



# Witching Season

## CREDITS

<b>Design:</b>	B. Matthew Conklin III
<b>Editing:</b>	Miranda Horner
<b>Cartography:</b>	Mike Schley
<b>Interior Art:</b>	Ed Cox
<b>Design Manager:</b>	Christopher Perkins
<b>Art Director:</b>	Stacy Longstreet
<b>Director of RPG R&amp;D:</b>	Bill Slavicsek
<b>Web Production:</b>	Chris Youngs
<b>Web Development:</b>	Mark A. Jindra

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and on the new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, d20, d20 System, Wizards of the Coast, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., in the U.S.A. and other countries.

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental.

Printed in the U.S.A. ©2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

This Wizards of the Coast game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit [www.wizards.com/d20](http://www.wizards.com/d20).

For more DUNGEONS & DRAGONS articles, adventures, and information, visit [www.wizards.com/dnd](http://www.wizards.com/dnd)



"Witching Season" is a horror-themed Dungeons & Dragons adventure set in a remote village beset by hags. It is suitable for four 6th-level characters.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

"Witching Season" makes use of the *Player's Handbook* (PH), *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG), and *Monster Manual* (MM). Aside from these three core books, the adventure also makes use of rules presented in the *Tome of Magic* (TM) and *Dungeon Master's Guide II* (DMG2), the specific details of which are presented within the adventure for ease of play.

"Witching Season" takes place in an insular human village on the marshy edges of civilization, but beyond that the exact location is left vague to allow the DM to drop the settlement into a preexisting campaign with as little work as possible.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Thirty years ago, the town of Aurasburg was terrorized by a covey of hags based out of a nearby swamp. After years of terror punctuated by disappearances, unthinkable sacrifices, and the occasional gory murder, the townspeople finally cornered one of the hags (Rann) on her dilapidated boathouse and set fire to it. Groa, the covey leader, retreated back into the swamp with the bestial annis, known in local legend as Lonni Longshanks, all the while cursing the loss of her "littlest sister." Groa did not mourn Rann's loss because of any attachment to the sea hag, but rather because of the loss of her own power caused by the breaking of her covey. Still Groa bided her time to exact revenge on the townsfolk, awaiting the day the perfect replacement would present herself.

Groa possesses a magic jewel called the *sea hag's pearl*. With this pearl she can turn an ordinary female human sorcerer into a hag, just as she had done with Rann. Only recently, though, did she discover young Autumn Wren. Autumn's half-elf ancestry made her conspicuous in the isolated human community even before she started developing arcane powers. Groa has increased the locals' suspicions about Autumn being a dangerous witch by subtly bringing misfortune and terror to those with which the half-elf has regular contact. By the time the characters arrive, Autumn has gone into hiding, afraid for her life, and a posse has been formed to hunt her down and try her as a threat to the community. Meanwhile, Groa has been waiting to greet her newest sister.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters have the opportunity to prevent the lynching of a local potter, Sadel Claywheel, Autumn's foster mom. A grateful Sadel asks the characters to help Autumn whom she has sent into hiding at an old mine entrance south of town. From there, the PCs may encounter some ogres bent on killing villagers who seek out Autumn, a cantankerous old fisherman and his ghostly "wife," a sunken riverboat with its nearby fiendishly old crocodile, a hovel that hides a hag named Lonni, and finally a trip to the Sinking Tower, where they may find and rescue Autumn from her terrible fate.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

"Witching Season" is set in an isolated village and the wilderness around it, so DMs have a lot of options regarding how to get the characters involved.

**A Plea:** One or more of the PCs may be native to the region or familiar with Sadel, Autumn, and the hag legends surrounding the area. As a result, Autumn may have tried to seek out the PCs, thinking that their broader range of experience would allow them to see the folly of the villagers, only to fail and then run. In this case, perhaps one of the wiser villagers (not Sadel) approaches the PCs with a note or word that Autumn was seeking them out for assistance.

### BEING SCARY

"Witching Season" is meant to be frightening adventure that involves horrific revelations, spooky atmosphere, gruesome murder, and madness. The following are a couple of suggestions for how to maintain the fright all through the adventure.

**Break It Up a Bit:** Horror is best served in short, frantic, concentrated doses interspaced with a little "down time." A lot of this comes down to timing something that individual DMs will have to figure out based on their group's, and their own, style of play. Try breaking up the horror with standard "random encounters" that somehow tie to the themes of the module. Rampaging ogres not aligned with Groa; ghostly victims of Lonni; village witch hunters; normal wicker dolls in the likeness of the characters left by the roadside; individual or small groups of spying fiendish crows (foreshadowing the murder the characters face in encounter A5); and traps set by poachers—all of these are possible encounters that seem standard on the surface, but also highlight some of the reoccurring themes of the adventure.

**Descriptions:** Players know that when you as a DM describe something in detail, it is usually important and worth their while to be cautious about, but that if the DM glosses over something, it probably isn't. Mix that formula up a bit and keep your players guessing. This is not to say that you should try to trick the characters into fearing, attacking, or following harmless butterflies you may have been overly prosaic about, but rather that you should try to describe environments, items, and creatures in an evocative style using as many senses as you can bring to bear in your description. Vary your length based on theme and mood.

For instance it is probably a good thing to get across the idea that going to the witches' hovel (area A5) might mean death, hence there are a lot of allusions to death in its description (its corpse color, the smell of rot, all the fungus, and the fact that even sunlight is washed out here). However, if that description comes out of nowhere, the players will know that they are in a module encounter.

It is better to overlay the previous encounters with similar descriptions of objects (whose only worth to the story you are telling might be symbolic such as in the case of a broken bit of Sadel's pottery, the wicker dolls, the subtle bigotry of the townsfolk, and so on . . .).

Likewise it is better if you familiarize yourself with the text you will be reading aloud before the adventure begins, putting it into your own words so that when the encounter begins you can just drop it into the flow of play naturally.

**Special Rules:** Groups that have access to *Unearthed Arcana* or the *Call of Cthulhu* d20 RPG might wish to include the optional sanity rules presented there, which can add an additional element of danger to the adventure. Likewise places such as the Sinking Tower and the witches' hovel might be prime locations for using the taint rules also described *Unearthed Arcana*.

**Theatrics:** Using indirect lighting and low creepy music around the game table can also help set the mood for a scary adventure.

**Roleplaying in the Village:** The use of body language and gestures can bring across the isolation that outsiders might endure in Aurasburg in ways more evocative than just saying: "the people here don't like you." Try this whenever you as the DM take on the role of a villager speaking to a nonhuman, half-human, or otherwise strange-looking PC: avoid eye contact. Give abbreviated responses. Mime out getting back to whatever it was the NPC was doing when the player character interrupted them. And when the PCs leave, put the tips of your thumbs and index fingers together in front of your chest palms out, forming a diamond shape and then pull them apart. Quick-eyed PCs who make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) recognize the sign for what it is: a superstitious hand gesture for warding off evil. When speaking with a human PC, the town NPCs are friendlier: They make eye contact, and even chat a bit. If, however, they see not-so-human PCs in the vicinity, they often look over to them to see what they are up to. They try to cut the conversation short, making the hand gesture as detailed before.

**Hunters:** Alternatively, Hagel Hansford, a middle-aged wheat farmer and town leader, might recruit the party to help hunt the “witch.” Hagel is put off by the idea of hiring adventurers (especially outsiders or non-humans), but offers to pay 100 gp to each member of the group if they succeed in returning Autumn for trial or if they figure out a way to put an end to the misfortune afflicting the community.

**Aurasburg (village):** Conventional; AL LN; Spending limit 141 gp; Assets 2,940 gp; Population 421; Isolated (human 99%, other 1%).

**Authority Figures:** Earl Eldon Corromat (NG male human aristocrat 2); Hagel Hansford (LG male human commoner 6), village leader.

**Important Characters:** Autumn Wren (NG female half-elf sorcerer 2), potter’s assistant; Gelou Colnias (N male human warrior 2), baker’s son/local tough; Sadel Claywheel (NG female human expert 3) potter; Gahreg, Thich, and Wolv (N male human warrior 2), local toughs.

## INVESTIGATION

The PCs have several avenues of investigation to use to solve the mysteries currently surrounding Aurasburg. Below is a list of topics for which clues can be found. The topics are followed by an information guide organized by check type and DC. DMs should certainly allow good roleplaying to take precedence over making a series of dice rolls when it comes to learning information, though.

*Note:* Characters that are obviously nonhuman or who openly consort with nonhumans receive a –4 penalty on Gather Information checks inside the insular town. When a character makes a skill check, the lore revealed on a given topic includes the information from lower DCs of that particular check.

### Aurasburg/Nameless Swamp

#### KNOWLEDGE (GEOGRAPHY)

##### DC Result

- 12 Nameless Swamp is a stretch of marshland to the east of Aurasburg in territory commonly thought of as wilderness. The ogre hills to the north and the Aura River to the west and south border the mire.

#### KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY)

##### DC Result

- 11 Aurasburg is a small isolated human farming village on the edge of civilization. It and the many other small communities along the Earl’s Road were founded nearly two hundred years ago by a group of human colonists from a nearby fief. Nominally the town is part of the domain ruled over by the young Earl of Corromat, who lives in a keep town to the north that was named in his honor.
- 12 Nameless Swamp is named such because for a long time it was considered bad luck to invoke its true name. Eventually the real name was forgotten.
- 16 Several centuries before, a great empire claimed the area around the Nameless Swamp region as part of its domain. The empire receded after several generations, which allowed the wilderness to reassert itself. The area is rife with superstition and the locals are very insular.
- 17 Nameless Swamp was once a haven for dark druidic rites involving human sacrifice, cannibalism, and worse.
- 21 Before the coming of the empire, dark druidic rites were performed at several locations in the region. These rites involved human sacrifice, cannibalism, and worse, or so the anecdotal accounts of the ancient imperial scholars suggest.

#### KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL)

##### DC Result

- 20 The swamp is home to a particularly dangerous and cunning giant crocodile known to local fishermen as Old Pete.

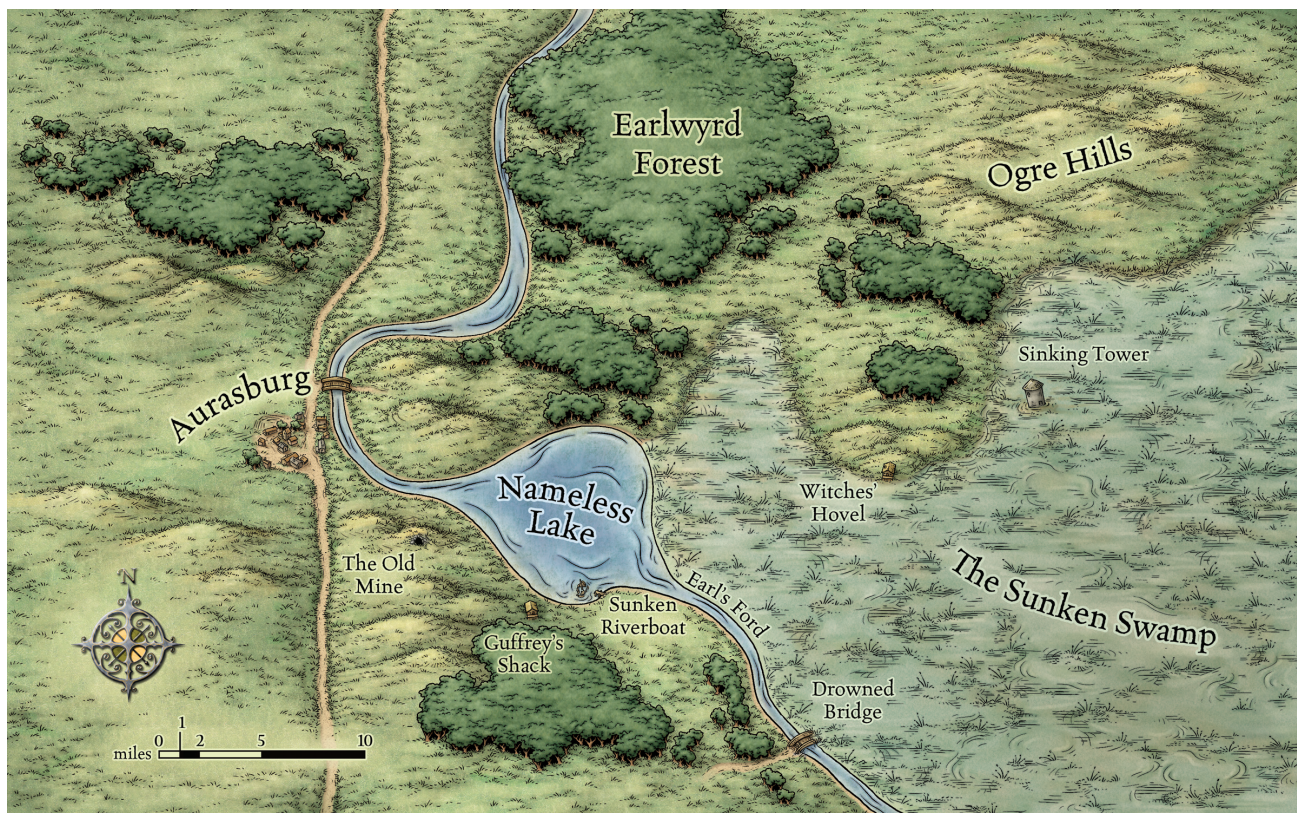
#### KNOWLEDGE (NATURE)

##### DC Result

- 13 Secretive elves and fey live in the forest that humans call Earlwyrd.
- 17 The Nameless Swamp is home to all sorts of evil. Even the animals seem hostile. To the north, in the aptly named Ogre Hills, wandering bands of carnivorous giants (ogres, trolls, and hill giants mainly) abound.

### Autumn and Sadel’s Home

Autumn and Sadel both live above their shop along the town’s main thoroughfare. Autumn sleeps in an unremarkable loft area that contains a large number of charcoal drawings. Most of the artwork features dark subject matter; one self-portrait, however, shows the girl’s morose beauty as well as her cat, Malphaset, whose eyes and expression bear an uncanny resemblance to his mistress.



#### SEARCH

- | DC | Result   |
|----|--|
| 14 | The only suspicious article one can find is a small crude wicker doll stuffed under the girl's mattress. The doll's "hair" is made of straw bristles and stands up in all directions like an unkempt mane.   |
| 18 | Characters find a series of sketches and doodles of what look to be driftwood at first, but a closer look suggests the remains of a riverboat sunk in shallow waters. The name "Rann" is scrawled in the corner. A subsequent DC 12 Knowledge (local) check reveals that a young woman named Rann was burned alive in her riverboat just off its mooring on Nameless Lake just south of town, near the old Guffrey place. Sadel can provide the same information if asked. |
| 20 | Characters find animal fur in Autumn's room. A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check (or simply asking Sadel) reveals it to be black cat fur. Sadel can confirm that Autumn had a cat named Malphaset. Autumn adopted the stray about four months ago over Sadel's objections. "He's just an infernal nuisance sometimes."  |

#### Autumn Wren

##### KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL) OR GATHER INFORMATION

- | DC | Result   |
|----|--|
| 10 | Autumn Wren is an attractive local 18-year-old girl with black hair and blue eyes. Autumn is suspected of using witchcraft to bring about misfortune to the community, including a series of unexplained incidents involving the spooking of farm animals, the mauling and mutilation of livestock, ghostly sounds, and the spread of an unexplained weakening sickness. She has since disappeared and is believed to be hiding in Nameless Swamp. |
| 12 | Autumn has on various occasions displayed a unique gift for magic since she was about fourteen.  |
| 14 | Characters are able to acquire a more or less complete list of the haunting scenes (see below).  |

### MALPHASET: AUTUMN'S FAMILIAR

Hiding in the woods near the ogres is Malphaset, Autumn's black tom cat familiar. Malphaset understands that his mistress is in danger, but has no practical way of saving her. Further complicating the situation, the cat has climbed too high into a tree in an effort to elude the wolves and ogres and is now too afraid to come back down. If retrieved (Climb DC 15, the cat is 30 feet up) and shown Autumn's sketchpad, the cat bats at the pages until it reveals the portrait of Groa as she appeared to Autumn, and then walks over it hissing and growling in an effort to warn them about the danger. Likewise, if shown a representation of Autumn, he purrs and lovingly rubs his head and flank against it. (Of course, if the PCs have a means of speaking with cats, they may figure out Malphaset's nature that way.)

If the characters take the cat with them and draw within a mile of the Sinking Tower, the cat's empathic link reasserts itself. Though the link is weakening because of Autumn's transformation, it is enough to allow the cat to lead them to the tower. Once there, Malphaset starts losing his augmented status and intelligence, changing back into an ordinary house cat and signaling that time is short—Autumn has nearly lost herself to the sea hag's pearl.

- 16 Autumn was orphaned as a child when her father Fouchard Wren, a poor woodsman and guide, was hung in the town square for thievery. Sadel Claywheel, a local potter and widow who had lost her own daughter to illness, took young Autumn in. Sadel has been Autumn's only friend since, though the girl's looks have often garnered her the admiring glances of the town's young men, including the baker's son Gelou. Until she was declared a witch, Autumn was considered an aloof loner.
- 18 Last week Autumn was seen speaking with old man Guffrey, a poacher and hermit who lives in a shack on the south of town. Guffrey is the town's only other notable "kook."
- 20 The identity of Autumn's mother is unknown, but many think it to be a dryad, elf, or other strange denizen of Earlwyrd, which explains Autumn's fey appearance.

#### KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

##### DC Result

- 20 The powers attributed to Autumn sound no different than the powers exhibited by most sorcerers as they come of age.

#### Old Guffrey

If the characters start looking into Old Guffrey, allow them to learn the information from the following table.

#### KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL) OR GATHER INFORMATION

##### DC Result

- 12 Guffrey is an old poacher, fisherman, hermit, and taxidermist who has lived alone in the hills to the south of town for over forty years. Guffrey is noted for his hard drinking, his surliness, and for talking to himself.
- 17 He usually comes into town once a month for supplies. The last time was about a week ago.

#### Witch Legends

If the characters start looking into local lore, allow them to learn the information from the following table.

#### KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL) OR GATHER INFORMATION

##### DC Result

- 10 Several legends are connected to the swamp and wilderness around Aurasburg, and most of these involve witches.
- 14 One witch legend involves a young local woman named Rann, who, after being accused in the disappearances of several people, was burned to death on her riverboat on the shores of Nameless Lake, south of town, near the old Guffrey place.
- 16 A popular local legend describes a female monster (possibly an ogre or troll from the Ogre Hills) known as Lonni Longshanks because of her lanky frame and spindly legs. The monster is so engrained in the local belief that the families of brides-to-be sacrifice a lamb on the eve of the wedding in order to appease Lonni, who seems to have a taste for young women.
- 21 Tales of ghosts, and ancient sacrificial rites are also popular fare.

#### {KNOWLEDGE (NATURE)}

##### DC Result

- 18 Lonni's description resembles that of an annis hag.

#### THE HAUNTING SCENES

Most of the scenes of Autumn's supposed supernatural attacks have been cleaned up or are several days old, making any evidence difficult to find. Most involved villagers waking up in the middle of the night being unable to move (due to Groa's weakening touch), animals being spooked at dangerous times (Groa and her wolves moving about invisibly), strange noises (invisible wolves howling or Groa's *ghost sound* ability), and eerie lights (*dancing lights*). The following locations and events still offer some clues, though.

### CHILD'S PLAY

At some point while still in town, the characters should run into a group of children playing hide-and-seek. The event can occur as the characters arrive, while the party is investigating the strange events, restocking supplies, or talking with the locals. During the game, the children that make it to the home base tree sing a fun little rhyme each time one of them makes it past the “seeker” (who represents the hag Lonni). The song goes like this:

*O'er field and marsh, o'er hill and stream,  
See the old witch run, chasin' after me.  
She's the bride of the marsh by the gallows tree.  
Maid, pay me a lamb, and you won't see me.  
She's faster than the wind and quicker than death,  
If she catches your scent, she'll steal your breath.  
You can't outrun her or your end,  
All you can do is outrun your friend!*

Characters who join in on the game can make Gather Information checks without the usual –4 penalty for consorting with nonhumans or being nonhuman themselves. However, the children's information is not as detailed and may contain some inaccuracies.

Each child has a +7 total Hide modifier.

If asked about the song, the children say that it's about an old witch named Lonni Longshanks who lives in the nearby Nameless Swamp. The song has been sung in the region for generations, as even the town's adults know, though no one knows exactly when it started.

Most of the lyrics contain bits of truth about the hag. The references to her speed and murderous nature are based on fact. Though Lonni has no special power of scent, the kids believe she does because of the long nose she is described as having. Really, though, it stems more from the fact that the tales describe her like a wild animal, and therefore she is assumed to have an animal's sense of smell. The line “O'er hill and stream” hints to the fact she can move across water with her magic sandals, though the children just think she's fast and can stride over narrow streams. The couplet about her being a “bride” and accepting “lamb” as a sort of bribe is a confused reference to a commonly known local legend that Lonni's favorite targets are brides-to-be unless that woman's family offers Lonni a “dowry” in the form of at least one sheep tethered to a swamp tree. This legend is itself a bit spotty, since while Lonni finds brides to be unusually tasty, she cares only about getting fed and is willing to attack and kill pretty much anything that looks edible.

### The Bainbage Farm

For about a week, the Bainbage Farm and, more specifically, its livestock has been under attack. The attacks began the night after Autumn had delivered a bit of

pottery to the home at the request of Mrs. Bainbage. The next day, several sheep were found mauled as if by wolves, but nobody could find tracks anywhere near the bodies because someone or something had placed their bloodied remains on the roof of the farmer's two-story barn (DC 25 Climb check). One of corpses was mounted on the weather vane while another went missing completely. Needless to say, this stirred a great commotion in town, and so the farmer and his fellows kept watch the next two nights. Then on the third day, Mrs. Bainbage discovered a crack in the bowl she had purchased and returned it to Sadel's pottery shop. The next day, Autumn returned with a new pot, and that night as Bainbage took up a lone vigil over his flock, he heard a commotion in his barn. When he opened the door, his carriage horse nearly trampled him to death and then fled into the night and has yet to be seen. The next morning, Mrs. Bainbage found the bowl Autumn had delivered full of blood and coiling centipedes. The latter attack happened five days before the characters arrive.

The bowl has since been broken, while the farmer burned all the sheep's bodies and spread the ashes over the farm. Mr. Bainbage and his oldest son have been out looking for Autumn the last two days with the dogs. Mrs. Bainbridge hasn't spoken since she last saw the clay bowl.

Characters who try tracking the horse (DC 19) find that its trail ends two miles northwest of town. A Search of the area (DC 20) finds its mauled and eyeless body in an overgrown gully. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check notes the numerous bite and tear marks probably left by a pack of wolves as well as marks indicating that the carrion birds had been picking at it. A DC 20 Heal check shows that the animal probably died of fright before the majority of the mauling transpired. The characters might find wolf tracks near the corpse but Groa has done a good job of obscuring them (DC 24). The tracks lead back into the center of town, where they become impossible to follow.

### The Weakening Sickness

Several people in town remember waking up and being unable to move over the last week. Most suspect Autumn had used her “evil eye” upon them. All of them had come into contact with Autumn the day before.

The most notable account of this occurrence comes from Gelou Colnias, the hotheaded baker's son who led the lynching (see encounter A1). Assuming the PCs can find him (and that he is still alive)—remember he may be on his way to the abandoned mine where Sadel

and Autumn sometimes go to collect clay,—they could try to talk to him. If the PCs can get him to speak with them (starting attitude is probably unfriendly or hostile), Gelou remembers waking up in the middle of the night three days before the characters arrive in town and finding Autumn (really Groa under the effects of *disguise self*) straddling him. At first convinced that his masculine charms had finally won her over as they did all women (or so the lad embellishes), he quickly realized that she was sapping his strength. When he rebuffed her, she clawed his chest, drawing blood, and then turned herself into a mountain lioness and fled into the night out through his second-story window above his father's bakery. His father, the baker, felt so weak that night that he could not even lift himself out of bed and has yet to fully recover. It was this incident more than anything that convinced Gelou that Autumn is indeed a deceitful witch who toyed with his affections—a crime that his ego cannot bear.

Gelou recounted the event to his friends, Thich, Gahreg, and Wolv. However the young man told them a very biased version of the tale, embellishing his part to sound more heroic.

### Wicker Dolls

The wicker dolls are a hold-over from earlier times when dark druidic rites were performed throughout the area to placate terrible nature demons and primal gods. At one point in the region's history, the dolls served as representations of the druids' power. Most of the wicker dolls found in the adventure (including the one in Autumn's room) are representations Groa made based on those created by the last keepers of this tradition. The hag distributes them to her minions, marking them as her servants to others.

Characters who acquire a wicker doll can confuse her servants for a moment by visibly wearing it or brandishing it prior to a tactical encounter. The ruse lasts only a moment, though, since none of the characters are likely to be ogres or wolves, but it does cause her minions to hesitate, imposing a –4 penalty on initiative checks. After two times of being used in this manner, one of Groa's many animal spies has informed the hag of what the PCs are doing with the doll, and she has in turn warned her minions. Characters can craft their own forgeries of the dolls using the Craft (basketweaving) skill (DC 12).

### KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

DC	Result
8	Wicker dolls and other scarecrowlike effigies were often used in ancient times to represent people and were thought to contain a bit of that person's spiritual essence.
20	Some dolls were used as conduits for curses, or as markers to signify that the bearer was under the protection of a higher power.
23	<i>Note:</i> This result can be taken into account only after the character has made a successful DC 21 Knowledge (history) check with regards to the history of Nameless Swamp. The wicker doll is similar to the ones used by the druids of the region hundreds of years ago.

## CHAPTER 1: THE QUIET LITTLE TOWN

The adventure begins once the players have a reason for their character to be in the town. The events start almost immediately upon their arrival.

### A1. MOB JUSTICE (EL 4)

Characters can have any number of reasons for visiting Aurasburg, from just passing through to being summoned to help put an end to the witch or the various bizarre occurrences.

Once there, read or describe the following:

*The sky grows overcast as you cross the short wooden bridge over the shallow leaf-clogged moat. The earthen embankment here marks the border between the village and the wilds and farmland beyond. Quaint two-story shops flank the broad, hard-packed dirt main street.*

**Tactical Encounter:** Mob Justice (page 15).

### A2. THE BROTHERS FINN (EL 7)

The night before the characters arrive at the old mine, Groa and her wolves spirited away Autumn and left behind a pair of erudite ogre brothers named Muk and Flogg Finn. The Finns have instructions to hang about and murder any villagers that might be coming to bring food or otherwise aid the girl, leaving their remains behind as proof to the rest that Autumn is indeed a murderous witch.

If the characters dally about in town or visit Guffrey first, Gelou and Thich (or two replacement toughs, if they can't make it) reach the cave first and are unceremoniously slaughtered by the ogres. Gelou is used for decoration, while Thich provides the ogres with a quick



repast. The ogres spend the night in the area and then move off in the morning.

If the characters beat Gelou and Thich to the cave, read:

*The forest opens up before you to reveal a small clearing around the old timber frame entrance of a mineshaft dug into the base of a very steep hill.*

If the characters arrive after Gelou and Thich continue reading:

*Dangling from the nearby trees like so many macabre garlands are the slick, disjointed limbs and entrails of a man. His blinded head is bound by a blood-streaked ponytail to a naked branch. You recognize the face as that of the hooligan whom you faced back in town. A smiling, charcoal portrait of the lad and a headless wicker doll are both nailed to the tree beneath it.*

**Tactical Encounter:** The Brothers Finn (page 17).

### A3. GUFFREY'S SHACK (EL 7)

Once the PCs reach the shack, read or describe the following:

*A small shack squats on a yellow hillside sandwiched between tall trees that allow in little light. A white ribbon of smoke curls from its chimney. Sitting on the porch in a creaking,*

*wooden rocking chair is an old man with pepper-colored hair and skin like dry, red leather.*

As the characters approach the shack, the sky threatens rain. Old Man Guffrey is sitting on his stoop watching the characters approach, whittling a sharp point on the end of a stick.

If Guffrey sees the party approaching, he rubs the back of his hand across his mouth and goes inside, shutting the door behind him. If the party insists on knocking or following him in (there is no lock), the hermit gloomily lets them in. His eyes are bloodshot, and his face gaunt from lack of sleep and too much drink.

Once inside, read:

*The dusty, stuffed, and mounted remains of a dozen types of birds and fish, mixed in with an assortment of crocodiles, varmints, predators, and more, cram the inside of this one-room shack. The smaller displays covering every table and shelf also contain overturned spent wine bottles. Some of these latter items are as grimy as the glass-eyed animals that they sit beside. The walls are a mad tangle of cobwebbed antlers. Larger pieces, such as the silent, vicious boar and a rearing black bear, stand on the floor.*

In Aurasburg, Guffrey is known to be a cantankerous, old kook and poacher who talks to himself and drinks too much. He has been the victim of the Rann's ghost for



nearly twenty years, and the experience has unhinged the hermit to the point that he now thinks of the ghost as “his woman.” Guffrey is taciturn and doesn’t talk a whole lot to the characters, though he does sometimes make rude asides about them seemingly to himself and without concern for who hears him. Really he’s talking to Rann, who is always near.

For her part, Rann sees Guffrey as little more than an instrument to occasionally possess so that she can vicariously live out the existence lost to her. Rann spends her time plotting petty vengeance against Aurasburg and Groa (Rann feels Groa betrayed her), though she is too frightened to enact any of her plans.

Both are immediately hostile to all uninvited guests. Guffrey sullenly offers to sell them his stuffed pieces, while wiping his hand across his mouth and eyeing their wineskins. With a straight face, he also proffers his services as a taxidermist for any animal companions or familiars the PCs have brought with them. If any party members show discomfort at the idea, he relishes going into a good deal of detail as to how the process is carried out. Rann meanwhile, floats nearby, invisibly observing the proceedings.

Should the characters ask about Autumn, Guffrey lies (Bluff +0) and says that he has never seen her—he hopes that the characters will leave him alone once they figure out that he can’t help them. In fact Autumn did come to the shack a week before, after running into him in town. She had hoped to discover more about

the hag the villagers killed thirty years before, but Guffrey scared her off. If the party mentions anything about hags or witches, Guffrey tells them a half-truth and says that there haven’t been any live witches in the area for thirty years—not since they burned that one on her riverboat a quarter mile from his house. He offers to lead them there for 3 sp or a full wineskin. If asked for more details, he feigns ignorance by saying that he hadn’t lived in the area back then. If plied with wine, he accepts, but he is wise enough to be wary of drinking too much alone with strangers nearby. If at least one of the party does not drink with him after he invites them to, he waits until they leave to indulge.

If the characters accuse him of lying, Rann uses her malevolence ability on Guffrey (who doesn’t resist). The change in personality exhibited by the switch is dramatic—the bitter old drunk changes quickly to a crazed selfish hag. She rants in his voice about her miserable existence as an unwanted orphan and how her horrible “older sister” (Groa) gave her power in the form of the *sea hag’s pearl*, but then left her to burn on her riverboat when the villager mob came. She curses her “big sister” and, in a fit of jealousy, names Autumn as a betrayer as well, spouting off a foul tirade of epitaphs. If the PCs pay attention, they may hear hint of Rann’s own experiences with Groa via snippets such as the following.

- “We’re all so young and sad when it starts!”
- “She said I was special and that they hated me because of it.”

- “She took me to her cottage out in the swamps and made me so pretty.”
- “She made me such a lovely dolly, and now she’s made one for *her*!”
- “She never really cared for me—only about the power.”
- “If she ever comes here again, I’ll make Guffrey snap her little white *neck*! Maybe your necks too.”

If the characters can shift Rann’s attitude to friendly (see below), and then ask about Autumn or the *sea hags’ pearl*, Rann starts talking to them more coherently and with less venom. The characters can mitigate the DC of the check by a number of means listed in the table.

#### DIPLOMACY CHECK RESULTS AND MODIFIERS

DC/Modifier	Result/Action Taken
35	Rann tells the characters where to find the witches’ hovel (A4), cackling at the thought of vengeance against Groa.
+8 bonus	If the PCs empathize with Rann (or at least seem to) by making a successful contested Bluff check against her Sense Motive (+1 total modifier), they gain a +8 bonus on the Diplomacy check.
+8 bonus	If the characters mention that helping them might be a chance to gain some measure of vengeance, they can make a second Bluff check (once again a contested roll against her Sense Motive modifier).
+5 bonus	If the characters had previously plied Guffrey with drink, they receive this additional bonus since Rann finds it more difficult to control his body and her own thoughts.

If the players don’t pick up on Rann’s emotional weaknesses, have them make DC 15 Sense Motive checks. If they succeed, they understand that they might have to empathize with the ghost to get information out of her. A result of 20 or higher means they also understand her need for revenge.

Inaction, hostile action, or a failed Diplomacy check by 11 or more on the part of the PCs results in the hag (and Guffrey) attacking the party. A failed roll by 10 or less results in Rann losing all interest in the party as she continues weeping and ranting. If the party disturbs her at this point, it is a slightly confused Guffrey who answers. He asks them to leave. Rann, he’ll tell them, has fled off into the hills. If asked about the shipwreck, Guffrey points them west.

**Tactical Encounter:** Guffrey’s Shack (page 19).

#### WHAT SHOULD THE CHARACTERS KNOW BY NOW?

If the characters did any sort of investigation in town, they probably know the following:

- More than likely they know about Rann’s death (the easiest witch to gather information about).
- They might surmise that Lonni is the master hag.
- They probably don’t know about Groa, who is only connected to the ancient druidic cult that once lived in the area—and even that is beyond the scope of this adventure.

If the PCs did no investigating whatsoever and can’t follow Groa’s party’s trail, they may need to consider returning to Sadel, which probably leads them to the riverboat and then perhaps back to Guffrey.

#### A4. SUNKEN RIVERBOAT (EL 7 OR 9)

When the characters reach the sunken riverboat, read the following:

*The top-most portions of what once was a riverboat reach to the sky from its position in the slow-moving water. By the looks of it, the wreck has been here for several decades. A loose assortment of burnt, splintering planks juts from the shallows.*

Characters who enter the water and shift through the debris see the following below the waterline.

*The riverboat’s remains lie like an ancient ruin upon the silt and sand of the lake bottom. Its framework makes an outline of the area the riverboat once encompassed. The deck rail juts like an old fence from the sand while the roofless and doorless cabin is awash with seaweed and bits of rotting furniture, which has become a home for algae and schools of small fish.*

Old Pete lies in wait beneath a collection of weeds and loose boards that used to be part of the deck (+16 Hide).

**Tactical Encounter:** The Sunken Riverboat (page 21).

#### A5. THE WITCHES’ HOVEL (EL 8)

When the characters reach the hovel, read the following:

*A dingy, colorless peasant hovel rises out of the clearing ahead like a tumor out of the gray mud. Its thatched roof is overhung in olive-colored swamp slime and lichen, and its walls are covered in ugly gray-brown mold and toadstools. The place reeks of humus.*



If the characters enter the hovel, read:

*Shafts of pale light poke through the gaps in the mossy roof and walls, dimly illuminating this decrepit cabin with a lifeless white glow. Dust and a few dry leaves cover the warped, creaking floor. The walls are covered in fungal growths that make it difficult to breathe.*

Characters descending into the cellar (either through the floor, narrow crawlspace, or Lonni's tunnel) find a macbre mud and bone catacomb similar to (but far smaller than) Groa's collection of the dead in the pit of the Sinking Tower (area T1).

**Tactical Encounter:** The Witches' Hovel (page 23).

## A6. SINKING TOWER (EL 5 TO 8)

As the PCs reach the sinking tower, read:

*Before you stands a curious sight: an old stone tower that has sunk halfway into the marsh around it, with only the topmost stories reaching outward from the gray muck in which it is embedded. No vegetation grows in the area around it, which makes it nothing more than a field of mud.*

The sinking tower was once an outpost for an ancient kingdom. Over the centuries, as the land turned to marsh, the heavy stone tower sank. Now fully half the building is submerged beneath the surface.

**Tactical Encounter:** The Sinking Tower (page 25).

### FINDING THE SINKING TOWER

Arriving at the sinking tower is no easy task since its location is known to only a few, and most of them are hostile to the characters. The following is a centralized list of clues that characters can use to track Autumn's whereabouts.

**Interrogating the Finns:** Catching and interrogating Muc or Flogg into revealing anything about Groa, her plans, or the Sinking Tower is pretty difficult. The ogres have both seen what Groa does to traitors, and they have no desire to end up like any of them. Characters who catch one or both have a challenge ahead of them to make one or both of the ogres friendly (Diplomacy DC 50).

**Tracking the Finns:** Following the retreating Finns is a much better proposition, but it comes with its own difficulties. The basic Survival DC to track them starts at 14 and it increases by +1 for each day that passes. At Earl's Ford, the difficulty increases to DC 19 before any other modifiers. Once inside Nameless Swamp, the swamp animals loyal to Groa conspire to cover evidence of the ogres' passing, which results in a DC 19 Survival check to follow them (once again this is before any modifiers for lapsed time or poor weather).

**Tracking Groa and Autumn:** Following the hag, her wolves, and Autumn is even more difficult than tracking the ogres. The starting DC is 21, which increases to 26 at the ford and within the confines of Nameless Swamp. They make better time than the ogres thanks to Groa's natural talents and her druidic abilities. Also they have at least a day's head start on party.

**Interrogating Rann's Ghost:** See Guffrey's Shack.

**Discovering the Map to the Witches' Hovel:** Finding the map to the hovel in the ruins of Rann's riverboat requires a successful DC 25 Search check.

**Discovering Rann's Old Diary:** Using the crude directions found in Rann's childhood diary bestows a +4 bonus on Knowledge (geography) checks to find the Sinking Tower.

**Interrogating Lonni (good luck with this one):** Lonni doesn't talk to her food that much. She is as uncooperative as the Finns (see above), but for different reasons.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE SINKING TOWER

By the time the characters reach the tower, Autumn's transformation is nearly complete. Some quirk of magic and biology has turned her once-beautiful features into a melted ruin so horrible as to nauseate more sensible souls. Groa uses this turn of events to her advantage when the characters arrive (see area T3).

The tower itself is constructed with standard stone masonry walls (5-foot-thick exterior walls and foot-thick interior ones). The floors are water-damaged planks supported by tree trunks. Doors are standard iron-bound

wood doors, and the ceilings are all a uniform 20-feet high except for those areas where they have rotted through.

## T1A AND T1B. THE PIT (AND THE BROKEN FLOOR) (EL 8)

As the PCs enter the entrance hall, read:

*The ruins of a half-drowned entrance hall, which also serves as some sort of catacombs for the dead, opens before you. The walls are lined with neatly piled bones and leering skulls packed with mud for mortar. The portion of the floor that rises above water is similarly gruesome, though it is fashioned of human skulls instead of cobblestones. The number of visible dead stored here probably equals a good-sized city. The ceiling above is rotted through and hung with a curtain of cobwebs. The place reeks of rotting wood, mold, and decay.*

This area used to be the bottom two floors of the tower, but the floor in area T1B has long since crumbled away (but see Features of the Area for area T1 on page 27). The characters can reach area T1A in three ways. The first is by using the underground tunnel. The second is by coming down the stairs. The last, and most dramatic, is by plummeting through the weak floor in area T2. The guardians of this room are under orders to attack only those lacking Groa's effigy (a wicker doll). This command extends to Groa herself. Characters who brandish the strange little dolls need not fear the mob of skeletons entombed here. Those that don't are quickly swarmed.

**Tactical Encounter:** The Pit (page 27).

## T2. COMMON ROOM (EL 6 OR 9)

As the PCs enter the common room, read:

*Barrels and crates line the walls of this room and spill over into the floor space. Though the dust is thick in some areas, other portions of the room show signs of habitation.*

Three of Groa's ogre thugs are currently engaged in a game of bones around the corner from the ground floor door. Groa has the trio acting as extra security while Autumn is undergoing her transformation. They are using a number of the large crates and barrels in the room as tables and stools for their game.

**Tactical Encounter:** Common Room (page 29).

## T3. GROA'S LAIR (EL 9)

As the PCs enter the lair, read:

*The air in this room smells of acrid chemicals and wet dogs. The few tables along the north half of the room hold a number of oils, unctions, and herbs, as well as storage jars, mixing bowls, and jugs, with some of the latter items made of skulls. The southern half of the room is littered with filthy piles of straw and an old ramshackle cot.*

**Tactical Encounter:** Groa's Lair (page 30).

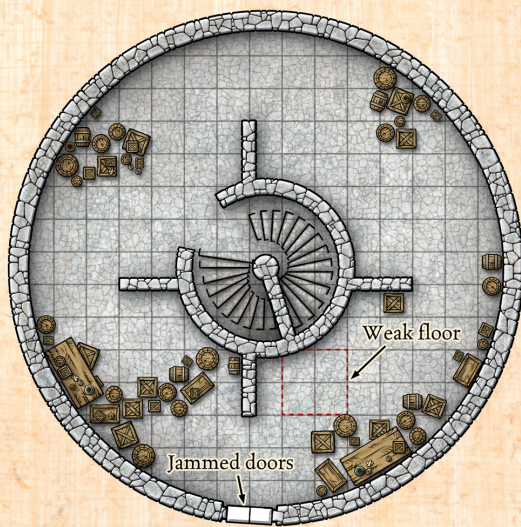
## THE AFTERMATH

The adventure ends when Autumn has been rescued, though whether she ever goes back to Aurasburg is left to the DM to decide. Characters who have not killed any townsfolk and return with proof of Autumn's innocence and Groa's defeat receive an official summons to meet with Earl Corromat at his keep. Noble and more worldly than the inhabitants of Aurasburg, yet still but a lad of fourteen, he rewards them handsomely with 850 gp each and names them protectors of the land, giving them authority equal to his constables. The townsfolk celebrate the defeat of the witches, and Hagel pays the characters their 100 gp each for ending the threat if he hired them at the beginning. Unfortunately many of the villagers still treat their saviors as unwelcome outsiders and long for them to leave. It takes a lot to convince these individuals of Autumn's innocence, and many are never convinced. If the party returns without any convincing evidence proving her innocence, Autumn is put on trial for witchcraft, coerced into admitting her guilt, and then burned at the stake, which means that the characters might have to organize a second rescue.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt would like to thank Chris Youngs and Gwendolyn Kestrel for giving "Witching Season" a chance. Matt is a member of the Were-Cabbages writing group. His credits include work on The Seeds Sehan adventure arc (*Dungeon Magazine* 145–147), *Ironstorm Mountain* by Silven Publishing, a forthcoming book for DMs from Goodman Games, and the ruin chanter and ruin elemental for *Monster Manual V*.

Only 1d4 cabbages were harmed during the making of this adventure.



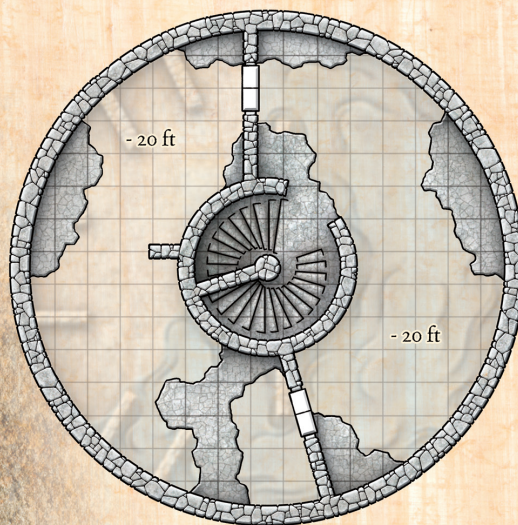
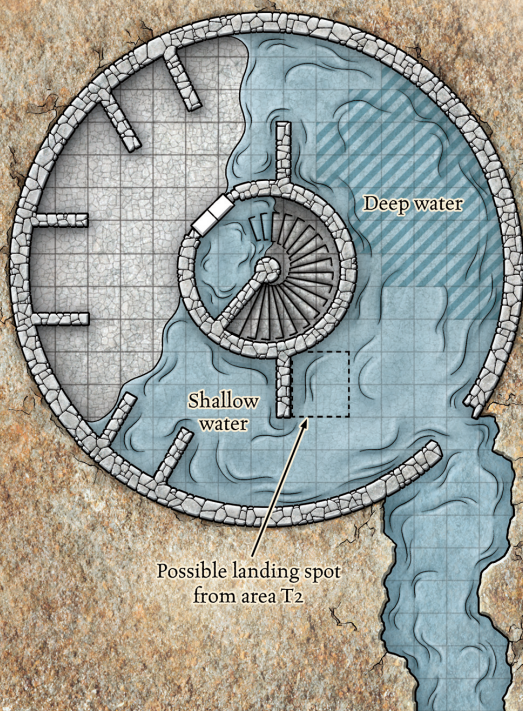
T2: The Common Room



T3: Groa's Lair

T1B: Broken Floor

T1A: The Pit



## The Sinking Tower

One square = 5 feet



# MOB JUSTICE

## Encounter Level 4

### SETUP

This encounter can occur practically anywhere in or around town. The characters start the encounter having just rounded a corner 30 feet away. A small mob of twelve villagers has converged on Sadel Claywheel (S), the local potter, in an attempt to intimidate her into revealing Autumn's location. Of the dozen mob members, only the hotheaded Gelou (Ge), and his three friends Thich (T), Gahreg (G), and Wolv (W) have any fighting experience since they all serve in the militia. The rest of the people are simple townsfolk (commoner 1, C). Sadel (human expert 3), a woman in her early fifties, is the target of the mob's aggression and doesn't look to be backing down.

### Listen Checks

**DC 10** Characters who succeed hear the read-aloud text before they stumble on the scene.

For those who succeed on the Listen check, read:

*A series of angry shouts and harsh epithets cuts the stillness of an otherwise unremarkable day, and the noise draws your attention to a cluster of about a dozen angry people in a tight knot around a defiant, iron-gray-haired matron holding a clay vase. A blond man steps forward from the crowd and knocks the vase to the ground with a leather-bound truncheon.*

### GELOU, THICH, GAHREG, AND WOLV

**CR 1**

hp 14 (2 HD)

N Medium humanoid (human) warrior 2

**Init** +0; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

**Languages** Common

**AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12

(+2 armor)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** club +3 (1d6+1)

**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** +3

**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Feats** Alertness

**Skills** Climb +5, Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +4

**Possessions** leather armor, club

### TACTICS

The four toughs led by Gelou are all local lads in their early twenties who are well known for playing a little rough at times.

The mob reacts with hostility toward outsiders who try to interfere. Most of the people in the mob don't really want things to end violently, but unless something is done to intervene, that's where things are heading. If things get physical, the four tougher members step forward to challenge the PCs. The mob disperses if these four are cowed, or otherwise defeated. If the PCs use lethal force against them, the remaining mob members (including any surviving local toughs) run for their lives and eventually notify the local authorities. Two days later, a quartet of bailiffs (same stats as the local toughs, but armed with longswords and crossbows, and wearing chainmail [AC 15]) arrive in town from the earl's keep looking for the PCs. Likewise word gets around quickly in a small town like Aurasburg, and, within a few hours, the populace's attitude shifts to hostile. The local shopkeepers and farmers don't attack the party (at least until the bailiffs arrive), but they remain tight-lipped and shy away from the PCs at every opportunity, which makes Gather Information checks nearly impossible to conduct.

### CONCLUSION

If she is rescued without too much violence, Sadel thanks the characters and tells them of her plight. She is desperate to enlist their help in shielding her foster daughter from the rest of the town (see Adventure Background above). She knows that a lot of strange things have transpired and that all of it seems to be surrounding the girl, and she also knows that Autumn has a gift and that it scares some people. However, she firmly believes that Autumn is not to blame for the recent trouble. While talking to the characters, she leaves out Autumn's exact location (an old mine that Sadel occasionally collects red clay from) saying only that she is "safe." If they succeed at a Diplomacy check (DC 30—they get a +25 bonus if they have just saved her from the mob), she gives them directions to the mine. Before they leave, she asks if they could take some food and blankets to Autumn since she's afraid she might be being followed.

If the characters seriously injure or kill anyone while dispersing the mob, Sadel's attitude toward the PCs sours a bit (she becomes unfriendly). Although they might have threatened her, she realizes that her fellow villagers are just acting out of fear. Under these circumstances, the difficulty to get her to divulge Autumn's location increases to DC 40.

If they survived this encounter mostly intact, Gelou and Thich set off into the woods since they finally guessed Autumn's hiding place.

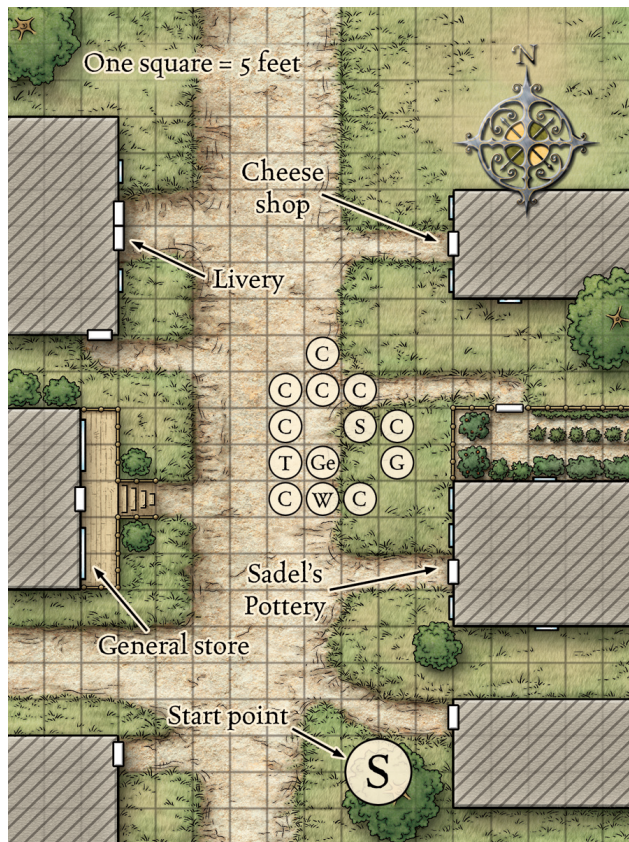
## WINNING FRIENDS AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE

Since the PCs are most likely outsiders to Aurasburg, the initial difficulty to diffuse the situation through Diplomacy is DC 25 (27 if there are any obvious nonhumans among the party). If at all possible, this should be roleplayed out with the DM taking on the role of a few members of the desperate, frightened, and hotheaded crowd as well as the defiant Sadel. Then adjust the difficulty based on the argument the player characters present. Characters who trick or use mind-affecting magical effects would do well to make sure that the townsfolk don't find out about it later.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area has the following features.

**Buildings:** One-story buildings stand about 12-feet tall, while two-story buildings stand twice as high. The wooden doors are all good quality (1-1/2 inches thick; hardness 5; 15 hp; break DC 18). Climbing the exteriors requires a DC 20 Climb check. The contents of each contain the sorts of things one might expect—furniture, displays, wares, and the like.



# THE BROTHERS FINN

**Encounter Level 7**

## SETUP

Muk and Flogg Finn (F) lie in ambush waiting for villagers to investigate the mine. If the characters arrive more than 2 hours after the first encounter, the ogres are gone, leaving their victims behind and proving conclusively to many in town that Autumn is a witch. In this case, they head back to the Sinking Tower (area A6) by way of the Earl's Ford while passing close enough to see Guffrey's Shack (area A3) and the Sunken Riverboat (area A4).

Noticing the brothers requires a successful opposed Spot check. If the PCs see the ogres, read:

*From out of the woods to either side, a pair of hirsute ogres quietly emerges. Their coats, caps, and breeches consist of a patchwork of smaller folks' leathers, and their arms and legs are bound in leather belts and buckles.*

*"What have we 'ere then Muc?" says one.*

*"I don'ts know, brother Flogg. Maybe we tastes 'em and finds out," replies the other.*

*"Whot a pleasant idear, kinsman o' mine."*

## MUC AND FLOGG FINN

**CR 5**

hp 63 (8 HD)

Male ogre rogue 4

CE Large giant

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8

**Languages** Common, Giant

**AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19; uncanny dodge (+1 Dex, +4 armor, +6 natural)

**Resist** evasion

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Melee** +1 greataxe +13/+8 (3d6+10/x3)

**Ranged** mwk throwing axes +7 (1d8+6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +16

**Atk Options** sneak attack +2d6

**Abilities** Str 23, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 5

**SQ** trap sense +1, trapfinding

**Feats** Power Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

**Skills** Balance +3, Climb +9, Hide +7, Jump +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Speak Language (Common), Spot +8, Tumble +8

**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 studded armor, +1

greataxe, 4 masterwork throwing axes, amulet of natural armor +1, dagger, wicker doll

## TACTICS

The Finn brothers like to talk while they fight. When in melee, they tend to speak down to their opponents, taunting them in a manner that is almost refined and quite disconcerting until they are enraged. If obviously outmatched, or if one or both lose half their hit points, they retreat into the woods and make for the Sinking Tower.

## CONCLUSION

If the characters return to town and tell Sadel the news that her foster daughter is missing, she breaks down and offers most of what she has saved (265 sp) to the characters if they'll help find her.

## AUTUMN'S SKETCHPAD (AREAS A2, T3)

Autumn is a talented artist. Her primary medium is charcoal and these charcoal drawings form an important part of the adventure. The first drawing characters probably see is her self-portrait at Sadel's house. It shows her to be a beautiful if sad girl (Investigation sidebar). The next drawing the characters are likely to see is her drawing of Leguo, a local boy she was infatuated with (as he was with her until hysteria hit). The portrait is a very flattering piece of work that Leguo would have appreciated were he not most likely dead at the time (A2). In the cave characters can find her sketchpad and among the many drawings and roughs they find another charcoal sketch of a sympathetic old woman holding a large pearl attached to a fine woman's necklace. Later in the Sinking Tower, when Groa reveals her true self (T3), she appears as a mocking, horrific half version of the kindly woman in the charcoal.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

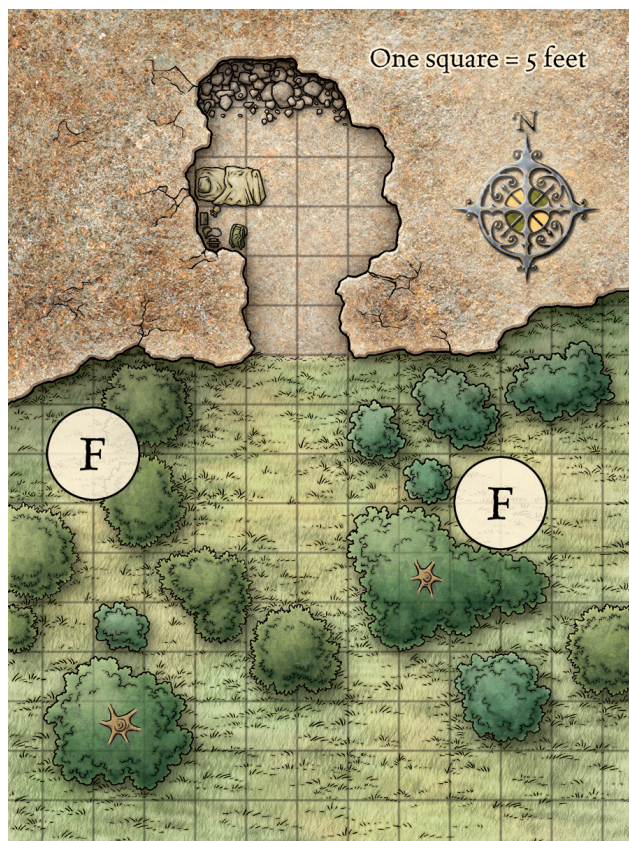
The area has the following features.

**Autumn's Belongings:** Autumn left behind most of the gear she brought up to the cave when Groa came to collect her. These belongings, now scattered by the rum-maging ogres, include a charcoal sketchpad (see the sidebar), a lantern, a bedroll, a waterskin, and three days of dry rations.

**Illumination:** The cave has no natural light source, though sunlight dimly illuminates its interior during the morning hours.

**Tracks:** The area around and inside the cave is littered with tracks that characters can find and follow with successful Search and Survival checks respectively. The Finn brothers trampled many of the footprints while loitering around the area, increasing the difficulty to find other tracks. The following list details the pertinent creatures and the respective DCs to find and track them when the characters arrive at the scene.

The Finn brothers (DC 14), a pack of wolves (DC 21), Autumn (DC 21), Autumn's black cat familiar Malphaset (DC 23). Note that while Groa was present, the hag is impossible to track due to her trackless step class ability. After she collected Autumn, Groa, her wolves, and the girl left as a group and made for the Sinking Tower by way of the Earl's Ford. Malphaset is currently hiding in the woods about a half-mile away.



# GUFFREY'S SHACK

## Encounter Level 7

### SETUP

If confronted inside the shack with persistent or unwanted guests, Rann (R) either starts near Guffrey (G) (as pictured), or within him, riding his body through the use of her malevolence ability.

If Rann attacks, read:

*From out of the old man's chest rises a wisp of white smoke that congeals slowly into the shape of a woman draped in soaked rags that are covered in scorch marks. She snaps her hair back, revealing a horrible ruin of a face that may have been sculpted by an amateur artisan and then cast into the kiln while still only half finished.*

### RANN

### CR 6

**hp** 19 (3 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Sea hag ghost

**CE** Medium undead (augmented incorporeal monstrous humanoid)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

**Languages** Common, Giant

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (while incorporeal) (+1 Dex, +3 natural) or

**AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (ethereal only) (+1 Dex, +3 natural)

**Miss Chance** 50%

**Immune** ability damage (Str, Dex, Con), ability drain, critical hits, death effects, disease, electricity, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless), death from massive damage

**Resist** turn resistance +4; **SR** 14

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (6 squares, perfect); swim 40 ft.

**Melee** incorporeal touch +7 (1d4) or

2 claws +7 (1d4+4) (ethereal encounters only)

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +7

**Special Actions** evil eye (DC 15), frightful moan (DC 15), horrific appearance (DC 15), malevolence (DC 19), manifestation

**Abilities** Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 18

**SQ** amphibious, rejuvenation, undead traits

**Feats** Alertness, Endurance

**Skills** Hide +12, Listen +14, Search +8, Spot +14, Swim +12

**Evil Eye (Su)** Three times per day, Rann can cast its dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be dazed for three days, although *remove curse* or *dispel evil* can restore sanity sooner. In addition, an affected creature must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or die from fright. Creatures with immunity to fear effects are not affected by Rann's evil eye. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Frightful Moan (Su)** Rann can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

**Horrific Appearance (Su)** The sight of Rann is so revolting that anyone (other than a hag) who sets eyes upon her must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 2d6 points of Strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's Strength score below 0, but anyone reduced to Strength 0 is helpless. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by Rann's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Malevolence (Su)** Once per round, Rann can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th or the ghost's Hit Dice, whichever is higher), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, Rann must be manifested and she must try to move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 19). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours, and the ghost cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the ghost vanishes into the target's body.

**Manifestation (Su)** Rann dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, she cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch

attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where it is not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane. A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

**Rejuvenation (Su)** If she would otherwise be destroyed, Rann returns in 2d4 days if she makes a successful DC 16 level check (1d20 + 3 HD). Rann's reason for existence is to gain revenge against those who have wronged her, in particular Groa. If it is somehow proven that the characters have defeated Groa or stymied her plans, Rann can then be permanently destroyed.

**Skills** A sea hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

#### GUFFREY THE HERMIT (RAGING)

**CR 4**

hp 49 each (4 HD)

CN Medium humanoid (human) barbarian 1/ranger 3

**Init** +2; **Senses** Listen +11, Spot +10

**Languages** Common

**AC** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

(+2 Dex, +4 armor, -2 rage)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Melee** mwk shortspear +6 (1d6+3) and

mwk sickle +6 (1d6+1/x4)

**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +7

**Special Actions** favored enemy (animals), rage (1/day, 7 rounds)

**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

**SQ** wild empathy

**Feats** Alertness, Endurance<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Track<sup>B</sup>, Two-Weapon Fighting<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Craft (taxidermy) +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +7, Spot +10, Survival +6 (+8 in aboveground natural environments), Swim +5

**Possessions** +1 studded leather armor, masterwork shortspear, masterwork sickle, whittling knife, vial of silversheen

**Rage (Ex)** When not in a rage, Guffrey uses the following statistics.

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp decrease by 8

**Fort** +7, **Will** +5

**Melee** mwk shortspear +4 (1d6+1) and  
mwk sickle +4 (1d6/x4)

**Grp** +5

**Abilities** Str 12, Con 14

**Skills** Swim +3

## TACTICS

In battle, Rann's first action is to use her horrific appearance to scare the characters away, followed by malevolence if they don't take the hint. Usually she inhabits a body and then runs madly off into the woods. Then, when she's far enough out, she leaves her victim lost, bereft of equipment, and doomed to die from exposure. The enraged Guffrey fights to the death to protect his "wife," but the cowardly Rann flees to the wreck of her riverboat if reduced to 8 or fewer hit points.

## CONCLUSION

Mixed among Guffrey's taxidermy supplies is a clay urn containing four applications of *silversheen* and a jar of *universal solvent* (DC 18 Search check to find). He keeps a stash of 34 gp in gold nuggets and 360 sp hidden in a small sack under his mattress (DC 20 Search check).



# THE SUNKEN RIVERBOAT

**Encounter Level 7 (or 9)**

## SETUP

The characters discover the remains of Rann's decrepit riverboat languishing 20 feet from shore. Hidden amid the wreck is local legend Old Pete (P).

If the characters draw within striking distance of Pete, read:

*The water surges violently as a massive toothsome maw opens before you like a gaping red cave.*

## OLD PETE

**CR 7**

**hp** 85 (10 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Advanced fiendish giant crocodile

NE Huge magical beast

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +5

**AC** 17, touch 9, flat-footed 16  
(–2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural)

**Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 15

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares); swim 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +13 (2d8+12) or

**Melee** tail slap +15 (1d12+12)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +23

**Atk Options** improved grab, smite good (+10 damage)

**Abilities** Str 27, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 2

**SQ** hold breath

**Feats** Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Armor, Skill Focus (hide)

**Skills** Hide +7\*, **Listen** +5, **Spot** +5, **Swim** +18

**Hold Breath (Ex)** Old Pete can hold his breath for 80 rounds before he risks drowning.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, Old Pete must hit with his bite attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the check, the croc establishes a hold on the opponent and drags it into deep water, attempting to pin it to the bottom.

**Smite Good (Su)** Once per day Old Pete can make a normal melee attack to deal an extra 10 points of damage against a good foe.

**Skills** Old Pete has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. He can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while

swimming, provided he swims in a straight line. \*Old Pete gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks when in the water. This bonus has been figured in above. Further, he can lie in the water with only his eyes and nostrils showing, gaining a +10 cover bonus on Hide checks.

## RANN

**CR 6**

**hp** 19 (3 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Sea hag ghost

CE Medium undead (augmented incorporeal monstrous humanoid)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +14, **Spot** +14  
**Languages** Common, Giant

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (while incorporeal)  
(+1 Dex, +3 natural) or

**AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (ethereal only)  
(+1 Dex, +3 natural)

**Miss Chance** 50%

**Immune** undead immunities

**Resist** turn resistance +4; **SR** 14

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (6 squares, perfect); swim 40 ft.

**Melee** incorporeal touch +7 (1d4) or

**Melee** 2 claws +7 (1d4+4) (ethereal encounters only)

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +7

**Special Actions** evil eye (DC 15), frightful moan (DC 15), horrific appearance (DC 15), malevolence (DC 19), manifestation

**Abilities** Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 18

**SQ** amphibious, rejuvenation, undead traits

**Feats** Alertness, Endurance

**Skills** Hide +12, **Listen** +14, **Search** +8, **Spot** +14, **Swim** +12

**Evil Eye (Su)** Three times per day, Rann can cast her dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be dazed for three days, although *remove curse* or *dispel evil* negate the effect. In addition, an affected creature must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or die from fright. Creatures with immunity to fear effects are immune to this ability.

**Frightful Moan (Su)** Rann can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that saves cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

**Horrific Appearance (Su)** The sight of Rann is so revolting that anyone (other than a hag) who sets eyes upon her must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 2d6 points

of Strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's Strength score below 0, but anyone reduced to Strength 0 is helpless. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by Rann's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Malevolence (Su)** Once per round, Rann can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, Rann must be manifested and she must try to move into the target's space, which does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a DC 19 Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours, and the ghost cannot enter the target's space.

**Manifestation (Su)** When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where it is not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

**Rejuvenation (Su)** If she would otherwise be destroyed, Rann returns in 2d4 days if she makes a successful DC 16 level check (1d20 + 3 HD). Rann's reason for existence is to gain revenge against Groa. If it is somehow proven that the characters have defeated Groa or stymied her plans, Rann can be permanently destroyed.

**Skills** A sea hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## TACTICS

Pete lies hidden amid the debris, snapping at likely prey that moves too close. Old Pete uses smite on the first attack, hoping to mortally wound his would-be meal. If Pete secures a hold on a target, he wrestles the foe under the water and then pins her to muddy bottom, where he initiates a death roll and applies bite damage every round until his prey is dead and then some (DMG 92).

If reduced to 30 or fewer hit points, the wise old croc gives up his meal and heads for deeper water.

## DEVELOPMENT

If the characters drove Rann away from Guffrey's shack, she is here waiting for them. Rann stays beneath the waters waiting for Pete to grapple one of the characters. Pete knows from previous experience that he can't eat Rann, so he doesn't bother. Rann fights until destroyed.

## CONCLUSION

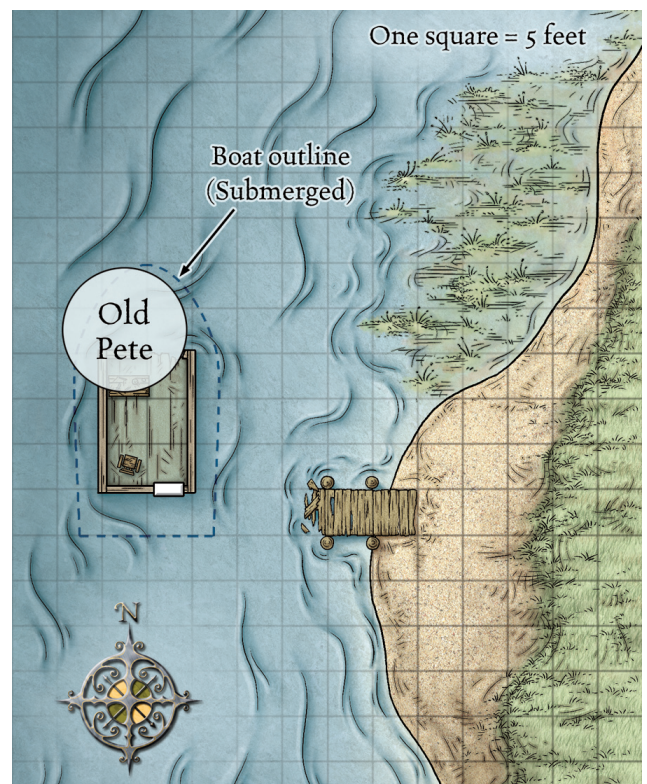
A Search (DC 25) of the waterlogged hulk reveals Rann's forgotten treasure: a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of resist energy (electricity) 10*, a *wind fan*, a large emerald (900 gp), a black pearl (500 gp), 640 gp, and a crude map of the swamp carved on the bottom of a shelf. The map shows the location of the witches' hovel.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area has the following features.

**Very Slow Flowing Water:** Creatures simply require a swim speed or successful Swim checks (DC 10) to move through the water. The water gets 5 feet deeper for every 5 feet of distance one gets from the shore, bottoming out at about 20 feet deep.

**Stealth and Detection Underwater:** As the encounter begins, the characters can see 30 feet while underwater, but when Pete attacks, he kicks up a cloud of silt that reduces visibility to a mere 10 feet for a full minute.



# THE WITCHES' HOVEL

## Encounter Level 8

### SETUP

The characters arrive at the witches' hovel. The greater part of the shack has been disused for years, but the earthen cellar serves as one of Lonni Longshank's (L) burrows.

When the characters get a first look at Lonni, read:

*A giant, hunched, mockery of a woman who stands perhaps 10-feet-tall leers at you. Her skin is pale gray and glistens damply. Her dugs lie limp beneath a torn, bloodied, and soiled wedding gown made for a much smaller being. Her face is twisted into a rictus of psychotic glee.*

### Lonni Longshanks (Raging)

CR 7

hp 53 (8 HD); DR 2/bludgeoning

Annis hag barbarian 1

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common, Giant

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17; uncanny dodge  
(-1 size, +3 Dex, +10 natural, -2 rage)

SR 19

Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +10

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d8+15) and  
bite +7 (1d6+10)\*

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Base Atk +8; Grp +22

Atk Options improved grab, rage (1/day, 9 rounds), rake  
(+17 melee, 1d8+10), rend (2d8+15)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th):

3/day—disguise self, fog cloud

Abilities Str 31, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 9, Wis 16, Cha 10

SQ fast movement, illiteracy

Feats Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural  
Weapon (claws), Power Attack

Skills Climb +10, Hide +11, Jump +10, Listen +6, Spot  
+6, Swim +10

Possessions cloak of elvenkind, sandals of waterwalk-  
ing, wicker doll

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, Lonni must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Rage (Ex)** When not in a rage, Lonni uses the following

statistics.

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19

hp decrease by 16

Fort +8, Will +8

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d8+13) and  
bite +5 (1d6+9)\*

Grp +20

Abilities Str 27, Con 18

Skills Climb +8, Jump +8, Swim +8

Rake (+10 melee, 1d8+13)\*

Rend (2d8+17)\*

**Rake (Ex)** Lonni can attack a grappled foe with both claws at no penalty.

**Rend (Ex)** Lonni latches on to an opponent's body when she hits with both claw attacks and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 2d8+22\* points of damage.

\* Includes 5-point Power Attack

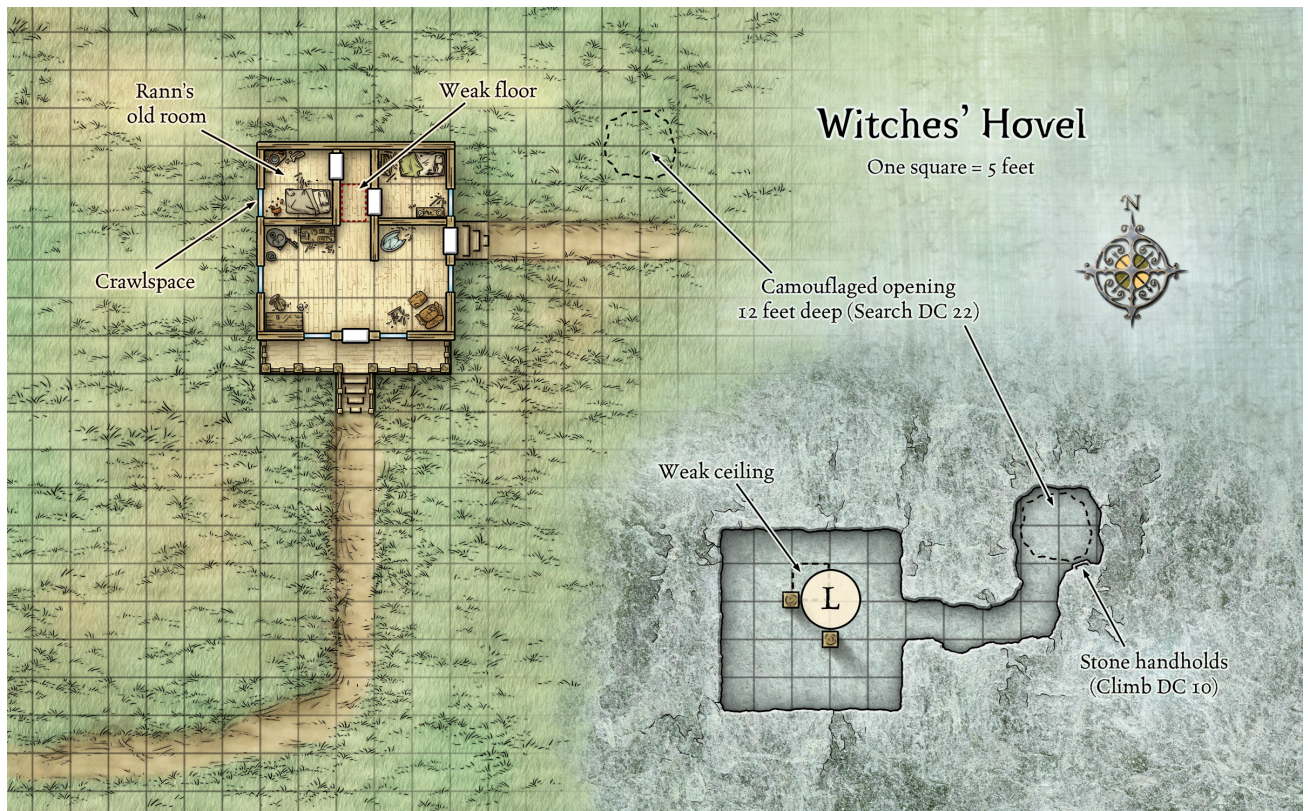
### TACTICS

Lonni stays hidden so that she can observe the characters though the gaps in the floorboards (+21 Hide check). If a party member puts his foot through the weak floor, the annis attempts to grab it, control the grapple, and pull him through to the cellar where she rakes him to shreds. She doesn't speak often, and then only monosyllabically. She does cackle, screech, and howl quite a bit though. If the PCs flee, Lonni gives chase for as long as she can keep them sight, eerily hanging above water with her magic sandals. Once she brings down a victim, she takes her time with him, assuming the remaining characters allow her to do so. Such victims are added to her collection of nameless skulls. Lonni *always* fights to the death—because she is really good at it.

### MAGIC ITEM: SANDALS OF WATER WALKING

Made of leather and hemp with clamshell accents, these open-toe sandals allow their wearer to traverse any liquid as if it were firm ground for 1 hour, once per day, after they have spoken the command word, as if under the effects of a *water walk* spell.

Strong transmutation; CL 6; Craft Wondrous Item, water walk; Price 10,800 gp



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area has the following features.

**Dry Rotted Floor and Walls:** The wooden walls and floor of the hovel have the following attributes: 2 inches thick; hardness 2; 7 hp. The shack is dangerously unstable and collapses if it takes significant area damage (such as from a *fireball*). Characters who make a DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check realize this immediately.

### COLLAPSING HOVEL HAZARD

CR 5

**Description** The hovel collapses in a heap on the occupants and falls into the tunnel. The collapse leaves a field of dense debris in the space formerly occupied by the hovel.

**Search** DC 22; **Type** mechanical

**Trigger** damage (10 points of area damage); repair reset

**Effect** House collapses on occupants and falls into tunnel (4d6, bludgeoning); multiple targets (everyone in or under the hovel); never miss; onset delay 1 round

**Duration** Instantaneous

**Disarm** Disable Device DC 20

**Dense Debris:** The aftermath of the hovel's collapse leaves a dense debris field. It costs 2 squares of move-

ment to enter a square with dense rubble. The DC of Balance and Tumble checks on dense rubble increases by +5, and the DC of Move Silently checks increases by +2.

### EXCEPTIONALLY WEAK FLOORBOARD HAZARD

CR 1

**Description** The floor gives way underneath, causing the one triggering it to fall prone.

**Search** DC 20; **Type** mechanical

**Trigger** location trigger (first 50 lbs. of weight placed in marked area); repair reset

**Effect** DC 20 Reflex save avoids; victim puts foot through floor and the character is considered prone

**Duration** Instantaneous

**Disarm** Disable Device DC 15

**Hidden Tunnel Entrance:** Requires a Search DC 22 to find from outside.

**Girl's Diary:** In the back amid the remains of a little girl's room complete with a collection of weather-beaten headless dollies, the characters can find (DC 18 Search) Rann's ancient diary in the Appendix (page 33).

**Treasure:** Amidst the dirt, filth, and bones in the cellar, characters can find (DC 20 Search) a sack full of mangled gold engagement rings (some few still wrapped about finger bones). The gruesome discovery is worth 800 gp.

# THE SINKING TOWER

**Encounter Level 5 (up to 8)**

## SETUP

The Tower has three standard entrances: the underground tunnel, the secret trapdoor in the roof guarded by two murders of fiendish crows (C), and the makeshift doors to area T3 (which are stuck shut). If the Finns (F) survived encounter A2 then they are hiding amid the foliage around the tower.

When the characters leave the clearing around the tower, read:

*Before you, an old gray stone tower has sunk halfway into the marsh around it. Only the topmost stories reach outward from the surrounding gray muck. You can make out a large murder of evil-looking crows perching atop the tilted tower, cawing and eyeing you suspiciously.*

As the characters approach, read:

*A big stout door has been inexpertly bolted over what looks like an old balcony entrance, but even this looks disused. As you draw near, you hear a roar of wings that sounds like ocean waves followed by a deafening cacophony of caws as birds take flight.*

## MURDER OF FIENDISH CROWS (2)

**CR 3**

TM 87

hp 18 (4 HD); DR 5/magic

Fiendish swarm of crows

NE Tiny magical beast (swarm)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +8

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

**Immune** critical hits, flanking, any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures

**Resist** cold 5, fire 5, half damage from slashing or piercing weapons

**SR** 14

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

**Speed** 10 ft. (2 squares); fly 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** swarm (1d6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** —

**Atk Options** blinding, distraction, smite (+4 damage)

**Abilities** Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 6

**SQ** swarm traits

**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative

**Skills** Listen +5, Spot +8

**Blinding (Ex)** A creature damaged by a murder of crows must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or be blinded.

The creature can regain its sight by healing the damage naturally, by any application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic, or with a *remove blindness/deafness* spell. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**Distraction (Ex)** Any living creature that begins its turn with a murder of crows in its space must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Smite Good (Su)** Once per day the swarm can choose to deal an extra 4 points of damage against a good foe during a swarm attack.

## MUC AND FLOGG FINN

**CR 5**

hp 63 (8 HD)

Male ogre rogue 4

CE Large giant

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +7

**Languages** Common, Giant

**AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19; uncanny dodge  
(+1 Dex, +4 armor, +6 natural)

**Resist** evasion

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Melee** +1 *greataxe* +13/+8 (3d6+10/x3)

**Ranged** mwk throwing axes +7 (1d8+6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +16

**Atk Options** sneak attack +2d6

**Abilities** Str 23, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 5

**SQ** trap sense +1, trapfinding

**Feats** Power Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (*greataxe*)

**Skills** Balance +3, Climb +9, Hide +7, Jump +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Speak Language (Common), Spot +8, Tumble +8

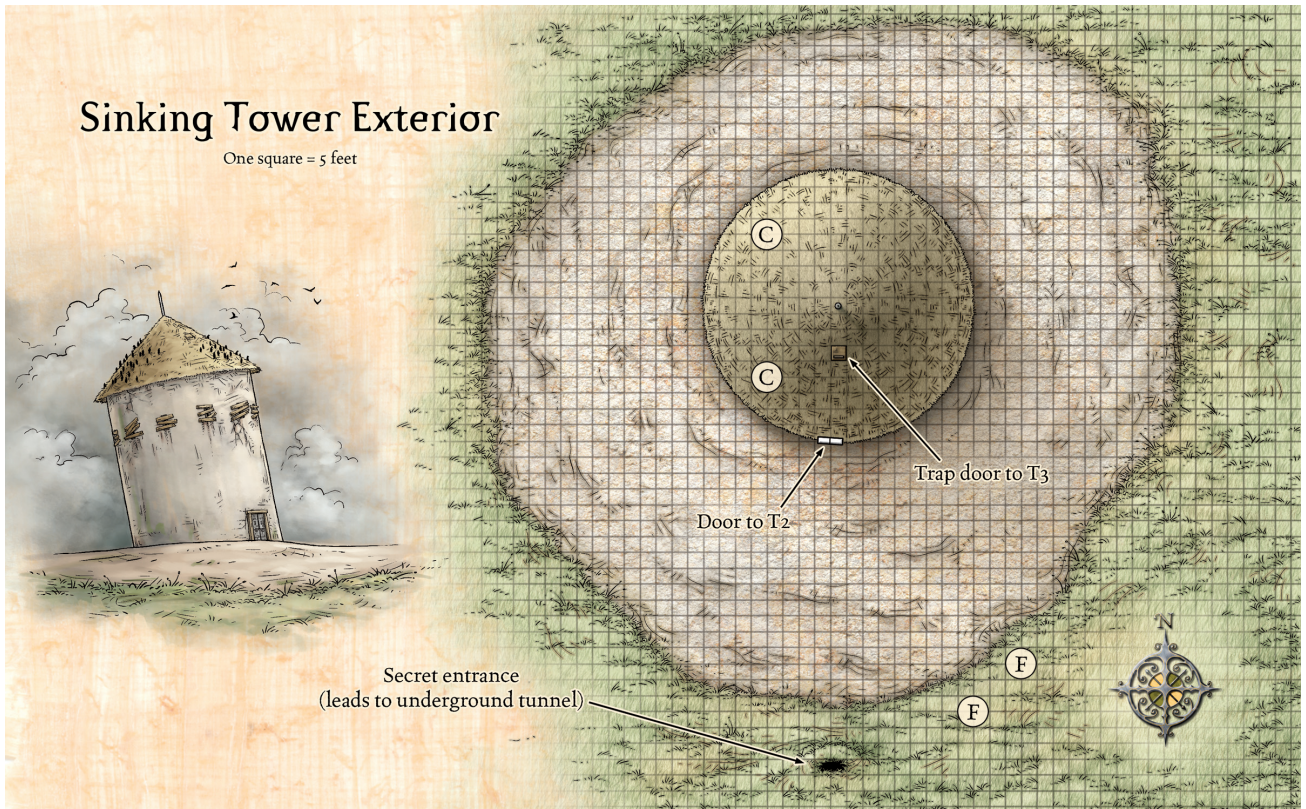
**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 *studded armor*, +1 *greataxe*, 4 masterwork throwing axes, *amulet of natural armor* +1, dagger, wicker doll

## TACTICS

The crows dive down from the tower's roof as soon as the characters reach the base of the tower, and they use smite on their first attack. The fiendish nature of

## Sinking Tower Exterior

One square = 5 feet



the crows drives them to try to blind as many foes as possible first before singling out individual victims to claw to ribbons.

If either or both of the ogres are here, they target characters who have been blinded already or those not otherwise in the midst of melee with the crows. This time they fight to the death.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area has the following features.

**Hidden Tunnel Entrance:** Finding it requires a successful DC 25 Search check.

**Jammed Door:** Five years ago, this door actually worked, but the continued exposure to the weather without maintenance has caused it to jam shut. Most of the tower's inhabitants use the underground tunnel entrance.

**Jammed Door:** 3 feet thick; hardness 5; 20 hp; break DC 23.

**Mud:** Squares covered in gray mud cost 2 squares of movement to move into, and the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks in such a square increases by 2.

**Tower Exterior Walls:** 5 feet thick, hardness 8, 450 hp (per 10-foot by 10-foot section), Climb DC 20.

**Secret Trapdoor:** Hidden under a section of roof tiles is a trapped door. It requires a second successful DC 25 Search check to find it from the outside.

### WYVERN ARROW TRAP

CR 6

**Description** A small arrow springs forth from a spot hidden in the roof tiles.

**Search** DC 20; **Type** mechanical

**Trigger** proximity; manual reset

**Effect** Atk +14 ranged (1d8 plus poison, arrow); poison (wyvern poison, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6 Con/2d6 Con)

**Duration** Instantaneous

**Disarm** Disable Device DC 16

# THE PIT

Encounter Level 8

## SETUP

Call for Spot and Listen checks as the characters move across the area.

## Spot and Listen Checks

**DC 10** Those who succeed hear the clatter of bones or see humanoid shapes pulling themselves free of the walls and floor.

When the PCs notice the mob, read:

*All around you the shapes of fully formed mud-encrusted skeletons emerge. With eyes burning like red candles, their mouths open in a voiceless challenge, and their fleshless claws grasp for you.*

## MOB OF SKELETONS

CR 8

hp 195 (30 HD); DR 5/bludgeoning

Human warrior skeleton mob<sup>DMG2</sup>

NE Medium undead (mob)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

**Languages** understands Common

**AC** 9, touch 4, flat-footed 8

(+1 Dex, +2 natural, -4 mob)

**Immune** ability damage (Str, Dex, Con), ability drain, bull rush, cold, critical hits, death effects, disease, electricity, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, flank-ing, grappling, mind-affecting effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, tripping, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless), death from massive damage

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +18

**Speed** 20 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** mob (5d6+1 bludgeoning)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Base Atk** +15; **Grp** +28

**Atk Options** expert grappler

**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

**SQ** mob anatomy

**Feats** Improved Bull Rush<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Listen +0, Spot +0

**Expert Grappler (Ex)** A mob can maintain a grapple without penalty and still make attacks against other

targets. A mob is never considered flat-footed while grappling.

**Mob Anatomy (Ex)** This mob of skeletons consists of 48 individual skeletons (MM 140). A mob reduced to 0 hit points breaks apart into 19 or fewer (if skeletons were incapacitated or slain) skeletons. While in mob form, each skeleton slain or incapacitated imposes two negative levels on the mob. A mob that gains 30 negative levels breaks up as if reduced to 0 hit points. A skeleton mob takes half again as much damage (+50%) from spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and evocation spells.

## CONCLUSION

If the mob is broken up (when reduced to 0 hit points, or after gaining 30 negative levels) the remaining skeletons return to the niches from which they sprung while those that are “destroyed” or have been shattered continue to shift about harmlessly on the floor. Two rounds later, a pair of skeletons returns bearing a gift in the form of the shield: *Morrowbound*, a +2 heavy bone shield (treat as a +2 darkwood shield). The mute skeletons then depart.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

The area has the following features.

**Desecration:** The area is treated as if under the effects of a *desecration* spell (CL 9). Charisma checks made to turn undead within the area take a -3 penalty, and undead creatures gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls, damage, and saving throws, which are reflected skeleton mob’s stats above.

**Illumination:** There is no light source in this area. PCs must employ their own light sources or use senses such as darkvision (if they have them). Otherwise, they are effectively blind. The skeletons here rely on darkvision.

**Shallow Water:** It costs 2 squares of movement to move into a (light blue) square with shallow water (roughly 1 foot deep), and the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks in such squares increases by 2.

**Deep Pool:** These (dark blue) squares have approximately 4 feet of standing water in them and it costs Medium or larger creatures 4 squares of movement to move into, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a square containing a deep pool. Tumbling is impossible in a deep pool. The

DC of Move Silently checks in such squares increases by 2. The water in a deep pool provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't also underwater.

**The Second Floor:** Twenty feet above the floor, the remnants of a second story (area **T1B**) cling to the inside of the tower. Characters who fail their Reflex saves and tumble through the rotting wood floor in area T2 have the opportunity to make a DC 25 Climb check as they pass through area **T1B**. Characters who succeed grab hold of the outcropping and end their fall; they can then haul themselves to safety. Note that they still take 2d6 points of damage for the 20 feet they did fall. Less lucky PCs who fall all the way land in shallow water and awaken the skeletons.



# COMMON ROOM

Encounter Level 6

## SETUP

The ogres in this room are involved in their game unless the PCs were noisy. In the former case, read:

*Squat shadows loom ahead. A rattling sound is followed by a clatter, and then by a roar of triumph.*

**3 OGRES: DUNN, FRAK, AND LOOM** **CR 3**  
hp 29 each (4 HD)

CE Large giant  
Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2  
Languages Giant

AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16  
(-1 size, -1 Dex, +3 armor, +1 natural)  
Fort +6 Ref +0, Will +1

Speed 30 ft. in hide armor (6 squares); base speed 40 ft.  
Melee greatclub +8 (2d8+7)  
Ranged tanglefoot bag +1 ranged touch (PH 128) or  
Ranged javelin +1 (1d8+5)  
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.  
Base Atk +3; Grp +12  
Combat Gear tanglefoot bag

Abilities Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7  
Feats Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub)  
Skills Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2  
Possessions combat gear plus hide armor, greatclub, 3 javelins, wicker doll

## TACTICS

If the ogres hear the PCs coming, two of the three toss tanglefoot bags at the first target, while the third attacks with his greatclub. Otherwise, they are sitting around on the crates throwing dice when the party arrives. The ogres fight to the death to protect Groa, who they call "Mum."

## DEVELOPMENT

The floor is weak in one 10-by-10 section, as indicated on the map. Any PC who falls through ends up in area T1.

## CONCLUSION

On top of the crates is the ogres' treasure: 400 gp, a fist-sized chunk of amber (100 gp), and a scroll inscribed with two divine spells (*undetactable alignment* and *zone of truth*).

## FEATURES OF THE ROOM

The room has the following features.

**Illumination:** A hooded lantern sits on the floor near the center of the room, illuminating the area.

**Jammed Door:** The damp has warped this door (3 ft. thick; hardness 5; 20 hp; break DC 23).

## WEAK FLOOR HAZARD

**CR 4**

**Description** The weak floor in the marked area gives way abruptly, opening up a bad fall to the area beneath.

**Search** DC 25; **Type** mechanical

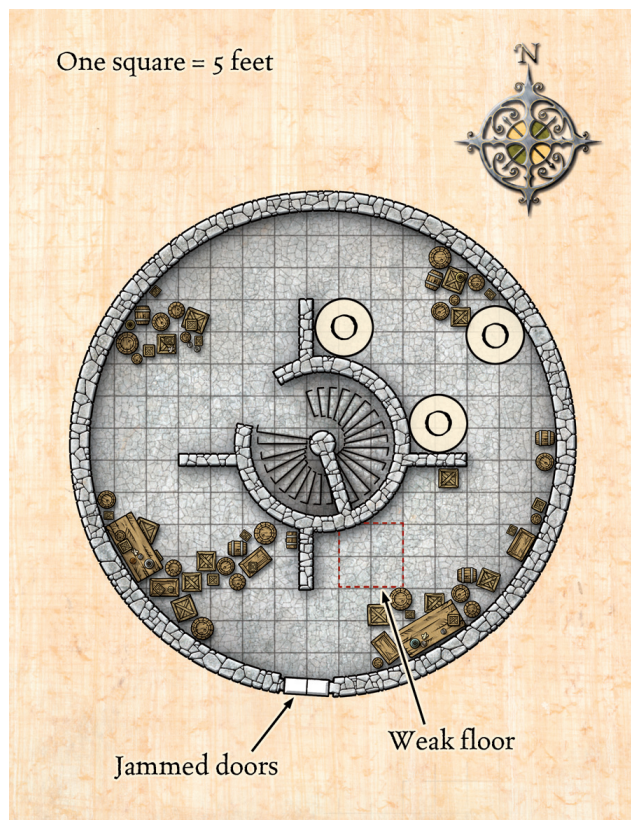
**Trigger** location; repair reset

**Effect** 40-ft. (4d6, fall) overall; see secondary effect; Reflex DC 20 avoids; multiple targets (triggering creature plus adjacent; first 100 pounds sets it off).

**Secondary Effect** A PC who falls can attempt a DC 25 Climb check to catch hold of the **T1** ledge 20 feet below (2d6, fall). Those who fail this check fall into the shallow waters of area **T1** (4d6, fall)

**Duration** Instantaneous

**Disarm** Disable Device DC 17



# GROA'S LAIR

Encounter Level 9

## SETUP

Groa (G) is probably aware of the presence of the characters before they reach her lair. By the time they arrive she is well prepared to greet them, along with her animal companion Blackjaw (B), her pet wolves (W), and the nearly fully transformed Autumn (A).

When the PCs enter the room, read:

*Amid this mixed laboratory and living space stands a grim, green-skinned hag with clever eyes, wild hair, and a wolfish smile. Before her stands a woman—a young woman judging by her hands, since her face is covered in an opaque black veil.*

<b>GROA</b>	<b>CR 8</b>
hp 96 (15 HD)	
Green hag <sup>MM</sup> druid 6	
CE Medium monstrous humanoid	
<b>Init</b> +3; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +15, Spot +15	
<b>Languages</b> Common, Giant, Sylvan	
<b>AC</b> 26, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +13 natural*)	
<b>SR</b> 18	
<b>Fort</b> +12, <b>Ref</b> +1, <b>Will</b> +17	
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft. (6 squares); swim 30 ft.	
<b>Melee</b> 2 claws +16 (1d4+3)	
<b>Base Atk</b> +13; <b>Grp</b> +16	
<b>Special Actions</b> weakness (+16 melee touch, 2d4 Str damage Fort DC 18), wild shape (small or medium animals only 2/day)	
<b>Druid Spells Prepared</b> (CL 6th):	
3rd— <i>dominate animal</i> (DC 19), <i>greater magic fang</i> †, <i>poison</i> (DC 19)	
2nd— <i>barkskin</i> †, <i>chill metal</i> (DC 18), <i>spider climb</i> †, <i>summon swarm</i>	
1st— <i>cure light wounds</i> , <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>produce flame</i> (+16 ranged touch), <i>speak with animals</i>	
0— <i>detect magic</i> , <i>guidance</i> , <i>mending</i> , <i>resistance</i>	
<b>Spell-Like Abilities</b> (CL 9th):	
At will— <i>dancing lights</i> , <i>disguise self</i> , <i>ghost sound</i> (DC 12), <i>invisibility</i> , <i>pass without trace</i> , <i>tongues</i> , <i>water breathing</i>	
<b>Combat Gear</b> <i>potion of cure moderate wounds</i> (2), <i>potion of owl's wisdom</i> †	
†Already cast/used.	
<b>Abilities</b> Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 22, Cha 14	

**SQ** animal companion, mimicry, nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, wild empathy +8, woodland stride

**Feats** Ability Focus (weakness), Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]), Stealthy

**Skills** Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +10, Craft (basketweaving) +4, Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +8, Hide +12, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +9, Spot +15, Survival +11 (+13 in aboveground natural environments), Swim +18

**Possessions** combat gear plus wicker doll

**Weakness (Su)** Groa can weaken a foe by making a special touch attack. The opponent must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or take 2d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Mimicry (Ex)** A green hag can imitate the sounds of almost any animal found near its lair.

**Skills** A green hag has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

\*With *barkskin* (+2)

<b>BLACKJAW</b>	<b>CR —</b>
hp 45(6 HD)	
Wolf animal companion	
N Medium animal (augmented)	
<b>Init</b> +7; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +3, Spot +3	
<b>AC</b> 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 natural)	
<b>Resist</b> evasion	
<b>Fort</b> +8, <b>Ref</b> +8, <b>Will</b> +3	
<b>Speed</b> 50 ft. (10 squares)	
<b>Melee</b> bite +7 (1d6+2)	
<b>Base Atk</b> +4; <b>Grp</b> +6	
<b>Special Actions</b> trip, tricks (come, defend, hunting, guard)	
<b>Abilities</b> Str 15, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6	
<b>SQ</b> devotion	
<b>Feats</b> Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Track <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Focus (bite)	
<b>Skills</b> Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3, Survival +3 (+7 track by scent)	
<b>Possessions</b> beads and a wicker doll woven into a	

hemp collar

**Tricks** Blackjaw has been trained in the following tricks and purposes (PH 74): come, defend, hunting, guard.

**Trip (Ex)** If Blackjaw hits with a bite attack, he can attempt to trip the opponent (+6 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

### 3 WOLVES: BLACKJAW'S PACK

CR 1

hp 13 (2 HD)

N Medium animal

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +3

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

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

**Speed** 50 ft. (10 squares)

**Melee** bite +3 (1d6+1)

**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +2

**Special Actions** trip, tricks (hunting)

**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Feats** Track<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1 (+5 track by scent)

**Possessions** beads and a wicker doll woven into a hemp collar

**Tricks** The wolves have been trained in the following tricks and purposes (PH 74): hunting.

**Trip (Ex)** If a wolf hits with a bite attack, he can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

### AUTUMN WREN (NEARLY TRANSFORMED) CR 4

DMG2 158

hp 8 (2 HD)

Female abysmally wretched<sup>DMG2</sup> half-elf sorcerer 2

N Medium humanoid (half-elf)

**Init** +0; **Senses** low-light vision; **Listen** +1, **Spot** +1

**Languages** Common, Giant, Sylvan

**AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14  
(+4 shield\*)

**Immune** sleep

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +4

\*From shield.

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares); swim 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +0 (1d4–1)

**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +0

**Special Actions** abysmally wretched

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 2nd):

1st (5/day)—*magic missile*, *shield*†

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12), *resistance*†

†Already cast.

**Abilities** Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15

**SQ** summon familiar (Malphaset, a black cat currently in hiding)

**Feats** Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana])

**Skills** Bluff +6, Concentration +5, Craft (drawing) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +1, Search +2, Spellcraft +6, Spot +1

**Possessions** sea hag's pearl, wicker doll

**Abysmally Wretched (Su)** As she transforms into a sea hag, Autumn's once fine features have become a dripping mockery. Any creature within 30 feet that looks at her uncovered countenance must make a saving throw (DC 13) or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Thereafter, the affected creature can look at her without ill effects. Autumn can affect up to two people each day with this ability. The closest characters are affected first, and those with the lowest Hit Dice before those with higher Hit Dice.

## TACTICS

If Groa hears the PCs coming, she prepares by casting the following spells and effects: *spider climb*, *barkskin*, *greater magic fang* (on Blackjaw), *guidance*, and *resistance*. She stands just behind the hooded Autumn forcing the characters to go through the girl to get to her. If given the opportunity, she converses with the party, which allows invisible wolves nearby time to quietly surround them. Any mention of Rann brings a sneer of disgust. If the characters inform her that they have killed Lonni, she laughs and says "Touched by the beast was my sweet little sister. I would have had to have done it eventually myself. Oh, but it seems you've put us back at two again, but I've got patience to wait for another!" She then offers any obvious (female) spellcasters a chance to join her covey. If they refuse, she says, "More's the pity." Then she gives the sign for her wolves to attack. If driven below 30 hit points, she tries to escape unless she is obviously winning.

Autumn, now nearly transformed into a sea hag, uses her magic in defense of her "big sister." She casts *shield* on herself before combat begins. Groa pulls Autumn's hood back once the fight begins, hoping to incapacitate the characters closest to Autumn with her abysmally wretched appearance.

### MAGIC ITEM: SEA HAG'S PEARL

The *sea hag's pearl* is a large pearl bound in a gold setting usually hung from a necklace. The pearl's powers affect only Medium humanoids. Wearers able to cast spells gain the ability to do so at +1 caster level strength. The *sea hag's pearl* is cursed with the power to turn its wearer into sea hag as per the spell *shapechange*, but with permanent duration and no Hit Die limit. Each day after the first that a character wears the *sea hag's pearl*, she must make a Fortitude save (DC 19). A failed save means the character has taken one step closer to becoming a sea hag as her skin yellows and warts emerge. For 24 hours following a failed save, the wearer experiences waking dreams as her thoughts become more haglike. During this period, the wearer can take single actions only (like a zombie; MM 266). A wearer who fails three (nonconsecutive) checks permanently becomes a standard (3 HD) sea hag of chaotic evil alignment (MM 144), losing any previously held class abilities but retaining nonphysical attributes and skills. Only a *miracle* or *wish* can revert a fully transformed character back to her original form. A wearer who is only partially transformed (failed one or two Fortitude saves) can also reverse the process by destroying the *sea hag's pearl* that caused the initial transformation.

In *Eberron* the Daughters of Sora Kell use *sea hag's pearls* as recruiting devices and target dissatisfied female spellcasters and artificers whose skills and knowledge are in high demand in Droaam.

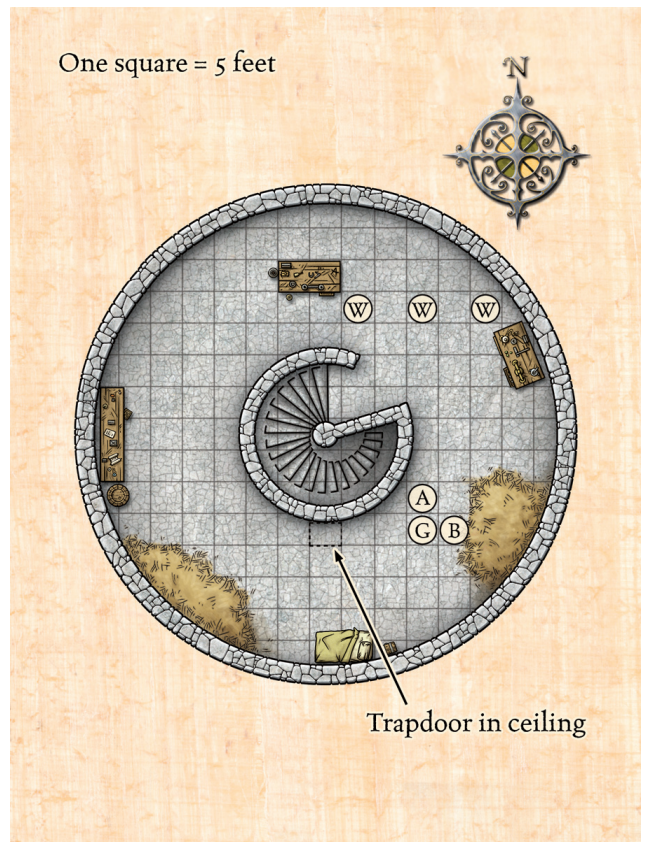
Strong transmutation; CL 17; Craft Wondrous Item, bestow curse, shapechange, pearl worth at least 1,000 gp; Price 10,000 gp.

### FEATURES OF THE ROOM

The room has the following features.

**Alchemy Lab:** A complete alchemy lab could be cobbled together from the contents of the room. In addition, on the tables, characters can find two jars of antitoxin, two vials of acid, a container of alchemist fire, a smokestick, a thunderstone, a box of 20 tindertwigs, a *potion of greater magic fang* +2, a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of owl's wisdom*, and a sealed *flask of curses*. All the chemicals are unmarked.

**Illumination:** The arrow slits that ring the walls of the topmost floor have been boarded up. As a result, Groa set up a quartet of permanent *dancing lights* (CL 9th) that move about the rafters. The lights are not especially strong and provide only shadowy illumination to the area.



## APPENDIX: RANN'S JOURNAL (AREA A5)

Most of the pages in Rann's childhood journal have been damaged to the point of being illegible by exposure to the elements. Aside from some crude drawings (especially when compared to Autumn's) depicting a tall gray woman in a red-splattered white dress and a picture of three female figures holding hands (Groa in disguise on one end, Lonni on the other, and Rann in the center) there are only a few legible fragments, including those below.

A successful DC 22 Knowledge (local) check reveals that Marcos Wreed, Gracelle Cupric, and Mrs. Henchal (the matron of the orphanage back then) all died under mysterious circumstances thirty years ago. Consulting with the families of the victims proves to be useless, and it results in stony silence followed by a demand that the PCs never darken their door again.

*I told Mrs. Henchal about Big Sister, but she doesn't believe me. She just whooped me for fibbing. Bit I know Big Sister is real. . . .*

*Most miserable day ever. Marcos the boy I liked, the one I told you about a few pages ago, is just like the rest only meaner. He lied when he said he would go to the Solstice Dance with me. He just stood there and lied. And Gracelle was there with him and everyone else laughing at me. I hate them all. I wish they all died. Big Sister says that they deserve it, but I'm so scared ... I wish my folks were still alive....*

*Everyone wants to kill me—even Mrs. HENCH! I had to run. They say I'm a witch. And I think I am one too. I can move things and make fire. I'm evil....*

*I skinned my knee on some roots and was crying when Big Sister found me. She's like this old lady (when you can see her), but she somehow reminds me of mom. She gave me this necklace with a big pearl—it's real pretty—and she took me to her house in the swamp. It was real scary with the wolves and the blackbirds and all, but the scariest was her sister. She's called Lonni and she's real tall and pale like a drowned person. She has these teeth like....*

*Big Sister lives in a magic castle to the Northwest. She says that one day she will take me there.*