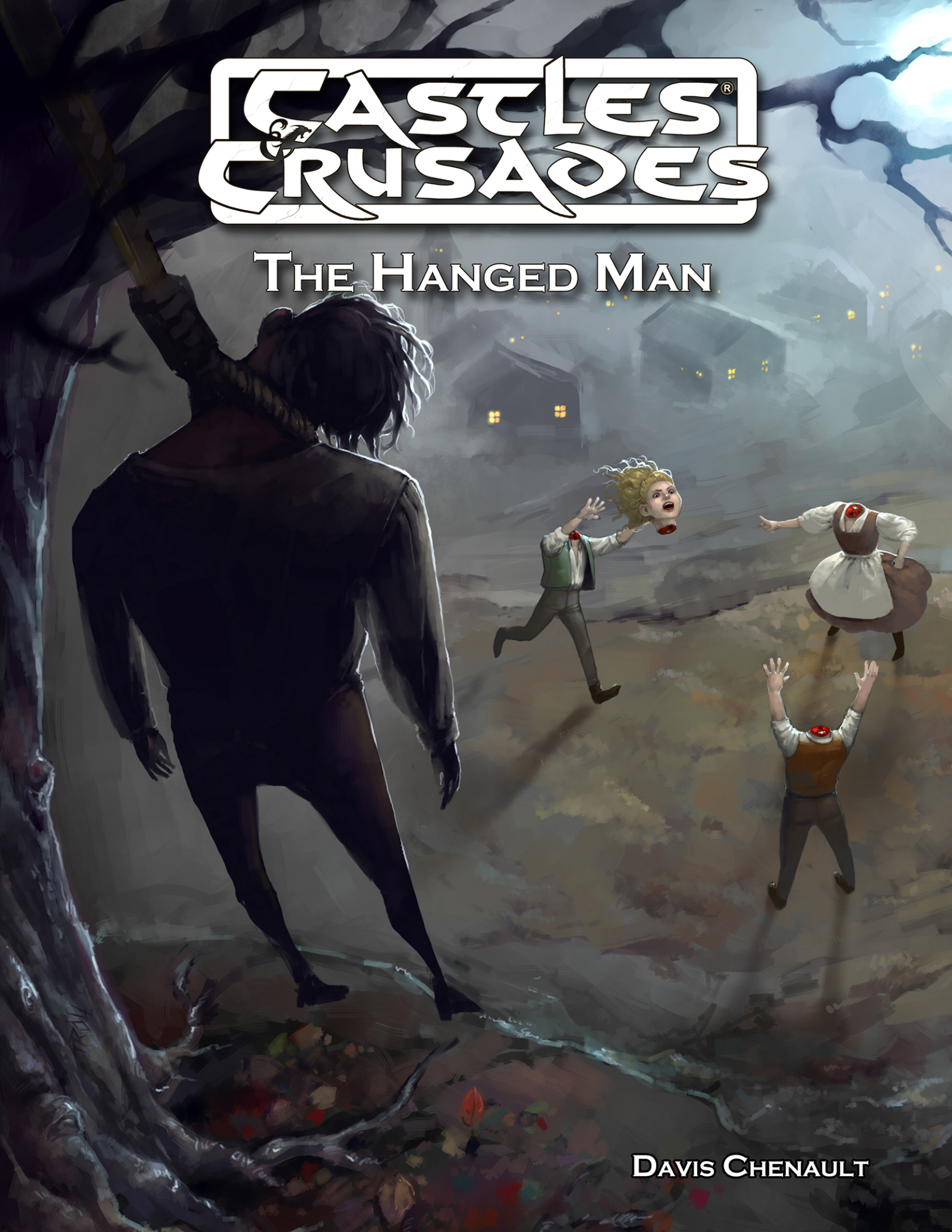


CASTLES & CRUSADES

THE HANGED MAN



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THE HANGED MAN

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This middle to high level campaign is designed for 4-6 players. The adventure takes place in a village where nearly all the inhabitants are evil, headless, aberrations intent on killing the characters. The adventure can typically be played in two four-hour sessions or can be used for extended play.

A long trek under an azure sky ends at dusk before an ancient oak tree. Its roots are thick and stretch far, like bark-encrusted tendrils winding through the earth. Its branches twist outward desperately as if to rip its trunk out of the earth. Ominous thunderheads roil the atmosphere in the distance; perhaps the dim sentience of the oak seeks to escape the impending storm. A man hangs limply from a gnarled branch, deadweight held by thick rope tightly wound around his neck. Beyond this grim scene, a town is silhouetted against a dim, yellow moon. The moon is partly obscured by ashen smoke coiling above the rooftops. A miasmal fog creeps down from freshly churned fields to infiltrate silent paths and byways. Lights flicker in many windows, the only sign of life. It is very quiet; all that can be heard is the rope straining with the weight of the hanged man.

GRALLOW SHAVE

The village of Grallow Shave is cursed. Ages ago, the town leaders hung an innocent man, Lyoneth Doognam, upon the hangman's tree outside of the village. So good was that man and so egregious his murder that the just gods took offense. They punished the people of Grallow Shave, cursing each person in the town and their village. The gods' righteous ire withered the villagers' bodies but left their heads alive to float around forever. Then, as if for the sake of emphasis, the whole town was banished to the abyss.

After many centuries in the abyss, the gods relented in their punishment, allowing the town and its inhabitants to return to the world for two days once a year. During these two days, the villagers were given their original bodies, their tragically cognizant heads temporarily reattached. Some villagers considered this a boon, an opportunity for redemption, as they were permitted to do what they will with that time. But alas, years in the abyss deformed the floating heads into grotesque things, tainted by the abyss. Their imprisoned minds developed wicked powers, becoming truly evil if not so already.

During their brief times of release in the mortal world, the villagers enjoy themselves, as if they were normal people again. They cook, chat, visit, slaughter animals, repair fences, or any of the other activities one might normally have undertaken. This time they are preparing for a celebration. Much food, beer, ale, cake, and other delicacies are prepared in expectation of festivities. The villagers appear happy, even jovial.

For 48 hours (or more if the CK desires) the inhabitants of the town regain their heads and bodies, appearing as they did the day the village was accursed. The village springs to life as if a normal day under a smiling sun. Flowers are blooming, plants are growing, animals enjoy their food; all is copacetic.

But such is not the case. The village and its inhabitants are far from copacetic. The heads of the villagers are not firmly

attached to the bodies. Any sudden impact can send a head careening off its body, whether from a punch, a fall, or even running too fast. All inhabitants are careful not to jostle each other much. Other strange facts: The animals cannot give milk and do not shed hair, and neither the villagers nor the animals feel thirst or hunger.

The villagers only have 24 hours to enjoy remembering what it was to be truly alive. After that, their bodies slowly begin reverting back into rotting corpses, their heads detaching to float around in their grotesque state. The latter occurs very slowly over the last day the village remains in the mortal world, and within the last six hours the bodies will nearly rot away entirely. When the full 48 hours passes, the whole town is returned to the abyss, all original inhabitants retaken, and any denizen who died in the interim is resurrected once again, undergoing a year of torture at the hands of demons who haunt the abyss. Visitors are spared and not dragged to the Abyss, as they are not themselves accursed. Instead, they witness their surroundings dissolve and find themselves standing in an abandoned field with nothing but the wind and cold for company. Visitors who died in the village are found lying in the open wherever their bodies fell.

It is possible to end this curse on Grallows Shave and its inhabitants. To wit, all the inhabitants must be killed before the village returns to the Abyss. Every single one. There is no other method of ending the curse. Over the centuries, adventurers have attempted this but never succeeded. Most of those who have come to the village have been killed or have awoken to an empty field. If even one villager remains alive at the time of transition, those denizens killed while in the world are raised from the dead by the demons of the Abyss (who enjoy torturing the hapless villagers).

Should the PCs manage to find and kill all the inhabitants of the village, the curse comes to an end, and the villager's souls are released from their punishment. When that happens, the village of Grallow Shave quickly dissolves. The hangman's tree falls over and dies, crops wither and die. Only weeds, patches of shrubbery, and grass clumped around the outlines stone foundations remain. However, one young man will be standing where the hangman's tree was located (see encounter 22).

From the perspective of many of the villagers, the entire process had become a grim game. They invite people into town, enjoin them to participate in the festival, then terrify, torture, or even kill them. The motives for the latter are varied as well as are the methods of torture. Most enjoy beguiling visitors and making them feel safe before beginning to terrify them. For many this is as far as it goes. But others are more malicious, capturing and torturing visitors with the hopes of selling/trading them to a demon lord for some momentary abeyance of their damnation. In other cases, it's not so much planned, they just enjoy killing. A few believe that by sacrificing enough visitors to the gods the curse can be broken (that idea was given to them by a demon – and a liar, go figure). Others don't bother with fighting and killing, knowing that nothing changes no matter what they do.

The village is surrounded by a 'spiritual field' beyond which none of the inhabitants can travel. The villagers may move

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Grallow Shave



along the perimeter of the field but cannot move beyond it. This boundary is 2000 yards from the center of Grallow Shave. Should any PC explore this 'spiritual' boundary, he or she might note a vegetation change, subtle differences in the soil, animal trails suddenly ending, etc. A successful tracking check or wilderness lore check reveals these oddities. Also, when the PCs are around fireplaces or any burning wood, anyone with an excellent sense of scent notes the faint smell of sulfur (CL 0). If asked about the sulfur, the locals explain the smell by claiming there is an abandoned sulfur mine about twelve miles away. They once mined it, the explanation goes, but the market suddenly and inexplicably dried up, so they quit mining. The dust and smell have lingered all these years.

There is no sulfur mine. The smell is that of the abyss, and it comes from two sources. The first is that everything in the village is tainted with a sulfurous smell simply from having been in the Abyss. Burning brings that smell out to assault the nostrils. The second source is an abandoned well at the edge of town. Should the PCs explore that, they have a direct access elevator to the abyss and a soon to be obvious source of the smell. Traveling to the abyss is not within the purview of this adventure – but be prepared to be unprepared.

To that end, toward the last six hours, while the village remains in the world, those villagers who care to do so will start to attack the characters. That's probably most of them (it's doubtful many would be distracted by mundane chores with only 48 hours to live again). Their plan is simple. Split any party up, get them inebriated, or so distracted and divided that they can be trapped and killed one at a time. Thence the slaughter and mayhem begins in earnest.

ARRIVAL

The PCs find the village just after sunrise. There should be roughly 45 hours left before the village returns to the abyss. This can be extended or shortened as the CK desires. When the PCs enter the village, they are greeted by a wide variety of people. Almost all act good-natured and joyous with the PCs arrival. The characters are lead to the tavern, the Bail and Twine, where they are lavished with food and drink, and offered room and board for free for two days. The owner of the tavern, Remmy Brandt, explains that a festival occurs on the morrow, and they would be proud and happy to have the PCs join. He does politely inform the characters that after the festivities, "the price for being in this world will resume."

Throughout the night many of the villagers come by to see the characters, and some even introduce themselves. Every villager who arrives brings something to either eat or drink. The villagers excitedly explain they are preparing for a festival to take place on the following day. Food and drink are free. If asked about the reason for the festival, they explain that it is a celebration of the fall harvest and the villages founding many years ago. Any seasonally appropriate reason can be given as the celebration is the same.

If asked about the hanged man at the edge of town, it is with downcast eyes, and displaying such fear and shame that the

PCs get an unsolicited explanation from a man named Lyoneth Doognam. He is, of course, an original denizen of the village. One of the villagers found him hanging from the tree, "this very morning, of all mornings.". No one knows if he committed suicide or was murdered, but everyone is concerned. Either Lyoneth committed suicide, or there is a murderer in their midst! No one knows. But the PCs are blithely encouraged to ignore the situation, told to just enjoy the festivities. "We will find the murderer and deal with him in the same manner. Mark my words," Remmy Brandt comments.

SUMMARY AND OPTIONS FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

From this beginning, the CK should choose how to play the adventure. It can be run comically, with notes of horror and dread, a mixture of the two, or otherwise in any manner the CK desires. Just bear in mind the following general information about the village and motivations of its people while running the adventure (of course these should be changed should need require).

- 1: The villagers do not actually get drunk after drinking. They can taste what they drink but do not actually consume it. The bodies can get drunk if the CK so desires. Stumbling bodies and floating heads may be funny.
- 2: Contact poisons work on the villagers' bodies and heads. A poison that must be processed through the blood has no effect. For example, if a villager is struck on the arm by a blade covered with a contact poison, the poison only effects the body. If struck on the head with the same blade, only the head is affected. If a poison must be processed or consumed through drink, it has absolutely no effect.
- 3: The heads of the villagers are not secure atop their necks. Significant jostling of the body may dislodge the head. Wrestling, fist fights, being hit on the head etc. All of these actions could potentially unsettle the head. In such a case, a physical attribute check is required for the head to remain successfully attached to the body. If the head becomes dislodged, it quickly goes back to its position unless it is during the last 6-12 hours of the villager's time in the world.
- 4: Over time, the bodies decompose. The decomposition begins around 24 hours prior to the village returning to the Abyss. This decomposition speeds up rapidly 12 hours beforehand, then accelerates even more, to the point that by 3 hours prior to the village returning to the Abyss, their bodies are nearly completely decomposed, zombie bodies with rotting flesh dripping from their skeletal cores.
- 5: No animals from the outside world willingly enter the village's 'spiritual sphere.' Generally, only sentient creatures or those with souls can come within 2000 feet of the center of Grallow Shave without their sixth sense warning them something is dreadfully amiss. Allow each PC one wisdom check (CL3) upon entering the village to note something feels wrong. Perhaps the hair on their necks will stand on end, their bodies feel a sudden chill, or other innocuous signals. A ranger or druid receives a +4 modifier to this roll. Pets, draft animals, horses, or the like traveling with the characters are reluctant to enter, but will do so upon command.

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- 6: The weather inside the sphere surrounding the village is different than that outside it. This may be difficult to notice because the village shows up at the same time of year it was first sent to the Abyss. However, the weather inside the sphere is the same as the weather was the day the village was cursed. The weather was clear and slightly blustery in the late fall at that time. The weather has never changed, nor can it ever change via forces outside the sphere. If it is raining outside the sphere, it will not rain inside, not even a tornado affects the weather inside the sphere.
- 7: The ground and vegetation are slightly different at the periphery of the village's sphere. This difference might be noted by a ranger or druid quite by accident or by checking. Those two classes should be allowed a tracking check every time the periphery is crossed; that is wilderness lore or any appropriate check to note the difference. If actively searching or examining the area at the periphery they receive a +4 to their check.
- 8: A cleric, paladin, or other similar spiritually oriented class may note the difference upon entering the spiritual field as well. All clerics or similar classes are allowed one wisdom check (CL3) upon first entering the village to note something unusual. This causes a sudden jolt in the characters' spiritual awareness that some significant event has occurred. A sense of dread or fear or some unnamable menace seems to be lingering in the shadows, something just out of reach. All intentional wisdom checks are normal (CL0).
- 9: All of the villagers have different goals and desires regarding the characters. Some would like to sacrifice visitors. Others just wish to kill them, some to torture the PCs, etc. Sometimes these motivations conflict. The villagers squabble amongst one another to achieve their goals. In every case, towards that last 6 hours, the PCs are attacked by someone.
- 10: All the villagers are given a slightly different set of goals, motivations, and involvement in the horrific affair regarding Lyoneth Doogman in their capacity or desire to confront the PCs. Please read their descriptions for how they interact with the party and to some extent, one another.
- 11: There are several dozen people in the village, including women and children. All are damned. There are only 25 buildings, the hangman's tree, and the abandoned well. Killing the villagers is the only manner of freeing their souls. ALL OF THEM. If the CK or players find this objectionable, allow for a consecration of some type to free the souls of those who were not involved in the affair.
- 12: There is no nearby creek nor a well from which to draw water. The water found in urns or other vessels at the time the village was damned is all the available water. By the end of the second day, a water shortage becomes an issue.
- 13: All the inhabitants of the village are cursed and have become, over their time in the Abyss, monstrous aberrations. Each is given a stat block, the abilities of each listed at the end of the module. Each of their heads is

unique, and each reflects the visage of its original self, with perhaps extra dangling appendage, twisted spine, or other visual nastiness, like dripping blood, etc. Brief descriptions of each are given, especially the more powerful ones, but please elaborate on the descriptions as desired. Though each should be described slightly different, the actual abilities of each relate to a monster.

1 THE WICKS

Baily Wick and his wife Tender have one child, Burnalong Wick. They were all good-hearted in their previous lives. They raised a few goats and chickens and had a garden. Tender brewed a small amount of beer for this festival and gladly gives it all away. Baily is talkative but boring, Tender is sullen and quiet, and Burnalong is pleasant and happy, bouncing around enjoying her "eternal life", even though she lacks a body and is tortured mercilessly in the Abyss. But as a wise one once said, it's the little things that matter in life.

Neither was involved in the killing of Lyoneth. Both do have an opinion as to who it was that perpetrated the deed. They believe Remmy Brandt (3 below) leveled the first accusation. Remmy, they say, claimed Lyoneth was a cannibal. They then say Al a Appy O'Ween (7 below) carried out the hanging. The first part is untrue and the latter partial true. What they don't know is that their daughter was the person who first put the idea in the minds of Neil and DeGast Ison (11 below). Burnalong was angered that Lyoneth refused to marry her.

Baily is unlikely to fight the PCs until cornered and even then, only weakly because he cares not a whit about anything anymore. Tender flees and hides in a fight, not wanting to die but in the end just allows herself to be killed, that is unless her daughter is attacked first. In this case Tender fights. Burnalong fights ferociously for every ounce of her being.

BAILY (*He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 13, AC 18, BTH +3, and Move 40 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d4 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. His special abilities are fly and restrain.*)

When detached, Baily's bearded face writhes with worms, and several four-foot-long veiny tendrils descend from his neck.

TENDER (*she is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 12, AC 18, BTH +3, and Move 40 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d4 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. Her special abilities are fly and restrain.*)

Tender's long golden locks are caked in blood and brain matter oozes from her mouth and nose. Four glistening white long tendons extend from her neck.

BURNALONG (*She is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 27, AC 16 and MOVE 30 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d4 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Her special abilities are fly, paralysis and restrain.*)



Burnalong has bulbous red eyes, a yellow pockmarked face with maggots bursting out of large pimples. Ten long arteries, an inch thick and dripping blood slop from where her neck once attached to her body.

2 SAMUAL AND FLIPPANCE HENDERSON

The Hendersons were an odd pair in life. Samual and Flippance Henderson always enjoyed a good prank. Their pranks bordered on the cruel and frightening the older they became. After having become disembodied manifestations and allowed to return to the world, the two decided to seize the opportunity to terrify those they could. Samual and Flippance both toy with any characters' minds whenever possible. They do this using small bizarre pranks like putting worms in shoes making ghostly sounds outside windows and supplying them with false information. The two may even show the characters a terrible thing or two in the village as time wears on. They hope to scare the PCs or, minimally, keep them on edge.

Both watched the hanging of Lyoneth. Neither had an opinion on the matter, other than perhaps that some joke was going too far and wishing they had thought of it first. When Lyoneth died, they kept quiet about the crime and never confronted anyone concerning the hanging. Their time in the Abyss has changed them, making them care even less for others and themselves. Their only joy in existence is causing mental anguish.

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Both fight with all their might if attacked. These two most assuredly do not want to die and thoroughly enjoy being able to live forever and play pranks on others. If either is involved in a fight that looks to be going poorly for them, one or both try to leave the fight or begin to beg for forgiveness. Any mercy shown them does not change who or what they are or will be.

Samual (He is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 16 and MOVE 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage. His special abilities are blood drain, infection, fly 30 feet, darkvision to 60 feet, and dominate.)

Samual's bald head is a bubbling wreck of boils infested with flies. His droopy mouth opens wide to eight huge canines. Blood and ichor spill from his neck.

FLIPPANCE (She is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 32, AC 16 and MOVE 30 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage. Her special abilities are blood drain, infection, fly 30 feet, darkvision to 60 feet, and dominate.)

Flippance was ugly in life and made more so in death. Three large angular canines protrude from a mouth filled with sewage. Beady eyes, a bulbous nose, and freakishly green hair top a neck dripping a white bubbling fluid.

3 REMMY BRANDT AND RADIANCE CURRIE OF THE BAIL AND TWINE

The Bail and Twine is the only tavern in Grallow Shave. This is a small building and the only one in the village with a second floor. The first floor has a dozen tables in the sitting room. A counter runs part of the length of the back wall. Remmy Brandt runs the tavern with his wife Radiance Currie. The upper floor is reserved for rooms. The only people to have ever been in the rooms in a thousand years are the travelers who happen upon the villages during the 48 hours it is in the world. The rooms are well kept and clean. They are so clean as to have no dirt, dust, mice, roaches, bed bugs, debris or even smell of any previous occupants. The rooms are unnaturally clean.

Nothing is charged for rooms or beer or food. It is a festival, and the entire town is out and ready to celebrate, and everything is offered to the PCs for free. That and the town's inhabitants look forward to killing the PCs. Remmy coyly notes that after the celebration everything returns to normal. The tavern is open and fills as the sun begins to set. People drink a lot of beer, eat a lot of food, dance, and sing.

The rooms should be described as exceedingly clean, though no more. That is unless one of the characters decides to look closely. Only then, and with a successful wisdom check, is it noted that the room is exceptionally clean. Not even the lingering odor of sweat and unwashed bodies lingers in the air, just a slight tinge of sulfur.

Remmy and Radiance were neither good nor evil people. They served their clientele and were happy to rent a few rooms every month. They knew of the hanging but did not attend.

After the event, they refused to speak of it. Their shame for not acting in defense of the hapless Lyoneth consumed the two. So deeply has this affected them that they have repressed all emotions so completely they feel nothing and watch unaffected as the suffering around them continues. Though their pretense at happiness is effective during the celebration. In a fight they stand and watch, only joining in at last and if victory is imminent. Otherwise they hide.

REMMY *(He is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 16 and MOVE 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage. His special abilities are blood drain, infection, fly, darkvision to 60 feet, and dominate.)*

Remmy turns ashen white as a bleached skull full of teeth. His beady eyes sit deep inside cavernous eye sockets with yellow bile dripping from his severed head.

RADIANCE CURRIE *(She is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 20, AC 16 and MOVE 30 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d4 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Her special attacks are paralysis and restrain.)*

Radiance flies upside down. With one great eye she looks lost. Snake-like tendrils extend from her head and trail the ground. The stump of her neck, facing skyward, fumes yellow, red and green puss.

4: BRANDY AND DANDY WINE

Brandy and Dandy Wine are twins who have an herb and vegetable garden. They both delight in their garden and spend much of their time during the festival in their garden chatting with one another. In life, they never married due to terminal and debilitating shyness. They were both stunningly gorgeous in their original form. They are also a little evil at heart. Both developed, over the years, a rather disquieting distaste for their fellow man due to an excessive number of marital requests. Their time in the abyss has taken that small evil and disquieting distaste and turned it into cannibalism. The two now enjoy eating those who have been killed in the village. It is more accurate to describe it as just gnawing their victims to small bits as the bodies are not digested; the remains just dribble out of the trunk of the twins' neck. They bury the remains in their garden. They do not bury the remains well. This is the only instance in which the remains of those who have died in the village remain in the village. The bones of the consumed remain forever as part of the village but passing through the twin's mouths.

The two try not to interact with the characters and remain as distant as possible until a fight occurs. They then linger in the background, helping where they might. If the fight does not appear to be going well, the two hide in their vegetable patch and plead for their lives if pressed.

If the PCs visit the twins while they are in their garden, the PCs may notice, in and amongst the vegetables, pieces of bone sticking up. If not searching, allow a wisdom check CL 2. A

failure indicates nothing out of the ordinary. Success means the PC has noticed something unusual in the dirt, something disquieting that the PC cannot quite identify. If for some reason the PCs follow up on the disquieting feeling and dig around the garden, they easily find a lot of bones from humanoids. These are the remains of people killed over the years they have moved from one place to the next.

BRANDY *(He is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 22, AC 14 and MOVE 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a tentacle for 1d4 damage and a bite for 1d3 damage. His special abilities are infection, restrain, and dominate.)*

Brandy's eyes dangle down by his cheeks. His mouth is agape, vomiting masses of maggots. Ten small tendril drops from his ragged stump.

DANDY *(She is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP 17, AC 14 and MOVE 30 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with a tentacle for 1d6 damage and 1 bite for 1d2 damage. Her special ability is paralysis and restrain.)*

Dandy's long auburn locks have become a hairy matte ridden with fat white lice and green engorged worms that pop and explode a gooey ichor like a pimple. Her face is marred by scares and infected stitches. Her neck is but one long spine whipping about madly.

5: MERRY WEATHER AND ARDLEEAT OME

Merry Weather and Ardleeat Ome have two sons and a daughter, Raynee, Cloudee and Mugee. Merry and Ardleeat are all very excited about the events at the tavern, and as soon as the PCs arrive, the two go to meet the characters. In life, Merry and Ardleeat were notorious gossips. Their daughter, Raynee, had hoped to find some wealthy knight, marry him and leave town. Merry and Ardleeat were both enamored of this idea, hoping they might receive some money for their daughter. They may even bring this up with the characters. The sons are hard-working, but like their parents, talk too much.

If Cloudee and Mugee (the sons) are pulled aside and spoken with in private, they tell the tale of the hanged man from their perspective. The two explain that Lyoneth Doognam was a fine person and stalwart member of the community. Because of this, many in the village did not like him. He was successful in business and raised the best crops, was industrious and quite kind to everyone. But, they opine, "He must have made Wig and Curlieair angry because those two brought the charges against him. They said he was a cannibal!" There was a town meeting, and those who came voted to punish Lyoneth for the crime of cannibalism. Even the remains of a body were found in his house. He was taken out and hanged just a few days ago. Both deny being at the meeting, which decided Lyoneth's fate nor at the hanging. The latter is only partially true, they were both at the hanging. Both were somewhat excited about the event because they had never seen anyone hung before.

One might consider the lot of this family harmless. That would be wrong. All have an exaggerated desire for something interesting to happen so that they might have something to talk about. This insatiable desire leads each one of them to create stories, embellish, lie, or, on occasion, tell the truth just to create tension.

If any member of the family senses a character is interested in something or someone, they create elaborate or complex tales of an unsavory nature to keep that interest piqued. This can have outlandish ends.

All fight if necessary, though if possible, they hide or watch any fights from a distance, delighting in any carnage – even of their fellow villagers. If any of the characters showed an interest in Raynee, she pleads for mercy and restoration proclaiming all the while she would make a perfect wife for any member of the party.

MERRY *(He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d6, HP 17, AC 13, BTH +4, and Move 20 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tongue for 1d3 damage or one bite for 1d2 damage. His special ability is paralysis.)*

Merry's head is covered with mouths full of tongues. Teeth pour out of the stump and littler the ground. One four foot long tongue lashes out from any of the mouths.

ARDLEAAT *(She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 15, AC 12, BTH +3, and Move 30 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with two tentacles for 1d4 damage. Her special ability is restrain.)*

Ardleaat can hardly see as her eyes are on top of her head and covered in hair as thick as twigs. One huge gaping mouth consumes nearly the entirety of her head. Several flapping, moist tongue-like tendrils extend from the stump of neck.

RAYNEE *(She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 14, AC 15, BTH +3, and Move 40 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d3 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. Her special ability is restrain.)*

This faceless grotesquery is all stump attached to a mouth that constantly champs. A long tongue extends from her neck, dripping maggot-ridden saliva.

CLOUDEE *(He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 10, AC 15, BTH +3, and Move 40 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with two tentacles for 1d4 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. His special ability is restrain.)*

Cloudee has two mouths where his eye should be and one eye where his mouth should be. The stump dribbles a gooey, gray-pink ichor.

MUGEE *(He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 11, AC 14, BTH +3, and Move 40 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with three tentacles for 1d4 damage. His special ability is restrain.)*

Mugee's mouth has been sewn shut, his eyes gouged out and nose stuffed with foul meat. A tangle of veins and arteries dangle from his neck.

6: JOHNSON GRASS

Johnson Grass is a mean-spirited old cuss. He sits on the front of his dilapidated porch spitting and hissing obscenities at all those who pass by. Bad luck in life and being hampered by a diligent desire to do as little work as possible, left Johnson a bitter person, both at himself and the world. A trip to the Abyss only deepened that resentment.

While in the Abyss, a devil gave him the idea that a way to end this curse is to sacrifice some innocent person, or guilty person, or person in general to those deities who cursed him. This, the devil assured Johnson, is the surest path to ending the curse. A sacrifice is Johnson's only desire. He tries to set a trap and catch one of the characters. If successful, Johnson, having no idea how to make an actual sacrifice, begins gnawing the person alive.

Johnson joins with others in efforts to trap and capture any of the PCs. Should a fight ensue, Johnson is enthusiastic about joining, hoping to capture someone for sacrifice. If no fight erupts, Johnson tries to capture one of the party members in the last 6 hours of his time in the world and make a sacrifice.

JOHNSON *(He is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d6, HP 17, AC 15 and MOVE 20 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with two tentacles for 1d4 damage and a bite for 1d3 damage. His special abilities are infection, restrain, and dominate.)*

Johnson's head is a mangle of short and wide hair with to large gray eyes nestled in the mess. A mouth full of molars sits in a stump oozing gray effluvium. In a fight, two long moist pink tendrils extend from the eyes.

7: APPY AND AL O'WEEN

Appy and her husband Al make a curious couple because they seem to hate one another. They both mercilessly ridicule each other in public and private yet, are never more than a few feet apart. The two have a garden, field, and a few animals they tend. Al made a little extra coin repairing or making shoes. Their two surviving children are the beautiful and dumb Apple and the smart but ugly Pug.

Both were involved in killing Lyoneth Doognam, but only tangentially. They brought the rope used to hang the poor man. They watched as he hung from their rope. Appy and Al O'ween participated in the festivities afterward, but only for a short time. They do not involve themselves with the current party. If introduced to the PCs, they dutifully ignore them afterward. They are an insular lot and make jokes about the other villager's inadequacies and even those of the party. Al's attitude only changes if asked to make or repair some footwear. He then becomes very friendly and talkative.

Pug engages with a wizard or spellcasting class as that has always interested him. He asks to be taken away from the village and

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agrees to serve as an apprentice to any wizard. Apple is dumb as a human can be and still function. Her awareness of what has happened to her is minimal. In conversation, she often references burning pits, monsters, demons, and torture. So second-hand are these references that it is rather off-putting. Her commentary is referred to as nightmares by the others.

None of the O'Ween family care to fight much. They do, if pressed or if any one of the family members is attacked. Otherwise, they wait for their return to the Abyss staying in or near their house. Of the PCs find themselves in a desperate situation, the O'Ween family arrives like clockwork to help in any final acts of slaughter.

APPY *(This is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 30, AC 15 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d2 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Its special attacks are stench and restrain.)*

Appy's head is a mangle of decaying skin sloughing off like bloody dandruff. Ten tentacles whip around a round, lipless mouth full of razor sharp teeth.

AL *(This is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 21, AC 15 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with one tentacle for 1d6 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Its special attacks are dying stench, paralysis and restrain.)*

This head is bald and naked of any distinguishing features other than one large mouth, and eyes where lips should be. A spine, bloody flesh encasing much of it, drops from the stump and drags the ground.

APPLE *(This is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP 14, AC 14 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with 3 bony appendages for 1d4 damage. Its special attacks are disarm, stench, wounding, and restrain.)*

Apple's gorgeous features descend into a chaotic mess of maggot-ridden buboes, bulbous eyes, stringy green hair, and three bony appendages poking out of her stump.

PUG *(This is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d8, HP 26, AC 17 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d4 damage. Its special attacks are paralysis and restrain.)*

This is a floating ball of tentacles and a stump dripping ichor and worms.

8: CRANE AND EUM BONE

This ancient couple tend a small garden and a few pet goats. They make a tasty cheese, of which they are overly proud. The two are so old and thin that it is difficult not to stare at them. Their heads are hairless, and skin so drawn they appear little more than skeletons with skin loosely draped over them. The two are friendly and offer their cheese to the PCs. They even invite the PCs to tea and crackers. Their house is meager, but they enjoy what they have.

The two get along famously and quickly ignore anyone they might have been talking to as they begin to reminisce about their past. Once they begin talking to one another, the two completely ignore the characters. If any of the PCs are patient enough to listen to a few hours of inane conversation, their memories end up to the most recent event of import their life; the hanging of Lyoneth Doogman. They do not recall the abyss – a willful memory loss and quite a frustration for those who torture them.

Regarding Lyoneht, they speak to another about what a 'greedy lit snit' he was. "Always offering food and what nots to everyone, as if we could not provide for ourselves. How insulting," and "remember when he bought poor Walfar's land. Gave him all that gold! Where did he get that? Stole it if you ask me." If interrupted and asked for details, both not only act as if they do not know what the characters are talking about, but they actually do not remember anything past a few moments in the past – just up until the point they slipped under the curse. Their memory is long-term, with no short-term recall due to dementia. They may even have forgotten who the characters are by the time they are asked a question. Only the tea they drink revives their memory and then for only a little short time.

Crane's Tea: Cranes tea is not really tea anymore. It is mixed with vegetation from the Abyss. One of the bizarre effects of the tea is to make the memory sharper and recollection better. If at least one cup of the tea is drunk, the person gains a +1 to their intelligence for 24 hours. Also, a spellcaster can retrieve one spell they have used in the past 24 hours and use again. Drinking two glasses doubles the effect. Drinking three glasses causes an interaction with the body so that the tea acts as a type IV poison. The lesson here; practice moderation.

CRANE *(He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d4, HP 4, AC 10, BTH +2, and Move 10 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d3.)*

Crane's bald head has hardly changed since the curse. A dry stump has one limp tendril hanging from it.

EOM *(She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d4, HP 3, AC 10, BTH +2, and Move 10 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d3.)*

There is one threadbare patch of wispy gray hair on top of the wrinkled cranium that was once Eom. These hairs twine together as a rope when attacking.

9: FLOW AND ERB LOOM

Their life has been one of accidental and undeserved misery. Flow and Erb married long before they should have. The two moved to Grallow Shave with their three daughters and son to start life anew. They are both weavers and have a large loom (the only one in town) on which they make blankets, clothes and other necessities. They also raise flowers with all sorts of medicinal plants. They have four children in their teens and younger.



The Loom's have never been welcomed in the village. Not only were they seen as outsiders, they also had a skill that none in the village had mastered. The envy of their crafting skills created quite a rift between the villagers and this family. Flow and Erb grew to dislike most of the villagers prior to the cursing and now they despise them wholeheartedly. The two cling to the hope that they can be forgiven for their part in the murder of Lyoneth. Which was nothing. They did not even hear of it until the day after it happened, and of all the villagers, Lyoneth was the only one who treated the two with any kindness.

Their time in the Abyss and the millennia of torture they have endured has not sullied their hearts. The two treat the characters kindly if not guardedly at first. They attach themselves to any goodly aligned cleric and intimate that there is more going on in the village than is apparent. They hope to slowly inform the characters of the situation in the forlorn hope the characters can release them from this curse. Of course, there is only one way to do this.

If properly convinced, the whole family might willingly go to slaughter without a fight. If not convinced that through death they might have redemption, they fight back reluctantly but and will their best to not kill a character, just immobilize, stop or otherwise render them incapable of killing.

FLOW (He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 14, AC 17, BTH +3, and Move 40 feet. His

primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d3 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. His special abilities are paralysis and restrain.)

Flow's head is limp, saggy, yellow flesh slumping around a stump from which a spine protrudes.

ERB (She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 17, AC 18, BTH +3, and Move 30 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d3 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. Her special abilities are paralysis and restrain.)

Erb's blank face is crusted over with scabs. Roaches and crickets clamber out of her stump, mouth and ears. A spinal cords whips around madly beneath her stump.

DAUGHTERS X3 (These chaotic neutral, aberrations vital statistics are HD 3d4, HP Variable, AC 8 each, BTH +3, and Move 30 feet. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with one tentacle for 1d4 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. Their special ability is restrain.)

These heads fester and bubble with volcanic zits. Huge eyes pop out of their sockets and their stumps drizzle white spume around large lolling tongues.

SON (He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +3, and Move 20 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)

The son's head is relatively intact other than the huge gaping head wound exposing brain and a stump dangling a bloody spinal cord.

10: CLAM AND MORY CHOWDER

The Chowders live in a long single room house near the center of the village. The back of the house has a wide pen containing a dozen milk cows. A nearby garden overflowing with bounty. Clam and Mory have two daughters and three sons. The seven of them did quite well as dairy farmers and raising vegetables. Outside of town, they raised grain. They are all friendly when first meeting the PCs. That is, except one of the sons who was taciturn in life and more so in his half-life.

Clam and Mory enjoy fishing and use fish in almost every single soup they make. The two cook the most wonderful stews for the festival and dinner and breakfast. Clam and Mory and the three sons were witnesses to the hanging of Lyoneth. These were the only people in town to have raised a finger in Lyoneth's defense. For this, they were roundly rebuked and disparaged. Since being cursed, they have learned to keep their opinions and ideas to themselves and grew to hate their fellow villages and eventually hate everything. They even hate the living for being alive.

Mory and Clam only fight if their lives or the lives of their children are threatened. If attacked they resist, but not wholeheartedly. They are tired of their existence and know they will be returned from the dead even if killed so care little if killed. Other than the daughter, the children fight about as much as their parents.

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The daughter most assuredly does not want to die again and again and again. She is also beginning to relish killing.

Over the centuries, all the Chowders have come to despise their fellow villagers. The Chowders take great delight in watching the villagers being slaughtered. So great has this desire become that, if the PCs start slaughtering villagers, the Chowders help them. Only if the characters eventually turn on them do they half-heartedly fight the PCs.

Clam's Stew: Clam's stew is very good for the body. Should anyone eat a whole bowl of the stew, it imparts a +1d4 to their constitution for 1d6 hours with any hit points that may come with that adjustment. This does not affect the villagers but does affect the PCs and normal animals such as dogs.

CLAM *(This is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 16 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d4 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Its special attacks are stench and restrain.)*

This grotesquery randomly spews a gross briny, liquid from its nose, ears and mouth. The head is covered with large barnacle-like substances. Ten short appendages flap around a toothy mouth.

MORY *(This neutral evil, aberration's vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 16, BTH +4 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage. Its special abilities are blood drain, infection, fly, darkvision to 60 feet, and dominate.)*

This mass of festering, floating goo has two eyes popping out of a bulbous blob racked with sharp teeth. The stump drains a viscous purple sludge that reeks of rotten eggs and decayed flesh.

DAUGHTER *(This chaotic neutral, aberration's vital statistics are HD 3d4, HP Variable, AC 8 each, BTH +3, and Move 30 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d4 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. Her special ability is stench.)*

This head is little more than one large eyeball sitting above a mouth of green, green, rotting teeth. A single long tentacle. A long flabby appendage extends from where a nose should have been located.

MEAN DAUGHTER *(This neutral evil, aberration's vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 26, AC 16, BTH +4 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage or three tentacles for 1d4 damage. Its special abilities are blood drain, restrain, infection, and dominate.)*

Three scaly flaccid limbs drop from the stump spuming green, liquid, putrefaction. Tiny eyes peer out a tangle of worms wriggling all over the skull while a wide toothy mouth snaps open and shut constantly.

SONS X3 *(These are chaotic neutral, aberrations whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +3, and Move 20 feet. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with one bite for 1d2.)*

Three cracked and broken skulls dribble blood and brain matter. Wide gaping drooling mouths gasp for air. The stumps drip pure, fresh, clean blood.

11: NEIL AND DEGRAST ISON

Neil and Degrast Ison are both oddities. They both love the stars and spent most of their time in the land of the living scrabbling for a living and then staring at the stars. Neil is obsessed with the heavens and spends the evening looking into the night sky and trying to map out the heavens. His house is full of scraps of paper, cloth, bark, etc. with star maps all over them. Degrast spends her time trying to sort through the mess that Neil creates in the vain hope of making some sense of his scribbles and dots.

There is no sense to be made. Neil is nearly blind and usually maps fireflies and other glowing insects as often as the stars. Degrast is illiterate and has no idea what Neil's scribbles mean. He is also a decidedly evil person, easily the most gruesome and mean-spirited of the villagers. Degrast is only a slightly better person. This is not by intent, but an accident of lack of focus. It is Neil who led the cabal to have Lyoneth hung and is, in this respect, the centerpiece of the action Grallow Shave.

Long ago, in an effort to acquire some food, Degrast and Neil approached Lyoneth late one afternoon. The two tried to convince Lyoneth to buy some of their star charts. Lyoneth politely refused but offered some food out of the goodness of his heart. Of course, Neil and Degrast's egos were shattered at his refusal to buy their grand maps. An argument ensued with Neil and Degrast ascribing to Lyoneth a whole host of horrible personality traits such as narcissism, hatred of science, haughtiness, disdain for the elderly, greediness, etc. Lyoneth simply explained that the charts were muddled, wrong, incomplete, and not of any real value. Honesty was about to cost Lyoneth much more than peace-of-mind.

Fuming, the Ison's went home and hatched a plan to have Lyoneth hung. While Lyoneth was away in his field, they took some of their belongings and snuck them into Lyoneth's house, burned a portion of their barn, killed several of their animals, and spattered the blood over their bed and then smeared blood in Lyoneth's kitchen. They then beat each other up so that they were cut and bruised and appeared near death. They went to the town square, told everyone that Lyoneth was worshipping demons and had beaten them, stolen their star charts to summon a demon to slaughter some of their animals.

Many of the villagers, upon hearing this, were incredulous. The petty spites and hatreds many of them overwhelmed their common sense, sense of decency, propriety, justice, and a host of other traits that bind a society together. A trial was held in a well-lit tavern without Lyoneth there to answer the accusations. Truly, most of the villagers were horrible people beneath a skin of decency. Lyoneth was found guilty. When Lyoneth returned

from a walk in the woods, he was summarily taken into custody and shown all the evidence against him. Given no time to speak – at the egging of Neil and Degrast, he was taken to the edge of town and hung. Neil and Degrast certainly felt better. Until the curse that is.

The two never get to see the stars anymore except when back in the world. That is the true torture of the Abyss. They spend most of their time in the Abyss being whipped and tortured and burned and beaten. This has made them decidedly more evil than ever before and quite desirous of inflicting pain on any living creature they can find. As soon as the characters show up in town, the two begin plotting a manner to capture them and keep them alive so they can be brought to the abyss. There, they hope to trade the lives of the PCs for some semblance of freedom from torture on the abyss – or be allowed to torture the characters.

Neil and Degrast are the only two in town who can take a living creature to the Abyss. This is done by hanging them from the hangman's tree until dead. When the village is transported to the Abyss, those hanging from the tree are also transported to that infernal hole. There, they are raised from the dead and spend eternity in cells awaiting torture.

NEIL *(This is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 28, AC 16, BTH +5 and MOVE 20 feet. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with 1 tentacle for 1d10 damage and 1 bite for 1d8 damage. Its special attacks are dominate, stench, restrain, constrict and infection.)*

The floating blob is a fluid mass of scabrous peelings dripping around a wide mouth filled with short glinting canines. A wide, round tongue, dripping saliva, protrudes from its stump trailing along the ground.

EGAST *(This is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 25, AC 14, BTH +4 and MOVE 50 feet. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks with 3 tentacles for 1d6 damage and 1 bite for 1d4 damage. Its special attacks are dominate, stench, restrain, constrict, and infection.)*

Thin paper-like, transparent skin stretches over a skull writing with maggots. Its eyes hang on long tendons, whipping around the head in various directions. Three thin and long snake-like appendages stretch out from its stump.

12: PO AND KEE MAAN (2)

Po and Kee Maan were warriors extraordinaire. Without their bodies, they are not good at doing what they once had. While they have control over their bodies while in the world, both are aware that this control is tenuous at best and that their heads may become dislodged with too much activity, so they usually do not fight. However, they can be engaged to fight if they become excited enough. If the PCs become aware of the martial background of Po and Kee and begin trading stories, the two become ever more excited. After a time, each must make a charisma check; if either fails, one or the other or both may just challenge a player to a wrestling match, boxing match, or other

similar activity. This does not end well. Should either of the two receive more than 3 points of damage on single blow, their head detaches. In this case, the head quickly attempts to reattach but will not be able to.

Po and Kee's house is shaped like a horseshoe. The enclosed portion has a fence at one end. In the middle are several large stakes used for fist striking practice, sword-swinging, obstacle dodging, and similar devices. A few racks with sashes and leather gloves and other martial practice items are arranged around the yard. They have a garden, in horrible shape.

The two join whomever in whatever plan or activity is underway, whether it be chasing and scaring the PCs, fighting them outright, or setting up a trap. The two just want to part of the action. Neither attended the hanging but felt no remorse or guilt in the matter as well. Of anyone in the village, these two could have easily prevented the hanging with threats alone considering their martial prowess. They are damned for this.

PO *(This is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 32, AC 15, BTH +5 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 1 tentacle for 1d12 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Its special attacks are stench, restrain, constrict, and tendril sweep.)*

Po's head is splits and cracks and breaks leaking fluid and gray ooze that dribbles down his face to coalesce in a stinking, thick tendril dissipating at its end.

KEE *(This is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 13, BTH +5 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 3 tentacles for 1d4 damage and 1 bite for 1d10 damage. Its special attacks are restrain and rend.)*

One huge mouth bristling with razor sharp teeth dominates this head. Wispy strands of thick brown hair pepper the cranium. Three ungainly and awkward tendrils erupt from where the ears and nose once were.

13: WIG AND CURLIEAIR BOUFFANT

Wig and his wife Curlieair live in a large clapboard house with a thatch roof. Both are evil to the core, and two of the major culprits insuring poor Lyoneth was hanged. They both detested the goodness of the man so much that they told others in the village things about Lyoneth that were incredulous, not true, or only half true. These rumors and gossip seeped into the already poisoned minds of several of the villagers so that the accusations leveled by Neil and Degrast were readily accepted by many.

Wig and Curlieair have an obsession with hair and believe themselves to be phenomenal stylists. They are not. The two have a small barn with several pigs in a yard. They also have a large barley field and make a good brew which they hand out at the festivities. They also enjoy doing other people's hair for the festivities. Only a few people in the village allow this to be done anymore, and they hope the PCs will allow them a chance to do some new hair. While doing so they do speak of Lyoneth if asked. Neither has anything kind to say about the man.

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During the time the PCs are here, the couple attempt to scare the PCs by telling them terrifying things or wander headless at a great distance from the characters so that they might be glimpsed. They avoid, as much as possible, exposing their true form to the PCs until or if necessary. Both fight ferociously to protect themselves, but otherwise, they attempt to avoid any fight.

WIG (He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 14, AC 12, BTH +3, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 2 tentacles for 1d3 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. His special ability is restrain.)

A matt of long stringy, greasy, unkempt, smelly hair covers this entire head. Two tentacles extend from the stump, constantly brushing hair out of the way.

CURLIEAIR (She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 3d6, HP 14, AC 12, BTH +3, and Move 30 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d2 damage. Her special abilities are constrict and restrain.)

Long slimy hair dangles in massive dreadlocks from this pale skull. The stump bubbles and froths worms, maggots and tiny flying insects.

14: TIE AND NEE WILLOW

These two innocuous halflings and their 8 children have a lavish garden and raise miniature pigs and goats. They are generous to a fault. They have produced such a bounty of food it is of no consequence to give away as much as they can. They are also devilishly cruel in the kindest possible way. They enjoy intentionally making small slights and delivering back-handed insults to those around them. The two depend on the natural affection men have for big, doe-eyed, innocent, and small defenseless halflings for their protection.

They did not have much to do with the hanging of Lyoneth. Yet they did attend the gathering, and admittedly offered no defense for the man. Afterwards they enjoyed some jokes about the event, and even stole a few of Lyoneth's animals. But their time in the Abyss has not actually been that bad, all things considered. A devil has grown somewhat fond of the two and their ability to insult others, so they are not tortured - much. This has encouraged the two, and the whole family, to refine their art of viciously insulting others.

They all hide if challenged to a fight, cowering in their hole in the ground until rooted out and killed. In no way do they join the others in combat of any sort.

TIE (He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 20 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)

This bobble-headed caricature of a halfling's head has massive eyes, a huge bulbous nose, wide flappy lips, and a spindly spinal cord dangling from the stump.

NEE (She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 20 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)

Nee's head becomes a wide mouth topped by beady eyes and a tiny nose. A large tongue lashes out of the mouth, often licking a stump dripping vile fluids.

CHILDREN X8 (These are chaotic neutral, aberrations whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 3, AC 11, BTH +2, and Move 10 feet. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with one bite for 1d2. Their special ability is infection.)

Ugly, cracked, green teeth dominate these faces. A half dozen little tongues lap and lick the grotesquely deformed lips.

15 BLUDEE BLOOD AXE

Bludee lives in a stone house built like a small fortress. The doors and rooms are not made to accommodate anyone but those of his size. The house is three stories high with a flat roof and battlements. Bludee is often inside, trying to figure out how to rid himself of this curse.

Only at the height of the celebrations does he make an appearance. Should anyone want to talk to him, he answers the door by going to the ceiling and speaking down upon all those who come to visit. He never invites anyone into his house.

Bludee did not care about Lyoneth's hanging. He knows that the Isons were involved in setting up the whole affair but said nothing, considering the whole affair the problem of humans and not that of a dwarf. The gods saw it differently.

Bludee joins the celebration shortly before midnight before the heads become completely detached from the bodies of the villagers. He does not stay long and returns to his house. While in the semblance of former self, he fights with crossbows and other weapons. If he becomes a headless creature, he tries to remain hidden in his fortress. In all events, he fights diligently until killed. He wants to solve the curse for himself.

BLUDEE (He is a lawful evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 24, AC 13, BTH +4 and MOVE 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with two tentacles for 1d4 damage and one tongue lash for 1d2 damage. His special abilities are constrict, restrain and tongue lash.)

A viscous fluid seeps out of cuts that cover the entire face of this bald skull. A tiny mouth is hidden by a massive beard crawling with vermin. The beard's end is tangled into two long braids whipping around angrily.

16: ALOISIOUS AND APPI NEZ (9)

These two bumbling fools married young and had too many children to care for. All the children were very healthy and boisterous, much like their parents. There were seven children living in the Nez household at the time of the curse. Aloisious and Appi raised cattle, sheep, pigs, dogs, chickens and whatever other animals they could manage to pen. They also had a

random assortment of vegetables and plants growing in their garden and on a tract of land.

Perennially hungry and poorly attired even for peasants, the whole Nez family wandered about the village and beyond looking for odd jobs and handouts. Being naturally healthy and big and outwardly friendly, they all survived for years. This is not a nice family despite outward appearances. All attended the hanging of Lyoneth, making a kind of party out of the event. Afterward, they went and robbed Lyoneth's house, stole his animals and ate what could be found in the cupboard.

The Abyss has been an otherworldly source of pain and suffering for this family. The demons take some pleasure in rounding up the family, placing them in pens and chasing them around beating, cutting and generally just torturing them. As soon as the last six hours of the village's time in the world, these quickly shed their bodies and go hunting for the characters. They enjoy nothing more than terrifying the PCs, forcing them to run and try to escape the village. Then the whole family joins in the chase playing cat and mouse with the characters until they can be killed.

ALOISIOUS *(This is a neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 30, AC 16, BTH +5 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 10 tentacles for 1d4 damage and 1 bite for 1d6 damage. Its special attacks are paralysis and restrain.)*

The skin around Aloisious' jaw has been eaten away by an immortal mouse that has made this mouth its home. Stringy hair tumbles around much the rest of the head and rails the ground.

APPI *(This neutral evil, aberration's vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 16, BTH +4 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage. Its special abilities are blood drain, infection, and stench.)*

Singed and burned, the skin on this skull is just a mass of bubbling flesh, raw and painful to look on. A wide mouth is filled with circle upon circle of long shar canines. Blood and a foul-smelling yellow liquid leak from the stump.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS X7 *(These are neutral evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 3, AC 11, BTH +1 and MOVE 20 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d4 damage. Their special abilities are darkvision to 60 feet and stench.)*

These mouthy miscreants have all become liquefied. They have no skeletal material in the heads. The heads are in a constant state of sloughing. Small prey mantises prevent them from completely disintegrating by grabbing the flesh and pulling it back together.

17: GROO AND SUM DETH

Groo and his son Sum live near the edge of town in a long, simple one room building. They keep a few cattle and sheep. They have a peculiar history. Decades ago, the rest of this once

extensive family died in peculiar circumstances. Groo and Sum claimed bandits slew the rest of the family. Others believe, well, they do not believe Groo's story, and they are right not to believe it.

Groo and Sum raise sheep and cattle and have a small garden. They have become the village's butchers over the years. A calling to which they are particularly adept. Their house and butchering stalls smell horrible, and they make little effort to clean the mess made by butchering animals. It is an altogether uninviting place with piles of rotting meat outside the barn and butchering area, trails of blood and splatterings of flesh everywhere.

These two placed Lyoneth on the back of a cow and drooped the noose around his neck. They both encouraged the cow to run, and so were the final actors in Lyoneth's death. An act that many noticed the two seemed to enjoy. These are altogether cruel men, psychopaths who enjoy watching others suffer and die. Neither of the two care for any of the other villagers. They have found damnation to be somewhat liberating. They get to watch each other tortured for all eternity.

In a fight, both Groo and Sum become excited but remain out of it until victory is assured. At that point, the two leap into the fray, hoping to capture one PC to bring back to the butchering barn.

GROO *(He is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 5, AC 10, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 15 tentacles for 1 point of damage. His special abilities are impervious to metal, restrain and constrict.)*

This floating skull appears as a heap of rotting flesh with two bulbous eye sticking out of it. Piles of long, thin, green tendrils erupt from the scalp, dragging the ground.

SUM *(He is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 6, AC 11, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 10 tentacles for 1 point of damage. His special abilities are torturous rake, constrict, stench and dying stench.)*

This bizarre skull has a small creature running across it, ripping off pieces of flesh and eating them. Tentacles whip around madly, trying to catch this beast but never quite can.

18: WADDLE AND DAUB HAUZ

Waddle and Daub Hauz live near the edge of town. Though they have a garden and a large patch of barley and wheat they tend to, most of their time is spent repairing other's houses. Waddle advises the PCs on any and all house related construction if asked – even if not asked. The two are very proud of their abilities and regale anyone willing to listen about their various accomplishments.

Waddle and Daub were aware of the hanging but not involved directly in the event. They did not offer to defend poor Lyoneth even though Lyoneth had paid the two considerable sums over the years to repair his house and barn, and they had a friendly

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relationship. Their time in the Abyss has made the two horribly depressed. Not only can they no longer build anything, but they are tortured all the time.

Waddle and Daub both fight if cornered, but their depression is so deep that they give up quickly and accept their fate. They join the festivities late, knowing their bodies will give way shortly and actually make an effort to enjoy themselves for a few hours before heading back to the Abyss.

WADDLE *(He is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)*

This sad affair appears to be weeping tears from every remaining gland on its skull. The tears burn and sear the flesh as the drip down. Two long tongues snake out of its mouth lapping them up and, in the process, burning the tongue.

DAUB *(She is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 7, AC 14, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)*

Daub's skull is a fester of maggots boring and wriggling their way beneath the skin only to erupt somewhere else. The ragged tear on her stump opens and closes, regurgitating a cloud of flies every time it opens.

19: ORD AND OLLIE GAMZ

These two halflings have been married for a long time. Ord is thin as a rail, and Ollie is so fat she can barely walk. The two are hilarious together. They joke with one another and everyone around. Ollie is extremely intelligent, witty and has a great sense of humor that, honestly, some find caustic to downright abrasive. Ord is about as smart as a poorly fired brick that cracked into a million pieces but is so affable one can't help but enjoy being in his presence. He is also clumsy as a bull in a china shop, which leads to a lot of the humor between Ord and Ollie.

They are kleptomaniacs and liars. Each has a petty evil streak that would be amusing if it were not so cruel. The two steal anything they can for no other reason than that they can. Most of the stuff they have stolen over the years simply ended up in a fire pit. They especially enjoy stealing sentimental items and destroying them. They make every effort to steal from the party. This has to be a fairly safe undertaking because they do not fight and have no real fighting skills. They generally wait until the PCs leave something unattended to pilfer what they want.

When Lyoneth was hung, the two were busy pilfering Lyoneth's house, looking for sentimental scraps. They found a box of love letters. They forthwith went to the tree before Lyoneth was hung to show him what they had. The last moment of Lyoneth's life was watching these two look through his love letters. Ord and Ollie have a special place in the Abyss. The demons, often torn between admiration for their cruelty and disdain for their very existence, almost always elect to lay them upon the most painful of racks to torture them every hour of every day.

In a fight, the two stand by one another and await their punishment. They are so accustomed to pain and suffering they are numbed to the fear and hope to end it as quickly as possible. They simply do not, under any circumstances, defend themselves in a fight. If the PCs are being attacked, Ord and Ollie linger in the background hurling insults or making jokes.

ORD *(He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 20 feet. He has no primary attributes. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d2 damage.)*

Scabs cover this little floating grotesquery. Spiders erupt from tiny pustules to start the process of tearing off rotten skin. They crawl back into festering engorged pores. A small spine dangles from a bloody stump coughing out bile.

OLLIE *(She is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 20 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with one tentacle for 1d2 damage.)*

A long and limp tentacle grows from the top of this cranium where it nestles itself like a curled up snake, Crickets clamber all across the skull. The stump spews purple blobby blood.

20: PAASATHEE BRETT

What a brutal life she has had. Paasathee's parents died when she was young, her brothers died on her 20th birthday, her husband died when she was just 30, and all her children died in a plague a few years after. The curse that is upon Paasathee has dogged her since youth. It was so apparent that no one in the village would even speak to her nor even look at her. To walk in her shadow was considered a death sentence, to speak her name was to call a curse upon oneself. Paasathee was all alone by forty and remained so for the following twenty years of her life until the curse fell upon the village.

Paasathee prefers it this way. She is indeed cursed. It is no surprise that all those around her died. She may have acted upset by all those events but was not. All those lives were given to her demonic possessor with pleasure because this beast so tormented Paasathee that the deaths of those around her were a welcome relief as the demon lessened his tortures during that time. He left her broken and alone twenty years before the curse.

Of all those here, she is perhaps the most to be feared. Once she went to the Abyss, the other demons recognized her and smiled. They gave her many powers and contorted her to fulfill their demonic desires. She simply sits back and waits during any fight, not caring one way or the other what happens to the villagers or the PCs. Her aims lie elsewhere. However, should the characters come close to killing everyone in the village, she goes hunting the party with the intent of capturing and torturing them in the Abyss. If possible, she would sell one of the PCs as a slave to a demonic lord.

PAASATHEE *(This is a lawful evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 7d10, HP 55, AC 18, and MOVE 50 feet. Its primary attributes are physical and mental. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage and six tentacles for 1d6 damage. Its special*

abilities are SR10, stench, dying stench, darkvision to 300 feet, constrict, restrain, paralysis, infection and permanent damage.)

Paasathee has a beautiful face and white hair. While in the Abyss those devils transformed her face so that it was more beautiful than her lifetime. Three large tentacles extend from the stump.

21: IMMA AND NADFE ANORANUMENOR

Imma and Nadfe Anoranumenor are elves who came to reside in the village ages ago. They intended to teach others how to better farm or work with nature rather than against it. They got caught up in the whole fiasco of damnation and punishment. The two have been seriously tainted by their time in the Abyss such that they have gone from very good to insidiously evil. Not only do the two want to keep the curse in action, they rather take some delight in trapping and torturing others.

Both look forward to the arrival of the characters and treat them kindly, even with affection. This is a ruse to gain the characters' trust, as the two plan to trap one or more of the characters in their spacious and glorious house. The two have never needed elaborate traps nor even fighting skills to capture their prey. They rely on their wit and charm to gain trust and a hefty dose of a sleeping potion in a glass of wine, water, coffee or beer served to their guests. The latter requires a constitution save at CL5 otherwise the person imbibing it falls asleep for 1-6 hours. Should the character(s) fall asleep, they wake to shackles on their hands and feet. These are attached by chains and hooks to a wall in a bedroom. The elves commence to merciless torture of those in chains.

IMMA *(He is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 12, AC 12, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with 2 tentacles for 1d3 damage. His special abilities are constrict and restrain.)*

Imma's gaunt skull has strips of skin flayed off it creating a checkboard pattern of pain. Two slender tentacles whip around a bloody stump that dribbles ichor and bile.

NADFE *(She is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 12, AC 12, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with 2 tentacles for 1d3 damage. Her special abilities are constrict and restrain.)*

This head retains all the beauty of its mortal form except for the stump that is. The cleanly cut stump dangles two long and thin wispy tentacles. Once her head is detached, Nadfe begins crying and can not stop.

22: BURDST BLATTER THE DEMREED

Burdst lives in the most wretched hovel the town has to offer. This shack is located by a large pigsty and where most people dispose of their waste. He lives alone. Despite his surroundings, Burdst is the most affable person in town, if not the smelliest.

Burdst holds no grudge against anyone and is one of the few people in town who refuses to fight, run or hide but remains in his hovel, and, if death comes to him, so be it. If asked, Burdst

tells the PCs exactly what happened and expresses regret at his not having stood up and defended Lyoneth. He does not join in the festivities nor bother to introduce himself to anyone. However, once engaged in conversation, he is witty, humorous, intelligent, caring and understanding.

Burst personally feels that his current existence is punishment for his sin. He is right. He is the only person in the village who feels this way and willingly embraces this punishment. As a result of this acceptance, should the characters kill everyone in the village, Burdst is the only one returned to life near the hangman's tree. He is returned in the full breadth of his youth and as a lawful good 1st level Cleric who owes the PCs a debt. See "Treasure" below.

BURDST *(He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +3, and Move 20 feet. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)*

This floating wreckage has two large blind eyes sitting over a massive and wide nose out of which there is a constant flow of tiny beetles. These scurry across the scalp and up into the stump only to come out the nose again. The stump belches frothy white liquid. The spinal cord limply drags the ground.

23: PRALING HORSHIFFEREN

Praling and her nine children live in a large rambling old windmill. The windmill does not work anymore and is in tatters. Several pens and cages are strewn about the windmill as if the wind had blown them there. Praling raises goats and pigs and has a large garden and fields to take care of the outside of town. She and her children, who range in age from 5 to 20, all work around the mill. This is an argumentative lot with much yelling and screaming accompanying their every movement and action.

Of particular interest is the 5-year old. He has a habit of losing his head, quite literally, because he is so rambunctious. When others are not around, the 5-year old is allowed to do as it pleases. However, the others try to hide the child when outsiders are in the village. They even go so far as to tie up the body and head on the upper floor of the windmill to keep them together and others from seeing the child.

Praling did not care for Lyoneth. She blamed him for the decline of her windmill and business. This has no bearing on reality and is a complete concoction of a mind desperate to blame others for her own faults. After her husband died, no one ran the windmill, most especially Praling. It fell into disrepair. Praling lacked the skills of her husband, so the lives of she and her children markedly declined.

She participated in the hanging as a spectator and received some petty satisfaction for Lyoneth's death. Her life afterward did not improve, and it markedly declined in the Abyss. In a fight, most of the children run and hide in the windmill and hope not to be slaughtered. They fight half-heartedly if cornered. Praling herself involves herself in capturing the PCs or killing them. She, like others, mistakenly believe if enough souls are given to the demons of the Abyss, they might be freed. The older children join their mother.

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PRALING (She is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d8, HP 12, AC 12, BTH +2 and MOVE 30 feet. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with two tentacles for 1d4 damage and one bite for 1d6 Damage. Her special abilities are constrict, restrain and dominate.)

Long tendrils ending in flat paddles with suckers on them protrude from the stump of the skull. The skull has been shorn of all flesh with only a few remaining gobs of muscles attached to it.

OLDER CHILDREN X4 (These chaotic neutral, aberrations vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 7, AC 11, BTH +2, and Move 30 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with one tentacle for 1d4 damage or one bite for 1d3 damage. Their special ability is restrain.)

These beastly heads, bubbling in boils and scabs, float just slightly above the ground, each dragging one short bloody spine and flapping tendons.

YOUNGER CHILDREN X3 (This is a neutral evil, extraplanar whose vital statistics are HD 1d10, HP 5, AC 10, BTH +1 and MOVE 20 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d4 damage. Its special abilities are darkvision to 60 feet and permanent damage.)

The tiny skulls of the youngest children are covered with mouths and champing teeth. They babble and scream incessantly dripping blood, ichor and goo from their stumps.

24: BAGGI PANTZ

Baggi lives in a small hut. He tends some cattle and sells chickens. He is proud of his chickens but loves beheading them. He does this with zeal and obvious joy – should anyone be spying upon him. His wife is long dead, and all his children left home to wander the world. All except one that is; Ambler.

Ambler is a cripple and cannot walk. He lived his entire life in a bed. Ambler, envious of those around him and their ability to walk, resents his father for having passed bad seed onto him. Baggi Pantz and Ambler do not get along and fight all the time.

Ambler does not like the first 40 hours of his time in the world, for he is confined once more to his body and bed. During the last six hours he is free to roam and speeds around the village until returned to the Abyss. Baggi joins the festivities, enjoying himself immensely until the last moments. Neither gives much of a fight in the end.

BAGGI (He is a chaotic neutral, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 20 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with one tentacle for 1d2.)

This head is nearly intact. The mouth is shut with staples while the ears and nose are covered with a green rotting skin sewn over them. A long spine extends from the stump limply dragging the ground.

AMBLER (He is a chaotic evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 1d8, HP 3, AC 10, BTH +1 and MOVE special. His primary attributes are non-existent. He attacks with one



tentacle for 1 point of damage. Ambler can only move in the last six hours before the village is returned to the Abyss.)

25: RAFERD RED DOG

Raferd was once an adventurer and able warrior. He retired to while away his last years in Grallow Shave as a hobby farmer. Raferd married and has four male children; Shadow, Murphy, Lucky, and King. His wife died years ago. All his children had moved away though were in Grallow Shave for a visit at the time of the hanging.

Raferd stood by and watched Lyoneth being hanged and did nothing to help nor hinder the process. He did not want to become involved and risk his welfare and standing in the community. The same could be said of his children.

Guilt, and not a little shame, lingering somewhere inside Raferd. He is obviously depressed and spends most of his time in the world moping for the fate of him and his children. Once discovered, he is dismayed and puts up the meagerest of fights. He would prefer his damnation end - both in the world and in the Abyss. The same could be said of his children.

RAFERD (He is a lawful evil, aberration whose vital statistics are HD 4d10, HP 34, AC 14, BTH +4 and MOVE 30 feet. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with two tentacles for 1d6 damage and one bite for 1d4 damage. His special abilities are restrain, constrict and tendril sweep.)

This sad skull has a wide droopy mouth from which emerge green beetles and tiny red worms. The scalp is a mangle of marred flesh. Two long, thick tendons reach out from his stump like tongues licking of the beetles and worms.

CHILDREN X4 *(These are chaotic neutral, aberrations whose vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 4, AC 15, BTH +2, and Move 20 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with one tentacle for 1d2 damage.)*

These skulls stay close together, circling one another constantly, groaning in pain. The scalps are stripped of their flesh exposing bare muscle and the grotesquery of death. Their spines dangle in bloody scraps from their stumps.

THE WELL

There is an abandoned well at the edge of the village. It can just barely be seen from the town. All around the well are four-foot-tall wooden structures of bizarre and unworldly make. These are of such bizarre make that they can give the person looking at them a headache when first viewed. When first viewed within a few dozen feet, the PC makes a CL4 charisma check. Failure causes a headache and nausea. The nausea and headache caused are so bad that any mental and physical attribute check is made at a -4 for the next 6 hours.

The well is covered by a wooden pallet. The smell of sulfur emanates from within. If the pallet is lifted, a waft of warm sulfurous air comes out. The flow of air quickens and becomes forceful for a few minutes before relenting. Looking in, all appears normal except a small red glow somewhere in the bottom. Should a rock or anything be dropped in, it makes no sound. Climbing down the well leads to that part of the abyss where the village rests most of the year.

An adventure in the Abyss is outside the prevue of this module. The well extends some thousand feet down before anyone enters the Abyss. Once there, all is up to the Castle Keeper.

If the villagers are asked about the well, they act astonished and frightened. If asked in the last six to twelve hours of the adventure, the answers should become a bit more unnerving, eventually revealing the true nature of the well.

THE HANGMAN'S TREE

The hangman's tree is now a semi-sentient aberration consumed with the evil of the Abyss. Should anyone sleep under the tree, it tries to kill them. Other than that, it cannot move or act. The tree can entwine at least six people in its appendages. After this, the tree attempts strangulation while dripping acid on them from its limbs.

Should the character have successfully ended the curse and not killed the tree, it dies anyway and becomes a normal old rotting dead tree.

HANGMAN'S TREE *(This neutral evil, aberration's vital statistics are HD 6d10, HP 60, AC 17 and MOVE None. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with six appendages for 1d2 damage. Its special attacks are entwine, strangulation and acid.)*

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this adventure. The only reward comes if the PCs end the curse on the village. In the case that this happens, it is Burdst Blatter the Denreed (Area 22) who dispenses the reward. He is indebted to the PCs and thankful for their ending the curse. Burdst has been given power by the gods who aid the curse on the village and has become their will in the world. The gods are also thankful for the characters' actions, wanting the affair to come to an end.

Burdst gives each character a blessing and beneficence. Every character is allowed to increase one attribute by one point. This is a permanent effect. The only manner in which it can be removed is if the character becomes evil or performs an act of such horrific nature that the gods might become displeased.

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