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5 Adventures, 25 Rooms

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5 Adventures, 25 Rooms

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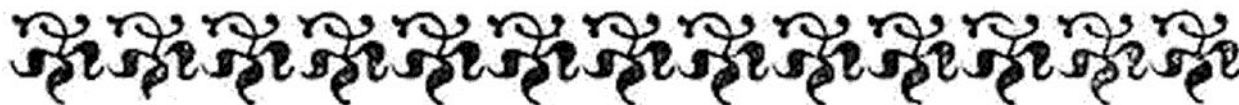


Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	2	<i>Adventure 4: Lost Love</i>	8
<i>Adventure 1: Guard Duty</i>	3	Room One: Aengus the Wanderer.....	9
Room One: The Interview.....	3	Room Two: Aengus's Tale.....	9
Room Two: A Trip to the Market.....	3	Room Three: The Fey King's Court.....	10
Room Three: Missing!.....	4	Room Four: Love Found.....	10
Room Four: Delivering the Ransom.....	4	Room Five: Love Lost Anew.....	11
Room Five: Double-Crossed.....	4	<i>Adventure 5: "I'm So Cold."</i>	11
<i>Adventure 2: Shelter from the Storm</i>	4	Room One: The Grizzled Veteran.....	11
Room One: Anyone Home?.....	5	Room Two: Searching for Clues.....	12
Room Two: Chasing Wild Geese.....	5	Room Three: The Graveyard Gang.....	12
Room Three: Murder Most Foul, Part 1.....	5	Room Four: "I'm So Cold.".....	13
Room Four: Murder Most Foul, Part 2.....	6	Room Five: The Locket.....	13
Room Five: After the Storm.....	6	<i>The Unseelie Template</i>	15
<i>Adventure 3: Bird Flu of the Damned</i>	6	<i>Fergus Blackheart</i>	16
Room One: Town Meeting.....	6	<i>Emu</i>	17
Room Two: "Help me! Help me!".....	7	Emu Animal Companion.....	17
Room Three: "Go away!".....	7	Mounts & Costs.....	17
Room Four: Undead Emu!.....	7	Undead Emu.....	18
Room Five: The End, or Is It?.....	8		

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Introduction

Salve!

About every two weeks since December 2009, **Spes Magna Games** has published *Quid Novi?*, an electronic newsletter emailed *gratis* to subscribers. Two of *Quid Novi?*'s regular features are Chance Encounters and Five-Room One-Shot.

Each Chance Encounters offers a brand new monster compatible with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*. Each Five-Room One-Shot presents a narrative synopsis of a short adventure built on the [5-room dungeon format](#) I learned about from John Four of [Roleplaying Tips](#) fame. A Five-Room One-Shot is not a complete adventure. It's more like an extended adventure seed. You provide the maps and the game mechanics to make that seed grow into a fully realized scenario.

5 Adventures, 25 Rooms offers content previously available only to *Quid Novi?* subscribers. In the pages below, you'll find five adventure synopses, one new template, and two new monsters. The adventure synopses assume a fantasy setting, but otherwise strive to be more or less system neutral. Throughout, I've offered suggestions for adapting the synopses to use with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*. The template and monsters are fully compatible with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*.

As always, your feedback about **Spes Magna** products is welcome. Indeed, it is encouraged. Please [email](#) any comments or criticisms that you feel could help improve **Spes Magna Games**. Finally, if you like what you read here, you'll probably enjoy [Quid Novi?](#) also. Click on the hyperlink in the previous sentence to learn more.

Sincerely,
Mark L. Chance
Spes Magna Games

Adventure 1: Guard Duty

The PCs are in town in between adventures when they are approached by a young woman of obvious breeding. She introduces herself as Iburra Kalth and asks the PCs if they'd be up to providing her with some protection while she is in town. The lady claims that she has been threatened in conjunction with her upcoming marriage to a merchant prince in another town. She's only in town for three more days, after which time her official escort from her fiance should arrive. If the PCs are interested, Iburra gives them an address in an upscale quarter of the town and tells them to meet Tinnal Sanak, her major domo, for an interview.

Of course, not everything is as it seems. Iburra is really a talented burglar and mistress of disguise. Tinnal is her sorcerous accomplice.

Room One: The Interview

Tinnal conducts a professional interview. He asks questions about the PCs skills and expertise. Tinnal gives them a tour of the lady's rented villa. The major domo emphasizes the importance of the secret room connected to the lady's private chambers. Should an attack occur at the villa, the lady is to conceal herself in the secret room until danger has passed.

Room One is a good chance for some straight-up roleplaying. Give the players time to brag about their PCs' abilities. Give



them a player's map of the villa and time to strategize. After the interview is over, Tinnal accepts their services and leaves to let the lady know about the arrangements.

Room Two: A Trip to the Market

Iburra enters the scene shortly after the Tinnal leaves to "attend to household affairs." In actuality, he is donning a disguise (magical or otherwise) and heading to the market square. Meanwhile, the lady tells the PCs she must go to the market to purchase necessary items for her journey to her fiance's city. This is another good chance for some straight-up roleplaying as well as an opportunity for the PCs to unload some of their gold and excess items.

The market isn't far from the villa. Tinnal waits until the PCs and Iburra are leaving the market and are within sight of the villa. He then summons monsters to attack the PCs (and appear to menace the lady). The PCs get to fight a skirmish while Iburra retreats to her secret room.

Room Three: Missing!

While the PCs fight the summoned monsters, Tinnal slips back into the villa. At the same time, the lady sneaks out of the villa. When the PCs have finished the battle, they and Tinnal discover the lady is missing. A ransom note demands a suitable number of gold pieces be delivered after sundown at a well-known site outside the town walls. Tinnal provides the PCs with the ransom and urges them to return the lady unharmed.

Room Four: Delivering the Ransom

Map out the ransom site. Let the PCs get their ahead of time and prepare as well as they can. Around the time of the ransom drop, they see Iburra in the distance, galloping at full speed astride a horse. She is pursued by several armed and armored men on horseback. While the lady has a good head start, it appears as if her pursuers' horses are faster.

What the PCs probably don't know is that Iburra is being pursued by guards, and that she just stole some valuable item from someone important in town. She gallops right past the PCs, relying on them to protect her, thus delaying the guards long enough for her to escape. In the dark at range, there ought to be little chance the PCs will recognize the guards for who they are.

Room Five: Double-Crossed

This "dungeon" ends with the PCs implicated as the lady's accomplices. Given sufficient time, they can surely convince the authorities that they were duped by Iburra and Tinnal. Whether the PCs get a chance for some payback is up to you.

Adventure 2: Shelter from the Storm

This adventure has been adapted from "A Vow from the Grave!" featured in *Detective Comics* #410 (April 1971). *Shelter from the Storm* presents a short murder mystery. To set up the adventure, it is important that the PCs already be on the trail of a killer. The terrain doesn't matter much, but it should be someplace to far enough away from civilization to prevent quick trips to town. There also needs to be an abandoned windmill or similar structure. Since this is a murder mystery, the rooms are really more like events.

Maps

You might be thinking, where can I get maps? Well, there are lots of free resources on the Internet. *Dungeon Mastering* has compiled a handy list of such resources at [this hyperlink](#).

Scaling the Adventure

Guard Duty works best for low-level PCs. Iburra and Tinnal are the bad guys, but the PCs aren't expected to fight them in this adventure. I've run this plot with 1st-level PCs.

If you go this route, make Iburra and Tinnal 4th level each. Rogue works great for Iburra, as does sorcerer for Tinnal. Give Tinnal *Extend Spell*. That way, he'll be able to cast *summon monster I* with an 8 round duration.

For the potential conflict with the town guards in Room Four, shoot for an [APL +1](#) encounter. (That last hyperlink leads to [d20pfsrd.com](#).)

As with any murder mystery, we need to establish our cast of characters.

The Heroes: These are the PCs.

The Killer: Let's call him Yrcanc. Capturing this NPC starts as the PCs' objective. Make him appropriately despicable. Attach a reward to his head. Make him wanted dead or alive. Since he's operating alone against the PCs, make sure he's enough of a threat that the players will be cautious, but ultimately he shouldn't prove too much of a challenge. He's not the main point of the story. Yrcanc is really a red herring.

The Sideshow Freaks: Holed up in the abandoned windmill are a family (of sorts) of sideshow freaks. Their wagon broke down on their way from Point A to Point B. They saw a storm brewing and decided to spend the night in relative comfort rather than attempting to repair the wagon in the rain, wind, and lightning.

The sideshow freaks include Ilista (the Fat Lady), Faril (the Thin Man), the towering Malonon (the Strong Man), and Laman (the Flipper Boy). Ilista and Faril are sort of like the mother and father of this strange family. Malonon secretly loves Ilista and hates Faril. Laman is mute and deformed. His arms and legs are stunted, appearing more like a seal's flippers than human limbs. He is about eight years old, and he loves the Fat Lady and the Thin Man as if they were his actual parents. Laman tries to be fond of the Strong Man, but he is afraid of him.

We also need a setting. In this case, it is just after sundown near the road between Points A and B. The abandoned windmill can be seen. The broken down wagon has been pulled to the side of the road. The moon and stars cannot be seen behind the thick, roiling storm clouds overhead. Lightning flashes. Thunder booms. A cold rain starts to fall. A fire's light can be seen flickering within the windmill.

Room One: Anyone Home?

Since the PCs have tracked the Killer this far, and there is light in the windmill, it doesn't seem unreasonable that the PCs will investigate. Yrcanc hides in the windmill, but not on the ground floor with the sideshow freaks. He's upstairs. The sideshow freaks aren't really a threat to the PCs. They're not secretly wizards or any such thing. They're just entertainers. Of course, Malonon needs to be very strong indeed. Assuming they're not mistreated, the sideshow freaks welcome the PCs to share their fire, food, and wine. They're polite and curious. What brings adventurers to an abandoned windmill on a night like this?

Clues

Shelter from the Storm instructs you to automatically tip off the players about important clues to solving the adventure's mystery. This happens regardless of any dice rolls. Why? Well, your players may not be a collection of Sherlock Holmeses, and missing vital information because a lousy die roll doesn't seem like much fun.

Scaling the Adventure

Shelter from the Storm sort of assumes low-level PCs. Make Yrcanc an APL +1 encounter. I recommend making him a fighter or barbarian.

Malonon shouldn't be a major threat. Shoot for APL +0, making him a warrior. Give him an impressive Strength. Even assuming 1st level human using the [basic NPC starting array](#) for stats, he could have a 15 Strength.

If the PCs tell the sideshow freaks about their mission (and why wouldn't they warn these travelers about the Killer loose in the vicinity), Faril remarks that he saw someone lurking in the trees (scrub, rocks, whatever) not too far from the windmill. They hello'd him, but he ran off.

During the interplay between the PCs and the sideshow freaks, slip a player a note. On the note, mention that the player's character notices that the Strong Man looks displeased by displays of affection between the Fat Lady and the Thin Man. For example, Ilista strokes Faril's hand, and Malonon glowers a bit. If the PC brings this up, the sideshow freaks laugh and defend each other. Appropriate skill checks may reveal that Malonon is less than sincere when insisting that he doesn't have a problem.

Room Two: Chasing Wild Geese

The PCs head out into the storm to search for Yrcanc in the direction indicated by Faril. Play up the

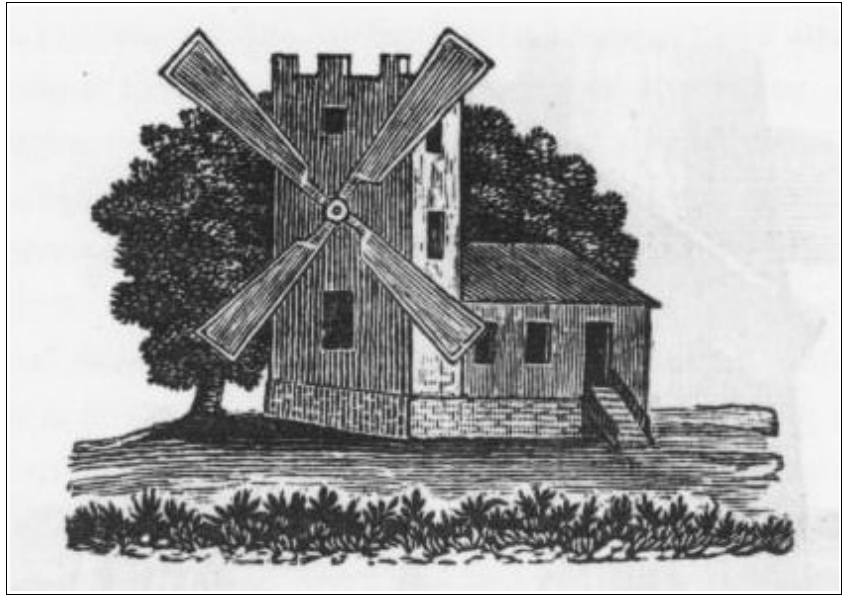
weather: the driving rain, the howling wind, the crashing of the thunder, the sudden bursts of light from the lightning. Give any characters with nature skills a chance to do their thing. Emphasize that the weather makes tracking difficult, but don't let the players lose hope. Right when they think they've lost the trail, a PC discovers a clue: a bit of cloth snagged on a branch, a dropped personal item, et cetera. Gradually the trail leads the PCs in a wide circle right back to the windmill, where Yrcanc has been hiding all along.

Room Three: Murder Most Foul, Part 1

While the PCs are gone, Faril hears Yrcanc moving upstairs. He tells Ilista to hide with Laman. He and Malonon arm themselves with clubs and go investigate. Yrcanc moves higher up into the windmill and evades detection. It's during this time that Malonon sees his opportunity. He chokes the Thin Man to death, wraps a length of rope around his crushed neck, and hauls him up toward the second floor's rafters. He then clubs himself in the head and stumbles back to Ilista, arriving at the same time the PCs return.

The Strong Man's story is that he and Faril went to investigate noises. Faril was jumped and Malonon was clubbed. Dazed, he staggered back to Ilista and Laman. Since this rough sequence of events is basically the truth, he is pretty convincing. What's more, the PCs might not have time for fact checking. After all, Faril is missing and Yrcanc is on the loose.

The PCs head upstairs and find Faril's corpse. They also find Yrcanc trying to get out of the windmill by exiting a second floor window. Run the fight as normal. The PCs either capture or kill Yrcanc.



After the fight, hand two other players two more notes. On one note, say that the player's character notices that Faril's neck has been crushed. This is not the Killer's *modus operandi*. On the other note, say the player's character notices that the rope suspending the Thin Man from the floor was tied off close to the ceiling. Yrcanc would have to stand on a chair to reach this height.

With the three clues provided, the players have what they need to figure out who really murdered Faril.

Room Four: Murder Most Foul, Part 2

If the players still haven't figured it out, Laman offers a final clue. He gets a PC's attention and draws a figure in the dirt of the floor. The figure is two circles connected by a straight line: O--O, a child's representation of a barbell. Even if the PCs still don't get it, Malonon does when he sees the picture.

Once he knows he's been figured out, the Strong Man justifies his action. He's a better man than Faril. No one could love Ilista as much as he does. He did what he did out of love. Whether Malonon goes down without a fight is up to you and your players' actions.

Room Five: After the Storm

Ilista is heartbroken but strong. She's still got Laman to take care of, after all. She asks the PCs to help her ensure that Faril receives a proper burial. If Malonon died, she insists on the same for him. At least once upon a time, they were friends, and it's the least she can do. The PCs might be able to help fix the wagon and accompany the Fat Lady and Flipper Boy down the road. Of course, there's also that reward to collect for capturing Yrcanc.

Adventure 3: Bird Flu of the Damned

This short adventure takes place in a small ranching community where people raise emu. (It could happen.) The various emu ranches surround a village of modest size. As the PCs travel through ranch country, it doesn't take much to notice something is wrong. Piles of burned emu smolder in fields. Worried ranchers check their remaining stock. Inquiries reveal that a strange sickness has struck the area's emu population.

The disease quickly takes an emu's life after just a few hours of increasingly horrible symptoms. Worst of all, shortly after disease claims an emu, the bird rises again as an undead monster driven by a hunger for the flesh of the living. Ranchers tell the PCs there is a meeting in town tonight and wonder if professional adventurers might be able to help.

Room One: Town Meeting

People crowd the town square at meeting time. The ranchers are there along with various town merchants. The small militia stands on guard. Village elders call the meeting to order. Discussion quickly reveals that efforts to contain the disease don't seem to be working. Also, a magical solution lies beyond the village's resources. The local clergy simply cannot meet the demand to cure sick birds. The disease acts too quickly and spreads too easily. Several villagers complain that the trouble started at Shane Greeley's ranch. Angry agreement sweeps the crowd while the village elders make calls for level heads to prevail.

Cue the PCs. The village elders accept the help of the PCs to find a way to stop the disease, offering suitable payment. Shane Greeley is not at the meeting. His emu ranch is the farthest one to the south, nestled in a hollow near the hills and a spring-fed pond.

Room Two: "Help me! Help me!"

Unknown to the PCs and the villagers, Greeley has fallen victim to a cabal of disease-worshipping goblins that now lair in a cave in the hills not too far from the pond. The goblins have polluted the pond by weighting the cursed remains of an emu and submerging it in the water. The infection thus spread from the pond to Greeley's flock to the neighboring ranches.

One of the goblins attends the meeting disguised as a child. Make this goblin a rogue or perhaps a sorcerer with appropriate appearance-altering magic. The goblin hears about the PCs agreeing to help and rushes off to alert his cohorts encamped in hiding along the southern road. The goblins quickly set up an ambush in hopes of stopping the PCs from reaching Greeley's ranch.

The goblins' plan is simple. The disguised goblin feigns having his foot caught in a hole. While he does this, his cohorts wait for the moment to strike. This combat shouldn't be particularly challenging. The real fight happens later.

The PCs find appropriate disease-god paraphernalia on the goblins: unholy symbols, lovingly tended profane boils, et cetera. If the party has a nature-oriented member, make note of subterranean cave mud or squashed cave crickets on a goblin's footwear. Have a few emu feathers show up on the goblins as well. The disguised goblin wears the typical garb of a rancher's child. He also has a wooden emu toy tucked into his belt. The clothes and the toy belong to Greeley's son Meelo, currently held hostage by the goblin cult.

Scaling the Adventure

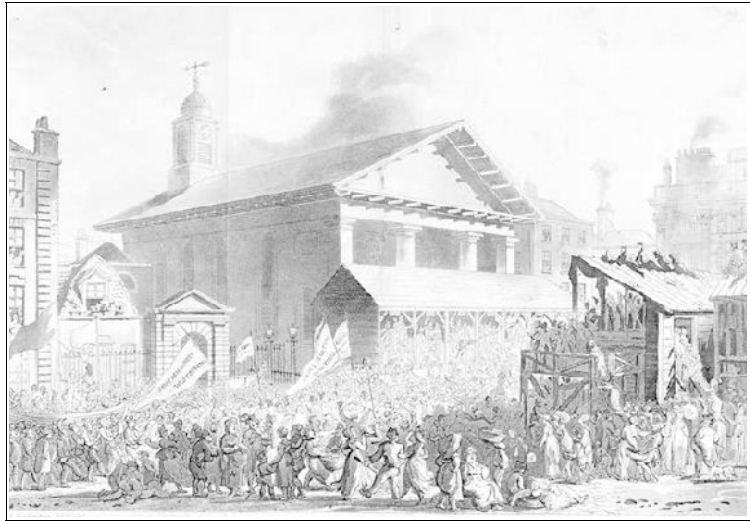
Bird Flu of the Damned has two combat encounters suitable for 3rd-5th level PCs. The first combat is meant to be just a sort of warm up to tip off the PCs that disease-worshipping goblins are involved. Make this encounter APL +0. Add levels of bard or rogue to the goblin that snuck into town to eavesdrop on the meeting if you need to beef up the opposition a bit.

The second combat encounter is against the assembled goblins, their cleric master, and her undead emu. Pull out the stops for this fight. Shoot for APL +2 or +3 (or higher), and keep an eye out for ways the goblins can capitalize on their home court advantage. Spend about half of the encounter's XP budget on normal goblins and undead emu. Use the rest for the cleric leader and maybe an elite guard or two.

To give the goblin cleric some unexpected punch, I recommend using [Timault Azal-Darkwarren's Disease Domain](#).

Room Three: "Go away!"

The PCs arrive at Greeley's ranch. It appears much like the others, including the piles of burned emus in the fields. A few sick birds stumble around in the pens. Greeley is home, but he isn't accepting visitors. The goblin cult has kidnapped his wife and son. He knows of the cave wherein the goblins are laired, but he is paralyzed by fear and guilt. The challenge here is for the PCs to convince Greeley to tell them about the entrance to the cave. Of course, if the PCs fail or simply opt not to try, they can search the ranch and eventually find the cave entrance on their own.



When roleplaying Greeley, keep in mind that he is a good man in a horrible situation. His source of income has been destroyed. His family has been taken and, for all he knows, they are already dead. His reputation with his neighbors is ruined. Greeley rapidly approaches that place where he no longer has anything to live for.

Consequently, he doesn't respond to threats. Death would be a release from his troubles. If the PCs are to convince Greeley to help, they need to give him hope rather than more grief. Appropriate revelation of the wooden emu toy could help soften Greeley's attitude.

Room Four: Undead Emus!

The cave entrance is concealed, but persistent PCs can find it on their own (perhaps by back-tracking the goblin ambush party) or with Greeley's help. After a length of winding, descending tunnel, the PCs reach the goblins' lair. It's time for a huge fight. The goblin leader is a cleric and devotee of a disease god. She's backed up by zombie emus and goblin warriors.

Constance and Meelo, Greeley's wife and son, are still alive, although they're quite hungry and a bit scraped and scratched. Once the goblin cult has been defeated, the PCs can rescue them. Reuniting Greeley with his family earns the PCs a friend for life. The PCs also get their hands on the goblin cleric's unholy book, which includes details about the profane ritual used to cause the bird disease.

Room Five: The End, or Is It?

The village elders express great appreciation for the PCs' efforts. They pay the PCs as agreed upon, and the village treats the PCs to an appropriate celebration. If the PCs explain about Greeley, the village elders help restore the rancher's reputation. The economic damage to the village is substantial, but the local clergy can undo the disease-causing ritual by blessing the pond. The region will recover.

There remains one question: Has the disease managed to spread beyond the ranches into the wider countryside? If so, there could be new instances of zombie bird attacks. After all, the emus were flightless and largely confined, but if the disease passed to a crow that fed upon the carcass of an infected emu....

Adventure 4: Lost Love

"[The Song of Wandering Aengus](#)" by W. B. Yeats provides inspiration for this issue's Five-Room One-Shot. You can listen to flower-power troubadour Donovan sing this poem in this [YouTube video](#).

This adventure takes place in any suitable wilderness area. The wilderness need not be too far removed from civilization. Ideally, the adventure's location should be a place known for its fey inhabitants. PCs with outdoorsy skills such as Knowledge (nature) and Survival should have ample opportunity to show off their

abilities. Should the party be a bit light with such abilities, the gaps can be filled by the NPC Aengus the Wanderer, a half-elf expert 3. This is, however, a less desirable solution, and care must be taken to not have Aengus overshadow the PCs. I've statted [Aengus the Wanderer](#) in the **Spes Magna's** Lab section of d20pfsrd.org.

Aengus has lived alone in the wilderness for years. Civilized life is not to his tastes. He finds solace in being alone. Aengus is not a hermit, however. He sometimes makes the trek into town to trade furs and dried fish for goods he cannot manufacture on his own or to visit his few friends. Consequently, the PCs may have met Aengus before, or at least heard talk of this strange loner.

Unknown to most, Aengus no longer wishes to live alone. While fishing one night, he caught what appeared to be a small trout, which he took back to his cabin. As he was preparing the fire, he heard someone call his name. When he turned around, a beautiful young woman stood where the trout had been. Laughing, she fled into the night, taking Aengus's heart with her.

Aengus is now a man with a mission. He wanders the woods and hills, searching for the fey woman with whom he is hopelessly in love. Months of effort are close to paying off. Unfortunately, Fergus Blackheart has decided that Aengus will die before he ever gets the chance to win his love's hand.

Room One: Aengus the Wanderer

The PCs have encamped in the woods within a few miles of Aengus's cabin. Before they've settled in for the night, the PCs hear something approaching the camp at a run: heavy footfalls, branches snapping. They also hear yelling (in Undercommon). Others are urging greater speed to catch "that damned half-breed!" Give the PCs a couple of rounds to prepare, and then have Aengus rush into view. Between 30 to 60 feet behind him are a sufficient number of drow warriors to provide a modestly challenging encounter for the PCs.

The drow warriors serve Fergus Blackheart, and they have orders to kill Aengus and retrieve the Ashen Key in his possession. They did not, however, reckon to stumble onto a party of well-armed adventurers. The drow open with a volley of poisoned hand crossbow bolts before closing for melee. Goal number one is to kill Aengus. Goal number two is get away alive. While the drow warriors fear Fergus, they also have little incentive to die for him when he's not around. Should the battle go against the drow, they attempt to retreat far enough away from the PCs to have time to come up with a convincing story about how Aengus escaped death.

Aengus is unlikely to die during this first encounter. (If he does, the PCs can always find the Ashen Key and perhaps a diary on the fallen half-elf's person, thus salvaging the adventure.) After the battle is over, he thanks the PCs for their help and begs that they listen to his plight.

Room Two: Aengus's Tale

"Almost a year ago, I felt this strange desire to go fishing roundabout midnight. No matter how I tried, I could not put the idea from my mind. So, I walked away from my cabin and cut a strong branch from a hazelwood tree. Using line I'd brought with me, I tied a berry to the branch and walked to the stream. Tossing in the berry, I quickly caught a smallish silver trout.

"Of course, I took the trout back to my cabin, and I set it on the floor while I could build back up my fire enough to cook it. When I turned my back on the trout, I heard a musical voice, like the voice of an angel, say my name.

Scaling the Adventure

Lost Love also would work well with 3rd-5th level characters. The first combat encounter isn't meant to be a challenge. Make it no more than APL +0.

The fight against King Ailill in Room Four should seem more threatening than it really is. Go ahead and make it APL +5 if you want. After all, Ailill is a powerful fey king. Of course, don't make him so impressive that there's no reason for him not to have been able to save his daughter on his own.

The final conflict in Room Five takes place with the PCs at full strength. Go ahead and make it a brawl of at least APL +2.

"Aengus,' the voice said, 'Thank you, but I must go.'

"I turned about, and the fish was gone. In its place was a glimmering girl, the absolute picture of beauty and grace. In an instant, I fell in love with her, but she turned and fled into the night. I gave chase. Just as I was about to grasp her trailing arm, she simply faded away. Vanished!

"I'm not ashamed to admit that I wept. I had lost my one true love. Since that night, I've wandered these woods and hills, searching for her. Recently, I befriended a dryad. She told me that my love is called Lasairfhiona [pronounced "la sar EE na"], and that she is a fey princess. This dryad gave me an Ashen Key with which I may enter the fey realm.

"That was three days ago. Since then, I have been attacked by drow twice. The first time, they struck too close to dawn, and I evaded them until the sun rose. Tonight, were it not for you, I surely would have died."

Aengus wants the PCs to accompany him to the fey king's court. He cannot defend himself against a party of drow warriors, and he will not abandon his quest to win his love's hand. Aengus plans to enter the Hollow Hill, present himself before the fey king as a suitor worthy of Lasairfhiona, and then live out the rest of his days in wedded bliss.

PCs with appropriate skills know that an Ashen Key is used to open a portal into a Hollow Hill, a sort of demiplane in which some fey live when not traipsing around in the mortal world.

What neither Aengus nor any of the PCs know is that Lasairfhiona was transformed into a trout as the result of an evil sorcerer's curse. Lasairfhiona rejected the evil sorcerer's amorous advances. In revenge, he had her kidnapped and then turned her into a fish. She would have remained in this state forever except for that strange compulsion that led Aengus to go night-fishing with a rod made from hazelwood, precisely the act and item needed to break the curse. The evil sorcerer does not appear in this adventure, but his agent Fergus Blackheart does.



Room Three: The Fey King's Court

Aengus can lead the PCs to the place through which they may enter a Hollow Hill via the Ashen Key. The portal into the fey demiplane opens right up into Ailill's court during a banquet. ("Ailill" is pronounced "AL yil".) The PCs arrival cannot be disguised; a doorway opening in thin air through which step adventurers in full view of more than two score fey would be hard to miss. In reaction to the PCs' arrival, all activity and conversation at the banquet screeches to a halt. After a round's hesitation, fey knights move to form a line between the PCs and the fey king and his daughter Lasairfhiona. Fergus attends the banquet, but without his drow retinue.

This sets the scene for Aengus to make his claim. Of course, Fergus objects, but he is silenced by Ailill. Aengus tells his story, which Lasairfhiona corroborates. The fey king thanks Aengus for breaking his daughter's curse, but notes that his daughter Lasairfhiona must be kept in a manner befitting a princess. He asks the PCs to tell him about Aengus.

After the PCs have spoken, Ailill remains unconvinced. Lasairfhiona's safety is a great concern. She was, after all, transformed into a fish until not too long ago. He asks if Aengus and the PCs are willing to prove their bravery.

Room Four: Love Found

Ailill has a simple test in mind. A monster has taken up residence in a grove not too far from the banquet hall. For some reason, it seems particularly keen on guarding a wonderful tree on which grow apples of silver and gold. Ailill requests one of each apple, and further requests that the monster not be killed.

The banquet-goers move to the walls of Ailill's palace from where they can see the grove as the PCs and Aengus make the short walk to the grove. At the same time, Ailill transforms via royal fey magic into a suitable monster and makes it to the grove before anyone arrives. During the test, the PCs and Aengus face not a genuine monster, but the fey king himself in disguise.

Ailill has no intention of killing Aengus or any of the PCs during the test, but he has no problem putting a serious hurting on them. His main goal is to prevent anyone from retrieving one of each of the precious apples growing from the magical tree in the center of the grove. Ailill will not pursue anyone much beyond the grove's confines, however.

Assuming the PCs succeed, Ailill resumes his normal form and congratulates Aengus and his friends. He agrees to the marriage between Lasairfhiona and Aengus, and gives the PCs the two apples as a reward for their heroism. The fey king makes immediate arrangements for a wedding. Aengus thanks the PCs and asks them to stand as his witnesses during the ceremony.

At this point, this "room" is ripe with roleplaying opportunities. Play out the ceremony, the PCs parts, the interactions between the PCs and the various members of Ailill's court, et cetera. Once all of this is done, it's time for the PCs and Aengus and his new bride to return to the mortal world.

Room Five: Love Lost Anew

But there's a final twist. Unknown to all but a handful of conspirators, Fergus and other agents of the evil sorcerer abducted Lasairfhiona while she was in her chambers preparing for her nuptials. A shapeshifter took Lasairfhiona's place during the wedding while the real princess was spirited away. Once in the mortal world, Fergus and his drow warriors launch an ambush while the shapeshifter waits for the right moment to strike against Aengus.

By the end of this short adventure, you've set the stage for a possible quest of more epic proportions. What do the PCs do once Fergus's treachery is revealed? Does Fergus escape? Does Aengus survive? Just who is this evil sorcerer, and to where has Lasairfhiona been taken?

Adventure 5: "I'm So Cold."

This short adventure synopsis is inspired by "Hold Me" (*Hellblazer* #27, written by Neil Gaiman and penciled by Dave McKean, published by DC Comics, March 1990).

"I'm So Cold" can be set in a community that suffers from severely cold winters. Of course, the adventure works best in a community with which the PCs have ties. During a period of chilly weather, the PCs are in town and discover that several locals have been found dead in the bad section of town. Violence in the bad section isn't unusual, but the deceased were all discovered frozen solid as if exposed to dreadful cold. While the recent temperatures have dropped to near freezing, they've been a far cry away from what would be necessary to kill a person in such a dramatic fashion.

The town watch in the bad section is next to useless. The Graveyard Gang, a local criminal band, has bribed the night sergeant Bickler to turn a blind eye on their illicit activities. The deaths by freezing have had the further effect of strongly encouraging people to stay inside after the sun goes down, providing the gang with an easier time of moving about at night.

Once you've hooked your PCs into the adventure, point out that the best place to stay in the bad section is the Grizzled Veteran, a run-down tavern and inn blessed with two honest owners.

Unknown to everyone, the restless spirit of Azrea, a down-on-her-luck drifter, haunts the bad section. Last winter, she was caught in the streets by a sudden blizzard. Despite banging on several doors searching for shelter, no one helped her. She froze to death that night. Now that the cold weather returns, her ghost wanders the streets at night, looking for a kind heart. Unfortunately, her undead appearance inspires fight-or-flight rather than compassion, and her twisted emotions cause her to react with violence when rejected.

Room One: The Grizzled Veteran

Marto and Filena have run the Grizzled Veteran for decades, and they've seen their share of times good and bad. The bad section wasn't always so bad, and they look forward to the day when the pendulum swings back toward the positive. They cheerfully offer the PCs room and board for a nominal fee, treating the adventurers as if they were lords of the manor.

The innkeepers know everyone in the bad section, and they are a ready source of information for the PCs. They can direct the PCs to where each body was found. They know about the Graveyard Gang and the corrupt Sergeant Bickler. Neither Marto nor Filena immediately remember the drifter's death, but circumstances may jog their memories. Both served the drifter a bowl of soup or two, and they saw the valuable necklace she wore. They even know the necklace's story.

In the weeks prior to her arriving in town, Azrea was a happily married young woman. The necklace was a gift from her mother who died shortly after the wedding.

The first year of marriage was blissful enough, but then a season of bad crops followed by an outbreak of disease struck. The bride's husband and infant son died. The loss was too much for her to bear. Little by little, almost everything she owned was sold to pay for ale to numb the pain. After a time, all she had left was her mother's necklace. The drifter clung to this piece of jewelry as if it were the last shred of her dignity and happiness.

Room Two: Searching for Clues

This "room" concerns the PCs' efforts to gather information about the recent killings. Getting to the site where each body was found is easy enough, but there's no physical evidence to be found at any of them. The PCs can interview folks who live near the sites, but most of the residents aren't helpful. In truth, few of them heard or saw anything. Here are some clues:

1. From Fabindar, a shopkeeper who saw Azrea: "I was closin' the shutters upstairs. Lookin' out the window, I saw a person shuffling down the street. Raggedy lookin'. Long hair. Dress all tored up. Didn't think nothin' of it. See lots of those sorts around here. A minute or so later, I heard the screamin'. No, of course, I didn't go look. Go lookin' for trouble, and it'll find you sure enough."
2. From Leneri, a streetsweeper who found one of the bodies: "It was horrible. There was someone leaning over the corpse. Didn't get a good look. It was still dark. Darkest before the dawn, as they say. Pretty sure it was a woman. I yelled, and she ran off down the alley. The body was frozen solid, all contorted, eyes wide with fear. I looked into the alley, but she was gone. Just gone. No other way out, but she'd managed to vanish."

Scaling the Adventure

"*I'm So Cold*" can reasonably work with PCs up to 7th level.

There's really only one fight in this adventure, but it's a doozy. In addition to the Graveyard Gang, the PCs end up facing a despairing ghost. Treat this as two different encounters.

The Graveyard Gang should be at least an APL +2 encounter. The Gang ought to be able to put a hurting on the PCs.

The ghost Azrea wasn't any sort of adventurer before she became undead. She was at best a 2nd-level NPC class sort of person. Tacking the [ghost template](#) onto such an NPC won't create much of a challenge for higher-level PCs. Take the time to advance her, perhaps adding an additional ghost ability or two. Also make sure she has some way of inflicting cold damage. This can be done as simply as ruling that she has a touch attack that inflicts cold damage. Azrea all by herself should be at least an APL +0 encounter.

Avoid letting the PCs involve city officials as a means of solving the conflicts in this adventure. The story's supposed to be about the players' characters, not about one group of NPCs being handled by another group of NPCs.

3. From Agli, a witness to the most recent killing: "She just appeared out of nowhere. Caught me and Mocko by surprise, that's for sure. Wasn't human, that's for sure. Could sort of see through her. Ye gods, she was terrible to behold. Wild hair, thin like a corpse, and those eyes. Clothes ragged and looked soaked. Poor quality, but she had a gold necklace with a locket. I'll never forget those eyes. Scariest things I ever saw. I just ran. Thought Mocko was behind me, but he wasn't. She'd caught him."

Talking to Sergeant Bickler proves fruitless. Bickler hides behind bureaucratic catch-phrases: "We're looking into it." "It's none of your concern. Leave it to the professionals." Bickler isn't likely to threaten or resort to violence. His small squad of militia aren't up to butting heads with adventurers. He avoids kicking the PC problem up the chain of command as Bickler doesn't want official scrutiny applied to his activities in the bad section. The PCs won't have much luck with the militia either. It's not so much that they're that loyal to Bickler (although some are). Rather, they're afraid of what'll happen to them and their friends and families should they cross Bickler and the Graveyard Gang.

All of Azrea's victims have been buried. The PCs could conceivably talk a family member into permitting an exhumation. Examining a corpse doesn't reveal much. There're no signs of violent trauma, and the bodies have thawed since burial. Magical means may reveal useful information. Adjudicate on a case-by-case basis.

Room Three: The Graveyard Gang

The PCs' questions attract the Graveyard Gang's attention. They don't want adventurers wandering around the bad section. Zecharias, the gang's leader, pays a street urchin to deliver a message to the PCs. Written on a scrap of paper are these words:

"I know who the killer is. Afraid for my life. Meet me at midnight in the Old Warehouse."

The Old Warehouse sits near the center of the bad section. It's little more than a shell now. All of its windows and doors are missing or broken. There are gaping holes in the roof and a few in the floor that open into the basement fifteen feet below. Zecharias pays one of the bad section's downtrodden to wait in the Old Warehouse in order to lure the PCs inside. Meanwhile, he and his ruffians hide in the shadows. Once the PCs show up, the bait mumbles a quick apology and attempts to flee. The Graveyard Gang strikes.

Make the Graveyard Gang a moderate challenge for the PCs. Fighters, rogues, and sorcerers make the most appropriate gang members. Zecharias explains that he's tired of them poking their nose into other people's business. This is a fight in earnest. The gang wants the PCs dead and left in the street as a warning to others.



Room Four: "I'm So Cold."

What Zecharias didn't know when he chose the Old Warehouse as the ambush point is that Azrea lairs there. In fact, the Old Warehouse is where she died the previous winter. She sought shelter in the basement, but the building was too exposed to the elements. She lurks in the basement during the fight between the PCs and the Graveyard Gang. This "room" can play out a few different ways:

1. Any of the Graveyard Gang who fall through a hole in the floor into the basement provoke Azrea and end up being flash frozen.
2. If a PC ends up in the basement during the fight, that PC may provoke Azrea depending on his reaction.
3. After the fight, Azrea exits the basement to face the PCs.

Azrea's restless spirit is not evil. Instead, she is driven by powerful, conflicting emotions: a yearning for compassion, anger at her fate, and sorrow over the lives she's taken. When Azrea meets the PCs, she states simply, "I'm so cold." and then waits for a reaction. The best response is for at least one of the PCs to respond with compassion. Even a simple gesture, such as offering Azrea a blanket or a cloak, is enough to lay her ghost to rest.

Less than compassionate responses uncontrollably provoke Azrea to violence. At this point, the PCs have another fight for their lives on their hands, this time against a powerful ghost that can flash freeze a 1st-level commoner with a touch. What's worse, Azrea cannot truly be destroyed by violent means. Even if defeated, her spirit returns to the Old Warehouse after a few nights to renew its search for a kind heart.

Room Five: The Locket

Azrea has no treasure except her mother's necklace. If and when she's put to rest, she fades away, leaving the necklace behind. The PCs have presumably killed the Graveyard Gang and get to take their stuff, thus adding to the haul from this short adventure. Sergeant Bickler isn't happy with the Graveyard Gang's defeat, but there's not much he can do about it. Marto and Filena are overjoyed that the Graveyard Gang is gone and that the undead menace stalking the bad section has been dealt with. Consequently, the PCs have earned one NPC's enmity and two NPCs' friendship.

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Table of Contents: *Contes populaires de Basse-Bretagne* by F-M. Luzel. Paris, 1887.

Page 3: *Victorian Songs - Lyrics of the Affections and Nature*, 1895.

Page 6: *Tales Worth Telling, Traveller's Adventures by Sea and Land*. Munroe and Francis & C.S. Francis & Co., 1852.

Page 8: "Covent Garden Market". *History of the Westminster Election*. London, 1784.

Page 10: *The Orange Fairy Book*. Edited by Andrew Lang. Illustrated by H. J. Ford. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1906.

Page 13: *Une vue de Nienport* with soldiers standing in the ruins, 1915.

Page 17: *Dictionnaire encyclopédique Troussset*. Paris 1886-1891.

The Unseelie Template

The unseelie are creatures who've been seduced by the dark side of nature. For them, nature is blood red in tooth and claw, more a source of fear than a world of beauty. Many unseelie were normal fey, but others were once non-fey creatures who have given themselves over to the forces of darkness.

An unseelie creature appears much like the base creature, but its hair and skin (or fur or scales or whatever) tend toward darker tones than normal. Its eyes, in contrast, tend to be more lightly colored, often almost albinic.

Creating an Unseelie

"Unseelie" is an inherited or acquired template that can be added to any fey, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid with an Intelligence score of 4 or more. An unseelie creature retains the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

CR: As base creature +1.

Alignment: Any evil.

Type: The creature's type changes to fey. Do not recalculate HD, BAB, or saves. It retains any subtypes.

Defenses/Qualities: DR 5/cold iron and SR equal to CR + 11 (maximum 35).

Special Abilities: An unseelie creature gains the following. An unseelie creature's caster level is equal to Hit Dice. Where applicable, saving throws for its spell-like abilities are Charisma-based.

Beast Shape (Su) Once per day, an unseelie can use *beast shape I*, as per the spell. This supernatural ability takes effect as if cast by a 6th-level sorcerer.

Dark Nature's Servant (Sp) An unseelie creature prepares and casts orisons as a druid with a caster level equal to its Hit Dice.

Speak with Animals (Sp) At will, an unseelie can *speak with animals*, as per the spell.

Woodland Stride (Ex) An unseelie may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at its normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. Thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect it.

Abilities: Dex +2, Int +2, Cha +2.

Skills: An unseelie with racial Hit Dice has skill points per racial Hit Die equal to 6 + Int modifier (minimum 1) per Hit Die. The following are class skills for an unseelie creature: Acrobatics, Bluff, Climb, Craft, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Fly, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Perception, Perform, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Swim, Use Magic Device. An unseelie creature retains the base creature's racial bonuses to skills (if any). Skill ranks from class levels are unaffected.

Unseelie have a +4 racial bonus to Bluff and Sleight of Hand.

Languages: An unseelie creature knows Sylvan in addition to the languages of the base creature.

Fergus Blackheart

With sure, fluid movements, the lightly armored elven warrior turns, cloak whirling. One gloved hand holds a rapier; the other, a hand crossbow. His skin is pale, nearly white, as is his long hair. Now that you can see his face, he doesn't appear completely elven. His features are sharper, ears longer, and his noble visage cannot conceal the malevolence burning in his eyes.

Male unseelie advanced drow aristocrat 1/warrior 2

CR 3; **XP** 800

CE Medium fey (elf)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +2 natural, +3 armor)

hp 21 (1d8+2 plus 2d10+4)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3; +2 enchantment

Immune sleep; **DR** 5/cold iron; **SR** 14

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; woodland stride

Melee masterwork rapier +8 (1d6+2/18-20), or

Ranged hand crossbow +7 (1d4 plus poison/19-20, range increment 30 ft.)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks beast shape, poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will - *detect magic*, *flare* (Fort DC 13), *guidance*, *speak with animals*, *resistance*

1/day - *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 21, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Combat Expertise, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +11, Climb +6, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (nobility)

+7, Perception +7, Ride +9, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Survival +6; **Racial** +4 Bluff, +2

Perception, +4 Sleight of Hand; **Armor Check Penalty** -1 (already included)

SQ poison use

Language Abyssal, Common, Drow Sign Language, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Beast Shape (Su) Once per day, Fergus can use *beast shape I*, as per the spell. This supernatural ability takes effect as if cast by a 6th-level sorcerer.

Poison Use (Ex) Drow are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves. Drow favor an insidious toxin that causes its victims to lapse into unconsciousness. This poison allows drow to capture slaves with great ease.

Drow Poison - injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/minute for 2 minutes; *initial effect* unconsciousness for 1 minute; *secondary effect* unconsciousness for 2d4 hours; *cure* 1 save.

EQUIPMENT

masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, hand crossbow with 20 bolts, drow poison (2 doses), two tanglefoot bags, 130 gp for other items

Emu

As tall as a human, this large bird seems to be composed mainly of a pair of legs that merge with a round, feathery body. Its long, skinny neck supports a rather small head that darts to and fro.

CR 1/2; **XP** 200
N Medium Animal
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex)
hp 9 (2d8)
Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee 2 kicks -4 (1d3)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 4
Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14
Feats Endurance, Run (B)
Skills Perception +9; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception
SQ docile



ECOLOGY

Environment temperate plains
Organization solitary, pair, or flock (3-30)
Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Docile (Ex) Unless specifically trained for combat (see the Handle Animal skill) an emu's kicks are treated as secondary attacks.

An emu is a smaller breed of flightless bird, often favored by smaller races such as gnomes and halflings. Typically weighing between 50 to 100 pounds, an emu stands 5 to 6 feet tall. A light load for an emu is up to 38 pounds, a medium load is 39-76 pounds, and a heavy load is 77-115 pounds. An emu can drag 575 pounds.

The statistics presented above are for a typical emu. Tougher emus with the advanced simple template exist, but are relatively uncommon. Emus can be trained for combat with the Handle Animal skill, and such mounts often serve halflings, gnomes, and other small races as steeds in combat. A Small-size paladin may choose an emu for a special mount. Druids and rangers may select emus as animal companions, using the statistics below.

Emu Animal Companion

Starting Statistics: Size Medium; Speed 40 ft.; AC +4 natural armor; Attack 2 kicks (1d4); Ability Scores Str 11, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4; Special Qualities low-light vision.
4th-Level Advancement: Ability Scores Str +2, Con +2; Special Qualities combat trained.

Mounts & Costs

Emu: 20 gp
Emu (combat trained): 30 gp

Undead Emu

CR 1; **XP** 400

NE Medium Undead

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 16 (3d8)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

DR 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +3 (1d6+1)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** --, **Int** --, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Toughness

SQ staggered

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization any

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Staggered (Ex) Zombies have poor reflexes and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.

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