

Patterns of Evil

An Adventure for Lost Souls

By Kathleen Williams & Joe Williams

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Email me at: freeRPGs@comcast.net

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Introduction

This adventure is designed to start directly after the players have finished an assignment, but before they summon a Tunnel of Light to return to Limbo.

It is about 10 pm on a cool autumn night when the lost souls are approached by a little girl dressed in a nightgown. She pleads with them: "Someone put my teddy bear in a tree! Will you get him down for 'me?'"

Rebecca Morley

Type: Good person

Consistency: Material

Defense: Pathetic

WTL: 10

Abilities: Good Charm, Great Persuade

Appearance: A four year old child dressed in a flannel nightgown. Her feet are bare and she speaks with a slight lisp.

Personality: Direct and charming.

Motivation: To get her teddy bear out of the tree.

Combat: Becky is defenseless against attacks by the living and the supernatural.

Powers: Becky is a budding medium, though she is unaware of her powers. She assumes that the ghosts are living persons.

Rescuing the Bear

If questioned, Becky will elaborate on her story. "Somefing woke me up - maybe nanny slammed the door too loud. Teddy was gone! The window was open so I twied to close it. Then I saw someone had put teddy in the tree. Pweese get him for me - my gramma made him for me.

He's special. If you hug him, all your ouchies go away."

The party will be unable to persuade Becky that they cannot physically interact with the bear. She will insist that they try and will lead them to a tree near a hedge. A full moon shines brightly on the scene and the party can easily see the bear. Climbing the tree takes a Passable Climb roll. If a party member touches the toy, he will discover that it is a dual object. If hugged, the bear heals all WTL damage, but it works only once per character during the adventure.

While one of the players is in the tree, a hulking brute looms out of the shadows of the hedge, grabs Becky, and subdues her with a chloroform-soaked rag. He stuffs her limp body into a gunny sack as he leaps through the bushes.

Bo Deckman

Type: Evil person

Consistency: Material

Defense: Superior

WTL: 30

Abilities: Good Stealth, Great Brawling, Superior Lie

Appearance: A heavy-set man wearing black clothing. He has a small bottle in his hip pocket. For his size, he is surprisingly nimble and quick on his feet.

Personality: Cruel and cunning.

Motivation: To kidnap Becky.

Combat: Bo carries a dual consistency 9mm pistol with a silencer which does (Defense vs. Great) x 3 damage to either the living or the dead.

Powers: Bo is a henchman of Herbert Moss, an evil spirit trapped on Earth (see below). In order for Bo to interact with Moss, he must drink an arcane potion every day. This allows him to see all supernatural creatures for 12 hours. He drank a dose just one hour ago.

Fighting Bo

Bo has a car parked on the other side of the hedge. He will try to dump the sack containing Becky in the back seat and drive away. The players may try to stop him, but once Bo is in the car and driving away they will not be able to keep up with him.

If Bo is captured or subdued, he will claim a strange woman approached him in a bar, offering him \$200 if he would kidnap her child from her abusive father. Becky will deny this, but Bo will stick to his story, though he knows it is a lie. Becky will ask the party to find out who would want to hurt her and teddy.

Making Vows

Although lost souls normally make ghostly vows while in Limbo, it is possible to make a vow while on Earth. Some possible vows are:

- I will not rest until Becky is returned to her home.
- I will not rest until I discover who wants to kidnap Becky.
- I will not rest until I return the teddy bear to Becky.

Becky's Home

If Becky has been kidnapped, the players can track her tiny footprints in the mud to the back door of a nearby house. If she's with the group, she will simply lead them to her home. The back door is ajar, and just as the party enters, they can hear the front doorbell chime. A few moments later, a woman rushes around the corner of the house and slips inside the back door. If she sees Becky, the woman will stare at her aghast, blurting, "What are you doing here?"

Sandra Cunningham (the nanny)

Type: Neutral person
Consistency: Material

Defense: Passable

WTL: 20

Abilities: Good Conceal, Passable Lie

Appearance: A slim woman with short blonde hair and pale blue eyes. She is about 23 years old and wears a conservative dress with sensible shoes. They are muddy, indicating that she has been outside recently.

Personality: Weak-willed and malleable.

Motivation: To help Bo, her latest boyfriend, kidnap Becky. She knows nothing of Herbert Moss.

Combat: Sandra does not fight.

Powers: Sandra has no powers.

Sandra met Bo a few weeks ago at a singles bar. He told her Becky's parents were hiding a fortune, and together they planned to kidnap Becky for a ransom. Knowing that it would be too risky for Bo to enter the house, Sandra arranged for the crime to take place outdoors. She put the bear in the tree and made sure Becky awoke to find it missing. Sandra also left the nursery window open on a cold autumn night to ensure that the child would be drawn to it and see her bear stuck in the tree at the end of the garden. Gambling on Becky's self-reliance, she hoped that the child would try to retrieve the bear herself, which is exactly what happened.

After seeing Bo grab Becky, Sandra snuck out the back door and around to the front, leaving a ransom note on the door. She rung the bell then hurried back into the house from the rear entrance, ready with her story of "I couldn't sleep so I decided to warm some milk in the kitchen."

The Ransom Note

Becky's parents are in the living room when the doorbell rings. Her father, Taylor Morley, is reading a book while her mother Sarah sews. Taylor answers the door and finds a note pinned to it. It reads:

WE HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER. YOU WILL PAY US 1 MILLION IN GOLD FOR HER RETURN. WE KNOW YOU HAVE SPECS O'MAL-LEY'S LOOT SO DON'T TELL US YOU'RE BROKE. WE WILL CONTACT YOU BY PHONE IN A FEW HOURS WITH FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. DO NOT LEAVE

YOUR HOUSE AND DO NOT CONTACT THE COPS.
IF YOU DO, THE KID DIES.

When the father reads the note, he throws it aside and dashes upstairs to look for Becky (If Becky was rescued by the party, a tearful reunion will occur).

Mr. Morley is bewildered. "Who is Specs O'Malley?" He wonders aloud. Mrs. Morley ponders the question. "Mother once had a boarder named Mr. O'Malley. He might be one of the men in that picture on the mantle. But I'm not really sure. I'll call her."

If the lost souls examine the old photograph on the mantelpiece, they will see a young woman (Grandma Ruff) standing between two men. One of them is very handsome, and holds a comb in his hands. The other is plainer and wears glasses. In the background is a sign reading "Ruff Bed & Breakfast." On the back are the words, "Herbie, Specs & Agnes, 1933" but a supernatural power is needed to extricate the picture from its frame and turn it over.

Mrs. Morley tries to make the call, but receives no answer. "I'm worried, Taylor. It's late and mother isn't answering. I must go to her." Mr. Morley stops his wife, reminding her that their child's life is at stake. Or, if Becky was not kidnapped, he will say they must stay and protect her. He offers to check on Sarah's mother in the morning.

Implicating Sandra

The nanny Sandra will lie to conceal her involvement in the kidnapping, and the Morley family will believe her unless they are presented with hard evidence that she is guilty. This can be found in her bedroom, just off of the nursery.

After searching the room, the party may find the following:

- A wallet-sized picture of Bo with "Love, to Sandy" written on the back. Becky can identify the man in the picture as her assailant.
- A crumpled note and envelope in her wastepaper basket which is dated October 17th and reads "Tonight." The paper has the same watermark as the ransom note.

The lost souls may tell Becky their suspicions about Sandra and urge her to warn her parents, but Mr. and Mrs. Morley will view her accusations as a childish dislike for a new nanny.

Denouncing Sandra to the Morleys will be especially difficult if Becky is not available. However, a supernatural power may convince them that the nanny knows more than she's telling. If forced to, Sandra will admit that Bo has kidnapped the girl. She knows nothing more.

Finding Grandma

Since there is little else of interest in the Morley home, the party may wish to visit Grandma Ruff's house. In fact, if Becky is present, she will ask them to look in on her beloved granny; after all, she was the one who gave her the wonderful bear. Becky will give directions to Grandma Ruff's house, which is only a few blocks away.

The lost souls can discover this information on their own by examining the following clues:

- A scrapbook entitled "Our Wedding" lays on the coffee table. Using a supernatural power, the players can flip through it and read that Sarah's maiden name is Ruff.
- An address book is next to the phone. It contains the address for Agnes Ruff at 1227 SE Lovingood St.
- A phone book can be found tucked in a book shelf near the phone. The address for Ruff's Bed & Breakfast can easily be found.

Grandma Ruffs House

The house is located only a few blocks from the Morley home. A Bed & Breakfast sign hangs near the door; a smaller sign reading "Closed until March 15" is posted underneath it. The windows are all ablaze, and a shadowy figure lurks behind the curtains. The front door has been partially ripped from its hinges.

When the characters enter the house, they see a cozy parlor. A bookcase contains a jumble of sewing goods - yarn, needles and thread - along with books about needlework, quilting and knitting. An elderly woman is crumpled on the

floor in front of the fireplace. She is moaning, and her chest and head are bloody. She clutches a quilt to her chest. A huge hairy creature stands before her.

Kuang-shi

Type: Evil Lost Soul

Consistency: Dual

Defense: Great

WTL: 45

Abilities: Good Strength, Feeble Cunning

Appearance: Tall, with short white hair all over its body. The Kuang-shi has long fangs, sharp claws and eyes with no pupils. It can only be killed by a bolt of lightning or an electric shock; if captured, it must be incarcerated in a room lined with iron.

Motivation: To kill Agnes Ruff at the direction of Herbert Moss.

Combat: The Kuang-shi leaps in and out of the fray, getting two attacks per round with its claws for (Defense vs Good) x 2 damage each. Once it has forced an opponent to her knees, the Kuang-shi will bite deeply into her throat for (Defense vs Poor) x 6 damage.

Powers: The Kuang-shi can leap up to twenty feet. To strike a Kuang-shi before it jumps away, a character must make a Good Quickness Roll.

Weakness: A lost soul who makes a Superior Folklore roll will remember that Kuang-shi are not very bright. If small objects are scattered before the monster, he will stop what he's doing to pick them up, even in the middle of combat. There is a jar of buttons on one of the shelves, and if it is broken the Kuang-shi will stop his attack on the old lady. He will collect all the buttons before raging again.

If the Kuang-shi is not thwarted with buttons or electrocuted in some fashion, he will kill the old lady within two turns. He will then vanish.

Searching Grandma's House

If the players manage to dispatch the Kuang-shi before it kills Grandma Ruff, they will hear her gasp: "He came back and demanded the dagger. I just kept burning O'Malley's things, but then he

told me he had little Becky. So I told him where the gold was - only I didn't tell him everything. It's here, it's here..." As Grandma lapses into a coma, her hands loosen from the quilt she is clutching. She will need immediate medical attention or else she will die.

The blood-soaked quilt appears to be a simple pattern of red and blue squares. An observant lost soul will notice a small rip in one corner, showing a glimpse of bright green. If the top layer of the quilt is ripped away, a whole new pattern is revealed underneath.

On a background of green, a number of small gray patches are scattered over the quilt. A few embroidered angels can be seen as well. The patches are roughly in a grid pattern. In the corner is a stylized depiction of a church with a high spire. A person making a good Artistry roll will realize that a graveyard is depicted on the quilt.

Embroidered along the bottom are the words "Num. 8:32." While many players may guess that this is a reference to a Bible chapter, only a character who makes a Superior knowledge roll will realize that the reference is false - there is no verse 32 in the 8th chapter of Numbers. A Bible can be found in the house, if the characters wish to refer to it.

A page from a grimoire can also be found, lying partly in the fireplace. The rest of the book has been burned in the fireplace. Written in Grandma Ruff's handwriting, the singed page contains her notes on invisibility spells.

A newspaper clipping dated June 13, 1934 reads:

Museum Robbed By Cunning Bandit

The Westlyn Museum of Culture was robbed Sunday night. Although security had been increased due to the presence of the famous Nile Collection of gold and jewels, the unseen thief breached the building and made off with all the ancient artifacts without raising the alarm.

"We're quite stunned," said Police Chief Dawson. "Several pieces were solid gold and silver - quite heavy to move, yet this fellow seem to have had no trouble." Dawson went on to say that he's sure the treasure will be recovered as soon as the thieves try to sell the unique items, including a pharaoh's death mask, ceremonial Jackal dagger and a number of scepters.

Referee's Note: Any player asking about the Jackal dagger who makes a Passable Occult roll will recall that this arcane artifact from Ancient Egypt is supposed to have many mystical qualities, one of which is the ability to bring the dead back to life. If a lost soul bathes in the blood of a child sacrificed with the Jackal dagger, he will supposedly be restored to life.

Grandma Ruff's Diary

Other clues include Grandma Ruff's diary, which can be found on her bedside table. The latest entry reads:

He appeared to me again, and demanded the dagger. He promised not to hurt me. I can't believe him, not after he tried to kill me and Specs. I know Specs didn't want to kill him all those years ago, but it really was Herbie or us.

Funny how that changed Specs. He said he wanted nothing more to do with robbing if it meant killing folks. Refused to have anything to do with the gold, too. Called it blood money. I didn't really have the stomach for it either, so we both just let it stay hidden. When Specs died, I almost turned myself in, but I thought, "Why should I go to jail for something I did when I was a foolish girl of twenty-three?"

I wonder what vain Herbie is going to do, now that I've refused him? It's better if I destroy all my notes about the robbery now, before he tries something nasty. Oh, I wished I'd never told him the legend about that dagger!

Secret of the Quilt

Before Grandma Ruff was attacked, the spirit of Herbert Moss appeared to her. She refused to tell him where the Nile collection was hidden, until he told her that he was holding her granddaughter hostage. Trying to buy time, she told him in general terms where the gold was located. When Moss left, he set the Kuang-shi on her.

The lost souls can determine the exact location of the treasure by "reading" the quilt. The quilt shows the Westlyn Church in the upper left corner; the spire of the actual church can be

seen from Grandma's porch on a moonlight night. The gray patches and embroidered angels represent the tombstones in the nearby cemetery. The reference to Numbers 8:32 signifies that the gold is hidden eight rows from the church in plot number 32. On a Good Search roll, the name "Niles" and the date 1934 can be seen, embroidered on this tombstone.

Westlyn Church

Though Grandma Ruff told Moss that the gold was hidden in a family vault, he doesn't know which one. He has sent Waldo to find it for him.

Waldo

Type: Evil Creature

Consistency: Dual

Defense: Great

Abilities: Superior Agility, Passable Strength (Awesome in direct moonlight) Good Search

Appearance: Pale, fat man with weird eyes and a crazy smile. He wears a white leisure suit and a beautiful moonstone ring which he fondles lovingly. Though he looks like a man, Waldo is actually a Lunatic.

Personality: Looney. Likable and friendly when the moon is not full, a dangerous adversary when it is.

Motivation: To find the Egyptian dagger and return it to his master, Herbert Moss.

Combat: A Lunatic is a talented tumbler and can jump, twist and roll like an acrobat. He has Awesome Strength when in direct moonlight and noticeably weakens in shadows. He loses his magical strength and abilities when his ring is removed or destroyed.

Powers: The Lunatic uses his moonstone ring to blind his victims for up to (Alertness vs Good) minutes. The ring can also be used to hypnotize a target, causing him to stare at the moon for (Sanity vs Good) minutes. Three times a night, Waldo can point the ring at a victim and cause a lightning bolt to spring forth, doing (Defense vs Great) x 3 damage. He will use this power to open the vault when he finds it.

Waldo is in a frenzy of activity when the lost souls arrive. He is frantically digging up graves, all the while muttering to himself. When he spots the characters, he will greet them in a friendly manner, "Has Mr. Moss sent you to help me? We must return the heirloom to the Moss Mansion at once -that's what he said!" Waldo will continue to prattle about a number of things, including the beauty of the moon, "Such a lovely moon-drenched night! I just love the moon. It makes me feel powerful."

If the players threaten Waldo, he will call forth six Children of the Ravenmocker to attack them. If the lost souls try to circumvent him and find the proper vault on their own, he will quickly catch on and follow them. In any event, either Waldo or one of the Children of the Ravenmocker will obtain the dagger and return it to Moss. If Waldo gets it first, he will give it to a Child with instructions to fly to the Moss mansion with it.

Child of the Ravenmocker (6)

Type: Neutral Entity

Consistency: Dual

Defense: Passable

WTL: 25

Abilities: Great Agility, Passable Strength, Passable Intelligence

Appearance: Short, spindly humanoid covered with dried skin. It's skull is that of an oversized bird, and it has talons rather than fingers. A thin webbing of skin stretches between each wrist and ankle.

Personality: Single-minded and merciless.

Motivation: These creatures normally attack those who desecrate graves, but Waldo will mumble a spell which will cause them to attack the party.

Combat: A Child attacks twice with its claws, doing (Defense vs Poor) x 2 damage. If both claws do damage, the Child gets an additional bite attack for (Defense vs. Good) x 3 damage.

Powers: A Child can fly at Great Speed. It has a flawless tracking sense that allows it to follow a target indefinitely.

Notes: You may adjust the number of Children attacking depending on the size of the party.

Moss Mansion

On a Good Memory roll a lost soul will remember passing a nearly deserted road on their way to the cemetery. The sign posted near the road read, "Moss Estates." Otherwise, they may be able to track the Child of the Ravenmocker, or coerce Waldo into telling them where the Mansion is located.

The Moss Mansion has fallen into disrepair, and though someone has made a halfhearted attempt to board up the windows, there are still plenty of gaps where a lost soul could slip in. A dim light shines from within. If the party examines the grounds, they will discover Bo's car parked in back (provided he eluded them in the first scene). Anyone who makes a Passable Memory roll will remember that this is the car driven by the kidnapper.

Inside, the party will see that nearly the whole lower floor has been gutted, and made into one large room. It is dusty, and the furniture is old and ripped. Mildewing portraits hang on the walls and a large, claw-footed bathtub rests incongruously in the center of the room. A staircase leads upwards, but it has been blocked off and is now impassable. Another stairway leads to the cellar.

As the party enters the room, they will be momentarily stunned by a flash of light. Herbert Moss appears before a large, ornate mirror at the far end of the room. "Welcome," he greets them. "I thought Agnes might try to solicit help from the other side. Well, it won't do her any good. I am determined to return to the mortal plane!"

Herbert Moss

Type: Evil Lost Soul

Consistency: Incorporeal

Defense: Superior

WTL: 30

Abilities: Great Dodge, Superior Alertness, Superior Occult

Appearance: Tall, with slick-backed hair and brown eyes. He is impeccably dressed, and has a distinct air of superiority about him. He often

glances into the mirror hanging behind him, as though admiring himself.

Personality: Vain and determined.

Motivation: Moss believes that if he bathes in the blood of a child sacrificed by the Egyptian Jackal dagger, he will return to life. What he doesn't know is that anyone who returns to the living plane in this fashion will become stark, raving mad.

Combat: Herbert doesn't care to fight, and in fact doesn't want to get too far from the mirror, which is his focus. However, if approached, he will defend himself with a pistol for (Defense vs Good) x 3 damage. If badly wounded, Herbert Moss will instantly vanish in a flash of light. The players may surmise that he has entered his focus. If they smash the mirror, Moss will take 15 points of damage and will be forced out -the damage alone will probably be enough to reincarnate him.

Powers: Herbert has the following powers:

Death Throes (Uses=5): Violent spasm of pain course through the bodies of up to five victims within thrown range. The pangs are so intense that the victims are at -2 columns on all rolls, including Defense, for (Stamina vs Passable) x 2 turns.

Deflect (Uses=2) for 2 turns, any object or person that strikes at Moss is deflected. This power may be used instantly, and does not require an action to activate.

Compel (Uses=4) For (Intelligence vs Superior) turns, the target must perform a simple action of 4 words or less. The victim cannot be compelled to kill himself.

Bo Returns

If Bo escaped the lost souls in the first scene, he will now enter the room from the cellar door, carrying the unconscious Becky (or another victim, if Becky was saved) in his powerful arms. He places the child in the tub.

If the players have not retrieved the Jackal dagger from the cemetery, Moss now pulls it from beneath his jacket and tosses it to Bo. "You know what to do!" he cries.

Bo will do his utmost to kill the child, and will succeed in one turn unless stopped. He no longer carries the dual gun, but he does have the

knife, which is also dual and does (Defense vs Good) x 3 damage. Moss has offered him a share of the gold as soon as the transformation is complete, and Bo will fight fiercely to obtain the treasure. Moss will use his supernatural powers to ensure Bo's success.

Once the child has been slain, Moss and Bo will fight to drive away the unwanted lost souls so Moss may bathe in her blood. If he does this, he will become material - but he will also become mad!

Missing Pieces

At this point, the players should have all the missing pieces to the story:

Agnes Ruff, Specs O'Malley and Herbert Moss grew up together. During the depression, their families lost money and they were forced to scabble for work. When Herbert suggested they turn to burglary, Agnes and Specs were horrified, but Herbert wheedled and pleaded until they relented. As an arcane scholar, Agnes was in a unique position to help them; before Specs and Herbert would break into a bank or museum she'd cast an invisibility spell upon them. The two men attributed their success to great luck.

Being greedy, Moss decided to cut Agnes and Specs out of the picture by killing them and making their deaths look like a lovers' quarrel. Unfortunately for him, they figured out his evil plot, and Specs managed to plug him shortly after the Westlyn job.

The shock was too much for the vain Moss. Unable to forsake his mortal flesh, he refused to enter the Tunnel of Darkness which came for him. Instead, he became a lost soul on Earth, hiding out in his focus - the large picture mirror that still hangs in the Moss mansion. And then he remembered something Agnes told them before the Museum job: "Be sure to get the dagger with the picture of the jackal on it. It's supposed to have the power to bring back the dead."

Conclusion

The adventure will be happily concluded when Herbert Moss is reincarnated and Becky (or

the child) is safely out of harm's way. The referee may award Karma for the following good deeds (awarded at the time they are accomplished):

- +2 for preventing Becky's kidnapping
- +1 for bringing Bo to justice
- +1 for exposing Sandra's guilt
- +1 for destroying the Kuang-shi
- +2 for preventing Grandma Ruff's death
- +1 for destroying Child/Ravenmocker
- +1 for destroying Waldo the Lunatic
- +1 for preventing the death of a child
- +1 for destroying Herbert Moss

Plus award points for completing Ghostly Vows.