

# The Demon's Wet Nurse

## *An Adventure for Novice Characters*



Evil is at its most insidious when it hides behind a veil of familiarity and innocence. There, wickedness is the most difficult to recognize and, more importantly, fight. We cannot bring ourselves to identify rot and decay in something we already know and love. Even when we do, we fear that the thing we love might not survive the necessary act of purification. So we must decide the result we want more—to destroy evil or to preserve what we love, because sometimes you cannot have both.

The Demon's Wet Nurse is an adventure for a group of novice characters who find themselves caught in a net of a cult's plot to wreak havoc and, in so doing, loose a hideous demon into the world. During the adventure, the characters explore the community and deal with the locals to gather the clues they need to find the source of the threat. The characters complete the adventure when they confront the unhinged cult leader and put a stop to her foul plan before it's too late.

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# BACKGROUND

A few years ago, a young newlywed couple set out to make a life for themselves in Ephram's Fork. Zachary and Nonna Meadows pooled their savings and dowry to purchase a herd of cattle and a small farm a few miles outside of town. Through hard work and determination, they built the Golden Meadows Dairy and found great success supplying the neighboring community with butter, cheese, and milk.

Yet the dairy thrived, the couple had no luck when it came to bearing children no matter what they tried. Their desperation grew as the years passed, until they prayed to any power that might be listening. Unfortunately for them, something heard them and answered. Nine months later Nonna gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, who they named Gregory. What the happy couple didn't realize was that Gregory was marked by a demon, the same demon who had quickened Zachary's seed and made Nonna's womb viable for carrying the child.

The challenges of running the farm and raising the child proved difficult for the pair, so when a woman appeared at their doorstep on the night of the new moon, it seemed as if the gods had answered their prayers once more. The strange woman, Beryl Zarnie, claimed a spot of bad luck had landed her in Ephram's Fork with no employment and no way to pay for passage to a larger city. Without funds, she inquired with the locals if there were any families in need of a nanny and wet nurse, and she heard that the Meadows farm might be in need of such help. Overjoyed by their good fortune, the couple invited her in and offered her a place in their family for as long as she wanted it.

## GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins in Ephram's Fork, a small trade town you can place anywhere between two to four larger settlements. The town's position on a major crossroads makes it an ideal stopping place for travelers, so the characters probably happen upon Ephram's Fork en route to someplace else, ideally at the end of a day's travel.

## THE DARK TRUTH

Beryl Zarnie lied to the family. She never went to Ephram's Fork, and she's no nanny. In truth, she leads a small cult of demon worshippers devoted to a mighty demon prince called the Maker of Sorrows. This demon prince was the entity who answered the Meadows' prayers and planted within Nonna Meadows the child that would become its vessel in

the mortal world. Beryl, through her portents, sensed her master's stirring in the world and set out to watch over the child and prepare the way for the Maker of Sorrows' arrival.

After insinuating herself into the family, Beryl snuck about, carving demonic sigils at points around the farm. These markings focused the unholy power of the Void so the demon could enter the child more fully. Meanwhile, she fed Gregory her own breast milk, soured by her years of demon worship. When the baby slept, she placed a grotesque idol in the crib to stain the child's dreams and weaken his soul, allowing the demonic essence tainting it to grow and strengthen.

Using magic and threats, Beryl has coerced the Meadows to do her bidding and through her efforts, the demon has almost taken possession of the baby fully, and Beryl has control of the couple, such that Zachary and Nonna do whatever she says, fearing she will do greater harm to their child. In addition, Beryl called in a handful of cultists to keep the farm working as it had been to avoid arousing suspicion in the nearby community.

What neither Beryl nor the cultists realized was that the sigils' vile power tainted the farm and livestock, which has infected the milk churned into butter, cured to make cheese, and kept in barrels for drinking. Anyone who consumes the products falls ill not long after. So far, no one at the farm knows what's happening in the nearby community. The cultists, in the guise of farmhands, venture into town every couple of weeks to deliver their goods, unaware that they sicken everyone who consumes the goods.

## EPHRAM'S FORK

A small community built at the intersection of three well-traveled roads, Ephram's Fork welcomes merchants, caravans, and other travelers, offering a place to rest, exchange information, and refresh supplies. Thousands of people come to Ephram's Fork every year, but few ever stay for more than a couple of days. Only a hundred or so people actually live here. These people run the inns, livery stable, general store, and the other businesses in town, all of which service the travelers passing through. A handful of farmers and ranchers work the lands surrounding the town, providing the food and other raw materials needed to keep the town's businesses going.

## TROUBLE BREWS

A mysterious sickness spreads through Ephram's Fork, an ailment that first appeared a month ago when a few unlucky souls suffered sudden bouts of stomach distress. Most thought nothing of these isolated



cases as travelers bring all sorts of bugs with them. However, more and more people have been falling ill. With more severe symptoms on the rise, many whisper about plague and curses bestowed on the community. Everyone fears for the town's reputation. If travelers associate Ephram's Fork with plague, they might take their custom elsewhere, and the town will shrivel up and die.

## TAINT

The taint, as locals have named it, struck from out of nowhere, afflicting several people at the same time. Those stricken by the illness experience fever and strong stomach pain, though a few have experienced vomiting and diarrhea as well. As the taint has wormed its way through the community, the symptoms have grown more severe, with some people finding thick black bile, wads of clotted blood, or even insects or worms in their discharges. No matter how nasty the sickness's effects, the symptoms last only a day or two, leaving its victims weak, shaken, and dehydrated, but otherwise fine.

**Transmission** A living creature that consumes dairy products—milk, cream, butter—from the Golden Meadows Dairy must, 1 hour later, make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature becomes diseased and suffers the stage 1 effects of the disease.

**Stage 0** The creature becomes immune to the taint.

**Stage 1** The creature is diseased, suffering from cramps and nausea.

**Stage 2** As stage 1. In addition, each hour, the creature must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or spend the next minute vomiting, defecating, or both, during which time the creature is dazed.

**Stage 3** As stage 2. In addition, whenever the creature takes damage, it must make a Will challenge roll or immediately void its bowels and become dazed for 1 round as a result.

**Stage 4** As stage 3, but each time the creature vomits or defecates, it finds insects, worms, blood, and clots of hair in the discharge. Seeing this, the creature must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

**Stage 5** The creature takes a cumulative -1d6 penalty to Health that persists until the creature is no longer diseased. The creature then moves back to stage 4.

**Recovery** Every four hours, the diseased creature must make a Strength challenge roll, with the results of that roll determining how the disease progresses.

- **20 or more:** The creature moves down one stage.
- **Success:** No change
- **Failure:** The creature moves up one stage.
- **0 or less:** The creature moves up two stages to a maximum of stage 5.

## EXPLORING EPHRAM'S FORK

The community appears to be a healthy, thriving place, with travelers moving about and locals happily accepting their coin. Characters who have visited the town before notice fewer visitors than what the town usually sees. Let the characters go where they wish, visiting some or all of the described locations and any others you create.

## RUINED APPETITES

If the characters go someplace for a meal, they witness the disease's effects firsthand. Almost all meals offered include dairy products, so any character that eats and does not specify what he or she eats is at risk of suffering the taint's effects as described above. Note the characters who consume dairy products so you can call for challenge rolls one hour later.

Midway through the characters' meal, a patron at a nearby table groans loudly and then falls to the floor on all fours. A few moments later, the man vomits a stream of bloody filth, and the stench of his voided bowels fills the air. Patrons and staff alike back away and whisper about "the taint." A few panic and flee. After 1d3 minutes of this, the man collapses, shivering and weeping miserably.

If any characters move to help, a town elder, Samantha, a middle-aged woman with a freckled face, comes forward to lend aid. If no character does, the elder approaches them instead, and the patron is carted off to Doc Bentley's Infirmary.

Samantha informs the characters about the situation, revealing as much as you wish about the sickness as described under Trouble Brews, though she does not know the source of the sickness. She asks for the characters' help in solving the mystery, offering a reward of 5 ss if they can sort it out. "Ignorance is the Demon Lord's wet nurse," she says. "If we cannot uncover the truth behind this plague, our town is doomed."

### INVESTIGATION

It's up to the players to decide how they want to investigate the taint. From visiting the locations and talking with the locals, the characters should learn locals fall ill after eating, suggesting some kind of food poisoning. Queries about what the taint's victims ate should make it clear that dairy products are responsible since each meal includes cheese, milk, or butter in some quantity. Everyone in town gets these products from Golden Meadows Dairy, a one-family farm, just outside town. People hold the place in high regard and point to their hiring of helpers as a sign of their skill and good fortune. Anyone can direct the group to this location.





## KEY LOCATIONS

The characters might visit any of the following locations during their stay in the community. Not exhaustive by any means, add as many as you need to bring the community to life. Again, no one has yet figured out the source of the sickness.

**1. The Hopping Toad Inn:** The owner and manager of the Hopping Toad Inn, Argent Thidders, claims it's the best place in town to stay. He takes pride in running as fine an inn as found anywhere. In truth, the inn is mediocre at best, though still better than other accommodations in town.

Argent says none of his guests have gotten sick because of his insistence on high standards. In fact, he has kicked out several guests who looked like they might have been getting ill. Most rooms here are currently vacant.

**2. Lester's Livery:** Run by Arthur Lester and his daughter Ophillia, the livery can accommodate up to two dozen horses and has another six horses for let. Lester had a mild case of the taint (gained from eating a bowl of onion soup with cheese), but made a quick recovery. Lester notes none of the animals have been sick at all, so he doubts it is a natural disease. Ophillia discounts all the stories of more virulent cases of the taint and believes people have been making up tall tales about how sick they were.

**3. Eastman's Eastbound Caravan:** This trade caravan run by Garland Eastman passes through Ephram's Fork about five times a year. The caravan consists of four wagons with oxen to draw them and has a camp on the edge of town, the wagons arranged in a circle.

The caravan was supposed to leave town three days ago, but two of the wagon drivers contracted the taint (after eating platters of dried meats and cheese) while the group was staying at the Hopping Toad. When Argent Thidders threw the two out, the whole caravan left, and they have all been sleeping under the wagons since. Now that the drivers have recovered, the caravan plans to get back on the road in the morning. Eastman blames Thidders and believes the Hopping Toad is the source of all the illness.

**4. The Inn of the Buxom Barkeep:** A rowdy establishment, the two-story building's ground floor is a large common area filled with tables, booths, and a bar along the back, where a door leads to the kitchens and storerooms. A staircase on the main floor climbs up to a short hall and six small rooms.

Guests tend to drink more than they eat, so while folks get sick on a nightly basis, none have contracted the taint. Ellie Rumpus, the proprietress and namesake, is a levelheaded businesswoman. She thinks the illness is actually a new kind of venereal disease being spread by the "assistants" at Mrs. Tartaar's Bath House.

**5. Mrs. Tartaar's Bath House:** Agate Tartaar offers hot baths, steam baths, saunas, and other ways to wash off the dust of the road and refresh both body



and spirit. For an additional fee, one of her attractive young assistants (both genders) can be engaged to scrub visitors' backs and, if desired, tend to other needs. There's no law against prostitution in Ephram's Fork, but Mrs. Tartaar likes to keep up the pretense that baths are the main service she provides.

Many visitors and staff members have contracted the taint in varying degrees of severity. All of them having either administered or received a milk bath. Tartaar thinks the whole taint outbreak is "just one of those seasonal things."

**6. McFarley's General Store:** Henson McFarley is the one citizen of Ephram's Fork who buys as much from visiting caravans as he does selling to them. McFarley himself is a sixty-year-old man with the vim and vigor of a teenager. His shop sells common and uncommon items for prices as shown in the rulebook.

McFarley confesses when he had the taint (after having pie and a glass of milk with his sweetheart Hortense Sweetchilde), he thought old age had finally caught up with him. After the most unpleasant couple of days of his life, he's back to his old self. He believes he caught the bug from a wine merchant who passed through last week.

**7. Dead-Eye Nikkel's Caravan:** "Dead Eye" Pippy Nikkel leads a small trading cartel that specializes in weaponry, alchemical supplies, live animals, and unusual and often dangerous items. She and her six employees (as veterans) have set up shop in the center of town. They sell common, uncommon, and rare goods as described above for 10% above the prices shown in the rulebook.

In other towns, Nikkel has been accused of being the source of diseases and other bad tidings, so she's pleased no one in Ephram's Fork has cast such aspersions at her here. Neither she nor her workers have become ill.

**8. Prudence Appleton's Kitchen:** A first-class eatery nearly everyone in town visits on a regular basis, owner Prudence Appleton was once the personal chef for a noble family in the south. Her talents show in the offerings from her kitchens. Of course, most dishes served here use cheese, milk, and cream, so a great many cases of the taint can be traced back to Prudence. The food is so good that no one has ever linked the illness to the meals they had here.

**9. Wiggam's Smithy:** Arnell Wiggam is the only smith in Ephram's Fork, working, for the most part, as a blacksmith, particularly shoeing horses. He is also skilled at forging and repairing blades as well as tin-, gold-, pewter-, and silversmithing.

Wiggam currently suffers from the stage 4 effects of the taint (having eaten extensively from a wheel of cheese he keeps around to snack on while he works). The group can find him in a small apartment at the rear of the smithy. The place reeks of his bodily fluids, and he's grown quite emaciated.

**11. Sweetchilde's Boarding House:** Hortense Sweetchilde is a kindly woman in her sixties who runs a boarding house for people staying for more than

a few days and who want quieter accommodations than can be found at the inns. She's no longer able to handle preparing dinner for her guests and thus most dine at Prudence Appleton's Kitchen, but she does cook them a hearty breakfast each morning and bakes fresh pies three times a week. However, since milk is often drunk with both of those, a good number of her guests have suffered from the taint, though none blame her for their ailments.

## RUMORS

You can use the following rumors to supplement the information gained at the various locations.

d6	Rumor
1	It has to be hygiene practices. There's no other explanation. People here don't value cleanliness as I do.
2	Sometimes, an entire household or group of traveling companions falls ill at once. Other times, just one member of a large group becomes sick.
3	More cases of the illness crop up every day. No one can figure out why.
4	It's the damned foreigners! They're making us sick with their exotic infections.
5	It's a curse. Sure as shit, some heathen witch did this to us!
6	It's them whores over at the Bath House. They're to blame.

**12. Archibald's Outfitters:** Gherbalt Archibald was the first person to say that he thought the town of Ephram's Fork might be facing a plague, and he announced his intention to leave town as quickly as he could. His general supplies store has been closed ever since. Unfortunately for Archibald, he also is the first person in town to die from the taint. If the character's go into the store (they'll have to pick the lock or break in) they find him in his rooms above the store, having collapsed and choked to death on his own vomit. The character who finds him must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

**13. Doc Bentley's Infirmary:** Katarina Bentley is not a physician, but she is a healer who is practiced in folk and natural remedies. Over the years, she has kept the people of Ephram's Fork healthy. Unfortunately, none of her work has been efficacious against the taint. She does have beds and cares for anyone in need.

She blames the poor sanitary conditions at the inns (particularly in their kitchens) but so far hasn't been able to prove her suspicions.

She can also tell the characters about a young boy who traveled with a visiting caravan. He fell completely insensate for two days, during which time his gut issued horrific rumblings. She saw his skin wriggle and writhe as though his intestines had become eels. On the morning of the fourth day, the boy sat bolt upright and vomited a corrosive substance that dissolved anything it touched. The stench of it was enough to cause everyone around to empty their gullets. The boy had episodes every few hours for more than a day before he finally fell into a deep but healthy sleep.



# GOLDEN MEADOWS DAIRY

The investigation should eventually lead the characters to the Golden Meadows Dairy. The farm does not sit on any of the main trade roads, so getting there requires traveling more than an hour along an old dirt road.

The farm consists of several acres of fenced-in pastures, a large dairy barn, and a charming rustic farmhouse. It looks practically idyllic. There's no sign of activity, with no signs or sounds of livestock no matter what time the characters visit. Worse, an atmosphere of dread hangs over the place, one that causes hearts to flutter and cold sweat to break out on the napes of necks.

The reason for the inactivity is that the farm and the family have come under the control of the vile cult leader, Beryl Zarnie. She's recruited 10 cultists to help her protect the special child and keep up the pretense that everything is business as usual when it comes to the dairy.

## DEMONIC SIGILS

The cultists carved and painted 200 sigils on surfaces all over the farm to focus the demonic power of their patron. The sigils are all inscribed in the script of the Dark Speech and are recognizable to scholars of the occult as being used to focus magic from the Demonology tradition. Furthermore, their placement and numbers have caused the boundaries between the mortal world and the Void to unravel. Some of the sigils are easier to find than others, but once a sigil has been located, simply erasing or defacing it is enough to remove its power. If half the number of sigils are removed or defaced, the effect ends, and there is a palpable ease in the sense of dread that permeates the grounds.

## BERYL ZARNIE

The nanny and wet nurse has served the Maker of Sorrows for many years, and for her loyalty, she has risen to a position of leadership in her deranged cult. While loyal to her master, she values her own life above all and readily sacrifices her servants to save herself and the boy.

Beryl's most important job at this point is the care and feeding of the baby within whom grows the essence of her demonic master. She never lets Gregory out of her sight and keeps him in a harness strapped to her chest.

Service to a demon prince has not been kind to the woman. Her body hums with dark power, which

is why her breast milk enables the demonic essence to gain strength in the baby. Beryl appears to be a heavyset, matronly woman with blonde hair pulled back in a bun. Dark circles ring her eyes, and open sores dot her lips. She wears a loose blouse stained with leakage from her swollen breasts. A long black skirt, bunched up in the back, partly covers her veiny legs.

## BERYL ZARNIE

DIFFICULTY 25

### Size 1 human

**Perception** 14 (+4)

**Defense** 13; **Health** 30

**Strength** 11 (+1), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 8 (-2)

**Speed** 10

**6 Insanity**; **5 Corruption**

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Long Knife** (melee) +3 (1d6)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Foul Lactation** Beryl uses an action to squirt two streams of foul milk from her swollen breasts at up to two creatures within short range. For each stream, Beryl makes an Agility attack roll against the target's Agility. On a success, the target takes 1d6 damage from the corrosive fluid and must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or become poisoned for 1 minute. If the target is already poisoned this way, it takes 1d6 extra damage. Beryl must wait 1 round after using this action before she can use it again.

**Demonic Eruption** When Beryl takes damage, she can use a triggered action to release a pulse of energy from the Void. Each living creature that is not a demon and within short range of a point inside her space must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or take 1d3 damage and be moved 1d3 yards away from Beryl. Both Beryl and Gregory are immune to the effects of Demonic Eruption.

### MAGIC

**Power** 2

**Curse** hex (3), frighten (2), pain (2), weakness (1)

## CULTISTS

Beryl summoned 10 cultists to work on the farm. Fervently devoted to their demonic patron, they do anything Beryl tells them to, even if it means their own death. If they encounter the characters or find evidence that someone has been tampering with the sigils, they raise the alarm, and two groups of three, drawn from locations you choose, scour the farm. From that point on, all cultists are on guard and looking for trespassers.

The cultists are human, with equal numbers of men and women. All sport marks of darkness from their Corruption.

## WHAT ABOUT THE BABY?

Little Gregory Meadows is the innocent life caught in the midst of this horrific affair. Despite his helpless appearance, his body currently hosts the seed of demonic essence, power that grants the boy some very dangerous abilities.



Fortunately for the characters, Gregory is still an infant. He can barely hold his head upright, let alone aim it with any precision or move under his own power. He relies on Beryl to carry him around, point him at appropriate targets, and to tell him when to use his various abilities. If the characters kill Beryl or somehow get Gregory away from her, the demon-possessed baby can only lie on the ground and wail. If someone else picks him up, he can attack that person or anyone else within his reach.

## BABY GREGORY

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1/4 human (demon-possessed)

**Perception** 13 (+3); darksight

**Defense** 7; **Health** 5

**Strength** 5 (-5), **Agility** 7 (-3), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)

**Speed** 2

**Immune** damage from disease or poison; gaining Insanity; dazed, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, impaired, poisoned, slowed, stunned

**Demon Inside** If baby Gregory becomes incapacitated, he dies and a **small demon** appears in his space. The demon can act immediately.

8 **Corruption**

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Gums** (melee) -3 with 3 boons (1 plus Obey the Baby)

**Obey the Baby** A living creature that is not a demon must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. A creature becomes compelled by baby Gregory for 1 minute on a failure; on a success, the creature becomes immune to Obey the Baby until it completes a rest.

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Vomit Fire** The baby Gregory vomits a gout of fire into a 3-yard-long cone originating from a point inside his space that deals 1d6 damage to everything in the area. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll and takes half the damage on a success. Baby Gregory must wait 1 round after using this action before he can use it again.

**Void Bowels** When baby Gregory or a creature holding him takes damage, baby Gregory voids his bowels, releasing a tremendous stink to spread through a 5-yard-radius sphere centered on a point within his space and remains until the end of the round. Each living and breathing creature in the area or that enters it must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or become dazed for 1 minute. At the end of each round, a creature dazed in this way can make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the creature removes the dazed affliction. Once Baby Gregory uses Void Bowels, he cannot do so again until after he eats.

## DEALING WITH THE BABY

Gregory's body is as frail and fragile as any infant's. The single most expedient way for the characters to end the threat is to kill the baby—if infanticide is something they have the stomach for. Unfortunately, that also releases the demonic essence to become a miniature version of the Maker of Sorrows, who pulls free from the remains and attacks the characters.

Though more difficult, the characters can exorcize the demon and save Gregory's life. To accomplish this the characters must do all of the following:

- Erase, destroy, or deface half of the 200 demonic sigils inscribed on buildings and structures around the site.

- Find and retrieve the idol from Gregory's crib and purify it by dousing it with holy water or by expending a casting of a Theurgy spell while holding it.
- Break the idol in half.

If the characters do these things, the demonic essence flees from Gregory's body, returning to the Void from which it came.

## KEY LOCATIONS

All of the following locations are shown on the map and describe the most likely places for the players to encounter the cultists. Change the details as needed to address the group's actions.

### THE GATE

A wooden fence surrounds the farm and normally keeps the cows close to home and prevents thieves from stealing the cattle. The fence is easy to climb or crawl through. A large gate with a painted sign that reads "Golden Meadows Dairy" marks the entrance. The gate is currently closed. Opening it makes a good deal of noise. The gate has been marked with 5 sigils visible only from inside the farm property.

### PASTURES

Two large pastures normally host the cows for grazing when they aren't being milked or otherwise worked on. Since the arrival of the cultists, the cows stay in the milking barn and graze on rare occasions. The grass has grown thick and high, making it easy to hide in or sneak through these areas. On the fence posts surrounding the pasture, 10 sigils have been carved or painted.

During the day, 1 lazy cultist naps in the eastern pasture.

### CORRAL

A small corral has been fenced off to sequester the cows that need treatment, branding, or breeding. The fence around the corral has 5 sigils carved or painted onto its posts and slats.

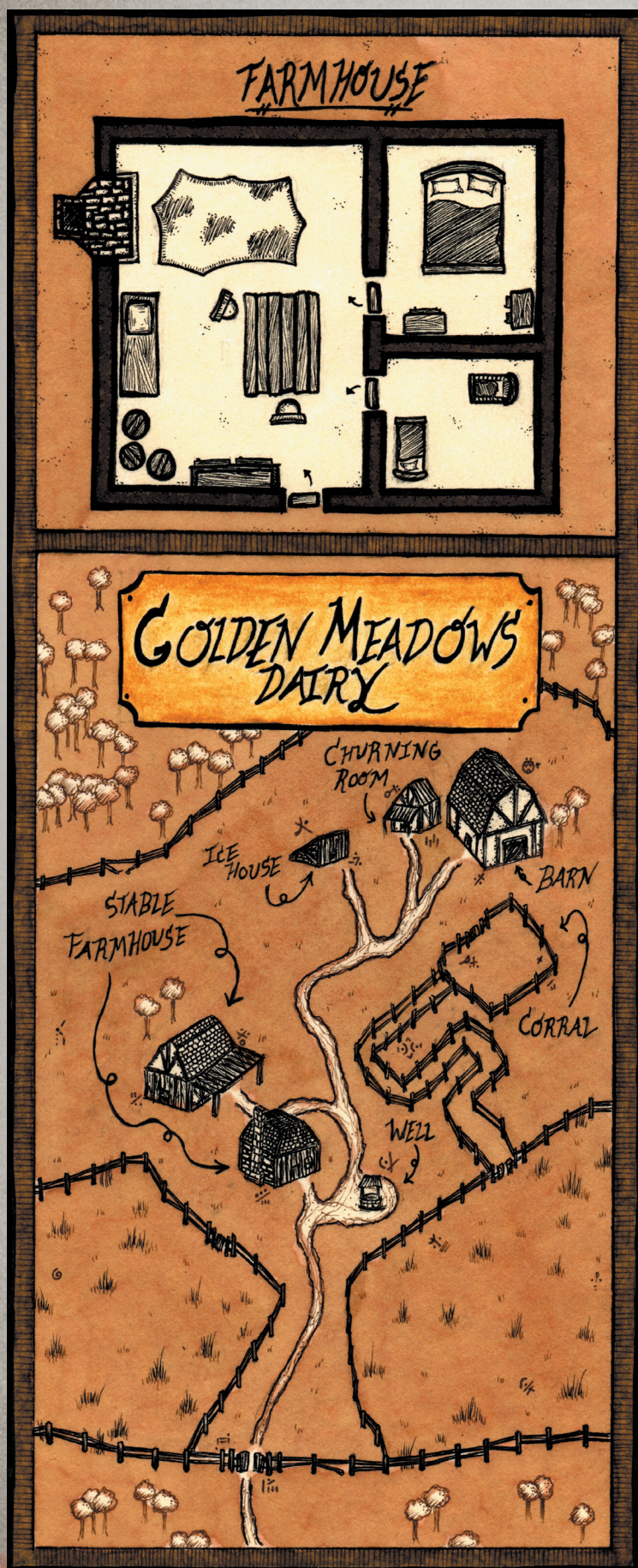
### WELL

The farm gets all its water from this well and its single winch and bucket—a labor-intensive task. Here, 5 sigils have been painted onto the stones of the well, and an additional 5 have been carved into the wood of the bucket and winch.

### STABLE & FEED LOFT

This building holds the cattle in bad weather. The loft normally holds a supply of feed hay, but the cultists have been feeding the cattle almost exclusively from





this stock, so it is nearly empty. There are 10 sigils carved or painted on the outside walls of the stable, plus another 10 on various surfaces inside the stable and in the loft.

Normally, 4 cultists are in the feed loft gathering hay to feed to the cattle later in the day.

### MILKING BARN

This building is where cows are brought for their twice-daily milking. The cultists are too lazy to care for the cows properly, so they keep them tied up inside almost all the time. As a result, it now smells like a manure pile. There are 20 sigils on the outside walls and another 10 on various posts and surfaces inside.

The cows are diseased, partly from malnutrition but mostly because of the demonic energy radiating from the sigils. The cultists, no experts on caring for animals, haven't noticed or reported the state of the cattle to Beryl. Thus, as the dark magic intensifies, the cows now produce only the tainted milk.

Zachary and Nonna Meadows (as commoners) are normally found here milking the cows with 1 cultist watching over them. Their skin has become sallow, their hair dry and straw like, and they have glassy, unfocused looks on their faces. At first, the characters might mistake them for undead, but in truth they are merely weak, malnourished, and sleep deprived. They tell the characters everything they know and help in any way as long as the characters promise that they will do their best to save Gregory.

### CHURNING ROOM

This small building is where the Meadows churns milk into butter and where they prepare cheese. There are 5 sigils carved and painted onto the exterior walls, and an additional 5 on the interior walls.

Beryl ordered 2 cultists to churn butter. They complain to each other about what hard work it is.

### ICE HOUSE

The farmers store butter, cheese, and milk here to keep them fresh until it is time to take them to market. A goodly amount of each is here—all cursed and carry the taint. There are 5 sigils on carved and painted on the building's exterior walls and 5 additional sigils on the interior walls.



## FARMHOUSE

The Meadows and the cultists live here. It's small and functional, with just enough space for a farming family. The house has three rooms, the "kitchen" is just a corner of the main room, and has only the most essential of comforts. There are 30 sigils carved or painted on the exterior walls, with an additional 10 on the walls of the main room, an additional 10 in the bedroom, and an additional 50 in the nursery.

Most times, 2 cultists sit in the main room doing nothing, while Beryl sits in the nursery with baby Gregory in a harness held tight to her chest.

**Kitchen:** The kitchen occupies the corner of the main room between the front door (for access to the well) and the fireplace (for cooking). It amounts to a countertop (with a wash basin and a pail for dirty cookware, plates, and cutlery), several cabinets for storing dried goods and clean implements, and several small barrels filled with flour, rice, and other staples.

**Main Room:** The Meadows and the cultists spend what little time they are awake and not working here. The room features a table with four chairs, a small bookcase with a handful of books plus a few other household items, and a cowhide rug on the floor in front of the fireplace.

**Bedroom:** This room is used almost exclusively for sleeping. As such, there is little in the way of decoration here—just a large bed and a pair of dressers to hold the farmers' simple wardrobe. The mattress is hand stuffed with chicken feathers, and the bed is piled high with homemade quilts, blankets, and pillows.

**Nursery:** This is baby Gregory's room. It contains his crib and a small bed Zachary built for Beryl when she arrived. In the crib, buried below a tangle of blankets and a few crude homemade stuffed animals, is the idol that the cult leader uses to prepare the child for possession by her demon patron.

## CONCLUSION

Depending on how the characters decided to deal with the troubles at Golden Meadows Dairy, there might be some loose threads. At the very least, the demon itself still lurks in the Void and has other cultists and worshippers abroad in the world, all of whom now consider the characters their mortal enemies. One never knows where such foes might lurk.

If the characters exorcized the demon and saved baby Gregory, they've had as good an outcome as can be gotten from this situation. However, that does not mark the end of trouble for the Meadows. Gregory was born with a lifelong spiritual connection to the demon. As a result, other cultists might attack the farm or even sneak in some moonless night to make off with the baby. Alternatively, they might wait a few years to lure the boy or even young man into their inner circle. Even if they don't, Gregory's connection to the demon haunts him all his life, bringing him nightmares, strange visions, and unsavory attention from anyone who recognizes his demon-touched nature.

Beyond the family's troubles, the cursed foodstuffs remain a problem. A great deal of trading takes place in Ephram's Fork, and it's likely that some of the taint-causing butter or cheese was carried off by one or more caravans. It is possible these items were not just side effects of the capture of the Meadow's farm but are instead part of some other scheme planned by the demon. Perhaps the sickness makes victims perfect targets for demonic possession. The sickness could also transform mortals into beastmen. As they are the only people in the world who know the facts of this situation, the player characters might conclude they have a moral imperative to track down and destroy all of the remaining demon-tainted food.