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Trollish
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Death at Grimwood Hall

A peckvle Adventure for Tunnels & Trolls



Crow 2013



Death at Grimwood Hall

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Death at Grimwood Hall

By Scott Malthouse

People will do strange things for love, but Margaret Grimwood of Grimwood Hall is going to take that to a whole new level. In the sleepy town of Meanderwood something stirs in the darkness. Under the moonlight a glint of steel flashes. Two shadowy figures emerge from the graveyard carrying something on their shoulders.

This adventure will take the players deep into a macabre mystery of love, power and magic inspired by Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Take care, for everything is not what it seems.

Death at Grimwood Hall is an adventure for 4-6 PCs (player characters) of levels 3-4, although the adventure can be scaled for other levels.

This adventure was designed for use with 7th edition rules of Tunnels and Trolls, but it can easily be converted for use with 5th edition.

Scott Malthouse
Summer 2013

GM Background

Meanderwood is a cosy town nestled close to Lake Bloodmoon, the site of a rift in time and space known as The Wyrd. The inhabitants of Meanderwood are mostly middle-aged and affluent people of different kindred. However, humans and hobbs are the most prevalent here as they are in many parts of the Kingdom of Peakvale, as they are seen as the superior kindred by King Hobbbletoe.

The reign of King Hobbbletoe has been the most controversial in Peakvale's history. He is ruthlessly conservative, even going so far as to expel all urooks from the Kingdom into the hinterlands on the border of Peakvale known as the Greyshades. He also makes sure that elves, leprechauns and dwarves are on lower wages than hobbs and humans, meaning that many have to live in squalor and scratch a living to pay their way. Many healing houses run by elves were shut down because they were free, something that Hobbbletoe did not respect.

Margaret Grimwood is a local noble who resides in a plush estate in Meanderwood called Grimwood Hall. She rarely shows her face about town unless it's for supplies, which are usually of a strange nature. There are mutterings around town that Margaret is a witch and the unusual ingredients she buys are for her bizarre spells. Some even say that they have seen her wandering the graveyard at night, looking for something. Her only companion in her house is her butler, Moss - an elven man who is much more than meets the eye.

The fact of the matter is, Margaret Grimwood is a scientist who is trying to create life from death. More specifically she is trying to create a husband for herself, as she is too introverted to go out and find a living one. She does this by going to the graveyard with Moss, finding body parts and stitching them together in her basement.

However, Moss has an ulterior motive in helping her find a husband. Under the rule of King Hobbbletoe his family has become desperately poor and as a result of being unable to afford healing his mother and father passed away. Now he's out for vengeance. So, Moss suggests to Margaret certain corpses with desirable traits, ones that would make the final product the perfect killer. Margaret is in the dark about this, thinking that Moss is suggesting rugged, manly traits that she likes.

So, unbeknownst to her, the brain that she inserted into the creature was that of Boon Hemlock, a master assassin. While she tries her best to make 'Mr Grimwood' come alive, her science is unable to do so. That's when Moss, who is a trained necromancer, brings the creature from the dead with the help of Wyrdstone, a mineral imbued with magical properties.

Moss orders Mr Grimwood to kill Margaret, and so begins his plot to bring Peakvale to its knees and begin a new rule – a more equal rule.

The PCs will be in Meanderwood when Margaret's body is found in her garden, having been thrust out of the top window by the monster. They will then start to piece together clues as to who Margaret was, what she was doing and how to stop the assassin monster. The adventure will culminate in a showdown between the PCs, Moss and the monster.

Part One

In this first part of the adventure, the PCs will arrive in Meanderwood for any of the reasons detailed below. They will find Margaret Grimwood dead at Grimwood Hall and begin investigating what has happened to her.

Adventure hooks

There are many reasons why the PCs could be visiting Meanderwood, but here are a few if you are stuck for ideas.

- One of the PCs, a rogue or wizard, is friends with Anita Branchfolly, the owner of The Happy Cauldron, a magical supplies store. The PC has been told that Anita has drakewater in stock, which is a component used for many potions, so the PC would like to stock up.
- King Hobbletoe sends the PCs to Meanderwood to collect information on any potential Urook raids in the area.
- A good friend of one of the PCs died exactly one year ago and was buried in Meanderwood, so they go to pay their respects.

Whatever their reason is for being there, at some point they will hear news that Margaret Grimwood was found dead in her garden. Councillor Hyacinth Hopbrush, a hobb who represents the king in the town, will seek out the PCs after hearing they are around town and ask for their help. Their guards are not used to this sort of drama in this sleepy little town, and the Councillor will pay the PCs 500 gold pieces each for helping with the investigation. A level 4 charisma saving roll will encourage the Councillor to settle on up to 800 gold pieces each.

A Death at Grimwood Hall

The PCs will be taken to Grimwood Hall by Councillor Hopbrush and shown the broken body of Margaret Grimwood. If asked, Hopbrush will explain to the PCs how Margaret tended to keep to herself and she lived alone in her house with the exception of her butler, an elf called Moss. She will explain that Margaret was left the estate by her parents, but was never married. She is described as a 'bit of a weirdo' by people around the town, but Hopbrush thinks she was just eccentric.

Examining the body, it can be immediately observed that her limbs are broken in multiple places. A level 2 intelligence saving roll will reveal that she must have fallen from a height to receive this much bruising and damage. Looking up at the house the PCs will be able to spot a top floor window that has been smashed.

Moss, the butler, is in the house weeping into his lunch. He doesn't want to go outside and see Margaret's body and has cooped himself up in the kitchen doing chores. He is a slender man with golden hair and a pointed chin. He is wearing an expensive satin suit and a yellow tie. If questioned, he tells the PCs that he was out at the time fetching fruit from the market for Margaret's favourite fruit salad. He returned this afternoon to find her dead on the lawn, which is when he alerted the guards. He is telling the truth, and the fruit seller at the market can back up his story. If questioned further, Moss will explain that Margaret was an eccentric but brilliant woman who was interested in the sciences and was particularly fascinated with biology. The hundreds of books on the subject in her library is testament to this interest, which could almost be called an obsession. He explains that other people around Meanderwood didn't much like her, calling her a weirdo and an outcast. Her only other friend about town was Anita Branchfolly, the owner of The Happy Cauldron, where she would often get her embalming supplies. Moss will not mention the embalming supplies, but does know what she was up to with the bodies. If violently interrogated, Moss will cower and cry, saying that they should speak to Anita.

If the PCs choose to investigate the house, they find a luxurious stately home with a gorgeous library and many rooms, but little else. If they go to the room with the smashed window, they find drips of blood on the carpet where the monster took Margaret before throwing her out of the window.

The Happy Cauldron

Anita Branchfolly works until dusk, but lives above her shop. Anita is an elderly human with a cloud of white hair and little green eyes. She is clearly distraught by her friend's death and finds it difficult to talk about. She will echo that other people found her to be strange, but she was really a brilliant scientist who was heavily interested in biology. If asked what Anita usually sold her, she will tell the PCs that her most purchased item was toad slick, which is used as an embalming fluid. Anita doesn't know what she was using it for, but she often bought a lot of it. In reality, Margaret was using the toad slick to preserve the body parts she dug up in the graveyard. After a few questions Anita will ask to be left alone to grieve for her friend. If the PCs do not do this she will become angry and tell them to leave or she will call the guards. If they still decide to stay, she will ring a bell above her head and cry out for the guards. Two armoured guards will arrive within a few minutes and force the PCs to leave.

The Toadstool Inn

After the PCs are done questioning people, they can retire to The Toadstool Inn for 3 gold pieces per night. They will receive a comfy bed and a hot breakfast in the morning.

The bar is abuzz about the death of Margaret Grimwood, with most people speculating who could have killed her. If the PCs get talking with the locals, they are told that there were rumours that she was spotted one night in the graveyard with a shovel and that a slim man was with her. They say that bodies were turning up with missing body parts: legs, arms, torsos. This was one of the nights her and Moss were out finding the next specimen for to create her 'husband'.

There are now a couple of lines of inquiry the PCs can take here. They could recognise that the slim man was Moss and go back to question him about it, or they could go to the graveyard to investigate any freshly dug-up graves.

Investigating the Graveyard

If the PCs visit the graveyard at night they will encounter Jim, the night watchman, who will question why they are snooping around the graveyard at night. He will explain that ever since graves were being found dug up they have put him in charge of guarding the graveyard from trespassers and potential looters, and he will not allow them in during the night and he advises that they come back during the day. However, they can still try and

sneak in behind Jim's back. If they do this, read the next paragraph if they succeed a level 3 saving roll on intelligence or luck to find the grave. Also, if Jim catches them, he will call for the guards and they will be escorted out of the graveyard. In the daytime, the PCs can freely enter the graveyard as there are other people walking around paying their respects to loved ones who have passed.

After half an hour of searching, they will come across a freshly dug grave belonging to a man called Boon Hemlock, who died a few days ago. The headstone only gives the date of death, his name and a little carved insignia in the top left corner resembling a serpent wrapping around a dagger. A level 3 saving roll on intelligence will reveal that this is the symbol of the legendary Assassin's Guild. If the PCs choose to try and dig the body up, they will be swiftly discovered and taken to the cells for the night by the guards until Councillor Hopbrush comes to bail them out and explains the situation. However, if they try to dig it up at night, they will have to roll a level 3 saving roll on luck or be discovered by Jim, the night watchman, who will call for the guards. If the PCs manage to dig up the body without being discovered, they will find that the head is missing and that the stench is unbearable.

Further investigation into Boon Hemlock will reveal very little, but the locals will say that he was rumoured to have been poisoned to death in Thornguard. He was said to have been buried in Meanderwood because this was his home town.

Returning to Grimwood Hall

If the PCs choose to go to Grimwood Hall at night they will find the gates chained shut and with no access to the house. If they try to break in, they will find that Moss is not home. He has in fact gone to Anita's to talk about their involvement with Margaret's macabre actions and how they might try to evade the law. Anita wants to come clean about her involvement with Margaret's experiment, but Moss wants none of the sort. If the PCs also take a trip back to The Happy Cauldron, they will find it shut for the next couple of days.

Part Two

In the second part, the monster strikes again and the PCs discover Margaret's laboratory.

The Untimely Death of Anita Branchfolly

In the morning the PCs are visited by Councillor Hopbrush, who is in quite a state. She explains that Anita has been found dead in The Happy Cauldron, her throat slit. She tells them to get back to their investigation quickly because the killer is still at large.

Anita was killed by the monster, sent by Moss to keep her quiet about his and Margaret's macabre dealings.

When the PCs arrive, they find the guards looking over Anita's body. It is immediately apparent that her throat was slit, as she lies in a pool of her own blood, her face as white as a sheet.

The guards will explain that they found her after a neighbour heard smashing and banging. The door had been forced open and some of the shelves have been smashed.

A level 2 intelligence saving roll will uncover a bloody dagger under a pile of smashed pottery. The dagger has the image of a snake wrapped around the hilt carved into it, which is the traditional weapon of an assassin. A level 3 saving roll on intelligence will reveal this fact.

Asking the guards about the dagger reveals that it is indeed the dagger of an assassin, but they are surprised because this attack seems to be quite clumsy. In reality this is because the monster is still getting used to his strange limbs and so isn't as dexterous as he once was. The guards suggest speaking to Bernard Harp, a well-known historian and wizard around town, if they want to learn more about the dagger.

The House of Bernard Harp

Bernard has a pleasant little house near the Temple of the Red Sun. He is a 56-year-old human with a short grey beard and half-moon spectacles. He is a cheerful man who is enthusiastic talking about history with the PCs.

Over a pot of tea he explains that the dagger belongs to the Assassin's Guild and that this particular one has a tiny engraving on the bottom of the blade reading BH. He doesn't know what this could mean, but if the PCs bring up Boon Hemlock his face turns grave. He explains that Boon Hemlock was a master assassin and that the dagger must belong to him. It was said that he died during a mission where he was hired to kill one of the

King's advisors, Wenda Sandborn. He snuck into the palace in the guise of a guard, but was found out by one of the king's men and was dispatched of. Out of respect for his family he was buried here in Meanderwood.

If asked about necromancy, Bernard will say that that would be entirely possible, especially if the bodies were preserved well.

By now, the PCs should have worked out that Margaret Grimwood's obsession with biology is linked to the sudden appearance of a dead assassin and that an investigation of Grimwood Hall is in order. If it doesn't seem like the PCs have realised this yet, have Bernard suggest that something doesn't seem right and it sounds like Margaret Grimwood may have been behind this.

Uncovering the Laboratory of Grimwood Hall

The gates of Grimwood Hall are still locked. The PCs can either break the chains with a level 2 saving roll on strength or climb over the wall with the same roll.

The doors of the house can be bashed open with a level 2 saving roll on strength, or a window can be smashed and climbed through.

Looking around the house the PCs will find a door leading to the basement, which is pitch black so torches will be needed.

The basement has been completely converted into a laboratory, with metal tables covered in blood and medical instruments scattered everywhere. In the centre of the lab stands a large contraption that resembles a table flanked by two poles, each topped with a shimmering blue rock. A level 2 saving roll on intelligence or wizardry will reveal that this is Wyrdstone, a strange magical rock that is found around Lake Bloodmoon and the rift in time and space. The Wyrdstone can have many uses, mostly to enhance magical abilities.

The table has bloody straps on it and can swivel vertically, as if it were used to hold someone on it.

There are jars lining the walls containing limbs and organs, which is a harrowing scene to behold.

On one of the tables is an open book about human anatomy and a notebook with handwriting in it. This is Margaret's diary and contains the following:

Day 22

People are getting suspicious. Moss and I have been frequenting the graveyard too much, but I cannot wait any longer - I must have a husband.

I am so lonely here and I need to be cared for. Moss can only do so much; he's not what I'm looking for in a man.

Day 23

Moss and I have finally found a suitable head for Mr Grimwood and I have covered it in toad slick to preserve it while I set up the Wyrdstone. Tomorrow it shall finally be time to create my husband.

Day 24

I found Moss creeping around the laboratory. When questioned, he said he was making sure Mr Grimwood had enough toad slick on him to preserve him for the rest of the day. I daresay he has been a bit shifty of late, always stuttering whenever I talk to him and going off for walks near Lake Bloodmoon.

After all my efforts, Mr Grimwood still won't live. I fear that I might just give up. Maybe I'm not the scientist I thought I was.

Day 25

What a glorious day! I came to the basement to find Mr Grimwood up and about. I have no idea what happened- possibly a delay from the Wyrdstone, I don't know. I am so happy right now.

The entries end there and the page is covered in blood.

Ask the PCs to roll a level 2 intelligence saving roll. Those who pass hear shuffling upstairs. In a few minutes Moss appears in the doorway at the top of the stairs, laughing.

Read the following passage:

You see Moss descending the stairs, followed by two strange people. You realise that those people are dead bodies - walking corpses! "Well, I suppose it was inevitable, wasn't it?" He says. "Unfortunately for you, you're just too late. Mr Grimwood is on his way to kill the King and there's nothing you can do about it." He smirks and holds out his hands. "You didn't think Margaret had the power to raise the dead, did you? She had a good stab at it but there's nothing like a good bit of magic to make dreams come true, eh? Mind you, while she wanted a husband, I was looking for a stone cold killer. As long as they had the desired traits she liked, strong jaw, muscular body, then she was none the wiser.

“Of course, Anita here,” he gestures to one of the walking corpses, “had to go before she talked. Mr Grimwood made short work of that didn’t he?” You soon realise that the other corpse is Margaret Grimwood herself, risen from the grave. “I’m a genius, really,” he boasts, “and that is why your king will die for how he treats us elves and other ‘lesser’ kindred. I wasn’t supposed to be a slave to the establishment - I should have been so much more, but Hobbletoe doesn’t believe in equality, does he? No, his vision of a perfect society is hobb and human,” he spits.

“But now I’ve waffled on long enough. It’s time for you to die.”

Combat Encounter One: Night at the Laboratory

Moss will begin attacking with Unlucky Bees to throw the PCs off. Zombie Anita and Zombie Margaret will each attack the most vulnerable in the party. Once one zombie is down, Moss will use Fire at Will and then Smog for when the second dies.

Moss

MR: 60 (7d6+30)

Wiz: 30

Spite damage: 3/ Protective Pentagram

Spells: Unlucky Bees, Fire at Will, Smog

Weapon: Staff

Zombie Anita

MR: 20

Spite damage: 2/1

Zombie Margaret

MR: 24

Spite damage: 2/1

Part Three

In the final part of the adventure, the PCs will race across Peakvale to stop Mr Grimwood from assassinating the king, culminating in a showdown.

The Chase is On

Mr Grimwood has had a couple hours head start, but is going on foot in the guise of a hooded traveller and will kill anyone who gets in his way. The PCs can acquire horses for free if they explain the situation to the guards, or they can buy them for 50 gold pieces each.

Thornguard, Mr Grimwood's destination, is two days away but Mr Grimwood is not going to stop to sleep as he is undead. The quickest route is over the Western Plains rather than taking the road.

There are several random encounters that can spring up on the PCs as they are travelling, differing by location. These are detailed below. For each location roll 1d6 to see if there is an encounter.

Location One: Meanderwood

- 1- No encounter
- 2- No encounter
- 3- No encounter
- 4- Urook raiders (4) MR15 each
- 5- Bandits (6) MR 20 each
- 6- Wyvern (1) MR 130

Location Two: Stonehelm Hill

- 1- No encounter
- 2- No encounter
- 3- No encounter
- 4- No encounter
- 5- Wyvern (1) MR 130
- 6- Hill Giants (2) MR 70 each

Location Three: The Red Cliffs

- 1- No encounter
- 2- No encounter
- 3- No encounter
- 4- Stone Giants (2) MR 60 each
- 5- Black Orcs (4) MR 30 each
- 6- Roc (1) MR 130

Location Four: Thawbite River

- 1- No encounter
- 2- No encounter
- 3- No encounter
- 4- Water Wraiths (4) MR 30 each
- 5- Black Orcs (6) MR 30 each
- 6- River Drake (1) MR 160

Along the way the PCs will come across the decapitated bodies of several merchants, killed by Mr Grimwood. A level 3 saving roll on intelligence will reveal that the wounds are fresh as of around two hours ago. One has been stripped of his clothes and there are cart and horse tracks on the ground, suggesting Mr Grimwood is posing as a merchant to get into Thornguard.

Arriving in Thornguard

Thornguard is the vibrant capital of Peakvale – the pearl of the kingdom. White spires scratch the blue sky and the scents of a hundred kingdoms waft through the famous Thornguard Market. The main gate admits thousands of people per day, flanked by a squad of guards in shimmering armour. Moving through its streets can be a difficult task on a busy afternoon, with people moving shoulder to shoulder trying to get to where they are going. Occasionally lines of dwarves march down the main street pulling carts of iron ore and coal they have mined in the mountains. It's not uncommon for them to be looked down upon and jeered at by the more wealthy citizens of Thornguard.

It is dusk when the PCs arrive in Thornguard. The guards become more cautious at night and will not allow anyone to enter who does not have business there. Mr Grimwood tricked the guards into thinking he was a merchant but if they are questioned will not remember anyone matching his description as they have just come on night duty. If the PCs ask to see the day guards they are taken to the barracks and introduced to Marta Fen, a guard who was on duty when Mr Grimwood entered. She will recall seeing someone of his description, telling them that he was a merchant setting up for the dawn market.

Mr Grimwood is already making his way to the palace when the PCs arrive in the city. He will proceed to sneak into the palace under the veil of night and make his way to the king's chamber where Hobbletoe is sleeping.

If the PCs alert the guards of the assassin, they will be accompanied by one of them, Glen, a half-elf warrior with an MR of 14. The guard will take the PCs into the palace and to the king's chamber where two royal guards have been killed, their necks broken. Inside the chamber is Mr Grimwood, sneaking up on the sleeping king.

Combat Encounter Two: In the King's Chambers

The PCs can only get into the palace with the guards' permission. The palace is a towering white monument to elven architecture – an incredible feat of ingenuity. The great doors are 25 feet tall and 15 feet wide. They are flanked by two of the king's personal guard wearing plate armour and elongated helmets. They carry 10 foot spears, shimmering in the moonlight.

The PCs are guided hastily into the marble entranceway, lined with huge white pillars. They run up the great red stairs and down a corridor with walls covered in portraits of past kings and queens, Hobbbletoe's lineage. Two royal guards lay on the floor, their necks twisted around. The PCs will hear a shout coming from the king's chamber. When they enter they will see Mr Grimwood approaching the king, who is cowering in the corner of the room yelling for his guards.

Mr Grimwood will attack the PCs when they make their presence known. He has already killed many of the guards, so if any are called two more will arrive with MR 15 each. King Hobbbletoe will retreat into a secret room behind a bookcase.

Mr Grimwood

MR: 160 (17+80)

Spite damage: 3/1

Special: Mr Grimwood is quick on his feet. On a roll of two sixes, damage against Mr Grimwood is halved for that round.

Once Mr Grimwood is dead, King Hobbbletoe emerges from his secret room and thanks the PCs profusely for their help. He allows them to stay in the palace for the night and will have his best healers look after them if they are hurt.

