



with my last scream

With My Last Scream takes master characters to another location near where they are adventuring, and you can introduce it at any point in the game thanks to the main character: the ghost of Perdita. Turn down the lights, add in some ambient sounds, and see what the adventurers make of this haunted house trap and its sole, lost inhabitant. You might consider preparing some visual aids ahead of time, too.

Perhaps, during this scenario, the characters will discover—or have underlined for them—that the worst monsters can be human.

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shadow of the demon lord



GETTING STARTED

Because you can run this encounter with a lost and fragmented soul anywhere, it's a location-neutral scenario. You can drop it in anywhere the player characters might be exploring, adjusting the appearance of the house as necessary to match the region in which you place it. When you've chosen a time and place, Perdita appears to the player characters and leads the way to the doom that has trapped her—and that could lead to the demise of one or more of the characters.

Perdita, a spirit, appears to the group as a living young woman dressed in a modest ivory gown and introduces herself to the characters in a soft voice. As she explains to them that she needs their help at a nearby house, her eyes are downcast, and her voice thickens occasionally with unshed tears. Someone she loves dearly, whom she calls Noira, has been trapped in the house by a demented and abusive spouse, and she needs the group to help her free that person. She offers to lead them to the residence, which is not far away. When the characters enter the house, the spirit disappears.

Perdita is a ghostly fragment of the bride who was captured and trapped within a manor house. When she was alive, her spouse tormented her until she broke in both mind and spirit. The husband, now long dead, traveled away one day and never returned, leaving his abused wife to die alone in the house. The name "Noira" represents, to her, the memory of the life she lived—and her spirit believes that she suffers still within the walls of that hateful place.

USING THE MAP

The map is labeled with names for rooms. As the characters choose which room to visit, use the numbered entries in the **Encounters** section, in order, to describe what they see in each room. If the player characters return to a room they have previously visited, roll a d6. On a result of 1–3, the room is vacant. On a result of 4–6, they experience a new encounter in that room.

THE ROOMS

Below are brief descriptions of each of the locations within the house. Each room contains an interesting item for characters to take with them and that might help them as they make their way through the house.

Hall. The entry hall has a wooden floor that starts with lighter-stained wood that darkens to black wood in the center square. The furnishings are sparse. A dead floral arrangement on the central table includes a glass rod upon which is perched a luminescent purple and blue butterfly that sheds light as a torch. The light cannot be extinguished without destroying the object. The rod can be removed from the arrangement.

If the characters spend more than 1 minute in this room, they hear the sound of a woman weeping somewhere in the house.

Parlor. Moth-eaten draperies that were once dark green frame the windows of this room. Furniture of dark wood complements the paneling throughout the area. Everything smells musty. The gaping fireplace contains a silvered iron poker that gleams. A character who touches any part of the poker but the handle is burned and takes 1 damage, though no fire keeps the iron warm. The heat from the poker is sufficient to ignite flammable objects.

The first time the characters return to this room, 2 clouds of moths (as an **animal swarm** with the **flier** trait) flutter from the walls, gather up, and attack the characters. Any character attacked by the moths can make a Perception challenge roll and hears, on a success, whispering cries for help.

Kitchen. Pots and pans cover many of the surfaces in this kitchen. Food once stored here has long since rotted or moldered away. Amid the items here, a snow globe glimmers—the flakes swirling and sparkling, hiding some structure within them. Holding the snow globe causes a creature to either feel comforted (1–3 on 1d6) or anxious (4–6 on 1d6). A comforted character makes Will challenge rolls to resist gaining Insanity with 1 boon, while an anxious character makes such rolls with 1 bane.

Servant's Room. A table and sideboards fill this room. It looks like it hasn't been used in a long time. Within an otherwise empty sideboard is a fresh silk sachet that smells of lavender and roses. The sachet's scent never fades.

Dining Room. The table here is set for one. Shards of the rest of the place settings are scattered throughout the room on furnishings and floor. Some of the shards have blood on them. A sharp dagger with an enameled handle is stuck in one of the walls. Violets decorate the handle.

Library. The few books in this room are in pristine condition. They cover topics concerning history and agricultural practices. A delicate music box rests on a shelf nearest the fireplace. Opening it causes the last few chimes of its song to ring forth; then it falls silent. A creature that hears the notes discovers they linger in the mind, imposing 1 bane on challenge rolls made to resist gaining Insanity. A creature can rid its mind of the accursed notes by hearing music performed by a skilled singer or musician or by hearing the box play its entire song (which it does when opened after being fully wound up).

Study. The cozy seating arrangements here are in disarray, as if someone had torn this place apart looking for something. A broken chair leg has hair and dried blood on it. In one of the windows, a pewter figurine of a kitten watches the world outside. Touching the figurine makes it purr, though there's no apparent mechanism to cause the sound. If Perdita attacks a character holding the kitten, she makes the attack roll with 1 bane.



Bedroom. The large room up the stairs has a shattered door with what was once a rusty lock. The metal looks as if it has been melted and twisted by a strong fire. The only thing remaining in the room aside from an empty and scarred bed frame is a stuffed dog toy crafted from brown fur. It is stretched out squarely in the middle of the bed frame, staring at the door from atop a pile of bloody white

shirts. It has dried blood on its real-looking teeth, and has a rent in its underbelly, which is "leaking" rust-colored stuffing. (Perhaps it can be sewn back together?)

The roof, when it collapsed, destroyed most of the second floor, making it impossible to explore without clearing it first. You could expand the adventure by adding additional rooms to this floor.

FRAGMENTED PSYCHE

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 horrifying spirit

Perception 16 (+6); darksight

Defense 19; **Health** 80

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 8

Immune damage from cold, disease, and poison; asleep, diseased, fatigued, immobilized, insanity, poisoned, prone

Insubstantial A fragmented psyche takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Dazing Horror Creatures that gain Insanity from a fragmented psyche are dazed for as long as they are frightened. If the target is already dazed, it becomes stunned for the duration instead.

Unsettling Presence Each creature within long range of a fragmented psyche that attempts to rest must attempt a Will challenge roll at the end of the rest. On a failure, the creature gains no benefit from the rest.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Tendrils (melee) +5 with 3 boons (4d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The fragmented psyche attacks twice with its tendrils.

Soul-Rending Scream Each creature within medium range of the fragmented psyche that can hear the fragmented psyche scream must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Insanity (see Dazing Horror). Once the fragmented psyche uses this attack, it cannot do so again for 1 minute.

MAGIC

Power 3

Illusion *clamor* (4), *figment* (2), *vertigo* (2), *glamer* (1), *phantasm* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Epic Recovery The fragmented psyche removes one affliction from itself.

Epic Adversary Roll 1d3 + 1 to determine how many actions the fragmented psyche can use during the next round. The fragmented psyche can use these actions during any turn and can do so before its enemies act. Each time the fragmented psyche uses an action, it can move up to its Speed before or after the action.

Maddening Grief Each living creature within short range of Perdita must make a Will challenge roll. A creature gains 1 Insanity, or becomes immune to Maddening Grief for 1 minute on a success.

RUNNING PERDITA

Each time Perdita (see the fragmented psyche, below) appears in a room, there is a description of what she looks like and what she might be doing as described under Ghostly Encounters. Deliver that information first, then allow the characters to interact with Perdita. She follows the routine outlined below until they find her corpse in the final encounter (8. **You Are Nothing**):

1. The characters are immediately subjected to her Maddening Grief effect.
2. The spirit uses Soul-Rending Scream as soon as she can.
3. She fights for 1d3 rounds after she screams and then uses her insubstantial trait to pass through walls.

Defeating Perdita at any point before the final encounter does not purge her presence from the house, but it does weaken her. It takes 1d3 minutes for her spirit to re-form with a –10 penalty to Health. The penalty is cumulative. Until she re-forms, the characters experience no encounters, regardless of how many rooms they explore.

INSIDIOUS INSIGHTS: TRACKING THE FRIGHTENED AFFLICTION

When a character in the house gets a failure on a challenge roll to resist gaining Insanity, the character must immediately make a Will challenge roll with a number of banes equal to his or her Insanity total. On a failure, the character relives an experience suffered by Perdita. You can roll a d20 to determine the experience randomly or choose one that suits the character. You can read aloud the appropriate text, pass it to the player on a piece of paper, or pull the player aside. It's important that you deliver this information in a way that makes the player feel as if he or she was the one saying the words. For each frightening experience a character has during the adventure, the character makes challenge rolls to resist Perdita's attacks with 1 boon.

FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCES

d20	Experience
1–2	He's back from town, and he sees the fire has died down. He will whip you for letting it happen. You know it. Where did Fidelius go? His barks usually warned you about his arrival.
3–4	You burned the food again. Why do you always lose track of time like this? Now he's going to hurt you.
5–6	Your sister told him that she never wants to see someone as horrible as you again. You're all alone now. Except for him.
7–8	You must hide that you've been crying. He doesn't like that. You must always be cheerful, or he'll give you more reasons to cry.
9–10	You broke his favorite plate. He's cutting you with the shards now. Time to go to that other place where it's safe. You wish you could stay there.
11–12	Why can't you find his boots? Where did they go? You must clean them before he leaves again. Or else.
13–14	He says your mother is dead. Why did she leave you to this? To him? She warned you. You should have listened. And now, you can't find the new kitten.
15–16	You tried to run away again. He found you. Your ribs hurt now, and it's so hard to breathe.
17–18	How can you get his clothes ready when you have so many burns on your hands? It's true what he says about you. You can never do anything right.
19–20	The blood. You got some on his white shirt. It's your fault, of course, because you earned his punishment. Now he'll punish you for this, too.

GHOSTLY ENCOUNTERS

Use the following encounters in the order in which they are presented. A new encounter takes place whenever the characters enter a room they have not visited before, or on a 50% chance (4–6 on 1d6) if they reenter a room they've already been in.

1. YOU CANNOT LEAVE

After they enter the house, the door slams shut behind the characters, and Perdita turns toward them (see **Running Perdita**). After the fragmented psyche departs or is defeated, a ripped piece of parchment flutters down from above. On it are these words, written in wet blood:

You cannot leave

The characters are now locked in the house and around it gathers a thick, impenetrable fog. Characters who leave, by kicking down a door or break a window, find themselves in a misty area that reduces visibility to 5 yards. The fog spreads 100 yards away from the house in all directions and remains until no living characters are in the house or in the fog. The fog also dissipates when Perdita is freed. When a character travels 50 yards or more from the house, a wraith materializes and attacks, trying to drag the cowardly explorer to Hell. The wraiths do not pursue the characters beyond the fog.

2. YOU ARE MINE

The area feels tight, compressed, when the characters walk into it—and it seems hard to breathe, almost as if they were being smothered. In this area, the group finds a woman in sleeping garb hunched over on the floor, sobbing loudly and holding her face. Blood stains the sleeves of her gown, and a rope leads away from her bound wrists to an unseen object.

When she vanishes, another piece of parchment is left behind with these words:

You are mine

3. YOU ARE UNWORTHY OF LOVE

The characters see in this room a woman wearing a dark dress, staring at nothing and holding a ripped note. She has bruises on her face, and her freshly split lip and broken nose are streaming blood. She looks at the characters with eyes that are wide-eyed in fear or despair, though the rest of her face lacks expression. The air in this room seems expectant, waiting. Then she opens her mouth to scream.

When she departs, the ripped note is left behind. On one side, these words are written in a flowery hand:

*Once-Dearest Sister,
Mother is dead. I can't believe it,
but she is. I can't believe it, much
like I can't believe how you have
ignored your own family so much
since haring off with your husband.
How could you leave us like that?
Leave Mother? What a terrible
person you are. You're lucky that
your new husband came by before
her death to tell us*

The note is ripped here; the rest of the message is absent. On the other side, these words are scrawled:

You are unworthy of love

4. NOBODY CARES ABOUT YOU

The air in this room is freezing cold. The woman, wearing a mud-covered dress, holds herself and paces slowly back and forth, trying to breathe. Her face is a study in pain, and her breathing seems very shallow. Her hair is half unbound and smeared with mud. She looks at the characters, and then draws a shallow breath.

After she leaves, a parchment note on the floor, lying in a smear of mud, reads as follows:

Nobody cares about you

5. YOU ARE CRAZY

Upon entering this room, the characters feel their skin itching as if they were covered with spiders or insects. The woman appears in front of them, crouched on the floor, and stares at a spot behind them. She rocks back and forth on her heels. She holds up her arm, which is twisted at an unnatural angle. You can see bone coming through the rent sleeve. She opens her mouth.

A scrap of torn fabric that remains on the floor in her absence has these words written on it:

You are crazy

6. NOBODY WILL BELIEVE YOU

The characters feel their scalps prickle as if their hair were standing on end. The woman holds herself and cries silently, silvery tears streaming down her face and a piece of paper forgotten in her hand. When she notices you, she begins to scream.

The paper says this on the front:

Former Sister,

Your darling and aggrieved husband has come by to tell us the news that you consider us to be unworthy of your attention. He says he doesn't understand it either, but all I can say is this: As you apparently feel you must forsake us, so do we. Never contact us again.

On the backside are these words, etched in light silvery fluid:

Nobody will believe you

7. YOU ARE NOT A PERSON

A feeling of dread settles on the characters when they enter the room. The woman's disheveled garb is ripped in the front, and she's pulling a shard of dishware from the soft area near her shoulder blade. She drops it to the floor when she sees the group.

The shard has these words scratched on it, amid the fresh blood:

**YOU ARE NOT
A PERSON**

8. YOU ARE NOTHING

The final room lies before the characters, containing nothing but the spirit of Perdita, her hair ragged and her dress filthy, crouching on the floor. A stench of body odor combined with the tang of blood and viscera hangs heavily in the air. Run the combat encounter, then proceed to Aftermath if even one of the characters survives.

AFTERMATH

An ethereal wind swirls around the spot where the spirit vanished, revealing a pile of bones, somehow previously masked by the spirit's power. The bones belong to a long-dead human woman and under them is a final note that reads:

To Perdita Noira, though you do not deserve to have a name, do you?

I'm leaving for a few months to attend to matters that you would never understand with your limited intelligence. I doubt you can keep the house up to my standards since you've fallen so far. Why I married you, I cannot understand. If you can even understand this note, then know this: I consider our relationship ended. You are nothing. Barely human. Never sane, certainly. What I loved was a facade. A fakery. A flummery. I am, alas, disappointed in myself for having fallen for such a poor shadow of a human being. I will do better next time. As for you, again, you are nothing.

I'm leaving the door open this time. Please leave. Or kill yourself. It matters not to me. Or anyone, really. Nobody cares about you at this point, especially after all the stories they know about how terrible a wife you have been to me.

Grant Noira

When the characters read this letter, Perdita, as she originally appeared to the characters, shows up. She says these words: "Destroy this house and all within it. Set me free, please."

Anything that destroys the house sets Perdita free so her soul can resume its normal path.

If characters follow up on Grant Noira, such as by investigating nearby locales, they learn he died at the hands of bandits while traveling. It was a quick death. Perdita's sister's family died in a fire not long after Grant's last visit to them. The soul of Grant might have returned to the world since this time, in fact, as you decide.

