filling the interior. It was a long job to clear the place, with only the help of his two children.

What lay under the earth surprised Cooper even more: an old, heavy trapdoor in the corner of the room, also barred, revealed a sprawling basement, containing a large stone arch. A side room possibly a library, contained hundreds of documents. Cooper pieced together that this arch would somehow create the perfect cow, udders filled with perfect milk, which would in turn create the perfect cheese.

Cooper couldn't believe his luck, but he knew he had to be careful. One hint of ungodly magic and his wife would give him no end of grief. Worse, Christ only knew how the church would react.

Heather, always the brighter of the two children, felt she could get the arch working given a few weeks. During this time Cooper restored the cow shed and purchased a herd of cows and the equipment required to produce cheese. After Cooper's first, tentative attempt the best that could be said was that the cheese was 'edible'.

One day Heather told her father she was ready and asked him to bring down a cow to test. Cooper looked at the arch and voiced concerns. A flickering purple light flashed erratically across its entrance, occasionally making a sparking sound as it earthed itself. Heather assured him all was fine, and they pushed the cow through the arch.

The air was filled with a loud tearing sound, followed by a moo that built into a monstrous roar. The cow that emerged from the arch was a mass of swollen flesh, vaguely shaped like a cow. Its muscles were bulging and distorted, showing red through the hide, veins pulsing over stretched flesh. The cow had grown to three times its original size. The monstrous frame could barely contain the fury exploding within. It thrashed around in rage before managing to get to its feet. With bloodlust in its eyes, it rounded on the Thornhills.

As the family tried to scramble out of its path, they lost track of their surroundings and Heather fell through the portal. There was another sickening, tearing sound, but this time a different kind of beast lay, stunned, behind the arch: it was a cow, in that it was on all fours and had udders, but its face resembled a contorted version of Heather. Her face had been stretched grotesquely over the skull of a cow, her mouth hanging to one side while her nose lay smeared across a cow's snout. One of her eyes retained its human aspect, dangling from its socket, while the other resembled that of a cow. The limbs were a horrible merging of human and cow, one hoof split in half, with three fingers protruding. The rear legs were unable to stand correctly, human knee caps unable to bend at the right angles. Its flesh was covered with a patchwork of human skin and cowhide, blood seeping from where the sections met.

The first cow rounded on the twisted form of Heather, snorting wildly. James grabbed a chain and looped it around the beast's neck, and together he and Cooper managed to fasten it to the far wall.

Heather tried to get to her feet, letting out a strangled moan which sounded vaguely like “Help”. The men were shaken, their focus flicking back and forth between the two cows. They began arguing about whose fault this was, while Heather wailed and the monstrous cow bellowed in rage. Eventually the argument died down as the men noticed the swollen udders on Heather drip a strange liquid onto the stone floor.

James knelt by his sister in silence, and let some of the bluish Milk drip onto his fingers before tasting it. He looked up at Cooper with a mixture of surprise and approval before collapsing. His body warped, becoming broader, his head growing larger and wider.

The story Cooper tells is that he indeed found a basement but there was nothing in it. There was a cave-in, which killed Heather and gave James a terrible knock on the head. The reality is that Heather still dwells underneath the shed, playing her part in the Thornhills’ dark secret.

James was still useful in his own way; his strength seemed to have doubled and he could follow simple orders if they were explained briefly and clearly. Cooper’s wife was distraught, however, breaking down in tears at the loss of her daughter and the change in her son so Cooper made her a glass of warm Milk from Heather. Like James, she immediately became sedated and numb to the outside world, while her figure filled out considerably. The villagers shook their heads in pity, assuming it was the result of comfort eating and a breakdown over the fate of her children.

Cooper grew curious about the Milk. He didn’t dare try it himself, but mixed it with the cheese he was making. The effect was better than he hoped – the cheese, despite an unusual look and smell, tasted wonderful according to his test subjects. It made people mildly euphoric. Best of all, Cooper was the only person in the world capable of producing it.

The Cow however was a different story. They tried to kill it, but its hide turned blades with ease, and the attempts only enraged the beast. Cooper left it chained to the wall, hoping it would die of starvation; 9 months on it is as lively and violent as ever.



James found a cowbell in the library and put it on one day. Cooper tried to take it off, unwilling to have his retarded son walk around wearing a cowbell. James grew violent and refused to let it go, so Cooper resigned himself to leaving him be. James now spends time with Heather whenever he's down in the basement with his father.

Cooper chained Heather up in a makeshift pen, initially gagged to muffle her strangled cries for help, which her father found heart-breaking. Over time she lost the will to cry, and Cooper removed the gag. Cooper milks his daughter daily, but as demand for his cheese has increased, Cooper has begun acquiring new stock.



# What now?

This all happened 9 months ago. Since then, the cheese coming out of Stilton has become legendary. The location of the inn on the Great North Road makes it ideal to catch travellers, and as the news spread, more travellers made a point of stopping at the Bell Inn. The cheese tastes fantastic and many insist that they feel brilliant for a long time afterwards, despite its questionable smell and odd appearance.

The player characters will likely have heard of Stilton cheese, but their story begins in Wymondham, receiving a job offer. The main hook of this adventure lies in doing a bit of espionage for the brother and sister-in-law – they want to know Cooper's secret, and he's been keeping quiet. If your players are not the kind to go for this then you can either dangle the thread about missing people (Cooper's been abducting the occasional lone traveller from his inn to turn into a cow) or perhaps it can be a request from the church believing there may be something sinister going on. The background in the story is that originally before the church was set up in Stilton they had fields of perfect cows, but the church discovered the secret and declared the process a sin in the eyes of the Lord. This happened in the 13th century so time has clouded up the details considerably (hence the current minister's confusion at why he technically owns the land) but the church as an organisation are possibly aware of what could be happening.

Another possible hook to use is that the players visit Stilton naturally and witness Cooper abducting someone, or even just grow curious in the face of all his secrecy. It'd be lunacy for Cooper to try abducting the player characters but if they push him or get caught snooping around he'll certainly try to silence them.

To kick things off, have players roll on the following Rumours table (though obviously don't let them know what is true or false).

- 1)** Stilton cheese is the finest tasting in all of England – even the King is rumoured to have some delivered to the palace! (Maybe)
- 2)** The barmaid at the Bell Inn is quite the looker, but she's not all there – never seen such a blank expression on a human being before! (True)
- 3)** Cooper Thornhill has a little room in his cow shed that no one is allowed to enter – he keeps it locked at all times. It must be where he keeps his gold. (True)
- 4)** Stilton cheese cures many ailments such as the common cold. (False)
- 5)** Cooper Thornhill used to have two children, but one was lost in an accident. (Kind of True)
- 6)** Travellers have been going missing on the Great North Road lately, leaving no trace. (True)
- 7)** Cooper Thornhill's son James is as big as a bull but sadly as thick as one too. (True)
- 8)** Cooper must be the richest man in England by now, and he's showing no signs of slowing down. (An exaggeration)
- 9)** Cooper no longer talks to his family back in Wymondham – apparently his sister-in-law is not happy at all with Cooper for not sharing his secret with them. (True)
- 10)** They say that if you tell a lie in the presence of a Stilton cow it will moo at you. (False)



# The Sister-in-Law

Jane is not a happy woman. Judging by the look on her husband Frances' face, she rarely ever is. She will rant at length about how selfish her brother-in-law is, how useless her husband is, how frustrating it is when a family refuses to pull together, and how she would hate to see any harm come to Cooper but she wouldn't shed a tear if something were to ever happen to his business. She'll pepper her tirade with questions to her husband of, "*Isn't that right, dear?*" and "*Frances will agree, won't you Frances?*" while rarely waiting for his hen-pecked response.

The couple are in their 40s, though both looking older than their age (such is the way of things in these times). Their farm is small and modest. The party will be seated in the kitchen at a table scrubbed clean yet bare. Jane will do her best to act the part of a lady, posh and aloof, but this will occasionally slip when she gets agitated about the subject. Frances however is exceptionally quiet and will rarely speak unless spoken to. He in reality doesn't care that Cooper refuses to share the secret, and if anything is secretly amused that it's bothering his wife so much.

Jane will ramble but the point of the matter is simple. **She wants the players to investigate Cooper and try and find out what he does to make the cheese taste so amazing.** She doesn't want to see any harm to come to him though as he is family after all.

Jane will offer roughly 200sp per character – money on return. She will be up for haggling, and may even cave to offering a percentage up front. Once a price is agreed upon, Jane will send Frances upstairs to fetch the money from their "safe" (the sack under the mattress).

Depending on how the discussion goes, if the players show Jane the right amount of respect (that she believes she's entitled to) or on a good Charisma check, Jane should let slip that the players aren't the first attempt at finding out Cooper's secret.

One month previously they hired a local lout by the name of William O'Leary to snoop around but he hasn't been heard of since. Jane suspects that Cooper found out and paid William to go away – William wasn't exactly the most reliable of individuals.

# Bandits!

The way to Stilton is mostly fresh, charming countryside but on the path they'll encounter a cart with its wheel shattered. A lone figure will be fruitlessly trying to stick it back together. As the characters draw nearer the figure will call out for help.

A successful **Bushcraft** or **Search** roll on approach should give the players a heads-up that it is an ambush.

There are **5 bandits** in total. The bandits will not want to fight but if the characters don't hand over their money and any food rations then they won't hesitate to cut them down.

**One of the bandits** should be **larger, stockier, and dumber** the others. In his pocket he has an **empty flask** that smells like it had sour milk in it recently. This bandit has drunk some of the undiluted Milk, received from Stephen Miller (see further down for information). He should be a bit of a **challenge** to take down.

**Samantha Drake** will be coming this way shortly on her way to London. If the bandits are killed, she will arrive in Stilton safely but if they are left alive (either with the players causing them to flee or the players avoiding them) then she will arrive beaten up and penniless.

**Bandits:** *1HD, Armour as leather, equipped with short swords (d6). If the large bandit is killed, their Morale will drop from 8 to 4.*

**Large Bandit:** *3HD, Armour as leather, unarmed but fists cause d4+1 damage.*

# Welcome to Stilton

Stilton is approximately 10 hours walk from Wymondham. Assuming the players spend the day travelling to get there, they should arrive approximately late evening. By the time they step foot into Stilton however, the weather will have turned bad. A lovely storm will be lashing down upon their heads, with the lights and sounds of laughter coming from the Bell Inn acting as a beacon to them.

**The Bell Inn** is one of the largest buildings in Stilton and easily identifiable by the large sign that hangs out front depicting a giant colourful bell. A large archway in the middle of the building leads through to a courtyard but the weather has driven any outdoor drinkers safely inside. During the day Cooper can be found in the courtyard selling Stilton cheese while his workers toil in the barn.



The Bell Inn has several rooms available for rent along with a large bar area. The atmosphere is **exceptionally warm and welcoming**, and while the conversation should dip accordingly as the players enter the bar, it should resume quickly and with no negative connotations. In reality, the patrons are either drunk, experiencing the effects of the cheese, or both.

**Cooper** will be by the bar, talking loudly and jovially with **Captain Cuthill**, while **his wife** is behind the bar, staring blankly at the players. **Cooper's son** will be sitting by the window, staring out at the rain. Everyone else will be engaged in **laughter and general merriment**.

Aside from the Bell Inn, other areas of interest in Stilton consist of the **St. Mary Magdalene Church** to the west (along the main road leading off the Great North Road), **several stores** to purchase various goods (predominantly travel items to equip those travelling through), and **numerous farms**. There is a **jail house** to the south (where **Jacob Smith** is currently held); Stilton rarely sees much trouble and as such only holds three guards including Captain Cuthill.



## Cooper Thornhill

Cooper is a bear of a man. It'd be an honest mistake to attribute his build to the effects of the cheese over a long period but in fact he never touches anything that leaves his barn. Despite the dark secret he holds, and what it has done to his family, he's **remarkably upbeat** – ultimately he's making a lot of money and his wife and son seem to be content at any rate. He will happily chat with the player characters at length but **if the conversation turns towards how he makes the cheese so great**, he'll find ways to deflect the question or make over-the-top lies like it's blessed by the wishes of children or similar. Persistent questioning will see him make his excuses to leave the party and attend to something in the kitchen.

He will be likely the first person to engage with the players, **offering them a chance to try** some of the potato and Stilton cheese soup with a tankard of excellent mead to wash it down. Another popular way to eat the cheese is for it to be brought out covered in maggots - people quite often ate the maggots as well, for they tasted of the cheese and were quite crunchy! Should the player's try anything off the menu with the Stilton cheese in it, have that player roll Save vs. Poison. See the "*Effects of the Cheese*" table later.

Steaks are also on offer but while they seem to look delicious, they're smothered in Stilton cheese sauce. If a player tries some without the sauce they'll find they taste a bit off, as if they've been cooked alongside something or marinated in an unusual way.

## Mary Thornhill

She's quite a plump and pretty lady with a large bosom. She has a blank expression except when she's asked to do something, at which point her face contorts with concentration as she tries her best to comply. Asking her for a drink for example will be a painfully slow experience though a crafty player can get away with not paying her the right amount. Mary will see the change in her hand but not register the amount in any way. A Sleight of Hand roll should be made however to see if any of the other patrons (particularly Cooper) notice the underpayment.

**Engaging Mary in conversation is a pointless endeavour** – she will try her best to respond but eventually she'll either give up and walk away, or look in mild desperation at Cooper for help who'll in turn kindly ask the players to leave her to do her job.

## James Thornhill

James, the remaining son of the family, will be staring absent mindedly out the window. Every so often he'll trace his finger along the condensation – **if any of the players take the time to examine what he's doodling they'll see it's a stick figure that he turns into a cow** before patiently waiting for the window to fog up again and repeating the process. If he's engaged in conversation he'll be like his mother: one word answers, confusion, and general ambiguity in any responses.

James wears an **old cowbell** around his neck and if anyone tries to take it from him or examine it he will grow very defensive, to the point of violence if someone persists. If a fight breaks out it's going to quickly have Cooper intervene and the atmosphere in the bar will turn very sour to the players. For more information on the cowbell, please see "*The Cowbell*" further on.

**James:** 3HD, *Amour as leather, unarmed but fists cause d4+1 damage.*

## Samantha Drake

Samantha is another guest at the Bell Inn. She's been **visiting family** up north and is returning to London. Her arrival will depend on how the **bandits** were handled previously – if she arrives safely, she'll rent a room and cease to be of any importance to the story, but if she arrives beaten up she will be too poor to afford a room. In this instance, Cooper will offer her the cowshed free of charge but ask her to keep it to herself. She should arrive sometime after the player characters have made themselves comfortable in the inn.

## Captain Cuthill

A fat jolly looking man, Captain Paul Cuthill is the type of fellow to sweat in any temperature. If the players **eavesdrop** (not too hard a task, given how loud he and Cooper are talking), they'll learn that the man he arrested this morning (Jacob Smith) is coming out with all sorts of **nonsense** about how Cooper apparently kidnapped his wife. If the players enquire further, they'll learn that Jacob stayed at the Bell Inn the night before with his wife Meredith but when he woke up in the morning she was gone. Jacob recalls her getting up during the night to get some fresh air and how she was going to have a look at the cows but she never returned - Jacob's convinced that Cooper kidnapped her.

## Jacob Smith

Jacob and his wife Meredith arrived last night and stayed in the inn but Meredith was **kidnapped** when she explored the barn. When Jacob awoke in the morning he got himself worked up into a **hysterical** state and the town guard were called to arrest him as he tried to attack Cooper. Jacob is a run of the mill farmer in his late twenties.

## Stephen Miller

Stephen is the town's scally. He's known for dealing in all kinds of narcotics and it was with great trepidation that Cooper decided to contact him. Cooper figured that Stephen might be able to find some way to break the effects of the Milk; Stephen, never to look a gift horse in the mouth, immediately began to market it while stringing Cooper along with stories about how his "contacts" need more Milk to analyse and that they're getting really close to uncovering a cure. Stephen **will enter the inn at some point** in the evening and ask to speak to Cooper in private, much to Cooper's embarrassment (he doesn't want to be seen consorting with people like Stephen). They will hold their discussion outside but it will likely get **heated** and end with Cooper threatening to turn Stephen over to the guard (something Stephen laughs at, but he doesn't realise that Captain Cuthill is all too aware of what's going on).

# That Night

How inquisitive are your players? The storm is still lashing away at the windows of the inn and doing its best to keep people indoors so it's either time to go to sleep or it's the perfect time to start snooping around the cow shed. They will however need torches – there's a lantern in the cow shed with a tinderbox, but depending on where Cooper is that may be taken (and if it's not there when he arrives, he'll know something's up). The NPCs however still have their own agenda so here is a quick timeline of how things would go down assuming the player's weren't to interrupt it in anyway.

**3am** - **Cooper** will wake up and enter the **cowshed** – this should wake the players if they aren't already as Samantha will yell out briefly if she's sleeping in the cowshed. Cooper will be dragging her under the shed to be transformed. There is a 1 in 4 chance that James will be accompanying Cooper into the basement where he will spend the duration of the night with Heather.

**3:30am** - Samantha will be shoved through the arch then placed into a cell. Cooper will then begin to **butcher Meredith**, who's been left hanging upside down since that morning. To his surprise he'll find she was pregnant. This will break him into tears.

**4am** - Cooper will have milked the cows by now but be taking time to **fuss over Heather** and generally care for her. Cooper is quite affectionate and treats Heather like a toddler – Heather seems to respond as such. The other victims are desperately thrashing in their stocks, trying to escape.

**4:30am** - **Stephen** will try and sneak in, tripping the alarm on the door. Cooper will **hide** somewhere depending on where he is and **ambush** Stephen, forcing him to drink the Milk. Stephen's plan was to find out what Cooper has been doing to create the Milk so he can sell the idea on. Roll a d10 for Cooper and for Stephen, highest roll 'wins'. If Cooper wins he'll successfully **force Stephen** to drink the Milk and turn him into a lumbering fool, sending him on his way back upstairs. If Stephen wins he'll squirm out of Cooper's grasp and **run away**. Depending on how much he's seen he may run straight to the guard to report what he's found regardless of his involvement – if this occurs, see the “*Help, the PCs decided to...*” table on page 24 for an idea of what will happen to him.



**5am** - There will be a **loud banging** at the entrance to the basement. It's **Jacob**, escaped from the jail, yelling that he knows something wrong is going on down there. If Cooper is still capable of responding, he'll let Jacob in. Jacob at this point will recoil in fear if he sees the cows, but he'll become more confused. Cooper will spin him a line about what's happening and assure Jacob that Meredith isn't there and he hasn't seen her. Cooper will at that point convince Jacob to take a small drink of Milk. If he refuses, he'll be shoved through the arch. After that Cooper will leave with a flagon full of Milk.

**If Cooper does not respond** to Jacob for whatever reason, Jacob will attempt to burn the place down. He'll start pouring paraffin over the entrance to the basement and light it. The players will now have to act fairly fast, as soon the villagers of Stilton will be gathered around and there's going to be some explaining required.

Cooper is unlikely to target any of the player characters for abduction as they are travelling as a group and potentially looking well-armed. Should he single one out however he will probably try to convince that character to take the special bedroom that has a comfier bed. This special bedroom is conveniently on the ground floor and the closest to the cow shed.

# The Cow Shed

The cow shed sits behind the Bell Inn within sight of the inn's courtyard. Calling it a cow shed is a bit of a misnomer however, being more of a barn that contains an office in the far corner, a large entrance at either side (closed with big double doors), numerous bits of cheese making equipment, and a large storeroom that looks to have been recently built as an extension to the barn.

In the corner opposite to the office lies the main cheese making area that features a large tank where the milk is pasteurised, a large open casket where the milk is churned, and a long trough where the cheese is raked. Various tools such as paddles and rakes hang on the wall behind the equipment.

There's space next to the cheese making facility for about 4 cows to be milked and there's an entrance to storeroom which holds all the cheese in its various states of production. Some have recently been placed into moulds, some are wrapped in sheets, and those nearer completion are sitting out with some maggots crawling over them. This recently built extension is about the same size of the cow-shed with rows and rows of Stilton cheese wheels resting on rickety shelves.

During the day, the shed is busy with activity as a couple of staff milk the cows and towards the afternoon begin to make the cheese. At night, the barn is empty though the main doors are not locked.

Out in the field behind the bar there are about 20 cows in total and 1 bull (who is kept separate in another field).

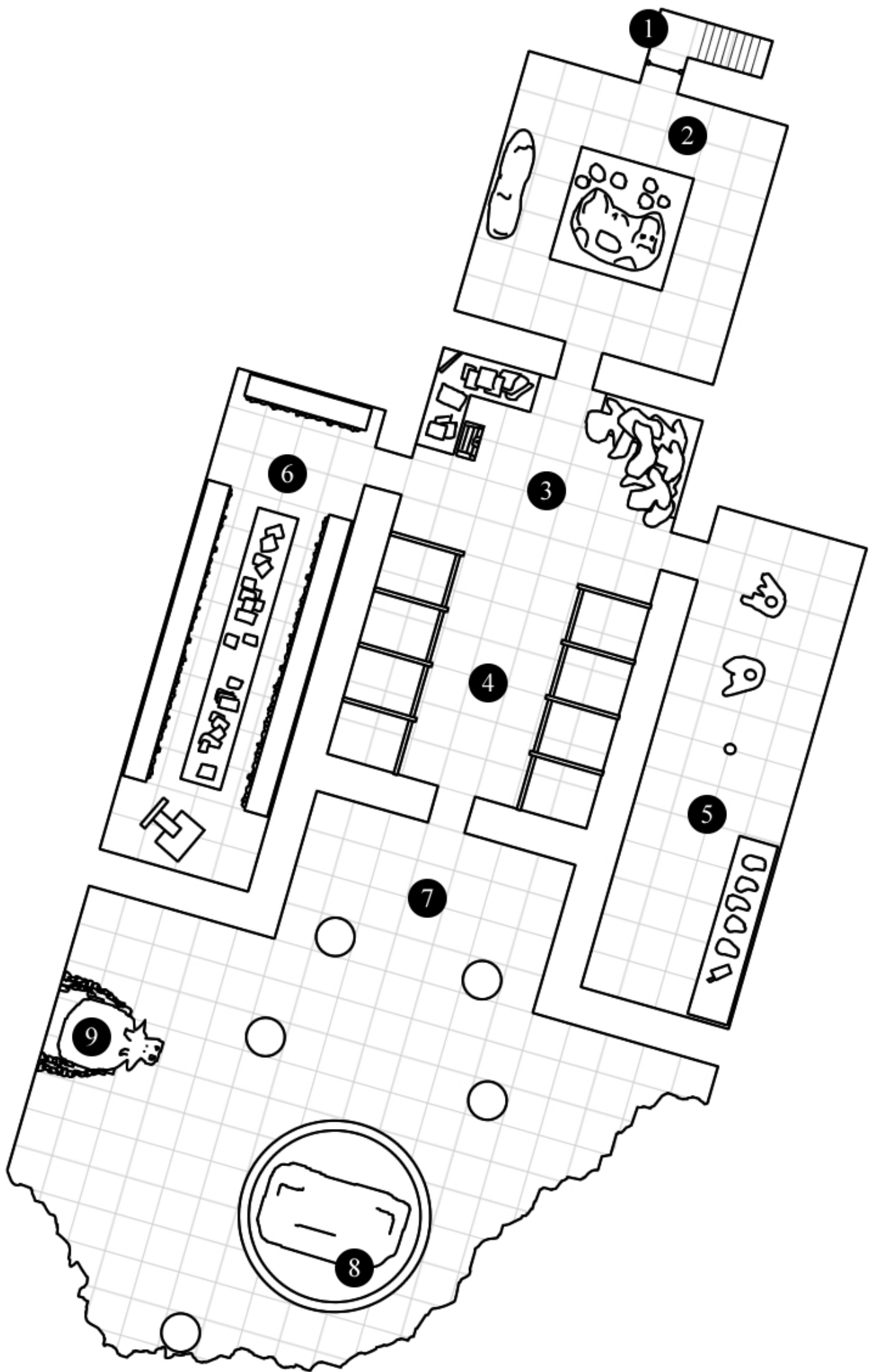
# The Office

The office itself has a battered old **desk covered in notes** regarding the cheese production and sales though close examination of the notes will show them to be fairly outdated. There are boxes all around and a wobbly chair. Under one large box by the far side of the room however is a **trap door** that will reveal stairs leading down to the basement.

Assuming that the players are investigating before Cooper arrives at the Cow Shed then they will find a tall **empty flagon** by the door. If the players however are investigating after 5am but before people are moving in and out of the barn they will find the **flagon full of Milk**. If they're investigating while Cooper is already down in the basement then the **flagon will be missing** (with Cooper).

The office is **locked** with a very shiny new lock. Cooper has the key in his pocket but it of course can be picked.

If the players leave any sign of their entry, **Cooper will fetch James** (assuming he's not already with him) as backup before venturing down into the basement on guard.





# The Basement

## (1) Entering the Basement

The stairway down to the main hall is made of a rough stone and the **smell of rancid milk** is strong here. The waste fluid from the cheese making process upstairs seems to be **leaking** down the side of one wall, pouring into cracks in the stairs. More importantly however is the **hidden string** tied across the corridor with a cowbell (not to be confused with The Cowbell) on the end. Should this trap be tripped, the cows locked in the pens down here will start going crazy. They'll be thumping, moaning, mooing (or roaring in the case of the beast-cow) like mad. If Cooper is down there already then he'll come to investigate. Otherwise the cacophony of mooing will gradually fade out after about 10 minutes.

## (2) The Foyer

The foyer is dominated by a large **statue** of a beautiful healthy looking cow. It's lying down, smiling and surrounded by blocks of cheese and flagons of milk. The effect is somewhat ruined by a large smelly **bundle** to the right against the wall. Under there is a body, the body of **William O' Leary**. If the players weren't told about William or what he looked like then this will be meaningless to them. William looks like he's taken a few blows from a cleaver to the face and chest though he still has a coin purse on him with a few copper pieces. The walls are covered in carvings of happy looking people milking the cows, preparing cheese, celebrating the arch and talking with the cows.

## (3) The Hallway

The main hallway looks like it may have been an impressive sight in its day, but now it's thick with dust and its structure looks unstable to say the least. A successful **Architecture** roll will date this place to the 13th century. At the far end there are several pens (four on each side of the hall) that someone appears to have converted into cells with doors, the wooden doors looking considerably newer than their surroundings.

To the right there is a **stone slab**, looking like a part of the wall, littered with old documents and parchment. Amidst the pile are a few newer notes, written in careful neat handwriting. Most the documents have been swept to the side, leaving a page that details how much cheese has been sold. **Unlike the financial notes upstairs** in the office these ones are up to date and show

very impressive figures. A **locked chest** by the base of the slab contains a vast wealth that Cooper has amassed so far in profit (8000sp). There is a small badly **painted picture** of the Thornhill family resting against the back of the wall on the slab - this will show the whole family, including Heather which the characters may not have been aware of before. Amongst the documents is a **spell scroll** that replicates the effects of the arch (in its current state). More information on this can be found in the *Effects Of...* section.

To the left there is a similar slab but it's obscured by a huge bundle of clothes and discarded items, remnants of the victims Cooper has taken. There's 5d10cp in cash here.

There are four doorways – one leading back to the foyer, one at the far end that leads to the arch, one to the right that leads to the library and one to the left that leads to the butcher's room.

#### **(4) The Pens**

In the pens there will be some of the **transformed cows**. Each pen has a thick wooden door over it which hides its contents. Players who open the door and peer inside with a torch should be ready to have a **sudden mooring** in the face. The pen should **stink of cow** though there is no dung; the cows aren't fed and as such don't defecate. You can determine how many of the cells are filled with cows with a 1d8 roll, but one of the cows will potentially be Samantha depending on when the players are exploring and previous events, and another will always be Heather.

Go crazy when describing the cows. The transformation will have effected each differently; some may look quite cow-like, while others will be predominantly human shaped with their forms twisted into a quadrupedal stance. Cows that were too deformed, or unable to produce milk, were killed and Cooper has been burying the bodies under the rubble in the Main Room.

Most of the cows have **severe bruising**, some have their **limbs hacked off** as punishment – Cooper has no time for cows that misbehave when he's trying to milk them. The exception is Heather who, although still penned up, seems to be well cared for and has a nice fleece blanket inside. Of all the cows, Heather is resigned to her fate and will just begin to sob if players try to interact with her.

Should the player's attack a cow, it will attack back. Otherwise it will just moo in terror and try and escape. All the cows with the exception of Heather are chained to the wall but lack the strength to break the chain.

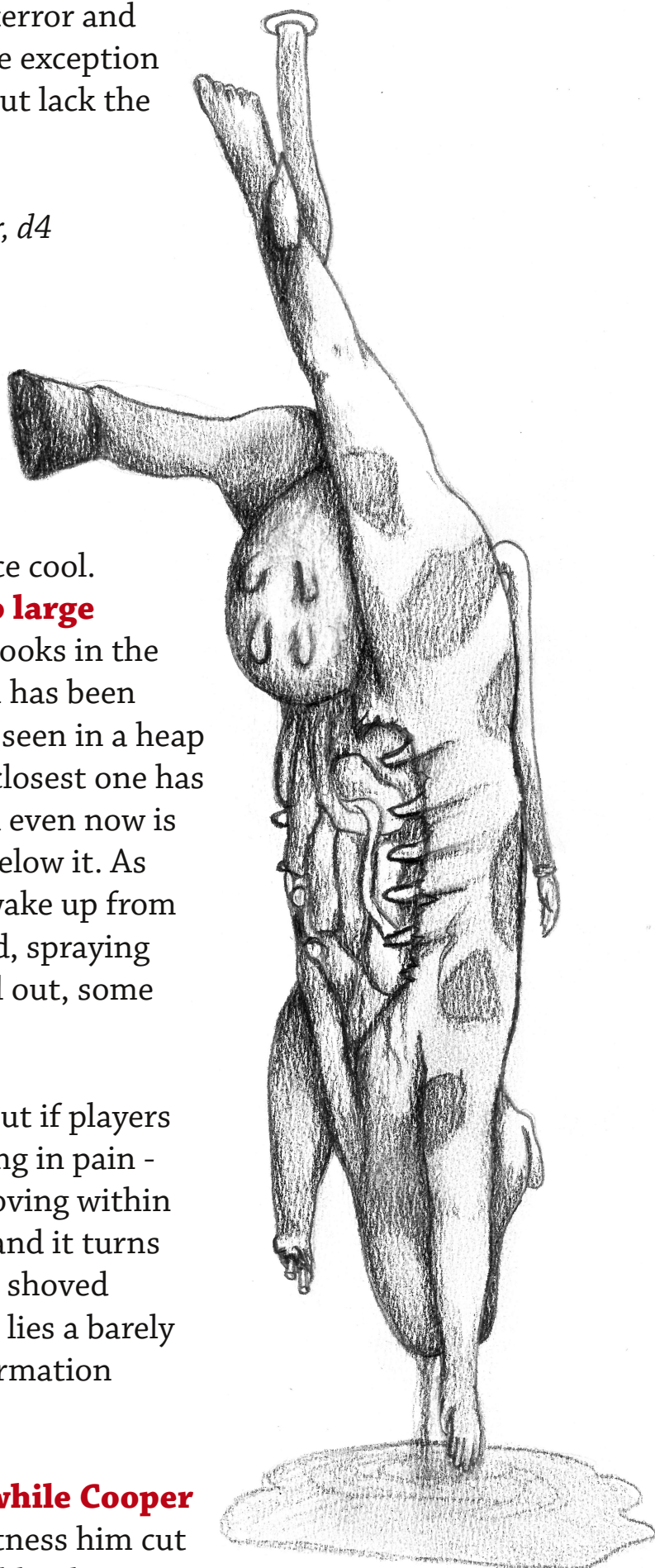
**Cow-people:** 3HD, Amour as leather, d4 damage, regens 1d4 damage every 5 turns.

### (5) The Butcher's Room

Players entering into this room will be taken by how **cold** it is. Large metal plates covering the floor, walls and ceiling keep the place cool. More important however is the **two large cows** suspended from large metal hooks in the ceiling by their hind legs. Their skin has been stripped from the flesh (and can be seen in a heap by the table near the far wall). The closest one has been cut open down the middle and even now is still dripping blood onto the floor below it. As the players approach, the cow will wake up from its state and begin thrashing around, spraying blood everywhere. An organ will fall out, some of its intestines will follow.

The **second cow** is yet untouched but if players disturb the cows, it will begin mooing in pain - players will note a strange shape moving within its abdomen. This cow is Meredith and it turns out she was pregnant when she was shoved through the arch. Within her womb lies a barely formed baby, twisted in the transformation between cow and human.

**If the players enter the temple while Cooper is butchering the cows**, they'll witness him cut her open to catch this deformed child in his arms.



He'll fall to his knees, and begin crying, muttering under his breath before eventually putting the creature out of its misery by slicing its throat. He'll then kill off Meredith completely before leaving the room, sickened with his own actions (and leaving the warped remains of the child on the ground).

**Should the player's enter the temple after Cooper has been in this room**, they'll find the first cow still alive of course, springing into action as before, but Meredith and the child will be dead.

Cooper learnt that the cows seemed practically indestructible and would heal slowly over time; he's begun experimenting butchering them live to see if he can get a steady supply of meat.

If a player decides to kill the cows off, it'll be a mercy. Obviously as they're strung up there's very little they can do in the way of defending themselves.

There's a **metal table** against the far wall that has several cuts of prime meat laid out, and a worn looking butcher's cleaver. The skin and hide pile contains about three cows worth and has been cleanly cut.

## **(6) The Library**

The documents in the hallway are a fraction of what's stored in the basement, and part of Heather's failure to reactivate the arch correctly lies in her lack of research here. As well as the **detailed notes on the arch** there are lots of parchments detailing things from recipes through to careful notations on how much milk was produced and when for a number of years.

The layout of the room consists of one large table in the middle of the room with numerous book shelves pressed up against them.

If the players could get this information out safely, it'd be worth a small fortune to the right buyer but its also exactly what their employer could do with. It'd take a horse and cart or 8 people to transport all the important stuff in here. The total value rests at about 1d4 x 1000gp but selling it will be difficult due to its ungodly nature.

There's a **stand** at the far end of the room that's been knocked over. A **scroll** on the stand shows a picture of a man putting on the Cowbell around his neck then talking to the cows. This is where the Cowbell that James wears around



his neck was initially kept. More information on the Cowbell can be found in the *Effects Of...* section.

**After a few moments** in this room, characters should be aware of a squeaking sound. Roll for surprise, because 1d4 mutated cow-rats will be attacking. These unlucky buggers have scurried through the arch and warped accordingly. They are more of a nuisance than anything else.

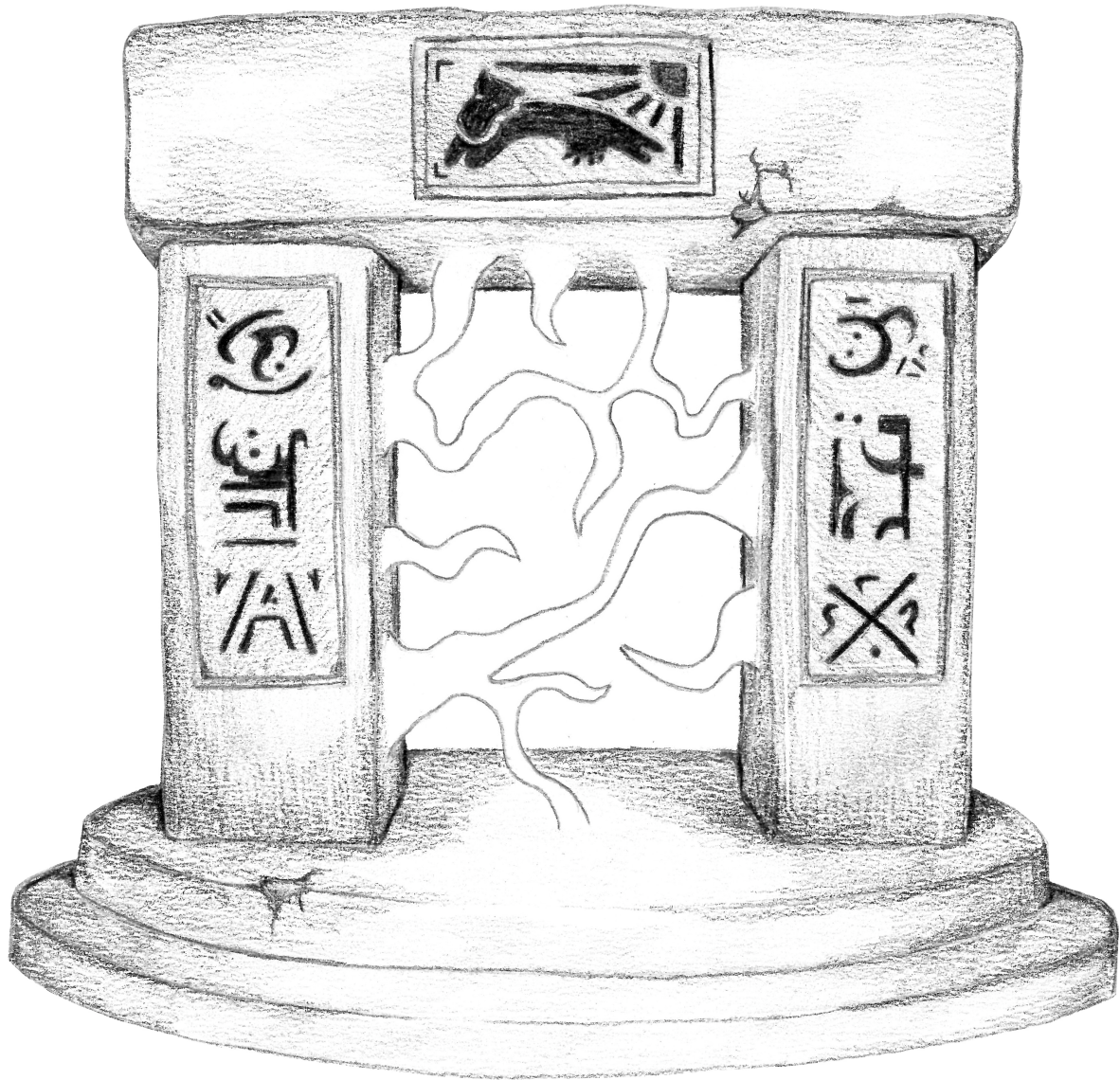
**Cow Rats:** 1HD, AC 10, d4 damage, regens 1d4hp every 5 turns.

## **(7) The Main Room**

The main room of the basement is the one that holds the **arch** and the **Beast**. The arch itself sits raised on a dais in the middle of the room, about two steps up. It currently has a **brown hessian tarp** thrown over it which has silenced the arch. If the tarp is removed, the room is lit up with the electric flashes and bursts of purple light coming from between its entrance. The arch itself has numerous symbols carved all over its stone and over the top piece a stylised drawing of a cow leaping has been etched.

**The Beast is to the right**, chained heavily to the wall. As soon as someone enters the room making a noise, she'll awaken and start roaring. The arch has made her into a monster, attempting to turn the cow into "more cow". See (9) *The Beast* further along for more information on her.

To the left there's general rubble, this continues round behind the arch and across the room. At one time this room was simply an opening to a larger room which in turn opened out to fields. The ceiling has since caved in and sealed off these areas, leaving only the arch section intact. If any of the players **search this rubble** they'll find numerous bodies in various states of decomposition, victims of Cooper that have either died during one of his mutilations or have been transformed but so deformed they were unable to produce milk.



### (8) The Arch

If a player decides to **step through the arch**, it's an instant shift to cow form. Other players will see the character warp into the cow creature, their face looking stretched over the bovine skull, their limbs becoming an odd hybrid of cow and human, the clothes ripping and possessions falling to the ground. There is **no saving throw**. To the subject however, they will think they are still human. If they turn to look back at the party, they'll see the party are all now cow creatures. If they look to the Beast, they'll see an ordinary cow chained to the wall looking very alarmed and upset. The arch not only switches the body but also switches the perspective. If the player speaks, they will think they are speaking in English but the others will hear nothing but strangled moo's with only the faint hint of words.

The character will be unable to use any weapons and trying to manipulate objects will prove impossible and distressing. Even going up stairs will prove difficult (going down stairs will likely result in a fall).

The effects of the arch can be **negated** with Dispel Magic temporarily but the mind will be pretty messed up. The arch will try to reapply its effects as long as it's in operation. A Save vs. Magic needs to be made every turn by the caster; success keeps the target in its true form, failure reverts it back to its cow form.

The arch, once a creation made to help the locals have a bountiful life and live happily, has become corrupted by the erratic attempt at magic by Heather. Destroying the arch will reverse the magic but all affected players must make a Save vs. Poison – a failure means death, a success means they survive but they'll be on 1hp. NPCs/Level 0 characters will die.

### **(9) The Beast**

The beast looks terrifying. Essentially it's a **huge cow** with nearly every muscle amplified in size, its teeth have become ragged and sharp (from grinding hard in frustration), its eyes seem to glow but in reality that's just to the constant glossy shine her eyes have due to crying tears of frustration. Make no mistake, she's angry but more out of terror. Her mind has long since broken down here in the dark.

Naturally she'll make a move towards the party, and if she breaks free of the chain she'll attack. **Every time someone moves into** the arch room (be it as a group or individually), there's a 1-in-6 chance she'll break her chains. If the players attack her, its 2 in 6 chance of breaking free, then next round its 4 in 6 chance, then on the third round she will break free.

**Daisy the Beast-Cow:** *4HD, Armour as chain, d8+2 damage, regens 1d4 HP every 5 turns.*

If the party, after slaying her, eat her remains they need to make a Save vs. Poison or face 2d6 weeks of restless nights where they see visions of Daisy's fractured mind and experience the hell that she went through.

# Help, the PCs decided to...

**...tell the local guard.** The local guard will naturally lock up the characters should they report such a wild story to them till they can investigate properly. In the morning they'll be dragged to see the captain of the guard who will listen to their story with grave concern. At some point during the discussion, Captain Cuthill's wife will enter the room: she's a large, plump lady who will be concentrating very hard on carrying a tray of tea in. It'll quickly become apparent along with a meaningful stare from Cuthill that he is all too aware of what Cooper has been up to. He'll let this revelation sink in before deciding whether to have the characters locked up (in which case they will be dragged one night to the basement) or set them free if he thinks they can be of no threat.

**...warn the church.** The local minister will be hesitant to act at first, he knows Cooper and sees him as a friend but ever since he sold the land he's had a funny feeling something was amiss. To make matters worse, he's been doing a bit of researching and he's pretty sure some sort of dark pagan ritual used to go on around that cow shed until the church put a stop to it back in the 13th century. He'll congratulate your players for being good God-fearing citizens then promptly ask them to do God's work by destroying the arch and bringing Cooper to justice.

**...not explore the cow shed till the following day/night.** Samantha will be transformed for a start if she stayed in the barn, or gone if she stayed in a room for the night. Getting into the cow shed during the day is going to be next to impossible; while the lock to the office is pickable, it's going to be hard work with people moving in and out of the shed all day making cheese. The following night however will see Cooper repeat the process of visiting the basement and milking the cows. If you're feeling generous, you could always delay Samantha's capture by a night but it could be more interesting for the characters to find her belongings dumped on the pile of discarded clothes in the hallway, then find her in one of the stalls.



# Effects of ...

## **The Milk**

Drinking the Milk neat is not advisable.

Should they foolishly attempt it however (they may have not seen the effects in action yet, and be looking for the same high they got eating the cheese in the inn), they have to make a Save vs. Poison. A failed roll results in them becoming imbeciles; their Wisdom and Intelligence drop by 5, while their Strength and Constitution increase by 5. If their Wisdom or Intelligence drop below 1, the character is now unplayable. In this state they can be led around by the remaining player's and perform simple tasks however. Either way, the victim's body will become bulkier and stronger.

A successful roll results in a temporary drop of the INT and WIS stats as above, lasting 1d6 hours.

## **The Cheese**

The milk is diluted significantly in the cheese making process to the point that the effects are not nearly as disastrous. Side effects can still occur from eating the cheese however but the locals have built up a certain degree of tolerance to these effects. Now when new customers try it out it becomes something of a joke to see them react to the cheese.

On first consumption, players need to roll Save vs. Poison. A success means they manage to enjoy the cheese without any negative consequences – they get a mild euphoric buzz, and a small portion of cheese is enough to stave off hunger for another 24 hours.

Should they fail this roll however, they need to roll on the following chart to determine an outcome:

- 1)** Ravenous! Delicious! CONSUME! The character is filled with a burning desire to consume all the cheese he or she can; they'll finish their plates and look to ask those around if they can have some of theirs. If they don't get more, they'll be left feeling pretty down about the whole thing!



- 2) Same as 1.
- 3) Moo! For the next 1d6 hours, the cheese-eater will randomly moo at least once every 10 minutes. As to be expected this makes Stealth rolls exceptionally difficult and any prolonged hiding should suffer as a result. To effect this, -1 to all Stealth rolls.
- 4) Feeling a bit bloated. Over the next week, the character will begin to fill out and put on a few pounds. All the exercise in the world will do nothing to shift this weight.
- 5) My, look at those udders. The characters sexual tastes shift, and they can only be aroused by cows (or at least thinking of cows).
- 6) Cow brain. The characters Constitution increases by two points while their Wisdom drops by two points.  
It should be noted that during 24 hours after making a roll, characters can carry on eating Stilton with no further repercussions. After 24 hours, they will need to roll on the table again; effects are cumulative so for example rolling a 6 will result in further point adjustment. Rolling a 5 will see an increased sexual desire for cows. And so on.

## **The Spell Scroll**

The spell scroll located in the Hallway (4) will attempt to transform a target into a cow. Normal rules apply to the use of this scroll with and transcribing it to a spell book.

**Magic-User** *Level 1*

**Duration:** *Permanent*

**Range:** *60'*

The effects are much like that of the Arch itself. The target however needs to make a Save vs. Magic before the effects take hold. If the spell is successful, the target will be turned into an abomination, a merging of its previous form and that of a cow. The target will no longer be able to communicate coherently though the effects can be dispelled using Dispel Magic. This spell is not tied to the Arch's existence.

## **The Cowbell**

The cowbell is tarnished, old, and entirely unremarkable in its appearance. Should someone wear the cowbell however they will see their fellow players as these grotesque human/cow creatures. They will in turn see the existing transformed cow people as humans, and be able to converse with them. This is why James has become possessive over the cowbell as he can now listen to his sister once again.

The bell lets the wearer view the inverse of the Arch's effects.

If the player tries to remove the bell however they'll need to make a Save vs. Magical Device roll. A success will allow them to remove the bell without issue.

A failure results in the player rolling on the following chart:

- 1)** The character's eyes explode as the collar comes off, unable to comprehend the reality shift. The character is now blind.
- 2)** The character removes the collar but sees no discernible difference in reality, they're doomed to stay like this unless the arch is destroyed at which point their vision reverts.
- 3)** Their body takes on cow-life features – feet become cloven, cow tail, nose becomes widened, eyes go cow like.
- 4)** Character turns into a cow/human thing. Irreversible unless the arch is destroyed.

The cowbell is worth 800sp as it dates back to the 13th century in a stamp inside. The cowbell was originally designed in order to communicate with the cows, to see if they were happy. It now channels the corrupted energy of the arch and will lose its power if the arch is collapsed.