

Cursed Cairn of the Moat House

Adventure Background

Cursed Cairn of the Moat House is a short adventure supplement designed for use with the classic TSR adventure, **T1 The Village of Hommlet**. The adventure, which is nothing more than a set of encounters, is a small expansion designed to provide the PCs with additional magic items to better tackle the dangers of the moat house. Alternatively, this small set piece can be dropped into just about any campaign.

As the PCs make their way to the moat house, as presented in the pages of T1, they arrive at an overgrown path leading away from the main road toward their destination. From this location, there are three separate adventure encounters that may be used.

1. Guard Shack

DM's Description:

Set 30' from the main road, near the moat house path, is a crumbling guard shack. Its function was as an observation post to warn the garrison at the moat house of attack, or direct new arrivals. Made of field stones (which are abundant near the many streams in the area) and wood, the shack is now in ruin and hidden from view by a copse of trees.

The bandits that now inhabit the moat house station a pair of guards here to warn of intruders, or identify targets

moving along the road. However, a pair of stirges attacked the bandits during the night (prior to the PCs' arrival). The stirges are sleeping off their meal in the rafters of the shack. One of the bandits has been killed and the other is barely alive (1 hp). The bandit, desperate for help, will call to the PCs as they move down the road. One of the stirges impales the bandit immediately after he calls out, killing him. Of course, the PCs will only hear the call for help, then a short, pain-filled scream.

The stirges will attack the PCs if they enter the shack. Each stirge can only suck up to 3 hp of blood until it is full. One of the stirges was wounded in the previous night's battle (see statistic block). Each bandit wears leather armor (human). They have short swords, light crossbows (20 bolts), pack with general gear, and a pouch with 2d6 gp. Six tarnished shields and a weapon rack hang from the north wall of the shack. One of the shields is a **+1 Deflector** (see **New Magic Item** section). The weapon rack contains six spears, but their shafts are all rotted. One of the spear heads is made of silver (100 gp value).

Stirge (2) AC 8; HD 1+1; hp (7) 4, 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Blood Drain; SD None; MV 30/180; AL N; Thaco 18; EXP 36 +2/hp. MM. Each stirge can only drain 3 hp total, at that point it will retreat into the woods.

2. Bridge

DM's Description: A low bridge barely rises above the water level of the stream it spans. The bridge is made of field stone, gathered from the area around the stream, and mortared together. A pair of large brook trout sporadically dart from beneath the bridge to snatch insects landing on water from alders that grow over the banks of the stream.

A year ago, a very old wizard took lunch at the bridge and a magic ring fell from his hand into the water. The wizard, frail and tired, did not notice the ring was missing until much later that night. Before the ring could reach the stream's gravel bottom, one of the trout raced out and snatched it as it tumbled. If the PCs observe the trout, they will notice (wisdom check at -2 penalty) the largest fish moves at twice the speed as the smaller fish. The trout has consumed a **flash ring** (see **New Magic Items** section).

The fish are wary and catching them is a difficult proposition. If attacked from the bridge, the fish have AC 3 (due to



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speed and water deflection). It has one hit point. If attacked, and not slain, the trout will flee upstream at a rate of 120'. Pursuing it through the alders is difficult if not impossible.

3. Rocks and Water

DM's Description: As the PCs move along the path they will hear a loud crash of falling stones and splashing water come from the east. The sound is generated from several stones falling from a stone cairn to the east. The cairn serves as the barrow of an evil elf chieftain that attempted to forge an alliance with the drow. The moat house was built upon the ruins of the chieftain's palace. Lareth (see module **T1 The Village of Hommlet**), has been charged, in addition to his other duties, with discovering the chieftain's secret vaults that lie hidden beneath the moat house.

3a. Cairn and Barrow

DM's Description: A large pile of plant-covered stones appears, at a distance, to be nothing more than a low hill. However, a clutch of swamp beetles (see **New Monster** section) has disturbed the stones of the cairn - the noise heard by the PCs at location 3. The cairn recently became the home of a very large raccoon. While out hunting, the raccoon came across an adult swamp beetle. The raccoon was injected with the larvae of the beetle and, mortally wounded, fled back to its barrow abode where it died. The swamp beetle larvae have consumed the raccoon and now scurry inside the cairn in search of food. This movement has dislodged the stones.

There are 11 juvenile swamp beetles within the barrow. They will attack any who enter (the interior of the cairn is a hollow area that is 20' x 20'). The beetles are young and can only spray their fungal gas once per day. Also, they cannot inject larvae (only adult swamp beetles have this ability).

Within the cairn is a throne of wood - now petrified. The skeletal remains of an evil elf chieftain slumps against the throne, one hand resting on the pommel of a long sword. The skeleton is clad in chain mail armor (fits human or elf). A horned helmet hangs askew the skull. A small chest lies at the feet of the skeleton. The chest is closed and locked (no key is present). The chest is trapped (heavy stones fall from ceiling if disturbed for 1d6 damage). The chest contains 119 gp and a silver crown embedded with emeralds worth 500 gp. Also, in a compartment hidden by a false bottom, a silver scroll tube

(100 gp value) holds a *clerical scroll of one spell: Sunflare* (see **New Spell** section).

The long sword is a **+1 sun blade** (see New Magic Items section). The armor is **+1 chain mail**. The helmet provides normal protection, but if worn within the dungeon level of the moat house, the wearer will automatically detect all secret doors as well as the secret door that leads to the hidden vaults of the elf chieftain (to be designed by the DM). The helmet only functions in this manner within the moat house.

Swamp Beetle, Juvenile (11) AC 8; HD 1/2; hp 2 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 bite; SA Fungal spray; SD None; MV 60; AL N; Thaco 20; EXP 10 +1/hp

New Spell

Sunflare

Level: 1

Range: None

Duration: instant

Area of Affect: 60' radius

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 3 segments

Saving Throw: negates (undead special)

The cleric brings forth a bright and intense flash of light that can cause temporary blindness in all within the area of affect. Each creature (with vision) must save vs. spell or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. All undead caught within the area of the spell must save vs. spell or suffer 1d8 damage plus 1d4 damage per every two levels of the spell caster (i.e. 3rd level cleric = 2d4, 5th level cleric = 3d4, etc.). Undead that make their saving throw suffer one point of damage per level of the cleric, but a maximum of four damage regardless of spell caster level.

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New Magic Items

Deflector

These shields are manufactured to not only defeat physical attacks but those from spell casters. The melee benefit ranges from +1 to +3. All deflectors have a 5% chance per "+" of reflecting a spell back upon the caster. This effect only occurs in the event of a hostile spell targeting the wielder of the deflector. The deflector must be in use (not slung) to use this ability. The target does have to be aware of the spell attack for the shield to function this way. Additionally, if the spell is not reflected, the wielder gains a bonus to his save vs. spell equivalent to the bonus of the shield.

Value: 1,200 gp plus 500 gp per "+"

Flash Ring

Commonly silver and plain, a flash ring grants its wearer with magical speed (per *haste* spell) for 1d3+1 rounds up to three times per day. However, when the magic of the ring is activated, it must recharge for 12 turns before it can be used again. It can be used no more than three times every 24 hours.

Value: 3,000 gp

Sun Blade

While typically swords, a sun blade may come in the form of any edged weapon. The combat benefit of these weapons is always +1, but the blade can become searing hot - enough to melt steel - for 1d6+1 rounds up to three times per day. When activated, the sun blade provides the same illumination as a standard lantern. It can be used to ignite any flammable object by touch. When activated the weapon inflicts and additional 1d4 damage most creatures. However, undead and cold-based creatures suffer an additional 1d12 damage. Those creatures who are fire resistant, suffer no additional damage. A sun blade can damage any undead creature (even those that are only affected by +2 magic weapons, etc.).

Value: base 1d4 damage 2,000 gp, base 1d6 damage 3,000 gp, 1d8 to 1d12 base damage 4,000 gp.

New Monster

Swamp Beetle, Juvenile

Hit Dice: 1/2

Armor Class: 8

Attacks: 1

Damage: 1d2 bite

Movement: 60

Size: small

Alignment: neutral

Intelligence: animal

THACO: 20

Special Attack: fungal spray

Special Defense: none

Special Abilities: none

EXP: 10 +1/hp

Swamp beetles typically feed exclusively on carrion. They rarely hunt unless no other food is available. In the event of combat, juvenile swamp beetles can shoot forth a spray of fungal gas at a single target within ten feet. The target must save versus poison (+4 bonus) or suffer 1d2 damage and one point of damage per turn for 1d12 turns. Magical healing or a *cure disease* spell immediately negates the fungus poison. Also, if doused with alcohol of any kind, the fungus is neutralized.

A swamp beetle has a long, oval shell, that appears to be covered with tubular shapes. The shapes converge on the elongated head to form two horn-like appendages. Swamp beetles emit their fungal spray from the hollow horns. Most swamp beetles are brown and green in color, though some have yellow bands. Their mandibles can slice bone.

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