



The Manure Menace

WINTER ETERNAL

What seemed like an easy, though potentially smelly case, turns into a desperate fight for survival against horrors that may haunt the heroes for a long time.

The second most important export for the city of Drogan next to metals is meat. There are several large, smelly caverns filled with cattle, sheep and pigs near the city. The third biggest export is manure, since it is used as fertilizer and more importantly as burning fuel in the cities. The heroes are asked to investigate the vanishing of large amounts of dung from the animal caverns. Not the most prestigious case, but a well paying one nonetheless. This adventure is for Late Seasoned- Early Veteran heroes.

THE CLIENT

The heroes head outside the city to meet the client. The animal caverns are a 20 minutes walk from the southern gate and for a good reason. The group can smell and hear the animals long before they reach their destination.

A bald dwarf with heavy boots and gloves come over to meet them. He introduces himself as Hurgab and tells them that he is in charge of the dung processing here at the caverns.

Exporting manure is a huge and valuable industry and thieves could be making thousands. It seems that this has been going on for a months, but they can't figure out how the thieves get in and make off with so much dung. The most guards are around the dry fuel warehouses, since not many bother with the wet dung. He hands them each a filter mask, a pair of thick leather gloves, and tells them they are welcome to look around.

THE ANIMAL CAVERNS

The caverns are reeking and pretty loud with the presence of hundreds of animals. There are groups of people in chains working with brooms, forks, and shovels working hard to keep the caverns clean. These are work teams from the jail in Drogan working off their debt to society.

1. THE OFFICE BUILDING

This squat building is where everything associated with the cavern, animals and dung is handled. The heroes see busy dwarves inside, scuttling about with orders and shipping papers, while wholesale customers wait in line. None seem to know what is happening to the dung though. They all point them to "The Oven" and the drying warehouses.

2. CATTLE PENS

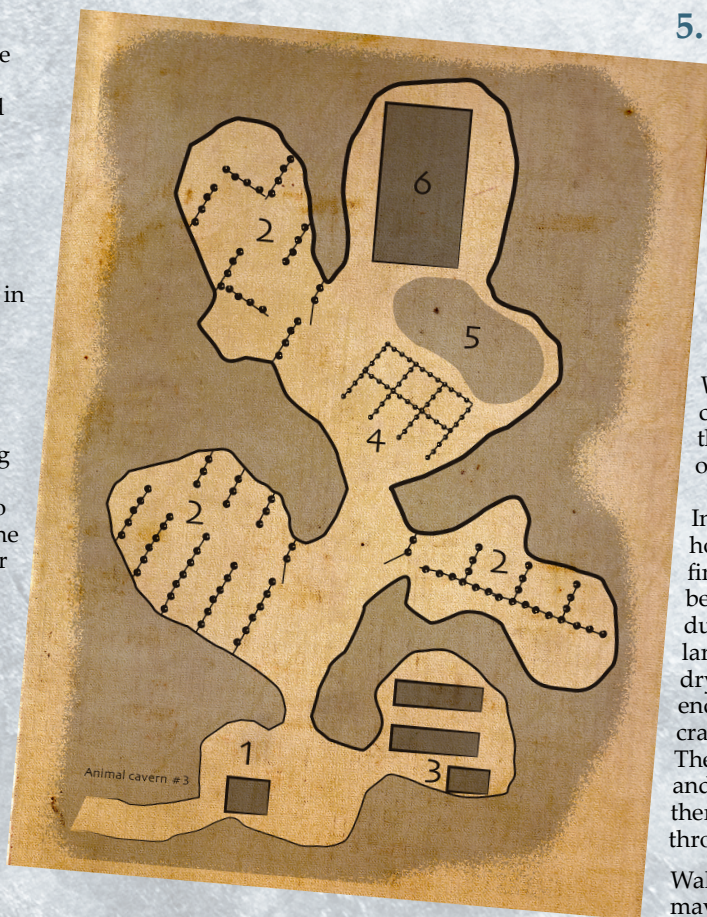
Each pen holds about 500 cattle. There are feeding and drinking troughs and the animals are all in pretty good condition. Farmhands are busy here but have no info that can help.

3. FEED WAREHOUSES

These warehouses are full of feed for the animals. Cases full of fungi grown in other caverns are used. The musty smell of the fungus overpowers the smell of animals and it's a welcome change. There is nothing suspect here.

4. SMALLER PENS

Sheep and pigs are kept here. They follow the heroes, bleating and squealing, thinking that they might be bringing them food.



5. MANURE HEAP

The smell here is worse. Most of the wet dung ends here. There is a conveyer belt powered by two cows walking in a wheel, on which prisoners are shoveling dung. The belt moves it to a big building to the north.

6. THE OVEN

Walking closer the heroes can feel heat radiating from the building. It is built out of corrugated iron.

Inside it is uncomfortable hot and stuffy. The heroes find multiple slow moving belts heaped high with dung. Each goes through large sunshard ovens and dry manure is heaped at one end. It then goes in large crates and is packed outside. The workers go home at 6 and though there are guards, there aren't many people here through the night.

Walking around, the heroes may find a very well concealed

trapdoor behind the building. It is up to the GM if they find it with a Notice check (with -2 penalty) or if one of the heroes steps through the slightly brittle wood of the trapdoor.

Inside is a very small crawl space. It looks barely big enough for a man-sized person to slither on his stomach down this dark tunnel. SIZ -1 persons have no problems to pass through, while a SIZ+1 person has to make an Agility roll as a free action each round he wishes to crawl through the passageway. Seems the thieves dragged bags of manure away from the caverns using this claustrophobic passages.

ON THE TRAIL

Following the tunnel is uncomfortably tight and heroes might have to make a Spirit check +2 not to panic. They emerge in a small cavern. A Notice roll shows wagon tracks and small pieces of dried dung on the floor. There is an exit to the northwest.

Walking down the low tunnel, the heroes should find it easy to follow the trail. After 10 minutes they stumble across a horrific sight. The terrible stench of decay hangs in the air and the heroes can hear cave flies buzzing in the air and rot beetles are crawling on the floor.

They find a smashed cart lying amidst pools of blood and body parts. There is gore splashed against the walls and bent

weapons on the ground. Seems something else found the thieves before the heroes did.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

Heroes that want to search through the bloody mess find almost nothing of value. The weapons are broken, clothes torn and scattered around there are some gold pieces.

Treasure: 50 gp.

Bloody drag marks and footprints head away from the carnage down the tunnel. Heroes inspecting the footprints find it impossible to place what manner of creature attacked the group of thieves. The large prints are distorted and do not correlate to anything known to them.

MYSTERIOUS CAVERN

The tracks lead down the tunnel for a short while before turning left into a concealed, smaller tunnel. It twists and turns and after 5 minutes it opens into a small cavern lit with a few torches. In the middle stands a large building built from rusted corrugated iron plates. Behind it, a small waterfall drops from the ceiling into a clear pool before disappearing between loose rocks in the opposite wall.

Nothing moves in the small cave and the heroes reach the door unhindered. When they open the unlocked door, a terrible smell rolls over them.

CHAMBER OF HORRORS

Only a few torches light the inside of the building. The place smells of rotting meat and each hero must make a Vigor roll or gain a level of Fatigue due to nausea. Throughout the room chunks of meat hang from chains and hooks as flies buzz in the air. The meat appears to be from cows and humans alike, some appear to be a mixture of both, thick stitches keeping the pieces together. Walking deeper into the room, the heroes dodge slightly swinging carcasses and spot a large workbench at the far end. A

man is hunched over and appears to be working hard, as he does not notice the heroes approaching.

Then they hear growling snorts come from the darkness and a huge monstrosity comes shambling towards them. It appears to be made from a mixture of cow and human pieces. A large bulls head rolls its eyes at them as it flexes the fingers on its human hand.

The man at the workbench spins around and his eyes widen when he spots the group. "Stop them!" He yells as more hideous creations stumble out of the dark.

Before determining initiative, the heroes can make a Notice roll at -2. Those that make it, see the old man sneer at them as he activates a device hanging around his neck. He yells, "We will meet again!" before he disappears in a flash of light.

The building size is 15"x35" (1" = 2 yards) and lighting inside counts as Dim lighting (-1 on attack rolls) except around the workbench. The swinging carcasses and large golems give Medium (-2) cover and the floor counts as Difficult terrain due to the gore and grime.

THE BATTLE IS WON!

After vanquishing the golems the heroes are covered in blood and maggots, but it seems there is nothing else about to jump out at them. The mysterious old man named Horace is long gone and heroes add him as a Minor Enemy to their list of Hindrances. Horace will not forget or forgive what they have done to his work.

Searching through the cabin is a gory job, and takes at least 15 minutes. Seems the old man has been working here for a while now. Searching through cupboards and chests, they manage to find some information and money. In the front of a

notebook they find the name "Horace". They also find some interesting potions and gold coins that should help. On the table they find a rusted, serrated scalpel. It hums with power, but even looking at it gives most heroes the creeps. Who would be brave enough to take this vile instrument?

Treasure: Notebooks, 8 x Healing potions, 1,600 gp and *The Scalpel of Horace* (Spirit roll or being creeped out to even touch it)



Meat Golem

Built out of the carcasses of dead animals from the pens, these monstrosities only follow the orders of their maker. These meat golems are a patchwork of raw, rotting meat and muscles glisten as the move. Their smell is horrible, but if you are close enough to note, it might be already too late.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(1)

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** Meat golems react violently to being hit and they have the Berserk Edge.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fear:** These horrors are terrible to behold and any hero seeing them for the first time must make a Fear check.

• **Fearless:** Meat golems are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

• **Gas Driven:** A meat golem is basically a primitive biogas plant on legs, converting manure into energy. If a golem is destroyed, the gas is released into a Medium Blast Template. Everyone in the area must roll Vigor -2 or is Shaken by the overwhelmingly nauseating stench.

• **Maggot Spew:** Since a meat golem is basically walking rotten meat, there are lots of flies and maggots crawling inside and out. Three times during a combat a meat golem can vomit a bucketful of maggots on its attacker. The hero must roll Vigor -2 or become Shaken by the horrible experience.

• **Size +2:** These monstrosities stand just over 8' tall.

• **Smash:** A meat golem hits with its massive fists or hooves and does Str+d4 damage.



Animal cavern #3