

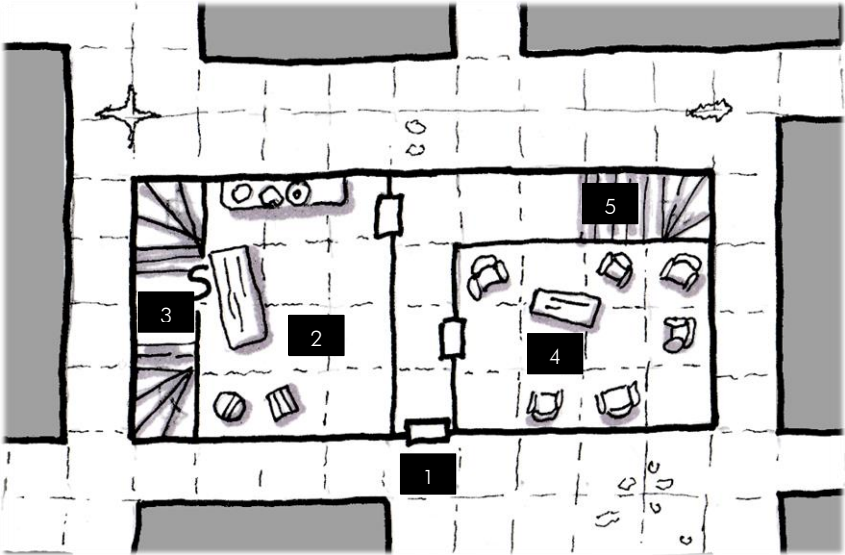
THE LITTLE BARBERSHOP OF TERROR

Come in for a quick snip and the cut might be closer than you would like.



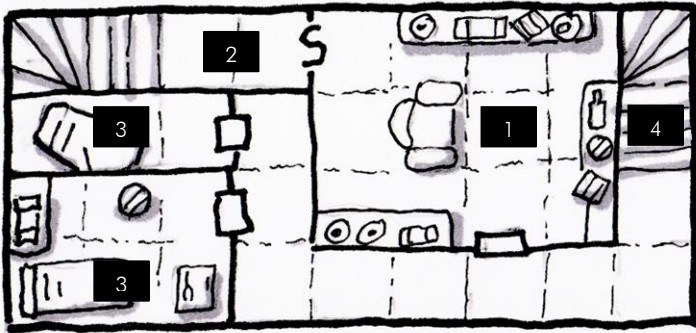
DESIGNED FOR USE WITH
**OLD-SCHOOL
ESSENTIALS**

BARBERSHOP GROUND FLOOR



1. **Entrance:** A non-descript but sturdy wooden door with a sign hanging from it which reads *Stroude's Barber Surgeons*. Providing a smooth cut to suit all pockets and treatments for minor *maladies*. If some-one knocks on the door, if **Aston** is present then he will appear 1D3 turns later to show them to the waiting room.
2. **Kitchen:** A well-equipped kitchen that also serves as a storage area for the various lotions that **Stroude** used regularly.
3. **Hidden Staircase:** A wooden staircase accessible via a sliding panel in the kitchen, it leads up to the First Floor and down to the basement.
4. **Waiting Room:** A spacious waiting room with half a dozen comfy chairs, those clients not currently being seen by **Mr Stroude** are instructed to wait here until called.
5. **Staircase to First Floor:** A wooden staircase leading up to the Cutting Room on the first floor.

BARBERSHOP FIRST FLOOR



1. **Cutting Room:** Where most of the business of cutting and blood-letting takes place, if there is at least one customer present then **Stroude** will be in here tending to them. The walls are lined with shelves, groaning under the weight of jars containing various tonics, leeches and herbal poultices.
2. **Hidden Staircase:** Accessible via a concealed door in the west wall of the Cutting Room, this wooden staircase leads down to an area behind the Kitchen on the ground floor.
3. **Sleeping quarters:** Two fairly small rooms, each contains a bed and personal effects, the larger of the two rooms is claimed by **Mr Stroude** the owner whilst the smaller is used by his assistant **Marley Aston**.
4. **Staircase to Ground Floor:** A wooden staircase led down to the Waiting Room on the ground floor.

CREDITS

LAYOUT, WRITING AND PRODUCTION

John Large

COVER IMAGE

Jost Amman, A barber's shop

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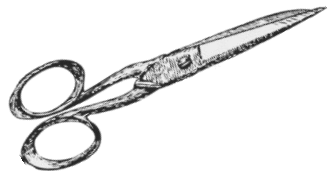
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INTRODUCTION

Little Barbershop of Terror is a short adventure that begins with an investigation surrounding the mysterious murder of a nobleman called **Lord Warwick Appletone**. The investigation leads to a small barbershop run by one **Henley Stroude**, a businessman who borrowed money from **Lord Appletone** to establish his business and is struggling to pay it back.

Exploring the barbershop leads to the discovery of a dark ritual and a creature created from sacrificed life-essence and body parts that does the evil bidding of **Stroude**.

OLD SCHOOL RULES

This adventure is designed for use with Basic/Expert version of the world's most well-known fantasy RPG or similar retroclones.

LEVELS 1-3

Little Barbshop of Terror is a short, location-based adventure designed for a party of PCs of levels 1-3. Embracing the old-school philosophy, encounters are not necessarily balanced for a particular party. Players will need to use cunning and forethought to triumph.

CAMPAIGN

ASSUMPTIONS

This adventure assumes an urban setting with numerous businesses operating, and people wealthy enough to support them. It also assumes the presence of a noble class who are concerned with physical appearance and an organised Watch who keep law and order.

THE ADVENTURE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Referees wishing to add this adventure into their own campaign world can easily slot it into a large urban centre in their campaign world. We suggest placing the barbershop in a slightly less wealthy district that is adjacent to more affluent areas of your city, this gives it access to a wealthy customer base and also the anonymous masses necessary for the dark deeds that **Stroude** performs in the adventure.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ANY CITIES?

If your campaign doesn't have any large urban areas then the adventure may require some more tweaking to fit in, however barber-surgeons have existed in the real world since the Middle Ages so there is certainly a place for them.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

In this *Little Barbershop of Terror* we use the following naming conventions to refer to certain background elements of the implied setting. These can be replaced with appropriate names and terms as befits the needs of your campaign.

- ❖ **The City:** Where the main part of the adventure takes place; a large urban setting with a number of different districts, some rich and others poor.
- ❖ **The Watch:** An organisation of law-men, funded by city taxes, that is composed of equal parts investigators and malicious thugs. Although useful in keeping a lid on common crimes they are somewhat out of their depth in this adventure causing their Captains to look elsewhere for assistance in unravelling the mysterious murder.
- ❖ **The Noble Families:** A group of inter-related people of high birth and substantial means who hold great influence, wealth and power within **the City**.
- ❖ **The Ruler:** The person who is in overall charge of the city, it may be a King/Queen or simply a prominent member of one of **the Noble Families**. **The Ruler** has great influence and is wealthy beyond the imagining of most men and women, **the Watch** report to them via a chain of command.
- ❖ **The Thieves Guild:** A shadowy organisation with its fingers in most of the crime that happens in **the City**. You don't have to be a member to be involved in thievery but even the lowliest vagabond knows that it's in their best interest to make sure that the Guild gets 10% of any money they make. The Guild is run by secret guild-masters who rarely show themselves, acting through lieutenants and various ruffians.
- ❖ **The Ritual Tome:** A battered old book that details the rituals necessary to create a Cast-off Golem.

GM BACKGROUND

LORD WARWICK APPLETONE

The adventure begins with the murder of a prominent member of **the Noble Families** known as **Lord Appletone**.

- ❖ **Old money:** The Appletone family are descended from a long line of influential nobles and can trace their lineage back many hundreds of years to the founding of **the City**.
- ❖ **Wealthy Investor:** Lord Appletone is a shrewd business-man who maintains his wealth by investing in promising businesses in return for a cut of their profits.
- ❖ **By any means necessary:** Lord Appletone is not above using underhand means to make sure he gets a return on his investments, retaining the services of a gang who harass those who do not pay on time.

STROUDE'S BARBERSHOP

When **Henley Stroude** first opened his business he was not able to afford an expensive premises nor did he have the reputation to establish a well-paying clientele.

- ❖ **Borrowed Money:** In order to set himself up in a fashionable area and attract the right customers, **Stroude** borrowed an extremely large sum of money from **Lord Appletone**.

- ❖ **New Premises:** Using the money **Stroude** was able to purchase clean premises in a prosperous area of **the City**.
- ❖ **In Debt:** Although his fortunes have improved, **Stroude** could not meet the large repayments owed to **Lord Appletone** and the noble's agents were starting to chase him for the money owed.

SECRET WARLOCK

Unknown to most, **Stroude** is also a practicing magic-user, but he keeps his abilities secret for fear of rousing a mob against him.

- ❖ **Sympathetic Magic:** **Stroude** specialises in sympathetic magic, using items associated with people to gain influence over them.
- ❖ **The Ritual Tome:** Whilst exploring a poorer part of the city, **Stroude** stumbled across an occult tome that claimed to show how to create a creature from cast-off body parts and imbue it with life energy. Ever the avid collector of curiosities, **Stroude** purchased the book merely as a curiosity.



BARBER SURGEON

The owner of the barbershop is also skilled—as many barbers were at the time—in performing minor surgeries, blood-lettings, etc.

- ❖ **Accidental Death:** During a blood-letting on a relatively poor patient, **Stroude** accidentally killed the patient and—fearful of the consequences to his fledgling business—concealed the body in the basement below his barbershop.
- ❖ **Getting away with it:** For weeks, **Stroude** was paranoid that his crime would be discovered. Time passed and **the Watch** hadn't come knocking on his door; **Stroude** realised that—due to the low social class of his victim—he seemed to have got away with the murder.

MENACED BY THUGS

Eager to ensure a swift return on his investment, **Lord Appleton** sent one of his thugs to make clear to **Stroude** the danger of not making repayments.

- ❖ **Beaten:** The thug, a man by the name of **Bartleby Grupt** roughed up **Stroude**.
- ❖ **A way out:** After the thug had left **Stroude** discovered a chunk of hair that had been pulled from the man's head during the struggle.

- ❖ **A creature born:** Taking the hair to his basement, **Stroude** used the body of his earlier victim and the hair from **Grupt** to construct a creature that would carry out his bidding.

HAIRY RETRIBUTION

The hair golem tracked down **Bartleby Grumpt** and killed him.

- ❖ **Worrying death:** **Lord Appleton** heard about the death of his agent and was quite affected by it (although he wouldn't publically acknowledge his connection to the man).
- ❖ **In fear of his life:** In the last week of his life, following the murder of **Grumpt**, **Lord Appleton** became increasingly paranoid about his safety and refused to venture far from his luxuriant home.
- ❖ **Fear realised:** Once he'd secured another victim to animate his creature, **Stroude** dispatched the creature to kill **Lord Appleton**. It broke into **Appleton's** mansion and killed him. **Lady Appleton** caught a brief glimpse of the creature as it left.
- ❖ **Investigation:** **The Watch** were called on to investigate, but are having little luck with finding a suspect. In desperation, and pressured by **the Noble Families** they are looking for outside assistance.

THE RITUAL BOOK

CAST-OFF GOLEM MANUAL

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- ❖ **Ancient and stained with blood:** The book is an old crumbling tome written in a pigeon of various dead and current languages, it is clear that many people have possessed—and added to—the book over time.
- ❖ **Medical diagram:** Although most of the book is cramped text, in a variety of handwriting, some of the pages contain detailed anatomical drawings of the human body, clearly created by someone with great medical knowledge.

ANCIENT LORE

Adventurers skilled in *Ancient Lore* or *Arcane Mysteries* may be able to research the book, although it will be a difficult task.

- ❖ **Sorcerous Origin:** The book was created by an ancient and paranoid Warlock named **Camdyn Kerry**. Worried that his underlings would betray him, **Camdyn** began researching a way to create a perfect servitor to carry out his evil designs.
- ❖ **A demonic bargain:** In his desperation to achieve his aims, **Camdyn** summoned and

consulted various demons, who revealed the necessary arcane formulae to him.

- ❖ **Demonic double-cross:** Inevitably his demonic patrons betrayed **Camdyn** led to him being possessed and eventually put to death, but when he was executed the book was nowhere to be seen.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Manual details the method of how to use cast-off body parts and hair to construct a creature. Once created a part of their target must be placed in the golem's mouth, it will then unerringly hunt down and kill the person before returning to its starting point and once more becoming inert.

The golem slowly falls to pieces and must be regularly repaired using humanoid body parts.

- ❖ **Type of Golem:** Cast-off
- ❖ **Construction Time:** 1 month
- ❖ **GP cost:** 30,000

Stroude has been using hair from his customers and the bodies of his poorer customers—at least those he can dispose of without bringing **the Watch** to his door—in order to repair and animate the creature.

*Once a week the golem must be “fed” with fresh blood and body parts, thus far **Stroude** has used the bodies of his victims to feed the golem. If it is not fed then the golem will go berserk (see the **Activating the Golem** section for details).*

HOOKS & RUMOURS

HIRED BY THE WATCH

WHAT THE PCs EXPERIENCE

- ❖ A **Watch** Captain by the name of **Grimes** has been placed in charge of investigating **Lord Applestone's** death.
- ❖ He is currently drawing a blank with his investigation and is under pressure from **the Ruler** and **the Noble Families** to bring the guilty party to justice.
- ❖ **Grimes** will offer the player party 100SP each to investigate the matter and—should they find the guilty party—a bonus of 500GP to split between them.

WHAT GRIMES KNOWS

- ❖ **Grimes** tells the PCs that **Lord Applestone** was a rich investor in local businesses.
- ❖ According to **Lady Applestone** he recently became very concerned with security fortifying his home.
- ❖ A week ago a large assailant broke into the **Applestone** estate and killed **Lord Applestone** before fleeing.
- ❖ **Lady Applestone** caught a brief glimpses of the intruder and several large tracks were found nearby, but the leads seem to have gone cold.

HIRED BY LADY APPLESTONE

WHAT THE PCs EXPERIENCE

- ❖ **Lady Lana Applestone** is the wife of the deceased **Lord Applestone**, she may try to hire her own investigators, since **the Watch** appear to be getting nowhere.
- ❖ **Lady Applestone** lives on a secure estate in an affluent part of **the City**.
- ❖ She can reward the PCs with 1D3 gems, each worth 100GP and 1D8 pieces of jewellery (each worth 3D6x100GP) if they find the killer.

WHAT LADY APPLESTONE KNOWS

- ❖ Her husband was having some trouble with a business he invested in not paying him back (she doesn't know which business it was).
- ❖ Just over a week ago her husband heard about the death of a man called **Bartleby Grupt** and it seemed to affect him greatly. The man was a low-life with reputed ties to **the Thieves Guild**, however **Lady Applestone** doesn't know why it bothered her husband so and is unaware of the connection between the two men.
- ❖ On the night of the murder she heard a scream and found her husband dead, she caught sight of a huge figure escaping across their lawn.

BEGINNING THE INVESTIGATION

Investigation scenarios can be incredibly frustrating for both players and GMs, sometimes a clue is missed or a connection that seems obvious is entirely ignored. When running the investigation portion of this scenario please keep the following in mind:

- ❖ **It's supposed to be fun and dynamic:** Don't leave the players agonising over a clue or a red-herring, throw in an additional event or an encounter to move the action along a bit.
- ❖ **Sometimes your players will miss things:** It's very easy—as the GM—with all the pieces set out in-front of you to think an investigative scenario is obvious, but it may not seem that way to the characters. If necessary ask for a couple of rolls then drop in some additional events or hints to keep the game moving.

FLOATING CLUES/EVENTS

A number of events/clues that can be dropped into the scenario are suggested below, this can either be used randomly or when your player party is struggling.

- ❖ **Another murder:** **Stroude** sends out his golem to kill another person. The reason for this is

left to the GM but **Stroude** should gain by their death. The circumstances will be similar, a large, shadowy figure seen in the area, huge footprints found, perhaps a few bits of hair or viscera shed from the golem are discovered.

- ❖ **A blade in the dark:** The PCs cross paths with a group of thieves were are trying to find the person responsible for the death of **Bartleby Grumpt**, if the PCs can persuade them they may arrange a meeting with one of the heads of their organisation. See *the write-up on the Thieves Guild for further detail.*
- ❖ **Appleton's missing money:** A noble acquaintance of **Lord Appleton** recalls that he was out of sorts recently because he had sunk a lot of money into a local barbershop and the owner had been unable to pay back his investment.
- ❖ **Golem attack:** If the PCs are really struggling or they have been indiscrete in their inquiries then **Stroude** will send the golem after them. If the PCs seem to be winning the golem will return to the barbershop, or perhaps they can follow it's trail should they defeat it. *This can only occur if **Stroude** has some hair or other link to the player party.*

RUMOURS

If the player party ask around in **the City** concerning the recent occurrences or **Lord Appletone** then they may discover some of the following rumours.

1D10
Roll

Rumour

Rumour: Lord Appletone became very security conscious just before his untimely death.

1

Truth: This is related by a craftsman who worked on installing bars and other measure at Appletone Manor.

Rumour: The Thieves Guild are stepping up their operations in **the City**.

2

Truth: The Guild are reaching out to their contacts and people to find the identity of **Grupt's** killer.

Rumour: A giant man has been seen roaming the city.

3

Truth: This is true, a result of vagrants catching passing glimpses of the golem.

Rumour: A man recently set up a small shabby shop in the district selling odd items and knick-knacks.

4

Truth: The shop in question is **Artair O'Brian's Bazaar**.

Rumour: A local barber-surgeon by the name of **Henley Stroude** has made a stir by offering free haircuts to the less fortunate.

5

Truth: This is true, **Stroude** uses some of these unfortunates to repair and animate his creature.

Rumour: There has recently been a plague of rats menacing **the City**.

6

Truth: This can be true or not depending on this needs of your campaign.

Rumour: There have been a recent rash of disappearances among the homeless.

7

Truth: The people who have disappeared are those **Stroude** has murdered to repair his creature.

Rumour: Strange creatures have been seen roaming the poorer districts of the city.

8

Truth: This may refer to the golem, but could just an easily refer to other creatures as suits the needs of your campaign.

Rumour: Old **Bartleby Grumpt** has been trying to get out of **the Thieves Guild**, said he'd found himself a nice cushy job.

9

Truth: Since **Bartleby** was acting as a paid enforcer for **Lord Appletone** he no longer wanted to share a cut of his takings with **the Thieves Guild** and was trying to leave.

Rumour: **Lord Appleton** was slain by a curse from his political enemies.

10

Truth: This rumour is false.

THE APPLESTONE

ESTATE

The player party may wish to examine the scene of the crime and converse further with **Lady Applestone**. She is planning to go to the country to stay with her sister until this ghastly business is resolved but will allow the PCs to explore the estate and examine where her husband was murdered, although **the Watch** have already been through everything and she is starting to become a little exasperated with the constant questions and examinations.

Lady Applestone

A middle-aged woman dressed in expensive mourning clothes of darkest hue. She wears a veil and is extremely saddened by her husband's passing, however she has a fierce resolve that the culprit should not go unpunished.

AC 9 [10], HD ½ (2hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d4 or by weapon -1), THAC0 20 [-1], MV 120' (40'), SV D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), ML 6, AL Lawful, XP 5. NA 1), TT V x 3

THE ESTATE

The Applestone Estate consists of a large mansion decorated in lavish style and surrounded by acres of well-kept gardens. A wall runs around the edge of the grounds with two sturdy metal gates providing access to the front and rear paths to the house.

SCENE OF THE CRIME

The study where her husband died has been left untouched (save for the investigations of **the Watch**), since **Lady Applestone** cannot bring herself to go in the room. If the player party want to go in, she will gladly let them do so, but will not accompany them.

- ❖ **Smashed desk:** Next to where her husband fell (visible by bloodstains on a thick rug) lies the remnants of a smashed wooden table. Examination of the table reveals it was shattered by a single blow of tremendous strength, judging from bits of flesh and blood on the broken wood the assailant struck the blow bare-handed.
- ❖ **Broken window:** A window at the back of the house was smashed by the murderer to gain entry to the building. It has now been boarded up, but the metal security bars that once covered it were bent aside with tremendous force.
- ❖ **Strands of hair:** Clinging to the edge of the broken window frame are a vibrant red hair strands, they seem to have been cut neatly rather than torn out but have a sticky saliva-like substance on them. **Lady Applestone** can confirm that the hair belongs to her husband but says his body was found in the centre of the room away from the window. *These*

strands of hair were in the golem's mouth when it attacked and fell out as it escaped.

- ❖ **Ledger book:** If the party search the remnants of the desk they can find a tattered ledger detailing that a year earlier **Lord Appletone** sunk a great deal of money into a location business (referred to simply as **SB shop** in the ledger) and had not yet seen a return. A scribbled note at the bottom of the page says:

"Need return on investment, have BG pay a friendly visit to HS to remind him of the importance of prompt payment."

*This is note was written before **Bartleby Grumpt** paid his visit to **Henley Stroude** as his barbershop.*

SERVANTS

Like most of **the Noble Families**, the Appletone Estate maintains a staff of servants to see to its upkeep, whilst stats are not provided for them, some useful information can be gathered from the servants who were working on the night of the murder, although persuasion or money may be required.

HERIOT SMITH, MANSERVANT

Heriot had been **Lord Appletone's** loyal manservant for many years and is keen

to find his master's killer, although he is worried about his own future.

On the night of the murder Heriot was in the kitchen making his master an evening meal when he saw a large shape pass by the kitchen window and then a crash from the study. By the time he arrived **Lord Appletone** was dead and **Lady Appletone** had fainted away.

It was **Heriot** who summoned **the Watch**.

***Heriot** knows about Appletone's link with **Grupt** since he used to pass messages to the thug on his master's behalf, meeting the thug at the **Red Lion** tavern.*

EMILY GRANT, MAID

A superstitious young woman who has been in **Lady Appletone's** service for three years.

*Emily was purchasing provisions a couple of weeks before the murder, she saw the struggle between **Grupt** and **Stroude**, she heard the ruffian mention **Lord Appletone's** name as he left but had been too afraid to tell anyone.*

WILLIAM BOTHUM, GARDENER

A gruff, no-nonsense man who is employed to tend the gardens on the Estate. He lives in the poorer parts of the city and can often be found propping up the bar in the local drinking establishments.

*Bothum frequents a tavern called the **Red Lion** that is a front for **the Thieves Guild**, **Grupt** also drinks there and has been seen by **Bothum** meeting **Heriot** outside, exchanging messages and gold coins.*

THE RED LION

The Red Lion is a small tavern in one of the poorer districts near to the Applestone Estate. It is a simple one-storey building that offers little in the way of rooms or decent food, serving mainly watered down ale and spirits of dubious quality.

The Watch offer raid the place due to the illegal gambling that goes on there and suspect it may be a front for **the Thieves Guild** although they have no hard evidence to back up this suspicion.

THE STAFF

HOLDEN BRYE, LANDLORD

Holden Brye is a large, middle-aged man with a pot-belly whose face has turned red from too much drink.

*He doesn't know anything about the current affair, although he has heard about it, but doesn't like to involve himself in those sort of matters since he is worried that any attention from **the Watch** may see him ruined if his affiliation with **the Thieves Guild** is proved.*

LILLEN BRYE, LANDLORD'S WIFE

A young, headstrong woman who does much of the actual running of her pub whilst trying to prevent her husband drinking the profits. She is a ribald sense of humour but is not adverse to clouting someone with a tankard if they cause too much trouble.

Although she doesn't know anything directly about the matter, if persuaded

*Lillen can point them in the direction of **Old Ewart**, a disgraced nobleman who may be able to tell them more.*

THE LOCALS

EWART, DISGRACED NOBLE

A once statuesque figure, now bought low by the demons of drink and gambling debts, he currently owes a great deal of money to **the Thieves Guild** after losing heavily on their illegal gambling tables (held in the back room of the Red Lion).

*If given monetary incentive Ewart can tell the PCs that he had some dealings with **Lord Applestone** a couple of years ago. Although Applestone had a spotless reputation, Ewart is aware that he hired thugs and enforcers to collect his debts, including **Bartleby Grupt**.*

CHANCEY HARLANE, BARD

Chancey Harlane is a beautiful young woman with long blonde hair plays a flute to entertain the locals. In-fact she is a member of **the Thieves Guild** and regularly reports on any suspicious activities in the area.

*Chancey knows that **Grupt** was trying to leave **the Thieves Guild**, he was in the pub months ago, drunkenly bragging about being employed by "a proper gentleman." She also knows that **the Thieves Guild** are not responsible for the killing of either **Grupt** or **Applestone**, if persuaded she may make an introduction to **the Thieves Guild**.*

THE THIEVES GUILD

This branch of **the Thieves Guild** (since there are many branches distributed throughout **the City**) operates out of the back room of the Red Lion where they run their illegal gambling tables.

ILLEGAL GAMBLING

The small back room of the Red Lion is filled with crates and boxes, these serve as tables for the illicit gambling but can quickly be disguised as simple storage if **the Watch** decide to pay a visit.

*If your player party want to get involved in some gambling here to ingratiate themselves with **the Thieves Guild** we encourage you to add whatever games you think appropriate to your setting.*

Gaining access to the back room requires either being accompanied by a known customer (like **Old Ewart**) or a recommendation from a member, such as **Chancey Harlane**.

HARALDA, GUILD LIEUTENANT

Haralda is **the Thieves Guild** Lieutenant in charge of the illicit gambling at the Red Lion, and also of collecting the Guild cut from the various footpads and cutpurses who prey on the local area. She is a talk, muscular woman sporting a number of tattoos on her arms, and what looks like a duelling scar on her left cheek. She has a fearsome reputation amongst local thieves.

Haralda Winter, level 4 Thief

A strong woman with a ruthless streak.

AC 8 [11] (leather armour), HP 8, Att 1 × two-handed sword (1d10), THACO 19 [0], MV 90' (30), SV D13 W14 P13 B16 S15, AL Neutral, STR 7 INT 8 WIS 10 DEX 7 CON 9 CHA 11, Items 17gp

There are always 1D6+1 low-level members of **the Thieves Guild** in the back room.

Thieves Guild Ruffians

AC 6 [13], HD 1 (4hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d6 or by weapon), THACO 19 [0], MV 120' (40'), SV D13 W14 P13 B16 S15 (T1), ML 8, AL Neutral, XP 5. NA 1d6+1, TT U

WHAT HARALDA KNOWS

- ❖ **Guild not responsible:** The Guild were not responsible for either the death of **Grupt** or of **Lord Appletone** although they want to find the culprit.
- ❖ **Grupt was working for Appletone:** Haralda knew that **Grupt** had taken up working for **Lord Appletone** as an enforcer.
- ❖ **Trying to buy his way out:** **Grupt** approached **Haralda** about buying his way out of the Guild, he said that **Appletone** sent him to rough up a barber and that—once the man paid up—he'd have enough money to make good with the guild.

OTHER PLACES

Although the clues point to a local barber being involved somehow and a little asking around should yield the location of **Stroude's Barber Surgeons** the player party may wish to look into some other places. Whilst beyond the scope of this adventure to detail the entirety of **the City**, some suggestions for other locations are offered below.

ARTAIR O'BRIAN'S BAZAAR

*This is the place where **Stroude** originally purchased the *Ritual Tome* that allowed him to create the *Cast-off Golem*.*

The Bazaar is a small, shabby shop full of musty old books and strange items from a variety of places around the world. The owner of the shop is an elderly, hunched figure whose body is covered with bizarrely designed tattoos.

Artair O'Brian, level 1 Magic-user

A hunched, elderly man with tattoos and a distinctive accent.

AC 10 [9] (unarmoured), HP 3, Att 1 × dagger (1d4) or 1 × spell, THACO 19 [0], MV 120' (40'), SV D13 W14 P13 B16 S15, AL Neutral, STR 5 INT 16 WIS 10 DEX 7 CON 10 CHA 11, Spells magic missile, Items None

If asked about his recent sales and provided with monetary incentive, Artair will tell them the following information (depending on what the player party ask):

- ❖ **Heriot Smith, Lord Appletone's manservant visited shortly before his master's death:** Appletone sent his servant to the shop looking for a talisman or token that could protect him from the enemies they may have been targeting him following **Grupt's** death.
- ❖ **Henley Stroude purchased an old book from the shop a week or two before Grupt's death:** Stroude is a collector of old books, particularly those with anatomical diagrams in them. When he discovered the *Ritual Tome* he was clearly very excited and purchased it straight away. **O'Brian** claims not to know what the book was about, but sold it anyway. He has a bill of sale that provides the address of **Stroude's Barber Surgeons**.

LOCAL WATCH STATION

If the player party decide to visit the local Watch station, they find a small stone building adorned with slightly tatty emblems of **the Watch**. The station is staged by normal guards who are all desperately trying to look busy in the hope that they won't be blamed for a lack of resolution in the case of **Lord Applestone's** murder.

City Watchmen

AC 9 [10], HD ½ (2hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d6 or by weapon), THAC0 20 [-1], MV 120' (40'), SV D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), ML 6, AL Neutral, XP 5. NA 1d6+2, TT U

The PCs can find out the following:

- ❖ **We're getting the blame:**
The watchmen aren't happy that they're being blamed for not finding the killer.
- ❖ **He must have been massive:** The guardsmen have heard about the large footprints and broken bars on the Applestone Estate.
- ❖ **We've questioned the usual suspects:** They have pulled as many known criminals as possible, but none of them have the strength or size to have committed the murder.
- ❖ **Not their style:** The guards know that a crime of this

magnitude is not **the Thieve's Guild** style, and they don't think the Guild is connected to it.

NEIGHBOURING NOBLES

There are other estates belong to **the Noble Families** surrounding the Applestone Estate, these nobles are mostly concerned with themselves and fortifying their homes in-case they should be the next target. They will only help the player characters if they are attacking in an official capacity but cannot reveal much useful information other than they heard the piercing scream when **Lord Applestone** was murdered.

LOCAL CRAFTSMEN

The local craftsman, particularly iron-workers and builders, are experiencing a boom in business as **the Noble Families** frantically rush to increase the level of security on their various estates. Although the craftsmen are wary they are enjoying the increase in business.

CLAY MORGAN

Clay is the man who fitting the iron bars to the Applestone Estate, he swears that they were the strongest he had in stock and that no normal man could have broken through them bare-handed.

STROUDE'S BARBER SURGEONS

The investigation should eventually lead the player party to **Stroude's Barber Surgeons**, a two storey wooden building situated in a moderately affluent district near to the Appletone Estates.

TRADE & CRAFTSMAN DISTRICT

The district where the barber surgeons is situated is a trade district, occupied by shops belonging to various craftsmen and specialists who deal in semi-precious or complicated items. A cut above the poorer district, but less affluent than the nearby noble districts it occupies a strange middle ground, a place where the burgeoning merchant class rub shoulders with people from the poorer district selling tatty wares from wooden carts, and lesser nobles who cannot afford the higher prices of the richer districts of **the City**.

The GM is encouraged to add whatever shops and stores they may wish to this district, but most should be trades that require specialised talents or that appeals to the tastes of the idle rich.

A few suggestions are offered below:

- ❖ Artists
- ❖ Chandlers
- ❖ Gemcutters
- ❖ Jewellers
- ❖ Sculptors
- ❖ Silversmiths
- ❖ Tailors

REGULAR WATCH PATROLS

Due to the importance of trade as the lifeblood of **the City**, there are regular Watch patrols that police the area, ensuring that crime is kept to a minimum (or at least occurs away from the public eye).

At any time of the day there is a 2-in-6 chance of their being a Watch patrol nearby when an encounter occurs in the district.

Guard patrols normally consist of 1D6+2 guardsmen, if there are more than 4 guards they will be led by a captain.

City Watchmen

AC 9 [10], HD 1/2 (2hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d6 or by weapon), THACO 20 [-1], MV 120' (40'), SV D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), ML 6, AL Neutral, XP 5. NA 1d6+2, TT U

Watch Captain

AC 2 [17], HD 1 (4hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d6 or by weapon), THACO 19 [0], MV 60' (20'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (F1), ML 9, AL Neutral, XP 10. NA 1, TT V

RUMOURS

If the player party as around or try to find out some more about the Barber Surgeons before entering then they may find out some of the following information.

1D10 Roll	Rumour
1	<p>Rumours: Thieves and cutpurses have been lurking in the area.</p> <p>Truth: Some members of the Guild know Grupt had an altercation with the owner of the barbershop. They are lurking round hoping to question him.</p> <p><i>If the GM wishes to bring this more into the game, should thieves accost Stroude, he will first try to bribe them and—should that fail—he will attempt to unleash the golem.</i></p>
2	<p>Rumour: The owner of the barbershop inherited a lot of money and used it to set up his business.</p> <p>Truth: This rumour is false.</p>
3	<p>Rumour: The owner has a stash of treasure hidden below his shop.</p> <p>Truth: Partially true, there is no stash of treasure but the golem is in the basement.</p>
4	<p>Rumour: The barbershop owner borrowed money from a noble.</p> <p>Truth: This is true.</p>

5

Rumour: **Henley Stroude** has made a stir in the area by offering free haircuts to the less fortunate.

Truth: This is true, **Stroude** uses some of these people to repair and animate the Cast-off Golem.

6

Rumour: The owner of the barbershop has a demonic imp that serves him.

Truth: This is false and comes from a drunken catching site of **Aston** standing at the window by the light of a flickering street lamp.

7

Rumour: The barbershop has been attracting wealthy customers from the area.

Truth: This is true, word of **Appletone's** patronage has lured some of his contemporaries to visit the barbershop.

8

Rumour: Strange smells sometimes emanate from around the shop.

Truth: **Stroude** burns strong incense to mask the smell of blood in his basement.

9

Rumour: The barbershop is a front for **the Thieves Guild**.

Truth: This rumour is false.

10

Rumour: A forgotten, underground stream runs below the area.

Truth: This rumour is true.

DAILY ROUTINE

The maps provided with this adventure show the static shape of the locations, however the shop featured as the central location is a working business with people coming and going at various hours. It is not possible for us to anticipate how the calendars and clocks might work on every campaign world so I have split the day up into segments.

Whenever the players visit the establishment, check the time of day and then roll to determine the number of customers and location of the key NPCs.

MORNING

- ❖ **Number of customers:** 1D6
- ❖ **People in the area outside the building:** 1D6
- ❖ **Henley Stroude:** Either talking to clients in the waiting room or in the cutting room (equal chance of each)
- ❖ **Marley Aston:** Either preparing food in the kitchen or sweeping up downstairs (equal chance of either).

AFTERNOON

- ❖ **Number of customers:** 2D6
- ❖ **People in the area outside the building:** 2D6
- ❖ **Henley Stroude:** Cutting room.
- ❖ **Marley Aston:** Assisting in the cutting room or out buying suppliers (equal chance of either option).

EVENING

- ❖ **Number of customers:** 2D4
- ❖ **People in the area outside the building:** 1D6
- ❖ **Henley Stroude:** Cutting room.
- ❖ **Marley Aston:** Assisting in the cutting room or tidying up downstairs (equal chance of either).

NIGHT TIME

- ❖ **Number of customers:** There is a 1-in-6 chance there is a single customer with a late appointment.
- ❖ **People in the area outside the building:** 1D4
- ❖ **Henley Stroude:** Cutting room (if customer present) or studying in room (if not).
- ❖ **Marley Aston:** Asleep in his room or making food in the kitchen (equal chance of either option).

CHOOSING A VICTIM

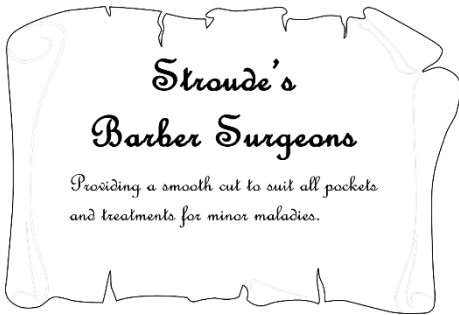
If there is a single customer in the building, there is a 50% chance **Stroude** will target them as a victim to repair his creature. If this is the case then he will slit the person's throat whilst they are getting a haircut and will have his assistant **Aston** help him take the body down to the hidden basement.

THE GROUND FLOOR

1. ENTRANCE

SIGNPOST

A small canvas sign hangs from the sturdy wooden door.



KNOCK AND ENTER

If someone knocks on the front door then 1D3 turns later **Marley Aston** will appear and escort them to the Waiting Room on the Ground Floor.

Marley Aston

A stooped man with a lazy-eye and slow wits, he was saved from frequent abuse by **Stroude** and is fiercely loyal to him.

AC 9 [10], HD ½ (2hp), Att 1 × weapon (1d4 or by weapon -1), THACO 20 [-1], MV 120' (40'), SV D14 W15 P16 B17 S18 (NH), ML 6 (8 if **Stroude** is present), AL Neutral, XP 5. NA 1), TT P

2. KITCHEN

There is a shelf on the northern wall full of jars and other supplies, there is also a wooden crate pushed against the

southern wall of the Kitchen.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Amongst various hair oils there are 1D3 random potions on the shelf. *These potions can be rolled using the Potions section of the **Classic Fantasy: Treasures** book.*

Inside the crate is 1D4 days of rations, neatly packed.

SLIDING PANEL

On the western wall is a concealed catch that causes a panel to slide to the left, revealing the Hidden Staircase.

3. HIDDEN STAIRCASE

A concealed wooden staircase that leads up to a hidden area behind the Cutting Room on the First Floor and also down to the Basement.

4. WAITING ROOM

WAITING CUSTOMERS

Depending on the time of day there will be a number of customers in here waiting to be seen. The chatter of the customers is a god place for the GM to insert rumours/gossip for the ongoing campaign.

5. STAIRCASE

A wooden staircase that leads up to the landing outside the Cutting Room on the First Floor.

THE FIRST FLOOR

1. CUTTING ROOM

PLACE OF BUSINESS

This is the room where the business of the establishment takes place, there is a large plush chair in the centre of the room where the client sits and a number of small shelves containing the tools of **Stroud's** trade.

If there are customers in the building **Stroude** is normally here.

Henley Stroude: Level 3 Magic-User

A tall, lanky figure with slicked hair who stares, unblinkingly from behind small round spectacles.

AC 9 [10] (none), HP 8, Att 1 × pair of shears, count as dagger (1d4), THACO 19 [+0], MV 120' (40'), SV D9 W10 P12 B14 S12, AL Neutral, STR 10, INT 13, WIS 11, DEX 16, CON 10, CHA 15, Spells Charm Person, Hold Portal, Locate Object. Potion of Healing, 17gp

Stroude keeps his spell book locked in his quarters and the ritual tome in the basement (the keys to both chests are always worn around his neck).

Should **Stroude** realise what the player party are up to he will attempt to acquire some hair from a PC and then head to the basement to activate the golem (see the **Activating the Golem** section).

HIDDEN PANEL

In the western wall of the room is a concealed catch providing access to the

hidden staircase.

2. HIDDEN STAIRCASE

A small corridor leads from the concealed panel in the Cutting Room to a staircase that leads down to a hidden area behind the Kitchen on the Ground Floor of the building.

3. SLEEPING QUARTERS

Two small rooms containing bedrolls and personal effects, the smallest room belongs to **Aston** the larger to **Stroude**.

ASTON'S PERSONAL EFFECTS

- ❖ 1000CP secreted in various places around the room. **Aston** hopes to save enough to eventually leave the city and settle somewhere quiet.

STROUDE'S PERSONAL EFFECTS

- ❖ **Spell book:** **Stroude's** spell book is locked in a chest (it will need to be broken if a key is not possessed).
- ❖ 3000SP (also locked in the chest below the bed).

4. STAIRCASE

A wooden staircase leading down to the area near the Waiting Room on the Ground Floor.



THE HIDDEN BASEMENT

1. STAIRCASE

A wooden staircase that leads up to the concealed area behind the Kitchen on the Ground Floor of the building.

2. MAIN CELLAR

The main area of the cellar is a deserted stone chamber, there is a slight dampness to the air and the stone walls caused by ground water seepage.

A PUNGENT ODOUR

There is a sharp, ammonia-like smell of Lye in here due to frequent cleaning.

CRATES AND BARRELS

Three barrels and an equal number of crates are scattered around the room, most of these contain little of value, a PC searching diligently will find the following:

- ❖ 5d4 gems.
- ❖ 2d6 pieces of jewellery.

These items were donated by wealthy patrons and/or stolen from victims. *They can be rolled using the **Treasures** section of the **Core Rules** book.*

3. CURTAINED OFF AREA

A heavy cloth curtain on a metal rail sections of this portion of the cellar, behind the cover of the curtain is where **Stroude** conducts his work on the golem.

CONSTRUCTION TABLE

In the centre of the room is a large wooden table, the golem lies on top of it surrounded by buckets full of blood, hair and viscera.

ANATOMICAL DRAWINGS

Covering the north wall are numerous, detailed anatomical drawings created by **Stroude** as he attempted to figure out the construction process.

JARS OF HUMAN HAIR

On the east wall, a shelf houses 1D6 jars filled with human hair, each is labelled (in the same handwriting as the note on the front door) with a name and date.

*These samples are used by **Stroude** to aim his golem at its target, the GM should feel free to add whatever NPC names make sense for their game.*

LOCKED CHEST

Hidden in a drawer in the base of the Construction Table is the Ritual Tome that first set **Stroude** on his path to wickedness. Once discovered the drawer must either be broken open or unlocked with a key (**Stroude** always wears the key around his neck on a thin chain).

4. HIDDEN TRAPDOOR

Below a loose flagstone, the trapdoor drops down 30' into an underground stream, **Stroude** uses the stream to dispose of his "leftovers".

ACTIVATING THE GOLEM

If the player party are indiscrete with their investigations then **Stroude** may try to activate the golem that currently lies inert on the Construction Table in the basement of his shop.

See the **Cast-off Golem** section for full creature stats.

As noted earlier the Cast-off Golem requires regular infusions of fresh blood and body parts in order to “feed” it (at least once a week); should the Golem not receive this then it will awaken and go berserk.

NORMAL PROCEDURE

As long as the Cast-off Golem is being fed regularly then it will remain in an inert state until blood, hair or fingernails from a target are placed in the misshapen mouth of the creature. Once this happens the creature will activate, attempting to seek out and kill it’s target.

SYMPATHETIC LINK

The hair/fingernails forge a sympathetic link between the Cast-off Golem and it’s target; as long as the hair/fingernails are fresh (less than a month old) the golem will be able to unerringly track the target as

long as they remain within five miles of the golem. Obstructions pose no difficulties to the golem, it will seek to take the most direct route to the target, eliminate it and then return to its starting point, at which point it once more becomes inert.

HAIRY RAGE!

Should the golem not be fed fresh blood and offal then—after a period of seven days—the golem activates. Without a target the monster will attempt to make its way towards the nearest signs of life, once there it will randomly select a target and attempt to devour it. Once this person is dead there is a 1-in-6 chance the golem will return to its starting point and become dormant, otherwise it picks another target.

If the golem is attacked then it will awaken and defend itself, attempting to kill its attacker before returning to an inert state.



EPILOGUE

The assumed ending of this min-adventure is when the PCs discover what **Stroude** is up to and stop him; although this is certainly not the only way for the adventure to end such elaboration is left to individual GMs, although some suggestions are offered in the **Expanding the Adventure** section that follows this.

STROUDE UNMASKED

If **Stroude** survives the adventure and his diabolical actions are brought to light then he will be arrested by the Watch, the trial is swift with the evidence of his guilt being clear. He is denounced as a sorcerer and is quickly sentenced to death by execution.

After 1D4+2 days **Stroude** will be put to death, his servant **Aston** (assuming he lives) disappears in the confusion and is never seen again.

REWARDED BY GRIMES

If the player party were hired to investigate by **Captain Grimes** then they will be rewarded as promised. In addition to this they will have made a friend on the Watch who may be able to provide them with future employment and missions.

REWARDED BY LADY APPLETON

Once **Stroude** is brought to justice, **Lady Appleton** will return to the City from visiting her sister in the country.. If the player party was hired by **Lady Appleton** then she will reward them as promised at the start of the adventure.

If the PCs have ingratiated themselves with **Lady Appleton** then she may be willing to act as a wealthy patron to the player party in the future, perhaps hiring them as bodyguard or for missions of a delicate nature.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

There are a number of different ways that the game can be expanded, some suggestions are offered below.

THE RITUAL TOME

If the player party did not destroy or end up in possession of the Ritual Tome, you may wish to consider what happened to it and whether it will rear its ugly head again in your campaign.

SPIRITED AWAY

When the Watch search the premises they find the Tome and hand it over to local scholar of the occult for examining. The scholar pronounces it of little importance and secretly squirrels it away for their own future use.

SERVANT BECOMES THE MASTER

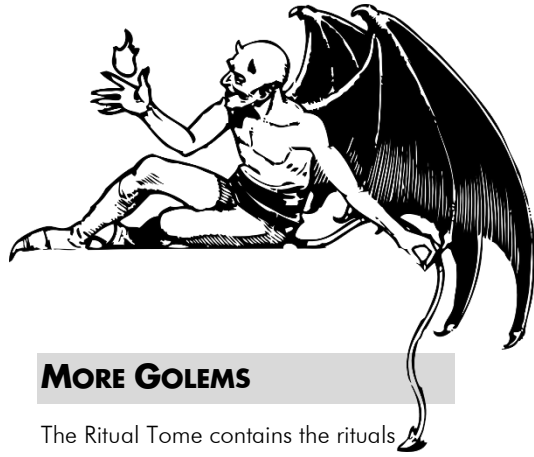
Aston has stolen away the tome and disappears into the night, with plans to unravel its mysteries and become a master of the occult in his own right.

RETURN OF CAMDYN KERRYE

Camdyn Kerrye, the original warlock who created the book (with demonic assistance) survived and has been searching for the ritual tome for years. When he hears news of the trial of **Henley Stroude** he heads to the—now abandoned—barber shop and begins

the search for his book. **Camdyn** is a ruthless magic-user who is willing to go to whatever lengths are necessary to recover his property.

The sorcerer may also have summoned demonic assistance.



MORE GOLEMS

The Ritual Tome contains the rituals necessary to construct Cast-off Golems, if a low-level magic-user like **Stroude** can figure out the procedures necessary then there will be other people in the city able to do likewise.

THIEVES GUILD

The Thieves Guild steals the Ritual Tome away, they plan to employ/blackmail a magic-user into creating a golem for them. It will be used as an assassin to target the enemies of the Guild, these enemies include **Captain Grimes**.

EVIL SORCEROR

An evil sorcerer obtains the Ritual Tome and plans to use it to construct their own creature to carry out their dark designs.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Some questions thrown up by this adventure have been left deliberately vague because those questions aren't the central focus of this adventure and so a GM doesn't feel obligated to use our ideas. A few questions are offered below with some possible suggestions.

Please note: You are not obligated to use these at all in your game, pick which ones you like or make some up of your own, it's your game.

STROUDE'S END-GAME

In the short-term **Stroude** was using the book to remove threats to himself, he may have had a longer term goal in mind though.

- ❖ **Power behind the throne:** The eventual aim was for the business to become so prestigious that royalty would visit, **Stroude** would then use his wealth to buy a title and influence in **the City**.
- ❖ **Found a society:** **Stroude** realised that his knowledge of the arcane is incomplete, he hoped to use evidence of his power to attract other magic-users and create a secret society dedicated to plumbing the secrets of the mystic arts.

WHAT DID ASTON THINK?

- ❖ **Mystic reward:** **Aston** believed his reward would be to become **Stroude's** apprentice.
- ❖ **Revenge:** **Stroude** promised **Aston** that—when his own business was done—he would use the ritual to take revenge on the people who mocked **Aston** for his deformities.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE GOLEM?

The golem has likely been destroyed at the conclusion of the adventure, however this might not be the case.

- ❖ **The golem remains inert:** If the golem was in an inert state then it can easily be destroyed by fire, otherwise it will rise after a week of not being fed (see the **Activating the Golem** section for details).
- ❖ **The golem is going berserk:** If the golem ends the adventure by going berserk and rampaging through the city is could continue rioting and causing havoc for a considerable length of time depending on how the dice roll. If this is the case then **the Watch** will be mobilised to stop and will either destroy the golem during one such rampage or when it returns to the shop. If they are friendly with **the Watch** the PCs may be involved in this.

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THE CAST-OFF GOLEM

A huge, artificial 6'-8' creature constructed of lashed together bones and mismatched, bloody organs covered in a coating of hair, fingernails and saliva-like slime.

CAST-OFF GOLEM

6'-8' humanoid construct made out of bloody, organs and bones.

AC 6 [13], HD 11* (49hp), Att 1 × fist (3d10), THAC0 11 [+8], MV 60' (20'), SV D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (5), ML 12, AL Neutral, XP 1,900. NA 1 (1), TT None

- ❖ **Mundane damage immunity:** Can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- ❖ **Magical weapon immunity:** Only harmed by slashing magical weapons.
- ❖ **Energy immunity:** Unharmed by cold and electricity.
- ❖ **Vulnerable to fire:** Cast-off golems are haphazardly constructed and take double damage from fire.

BEHAVIOUR

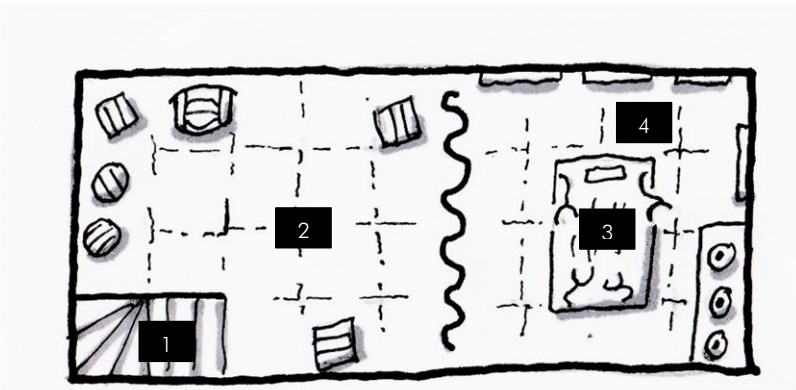
The Golem requires feeding with fresh blood and body parts at least once a week; as long as the Cast-off Golem is being fed then it will remain in an inert state until blood, hair or fingernails from a target are placed in the misshapen mouth of the creature. Once this happens the creature will activate, attempting to seek out and kill its target.

Should the golem not be fed fresh blood and offal then—after a period of seven days—the golem activates, lurching to life with a screeching cry of **“FEED ME!”**

Without a target the monster will attempt to make its way towards the nearest signs of life, once there it will randomly select a target and attempt to devour it. If the golem is attacked then it will awaken and defend itself, attempting to kill its attacker before returning to an inert state.



BARBERSHOP BASEMENT



1. **Staircase:** A wooden staircase that leads up to a concealed area behind the Kitchen on the ground floor.
2. **Main Cellar:** A largely deserted cellar that has a few barrels and crates in it containing supplies that are only used occasionally (more frequently used supplies are stored in the Kitchen on the ground floor). There is a strong smell of lye in the air, due to the frequent scrubbing and cleaning that **Marley Aston** does in order to remove the bloodstains.
3. **Curtained off Area:** A large, thick cloth curtain stretches across the length of the basement, behind it is a wooden table in the centre of the room upon which rests a horrendous creature constructed of hair and viscera. Covering the walls are various anatomical drawings, there is also a shelf on the wall containing jars of human hair, each neatly labelled with the name of their donor and the time it was cut.
4. **Hidden Trapdoor:** Below a loose flagstone, the trapdoor drops down 30' into an underground stream.

