

Credits

Design, Editing, and Layout: Greg Bilsland

Cover Art: "Haunted Mansion" by Chad Sparks, with modification

Interior Art & Photos: Michael Gadek, Ember Navarro, Quaidian Wanderer, Gabrielle Hensch, Pavel Brilla, Jared Craig

Map: Produced with modifications using watabou.itch.io with modification.

ON THE COVER

"Haunted Mansion" by "Thanks for over 2 million views!!" is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Bilsland worked at Wizards of the Coast on Dungeons & Dragons for 9 years and was Sr. Producer on D&D 5th Edition. During his tenure, he launched Dungeons & Dragons's Extra Life program, D&D Lair Assault, *Dice, Camera, Action!*, and managed *Dragon* and *Dragon+* and the D&D Next Playtest process. Among his previous works are *Monster Manual 3*, *Vor Rukoth*, *Fee Fly Foe Fund*, *The Hangover*, and *Vault of the Dracolich*.

Rate this Adventure!

Want more adventures like this one? Rate the adventure and leave a comment for what you'd like to see next. You can reach me at gregbilsland@gmail.com. Thanks for playing my adventure!

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Eberron, the dragon ampersand, Ravnica and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries.

This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All other original material in this work is copyright 2023 by Greg Bilsland and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All art courtesy of Unsplash.com. Artists credited when available. All photos published on Unsplash can be used for free. You can use them for commercial and noncommercial purposes. Unsplash grants you an irrevocable, nonexclusive, worldwide copyright license to download, copy, modify, distribute, perform, and use photos from Unsplash for free, including for commercial purposes, without permission from or attributing the photographer or Unsplash. This license does not include the right to compile photos from Unsplash to replicate a similar or competing service.

Introduction

"And the tiny hairs on your arm, you know when they stand up? That's them. When they get mad... it gets cold."

—*Sixth Sense*

Spoilers

If you haven't seen *Sixth Sense*, this might be where you stop reading. It's a 20-year-old movie, though, so we're probably on safe ground.

In *Sixth Sense*, Bruce Willis plays Dr. Malcolm Crowe, a child psychologist who doesn't realize he's dead. He tries to help Cole Sear, a child who sees dead people, including Dr. Crowe. *The Haunting of Hargrave House* thematically borrows from this concept, featuring a set of pre-generated characters who don't realize they're dead—nor do the players. This bears repeating: **The players don't know that the characters they're playing are dead.** Like in *Sixth Sense*, the entertainment comes from trying to unravel what's going on, eventually leading to a finale in which the audience (in this case, the players) discover the twist. For this conceit to work in a D&D adventure, we need to put a few assumptions in place.

Content Warning

This adventure pulls from the horror genre and includes child death and suicide. Be mindful of your players' backgrounds if this content might be triggering for them.

Adventure Conceits

The ghost characters in this adventure aren't your typical D&D ghosts. As part of the curse on the Hargrave estate, the characters are corporeal on the night of the full moon. During this night, they can interact normally with physical objects.

This adventure is intended to run as a one-shot in one or two sessions. The adventure setup assumes the characters have little reason to venture outside the estate. If a member of the party is determined to leave the estate grounds, refer to the **Captive Audience Sidebar**.

The characters (and players) believe their goal is to investigate the haunting of Hargrave House. The characters won't find the ghosts, though, because they *are* the ghosts. To break the haunting of Hargrave House and free themselves, the party members must come to terms with their own deaths. This revelation will require the party to investigate the grounds, during which they will discover **Clues** about what happened to them and the house. Clues are found across the mansion, including in each of the locations where the characters originally died. The adventure is structured such that each Clue can be investigated without revealing the truth, until together they create a narrative that hopefully enables the players to deduce the truth. As a Dungeon Master, you'll be threading a needle here: Reveal too much, and it could cut the adventure short and take away the surprise at the end; reveal too little and the players may feel lost.

This adventure's environment lacks NPCs to minimize the likelihood of players asking questions likely make a Dungeon Master slip up. The rest of this section presents questions and underlying conceits of the curse.

Why can't someone just tell the ghosts that they're ghosts? The curse affecting the Hargrave estate means that ghosts can't comprehend any statement that conflicts with their psychological reality. In the ghosts' reality, they're still alive. No one can convince them otherwise.
Why do we have to do this investigation at night? Can we take a long rest and wait until day? Anyone who's watched a horror movie has likely wondered at some point, "Why are the characters determined explore at night?" It might be tempting for the players to take a long rest to try and advance the clock. If the players are discussing this, you as Dungeon Master can offer a gentle reminder that the ghosts of House Hargrave only appear during the full moon, and this job was on the condition they complete their investigation during that night.

If that doesn't work, a second option is to play into haunted house tropes. Introduce disruptions that prevent the characters' attempts to rest. Here are a couple options:

- A character experiences grisly nightmares of death reflecting the deaths that occurred on the grounds. A character must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 15) each hour to remain asleep. On a failed saving throw, a character awakens, interrupting the long rest and causing 1 level of Exhaustion.
- **10 crawling claws** attack the party, but as soon as they're defeated, they disappear.

Can the characters "die" again? As part of the curse, the characters are effectively flesh and blood on the night of the full moon. Hence, if a member of the party drops to 0 hit points and dies, they are dead until the next night, when they reconstitute as a ghost with no memory of what has come before. A dead character's body remains, as does any of the character's equipment.

Do the characters remember anything of their past lives or their time as a ghost? At sunrise each day, a ghost loses their memory of anything that happened previously.

Captive Audience

If characters try to leave the grounds, they find a 10-foot stone wall bounding the Hargrave estate. A locked, iron gate blocks the carriage path. Use the following barriers if they try to leave:

- As a character climbs the wall, the Athletics DC gets progressively greater as the wall seems to lean inward.
- A character who reaches the top of the wall and slides over to the other side finds they're back on the side they started. No matter how many times they try this, they always end up on the interior wall.
- The lock on the gate cannot be picked.
- Peering through the gate, a character sees a low-hanging fog obscuring all visibility. A character who manages to climb over or pass through the gate and enters the fog finds they can't breathe (see [Suffocating](#)).

The Mystery

In the adventure, the characters will be investigating their own deaths. If the adventure had six characters investigating six deaths, it might immediately tip off some canny players to the truth. Instead, the adventure begins with the party asked to investigate a number of deaths equal to the number of players minus one (e.g. six players = five deaths). This setup works, because one of the players is secretly playing the lost **Hargrave Family Heir**. The heir is a living character who is helping the ghosts come to terms with their deaths, as well as trying to break the curse on the house and uncover what happened to their family. The player who plays the heir is informed about the adventure's premise, and they can help guide the characters as needed. That player must also be careful not to reveal themselves too soon and interrupt the ghosts own reckoning with their pasts.

If you don't have six players, you can use the approach described above and scale down the number of deaths being investigated (five players = four deaths; four players = three deaths).

Clues to the Hargrave Curse

During the adventure, the players learn that House Hargrave because a curse afflicts the estate. Each Clue brings the characters closer to realizing that they are dead, and helps the Hargrave Family Heir come one step closer to learning the truth. Since the party can investigate the rooms in any order, the following information about the curse is doled out in succession whenever the characters discover a Clue. If the players deduce that they're ghosts before all the Clues have been doled out, that's fine (see "Lifting the Curse"). They can still discover Clues to help add color to the story. The order of Clues about the curse is as follows:

- The House has a will of its own, and it lures people to their deaths.
- Helga was seeking to create a pocket of reality hidden from Death.
- Helga sacrificed her own granddaughter, Helen Hargrave, to open a rift to the Shadowfell.
- Death saw Helga's ploy and cursed the estate.
- With the curse, the Hargraves were all absorbed into the house, their life forces bound to sustain it.
- One Hargrave escaped the curse fate, an adopted child named Harper.
- Under the curse, anyone who dies on the grounds is doomed to haunt it.
- No one can convince them their ghosts. To free themselves, the ghosts must come to terms with their own death.
- The ghosts haunting Hargrave House materialize with their bodies and equipment on the full moon.

Lifting the Curse

The adventure can end in a few ways, and you as Dungeon Master can determine what makes sense for your players based on time and interest. If the players are having fun and you have adequate time, choose option 2. If you're running short on time, choose option 1.

Option 1. Increase the pace of Clues, remove monsters, and lower the DCs for contextual clues. For example, if the party discovers a scene of death where one of the characters died, you can hint at the connection between a player's character and a skeleton by calling out the race of the skeleton. Once the players learn the truth, skip the final encounter. The Hargrave Family Heir can congratulate them on their freedom and thank them.

Option 2. Once the players discover the truth about their characters, they can go into a final confrontation with Helga Hargrave, who is a **wraith** lurking in the **Temple**. Upon finding the final Clue, the characters hear the crack of ice shattering in the direction of the Temple.

The Hargraves

The members of the Hargrave family are listed below. All direct descendants of the Hargraves have names beginning in H. Before the curse, the Hargrave family had acquired their wealth through horse breeding.

- Helga Hargrave.** Helga was the matriarch of the family. She was married to Victor Hargrave. Traumatized by his untimely death, Helga sought to protect her family from Death. Ten years ago, she performed a profane

ritual, sacrificing her granddaughter Helen, resulting in the Hargrave curse and the death of everyone in the house.

- Victor Hargrave.** Victor Hargrave was married to Helga for almost 30 years. He was murdered 20 years ago, days after a jousting tournament. In the competition, Helga entered the men's tournament, disguised as Victor. After winning, she revealed herself, "humiliating" her opponent.
- Henry Hargrave.** Henry was married to Gladys, and both were renowned painters. Their works feature throughout the estate. Henry was the oldest of Helga's children and 39 at the time of the curse.
- Hazel Hargrave.** Hazel was the older of Henry's and Gladys's two children. She was 13 at the time the curse started. She admired her grandmother and was pursuing jousting and dressage.
- Helen Hargrave.** Helen was the younger of Henry's and Gladys's two children. She was 4 when she was sacrificed by her grandmother, who in her grief for her husband sought to sacrifice one to protect many.
- Harper Hargrave.** Harper was the adopted child of Holly and Lillian. They were 15 at the time of the ritual and was not on the estate grounds. Sick of their family's wealth and privilege, Harper left abroad and only learned years later of their family's disappearance. Harper is now 27 (see "The Lost Heir" sidebar.)
- Holly Hargrave.** Holly was married to Lillian. Both shared an interest in horticulture. They adopted Harper at a young age. Holly was the middle child of Helga's kids.
- Harold Hargrave.** Harold was unmarried and studied magic and alchemy. Harold was the youngest of Helga's children.

Timeline

The series of events leading up to the present day:

22 years ago: Victor Hargrave was murdered at age 57

12 years ago: Harper Hargrave left his family home

10 years ago: Helga Hargrave sacrificed and family cursed

6-9 years ago: The Archaeologist, the Investor, the Influencer, the Botanist, and the Writer, and the Astronomy visited the house and died.

The Lost Family Heir

The characters begin the adventure at the request of a mysterious benefactor who seeks to break the haunting and lift the curse. This benefactor turns out to be a member of the party—the only living one—Harper Hargrave. Give the following details to the player who is playing the lost heir:

- The Hargrave family heir can be any race (hence adopted) or gender. Their parents were Holly and Lillian.
- They know the house is cursed, but they don't know how or what happened to their family.
- They know the house is haunted and believe the curse and haunting are related.
- They were a child (5) when Victor Hargrave was murdered, but they don't know the details.
- They left home 12 years ago at age 15.
- They should not reveal the truth about the other characters being ghosts to the other players. Harper knows from past experience the ghosts can't accept their deaths and must come to terms with it themselves.
- If the players conclude Harper's true identity, such as through using *prestidigitation* on the family portrait in the Drawing room, then Harper can acknowledge who they are. However, they should continue to maintain the secret about the other characters being ghosts and can instead explain that they hid their identity because they didn't know the circumstances of their family's disappearance, which is technically true.

The Characters

This section provides an overview of the characters and their deaths. Each character was drawn to the estate for a different purpose. In life, they sought knowledge, opportunity, or adventure. Lacking knowledge of the curse, they didn't realize the risk they took until the House enacted its terrible toll, adding them to its ghostly ledgers. The section below includes each character's Background, Ideals, Flaws, Personality Traits, as well as why they originally came to the estate, how they died, and where they died. The pre-generated characters included with his adventure have the same details, with the exception of the Secret information, which is for the DM. When the adventure begins, the players have no knowledge of who their characters were before they died. Players are welcome to alter the personality trait, bond, or flaw if they wish; it won't affect the adventure, although there are subtle connections between those characteristics and the circumstances of their death. **Important:** If a player asks about their character's background, dodge the question. You can say "This is a one-shot adventure, so anything relevant is already on the character sheet."

The Archaeologist

- **Half-Elf Rogue**
- **Background:** Archaeologist
- **Personality trait:** You are always thirsty.
- **Ideal:** You believe no history should remain hidden.
- **Flaw:** You are uncomfortable in cramped places.

Secret

- **Reason for visiting:** The Archaeologist learned that in the past, a profanity had occurred on the grounds of House Hargrave. In the interest of separating folklore from reality, the Archaeologist visited the house to learn the truth.
- **Cause of death:** Buried. During an excavation, the Archaeologist provoked the powers of the curse, which brought down a tumble of rubble and debris, trapping them and leaving them to die of thirst.
- **Location of death:** Room 4. Crypt

The Investor

- **Dwarf Fighter**
- **Background:** Guild Merchant
- **Personality trait:** You tend to pick up anything of value that can be pawned or resold at profit.
- **Ideal:** You believe everything is an opportunity in disguise.
- **Flaw:** You sweat profusely.

Secret

- **Reason for visiting:** When the Investor came to House Hargrave, it had been a decade since anyone had heard or seen anything from the family. The estate, still being in surprisingly good condition, seemed an opportunity ripe for claiming.
- **Cause of death:** Cooked. The Investor was surprised to discover that House Hargraves's baths and sauna still worked. When the Investor gave the sauna a try, though, the house seized its opportunity. The Investor was sealed inside, eventually dying from heat stroke.
- **Location of death:** Room 8. Sauna

The Astronomer

- **Human Wizard**
- **Background:** Sage
- **Personality trait:** You document everything in relentless detail.
- **Ideal:** You believe the answers to the biggest questions are in the stars.
- **Flaw:** You are convinced only by things you can observe.

Secret

- **Reason for visiting:** Prior to the mysterious disappearance of the Hargrave family, learned scholars and sages from across the land came to visit the family's observatory. The Sage was no exception, lured by the promise of unlocking the secrets of the cosmos.
- **Cause of death:** Madness. When you stare at the stars, sometimes it stares back. The house, seeing an opportunity to entrap yet another victim, subtly steered the telescope to gaze into the depths of space, where untold Things dwelt in the darkness. The Astronomer became convinced only in blood could they see past the veil of darkness, eventually dying of blood loss from self-inflicted wounds.
- **Location of death:** Room 25. Observatory

The Botanist

- **Elf Druid**
- **Pre-Gen:** Elf ranger
- **Background:** Hermit
- **Personality trait:** You stop and smell the roses, both literally and figuratively.
- **Ideal:** You believe the life of plants is as precious as the life of anything else.
- **Flaw:** You touch everything.

Secret

- **Reason for visiting:** The Botanist was in the service of a nearby monarch who was fond of exotic plants. The Hargraves were widely known to have a collection of such plants, and among them one called a corpse flower. At hearing of the Hargraves disappearance, the monarch dispatched the Botanist to see if the corpse flower remained in the family's collection—and to take it, if so.
- **Cause of death:** Poisoned. At finding the estate abandoned, the Botanist searched the grounds, eventually finding the corpse flower. The house's magic had corrupted the plant, though, making it a deadly trap that ensnared and killed the Botanist.
- **Location of death:** Room 9. Conservatory

The Influencer

- **Tiefling Bard**
- **Background:** Entertainer
- **Personality trait:** You're don't believe in ghosts.
- **Ideal:** You believe new experiences are the only way to truly live.
- **Flaw:** You want to know what everyone else thinks about everything you do.

Secret

- **Reason for visiting:** After hearing stories of House Hargrave and the mysterious disappearance of its residents and visitors, The Influencer decided to check it out. They saw it as an opportunity to create a new story that could be shared in taverns and at court. They committed to staying alone overnight to prove the house was neither haunted nor dangerous.
- **Cause of death:** Falling. The Influencer brought a primitive camera as a way to capture their experience. While taking a photograph from a balcony, the railing gave way, and the Influencer fell to their death.
- **Location of death:** Room 28. Helga & Victor's Room

The Writer

- **Gnome Cleric**
- **Background:** Courtier
- **Personality trait:** You view everything through the lens of storytelling, even sometimes narrating aloud your and others' experiences.
- **Ideal:** You believe one must experience the world in order to write about it.
- **Flaw:** You exaggerate everything.

Secret

- **Reason for visiting:** The Writer sought Hargrave House as a source of inspiration for their latest murder mystery novel. Finding the house abandoned, they decided to take up lodging while working on a draft.
- **Cause of death:** Beheaded. The magic of Hargrave House has an insidious way of making reality out of fiction, which the Writer discovered too late. While in the study, the Writer wrote about a suit of armor coming to life and beheading their protagonist. These words gave life to a **helmed horror** that delivered a coup de grâce to the distracted writer.
- **Location of death:** Room 12. Study

Setup

Before the adventure begins, take the following steps:

- Identify who among your players will be the Hargrave family heir. This character is alive (not a ghost) and knows that the others are ghosts. Explain the premise to the player (see "Hargrave Lost Heir" sidebar, page XX), letting them know that they can ignore the personality trait, ideal, and flaw on their pre-generated character.
- To break the curse, the Hargrave family heir believes they must help the party realize they're ghosts without explicitly revealing the truth. At your option, you can give the player a copy of the Player Map.
- Distribute the pre-generated characters. The player assuming the Hargrave family heir can choose from among the characters as normal but ignores their traits, ideal, and flaw. **Important!** As the Dungeon Master, you must strike that character's death from the adventure. For example, if the player who's the heir picks the elf ranger (the Botanist), then that death should be removed from the adventure. This means if the characters were to visit the Conservatory, they would not find evidence of The Botanist's death.
- Give the characters time to familiarize themselves with their characters. Have the characters pick names. You should take special note of the name of the Hargrave family heir's pseudonym, as you'll be using the name in the read aloud text below. **Do not accidentally call them Harper!**

When you are ready, read the following:

House Hargrave. The name inspires dread in some, skepticism in others. For a decade, the estate sat perched atop a promontory overlooking Morrow's Cove, casting its long shadow over the tiny hamlet. In the years since the Hargrave family mysteriously disappeared, no one claimed the property. Rumors abound that the house is haunted.

The sun has just set beneath the horizon, plunging the sky into deep shades of vermillion. You stand at the threshold of the Hargrave mansion. One of your party members, [pseudonym of Hargrave family heir], heard about a job from a mysterious benefactor, and it seemed simple enough. First, investigate the fates of the [number of players minus one] people who disappeared in the house over the last several years. Second, find out what happened to the Hargraves 10 years. Succeed in both, and your mysterious benefactor will pay you 5000 gold pieces. Seems like easy money--what's the worst that could happen?

Allow the players a moment to share their character names, and any other details about their characters that they want to provide.

House Hargrave

House Hargrave is divided into two floors. When the characters are ready to proceed, read:

Standing two stories tall, Hargrave House cuts an ominous outline against the darkening sky, where a full moon hangs overhead. The sprawling mansion hosts dozens of shuttered windows on both levels of the home. The main entrance to the house stands before you, a set of imposing wooden doors dominating the front edifice of the house. Around the sides of the house is a small footpath. Other than some peeling paint, nothing of the house's exterior suggests abandonment. The paths are clear of weeds, and only a few cobwebs cling to the eaves. You might think the house were occupied if it weren't for the oppressive silence.

General Features

Due to the curse, Hargrave House has a will of its own. The house's goal is to keep the characters trapped as ghosts, ignorant of their state. To that effect, the players might attempt actions that the house opposes. The house has a spell attack bonus of +5, and its Arcana check is +5 for contested roles. Saving throws have a DC 12. As an example, a character attempting to use *prestidigitation* to clean up any of the house's ichor (see below) would require a contested Arcana check.

In the readaloud text throughout the adventure, you'll see a bolded terms to indicate anything that's a key feature that the players can inspect for more information.

Use the details below except where exceptions are noted.

Black Ichor. The house has a black ichor that flows through it where the magic is strongest. A character who breaks a wall or other structure within the house might encounter this blood-like substance. If they touch or taste it, they must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they take 1d6 psychic damage as they hear indistinct voices whispering out at them from the void. At your option, you can improvise dialogue or visions that a character witnesses of the Hargraves.

Ceilings. Most rooms in House Hargrave have 12-foot-high ceilings. The ceilings are plaster set over wood.

Doors. The doors are solid oak and stand 7 feet tall. They are closed but unlocked, except where noted.

Floors. The lower floor of the house comprises polished marble tiles, each 2-feet by 2-feet and joined with mortar. The floor of the upper story is maple planks.

Detect Magic. Owing to the curse, the entire house radiates necromancy, enchantment, and illusion. The pre-generated characters do not have *detect magic* prepared to help add to the suspense.

Illumination. None of the rooms are illuminated. The only pre-generated character without darkvision is the Human Wizard, who can use *light* or *darkvision* if the player wishes.

Spookiness. Many of the features of the house will have an inline heading called "Get Spooky," which has optional details to add some haunt to the house. The

adventure doesn't rely on any of these details, so add them at your discretion.

Temperature. Outside, the temperature is 65 degrees Fahrenheit (18 Celsius), but inside on Level 1 and Level 2, the temperature drops 20 degrees.

Tracks. The house is trafficked only by ghosts and periodic rodents, so there are few signs of passage. A character searches for tracks will discover with a DC 20 Perception check indications of a single humanoid of medium build who has come and gone several times over the past few weeks. (These tracks are from Harper Hargrave who visited the house before the house before devising the idea to enlist the ghost's help to break the curse.)

1. Foyer

Decadence welcomes you into mansion's foyer, where a marble **statue** stands on a raised platform. The statue depicts a handsome, shirtless man, his hands resting on his hips. He smiles broadly, as if welcoming you inside. On one side of the foyer sits an upholstered bench, while across from it is a tall **armoire**, awaiting coats and cloaks. The northern threshold of the foyer leads to a larger room, while to the south is a set of large double doors with brass door handles.

This is likely the first location the characters step into in the house, and the description might be at odds with the players' expectations. They'll learn in the course of their explorations that the mansion remains largely as it did a decade ago when the curse first fell over the house. If they inspect the floor or furniture for signs of use, they'll find little beyond what's described in "Tracks" in the house's General Features.

Key Features

Statue. The statue depicts Victor Hargrave, husband to the family's matriarch, Helga. Closer inspection (no Perception check required) reveals his name on the statue's base, along his year of birth and death, which reveal that he died at age 57, 22 years ago. The inscription also reads "Beloved husband, dedicated father, and hero of the people." A DC 15 History check lets a character recall with confidence nothing about him that would suggest he was a "hero of the people." *Get Spooky:* The statue appears to wink at one of the characters.

Armoire. This armoire would once have hosted the hats, cloaks, and coats of visitors to the house. It has a set of four drawers at the base as well as two sets of doors. The armoire is empty, save for a fancy top hat. The top hat is actually a mimic, which is content to stay disguised as a hat. It will attack a character if that character is ever alone or if the party becomes engaged in battle with some other threat. A DC 20 Perception check lets a character see through the mimic's deception. *Get Spooky:* If multiple characters are searching the armoire, the character with the lowest Perception check hears a child's voice quietly plead "Help, I'm trapped. I can't get out."

2. Reception Hall

This long room looks to have once been for hosting arriving guests. A cold and empty **fireplace** squats at the north side of the hall, while upholstered benches and chairs line the side of the room. Four marble columns support a high **ceiling** painted with a dramatic scene of heroes battling monsters. In the center of the ceiling hangs a tiered chandelier, crystals sparkly dimly in the sparse light. The room exits to the north and south.

Characters who languish in this room will hear bits of gossip from events once hosted at Hargrave House. Use the following or create your own:

- “That painting is just fantastic. Who was your painter?”
- “I don’t know why they keep throwing these events. You know they have no money left.”
- “I hear Helga hasn’t been seen since Victor died. Tragic. He was such a dear.”
- “They won’t talk about him since he went abroad. It’s like they disowned him.”

Key Features

Fireplace. The hearth of this fireplace is 6 feet wide and carved of granite. Above the hearth are two halves of a **broken lance**, mounted into the wall. Inside the hearth are ashes, and a DC 10 Nature check reveals they are no older than a month. Any character who wants to more closely explore the fireplaces needs an Investigation check. On an Investigation check of less than 10, a character accidentally triggers the fireplace’s lighting mechanism. That character must then succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2d6 fire damage on a failed save and half on a successful one. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Investigation check discovers among the ashes remnants of canvas and a large picture frame. (This is the portrait of Harper Hargrave that’s absent from Gallery; Harper destroyed it in an earlier visit to the mansion.)

Ceiling. The ceiling is painted with several monsters: a blue dragon, a chimera, a hydra, and a griffon. All are in combat with a half dozen scantily clad men and women. If a character studies the painting more closely, a successful DC 14 Perception check reveals that all the men appear to have a face resembling that of the Victor Hargrave statue in the foyer. The face of the women in the painting resemble Helga Hargrave, though characters recognize her only if they have already visited the Gallery or Victor & Helga’s Bedroom. The chandelier appears valuable (500gp). **Get Spooky:** The chandelier sways slightly whenever a character walks under it, as though it might fall. A character who lingers under it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity check as it comes crashing to the ground. On a failed check, the character takes 1d8 bludgeoning damage and 1d8 piercing damage.

Broken Lance. The lance is broken in the middle, and its grip bears a black and gold motif from the Hargrave family crest (no check required). The outline of a placard rests below the broken lance, but it looks to have been removed. With a successful DC 10 History check, a character can distinguish that the lance is a jousting lance.

3. Stairway

This circular room has a stone spiral staircase leading to the upper story of the mansion. A beautiful **banister** of carved wood follows the path of the stairs upward. Surrounding the room are four suits of **armor** atop stone pedestals. Doors lead to the east and west, and to the south is a large reception hall.

This room contains a **Clue**.

Key Features

Banister. With a DC 18 Perception or Investigation check in the room, a character notices that the banister is carved with several inscriptions:

- HH [heart] LG
- Harper sucks
- Hazel was here
- Magic rules
- Miss u grandpa
- a **Clue**

Armor. These are suits of splint armor, specialized for jousting. A character who dons the armor seemingly gains benefits as normal from the armor. However, in the next encounter, the character finds the armor seems to actively move the character into harm’s way, giving enemies advantage on their attacks. Removing the armor once donned requires a DC 15 Strength check. Regardless of the check’s success, a character can remove it, but a failed check results in one level of exhaustion. **Get Spooky.** Each time the party returns to this room, they find the helmets of the armor are facing in the direction they last left.

Secret Entrance. A successful DC 15 Perception check to look around the room lets a character notice scrapes on the floor beside the northeastern suit of armor. On a successful DC 15 Strength check, the pedestal can be moved to reveal a staircase down to the Crypt.

4. Crypt

This room contains a **Clue**.

Stone steps descend into a hall lined with burial niches, piled with bones. A set of unlit bronze braziers hang from the ceiling. At the end of the catacomb is a tumble of rubble and debris.

The **Archaeologist** died here. If a player is playing the half-elf rogue **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, add the following:

The top half of a **skeleton** sticks out from underneath the collapse.

Key Features

These features apply only if a player is playing the half-elf rogue and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir.

Skeleton. The skeleton appears to have been partially trapped under the rubble, unable to escape. At the waist of the skeleton is a scroll case. Within the scroll case, a character can find a drawing of the house (reveal the player map to the players). Scribbled in the margin is a Clue. If a character asks the race, a DC 15 Medicine check confirms it was a human, elf, or half-elf. A DC 15 Medicine check confirms it was an elf. Touching the buried skeleton activates the bones in the burial niches. Ten skeletons begin clawing their way out. The first turn of combat, the skeletons' only action is to free themselves and climb out.

5. Atrium

This room contains a **Clue**.

The ceiling of this circular room rises up to the roof of the mansion, where glass paneling exposes the stars and full moon. About twenty feet up, a mezzanine on the top story of the mansion looks down. Below, the room has four exits: east, south, north, and west. In the center of the room is a basin, above which stands a **statue** of a hooded figure. The hooded figure has a skeletal visage, and from its eyes and mouth flow a black sludge that runs the length of its robes down into the basin.

Key Features

Statue. This statue is a depiction of Death (Religion DC 10), and it is a manifestation of the curse. The black ichor is what remains of the bodies of the Hargraves and their spouses. Although their spirits still inhabit the house, their flesh, blood, and bones have been absorbed into this macabre fountain. With the *identify* spell, a character can learn these details. However, using *identify* on the fountain or touching the black sludge results in a cacophony of voices that comes crashing into a character's mind. The character must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the character takes 2d6 psychic damage and suffers a short-term madness effect for 1d10 minutes. A character who succeeds on the saving throw is able to push away all of the voices except one, Holly Hargrave, daughter of Helga Hargrave. If you are running short on time for the adventure, Holly can provide any number of Clues to advance story. Otherwise, she can answer questions about the house's contents and layout, but the curse prevents her from speaking any specifics about the locations of the bodies or what happened to her family.
Get Spooky. At your option, Holly can maintain a psychic presence inside the character and continue to offer advice, caution, or unsettling commentary.

6. Powder Room

One side of this room has an elaborate **vanity** with mirrors and drawers, while the other contains wooden shelves stacked with towels.

Key Features

Vanity. The vanity drawers smell of sandalwood and are filled with perfumes, cosmetics, combs, brushes, razors, shears, and more. A successful DC 15 Investigation check yields a *potion of healing*. **Get Spooky.** If a character picks up the shears or razor, they must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw (charm effect). On a failure, they feel an overwhelming compulsion to attack the nearest creature (Strength attack without a proficiency bonus). On a hit, the razor or shears deal 1d4 piercing damage. The effect ends after the character makes the attack, but you can have the party roll initiative to see how they respond to the sudden action.

7. Baths

This room is tiled floor to ceiling and has several drains set into the floor. In the center of the room stands a 10-foot-wide, circular **bath**. The rim of the bath stands waist high, and it has a submerged bench for bathers to sit on. A ceramic column is topped with a set of brass faucets. The northern wall has several hooks for hanging towels, while the eastern wall has a wooden **door** with a sign above it that reads, "Sauna." The western wall has assorted bath salts and a side table, likely for serving food and drink to bathers.

Key Features

Bath. The bath's waters are currently the same temperature as the rest of the house, but turning the faucet causes warm water to come pouring out. If the faucets are left running for more than a minute, the water is replaced by the black ichor (see General Features).

Door. The eastern door of this room is jammed. Opening it requires a *knock* spell or a combined DC 25 Strength check from two or more characters.

8. Sauna

This room contains a **Clue**.

The warm room is lined with cedar planks and has benches that run along all four walls. The air in this room is significantly warmer than the rest of the house.

The **Investor** died here. If a player is playing the human wizard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, add the following:

A couple **vents** below the benches look to have had a crude attempt made to block them using a torn towel. In the corner of the room on one of the benches is a **skeleton**. The skeleton clutches what looks like a **ledger**.

Key Features

These features apply only if a player is playing the dwarf fighter and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir.

Skeleton. If the skeleton is present, a DC 10 Medicine check can confirm that the skeleton didn't die of any obvious force trauma. A DC 15 Medicine check confirms it was a dwarf.

Ledger. The ledger seems to be an accounting of the rooms and objects in the house, as well as the approximate square footage of the mansion. A quick scan through the ledger reveals that the former owner was calculating the estate's worth and put it at 137,000 gp. The ledger also contains one Clue.

Vents. Warm air continues to pipe through the vents.

9. Conservatory

This room contains a **Clue**.

The air in this room is warm, humid, and smells of earth. Along the northern and eastern walls are glass panels to allow the sun to warm the room in the day. Forty or fifty pots, their plants now dead, sit on shelves along the glass walls. In the southwest corner of the room against the interior stone walls is a large **potted plant** that looks almost like an enormous piece of corn wrapped in vines. Unlike the other plants, it appears to still be alive.

The **Botanist** died here. If a player is playing the human wizard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, add the following:

At the base of the large potted plant is a **skeleton**, clutching a **sketchbook**.

Key Features

Potted Plant. The potted plant is a type of corpse flower. If a character approaches within 5 feet of the flower or skeleton (such as to use Perception or Investigation), the plant is activated. The plant's petal-like exterior unfurls, releasing a noxious smell. Each creature within 30 feet of the flower, including around corners, must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 2d6 poison damage. In addition, the corpse flower makes an immediate attack against the nearest creature (+5 vs. AC). On a hit, the character is grappled and must make another DC 12 Constitution saving. On a failure, the creature becomes unconscious for 1 minute. They take 1d6 poison damage at the start of each turn. Another creature can free the grappled character by dealing 10 damage to the plant (AC 5, automatically fails saving throws; immune to psychic damage and charm effects) or with a successful DC 15 Athletics check to break the grapple. Ending the grapple ends the damage. The plant cannot attack again for 24 hours. The plant, having no intelligence, attacks non-living things such as a *magic hand* as it would a normal creature.

Skeleton. This feature applies only if a player is playing the dwarf fighter and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir: A DC 10 Medicine check can confirm that the skeleton didn't die of any obvious force trauma. A DC 15 Medicine check confirms the victim was a human, elf, or half-elf. A DC 20 confirms it was an elf who died of poison.

Sketchbook. The sketchbook contains beautiful drawings of many of the plants. At the end is a full page illustration of the corpse flower. In the margins, are several notes:

- “Feels like the house is watching me.”
- “The curse?”
- “Learned something tonight.”
- “[Clue]” (Provide a Clue to the players.)

10. Courtyard

This long, empty inner courtyard opens to the sky above, where the full moon is visible. The night air is cold and still. On the eastern side of the courtyard is a **wall** of something shiny and black, which glints in the moonlight. There are doors to the south, west, and north.

Wall. A character who approaches the barrier on the east can see that the shiny, black surface appears to be ice, and that it blocks a door to the east. Touching the ice deals 1 cold damage. The ice is immune to all damage and conditions. As the characters uncover Clues, cracks form in the ice sheet. When the final Clue has been revealed, the ice shatters and the room can be entered (see Lifting the Curse.)

11. Temple

This room, unlike much of the rest of the house, is built from carved stone blocks. Six marble columns support an arched ceiling, fifty feet up. An **altar** encased in ice sits in the eastern portion of the temple. In the center of the room is a **circle of arcane glyphs**, in the middle of which is a small **skeleton**. Above the skeleton hovers a shadowy creature with eyes like burning coals. Its features vaguely resemble an elderly woman.

This temple is the location where Helga Hargrave sacrificed her granddaughter Helen Hargrave to attempt to create a pocket reality hidden from Death.

Key Features

Altar. The altar is difficult to make out through the ice (Perception DC 15). Once the **wraith** is defeated, the ice sloughs away, revealing a marble block. The marble altar is simple, carved with motifs and imagery of dawn. If you are setting this adventure in a particular plane, characters can determine the deity with a successful DC 10 Religion check (Ravenloft – Morninglord; Forgotten Realms – Lathander; Eberron – Silver Flame; Dragonlance – Mishakal.) If a character touches the altar after the curse is lifted, they disappear and are released from the house.

Circle of arcane glyphs. The arcane circle holds no power now. A character who makes a DC 15 Arcana check can determine that the circle was intended to channel the negative energy from an act of profanity into creating a powerful field of abjuration and illusion. A DC 20 Arcana check lets a character determine the field of abjuration was to shelter the estate from Death, but it was not created correctly. Once the **wraith** of Helga is defeated, the circle fades.

Skeleton. A DC 10 Medicine check reveals that the skeleton was from a young humanoid girl. A DC 15 check is sufficient to determine that it was a young human girl who died from a dagger through the chest. Once the **wraith** is defeated, the spirit of Helen appears. She thanks the party and offers several heartfelt words to her sibling, Harper, the Hargrave family heir. (Unless the heir has already revealed themselves, this may be the first time the players learn the identity of their companion.) Helen also tells the rest of the party that with the curse lifted, they are free to pass on and need only touch the altar. If players haven't deduced they're ghosts yet, Helen makes it clear.

12. Study

This room contains a **Clue**.

This study is lined with bookshelves and glass display cases filled with **curios** and trinkets. Above the shelves and cases are eight **horse heads**, mounted and preserved. A small fireplace is set into the southern wall. On the eastern side of the room is a large wooden desk flanked by two suits of splint **armor**. A finely upholstered chair sits behind the **desk**.

The **Writer** died here. If a player is playing the half-elf rogue **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, add the following:

The chair is stained with blood, and in the chair is a **skeleton** lacking a **skull**. Its hand is outstretched, clutching a **pen**.

Key Features

Curios. The curios are an assortment of sentimental objects and objects purchased at auction. Some of the objects still have tags on them, indicating the date, location, and price of purchase. All date back over a decade. For objects, use items from the [Trinket Table](#) in the *Player's Handbook* or the [Gothic Trinkets](#) from *Curse of Strahd*.

Horse Heads. These eight horse heads are the remains of some of the Hargraves's prized jousting mounts.

Get Spooky: A character examining the mounts using Perception or Investigation sees an unsettling sight: One of the horses appears to give them a rictus grin. None of the other characters see it.

Armor. Each suit of splint mail is mounted upright and holds a longsword in its two gauntleted hands. The armor on the left is normal and inanimate. The one on the right transforms into a **helmed horror** if it is attacked or if anyone disturbs the skeleton, book, pen, or desk.

Desk. The desk has three drawers, one on each side and one in the center. On the left side is a half-full bottle

of brandy. On the right are sheafs of paper that appear to include a calendar of tournaments, records from the purchase and sale of horses, and financial statements. With a DC 15 Intelligence check, a character can discern that the Hargraves's finances were not in good shape. The middle drawer of the desk is locked. Opening it requires a DC 15 Dexterity check. Inside is a potion of healing.

Skeleton. This feature applies only if a player is playing the half-elf rogue and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir: The skeleton clutches a pen, which it was using to write a novel (see below). There are several completed pages on the desk. A character who disturbs them or the skeleton activates the helmed horror on the right.

A DC 10 Medicine check can confirm that the skeleton's spine was severed, as if its head were lopped off. A DC 15 Medicine check reveals the skeleton was from a gnome or halfling.

Skull. This feature applies only if a player is playing the half-elf rogue and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir: A DC 10 Perception check reveals that the skull of the skeleton is under the desk.

Novel. This feature applies only if a player is playing the half-elf rogue and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir: All of the novel pages except one are contained in a leather-bound folio. Inside the folio, scrawled on a piece of parchment is a Clue. The novel seems to describe a story in which a protagonist visits an abandoned house that's supposedly haunted. The pages describe the protagonist increasingly losing their grip on reality as they investigate the house. The most recent page describes the protagonist settling down into a study, when the armor in the room abruptly comes to life. The narrative ends mid-sentence.

The manuscript has no name on it.

Pen (optional). This feature applies only if a player is playing the half-elf rogue and **is not** the Hargrave Family Heir: Creative players might conclude that anything they write using the pen will become reality. At your option, you can have the pen grant a limited ability to warp the reality in the mansion (as many times as you like until your players naturally start trying to abuse the power).

13. Trophy Room

This carpeted room smells vaguely of pipe smoke. Mounted **animal heads** line the western and northern walls, while to the south is an elaborate **tapestry** depicting a jousting tournament. The room is furnished with several chairs and side tables, as well as a tall **humidor** stocked with cigars.

Key Features

Animal heads. The room contains six animal trophy heads—a lion, a bison, a moose, a dire wolf, a bear, and a stag. **Get Spooky.** If a player asks about the animal trophies, describe the animals they see, only instead of a stag, say “a blond human male.” When the character looks away or draws others’ attention to it, all the other characters see only a stag head. The blond man matches the one depicted in the tapestry.

Tapestry. The tapestry is a depiction of a joust, in which an armored person with an emblazoned “H” bests a

young, blond man wearing the crest of a stag. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Perception or Investigation check notices a loose thread at the bottom of the tapestry. Pulling it causes the tapestry to begin weaving new scenes, as if by magic. It reveals three scenes:

1. A scene, presumably after the joust, in which there seems to be a confrontation. The helmet of the jousting bearing the H has been removed and revealed to be a young Helga Hargrave. The blond man looks furious.
2. A scene of Helga discovering a young man covered in blood, lying on the floor in what must be House Hargrave.
3. A funeral with the Hargrave family arrayed around a tomb. Helga’s face isn’t one of sorrow, but one of cold vengeance.

Although no History check will reveal the full details of what happened, characters might deduce the following: Helga disguised herself to enter the men’s joust and defeated the blond man. In retribution for the shame, the blond man had Helga’s husband, Victor, assassinated. Helga then later took her own revenge on the man.

With a DC 20 History check, a character knows the blond man was Lord Ambrose, a distant relation to the monarchy who disappeared about twenty years ago.

Humidor. The humidor is stocked with many quality cigars that have long ago dried out. If a character smokes one of the cigars, they gain 1d4 temporary hit points. However, after several minutes of smoking, the smoke coalesces into three smoke mephits, which attack. If multiple cigars are smoked, each one becomes three more mephits. The lesson: Don’t smoke, kids, or mephits will appear and try to kill you.

14. Wash Room

This room has the faint smell of human waste. It has a wash basin fixed into the wall and a toilet seat with a removable chamber pot. A side table contains several incense sticks that have long since burned out. A closed **cabinet** is in the west side of the corner of the room.

Cabinet. The cabinet contains additional chamber pots and cloths for cleaning oneself.

15. Room of Reflection

This circular room is enclosed by doors to the north, south, east, and west. Fixed to the curved wall between the doors are dozens of framed **mirrors** in all shapes and sizes. In the center of the room is a marble pedestal topped with a 5-foot wide bronze **urn** filled with water. A mezzanine is visible about twenty feet above.

Key Features

- Mirrors.** Until the urn is touched, the mirrors reveal only the normal reflection of a character. If the urn is touched and a character fails their Wisdom saving throw, the following deaths are among those depicted:
- The character falls from a balcony, their head smashed on the stones below.
 - The character is burned to a crisp by the breath of a red dragon.
 - The character is beheaded by an axe from some unseen attacker.
 - The character falls into a pit of spikes and is impaled.
 - The character is strangled by vines.
 - The character, their hands and feet bound, has a dagger plunged into their chest by a masked figure.
 - The character is crushed under rubble.
 - The character is turned to stone by the gaze of a medusa.
 - The character appears to die from thirst, their lips cracked and skin sallow.
 - The character dies from self-inflicted wounds with the point of an astrolabe.
 - The character, blue and shivering, and surrounded by a heavy snowfall, dies from exposure.

Urn. A character looking into the urn's water sees no reflection. Before the Hargrave curse, the magic of this room would reveal hopeful images of life's possibilities. Since the curse, the magic was corrupted. Now, touching the water in the urn requires the character to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw (fear effect). On a failed save, the mirrors play out dozens of variations of the character's death. They take 2d6 psychic damage, are frightened for 1 hour, and cannot bear the sight of their reflection. On a successful save, all of the mirrors depict just one death: The real way the character died (see [The Characters](#)).

If the characters have explored enough of the mansion, this hint might be enough to let them deduce the truth: They are ghosts. If that happens, you can have Helen Hargraves's reflection appear in the pool and provide the remaining [Clues](#).

A bound [water weird](#) fuels the urn's magic. If a second character touches the urn, the angry creature attacks. Touching the urn a second time has none of the effects described above.

Breaking Mirrors. A broken mirror seeps [black ichor](#). In addition, each time a character breaks a mirror, they feel a shiver run down their spine. For each mirror a character breaks, the DM gains a reroll to use against that character.

16. Piano Room

In the middle of this room sits a grand **piano**. Around the room are several upholstered chairs, facing the piano. A few paintings of pastoral landscapes hang on the walls. To the north is what appears to be a dining room.

Key Features

Piano. The grand piano is in pristine condition and still well-tuned. A set of sheet music sits in the music desk. Anyone, even unfamiliar with music, can tell that the piece is complex. Playing the music requires that a character be

proficient in the piano (e.g. the half-elf bard). A character who is not proficient can attempt to slowly play the music with a Performance (Intelligence). On a success, each member of the party gains Inspiration. On a failure, the keys slice the piano player's fingers, dealing 1d6 slashing damage and turning the white keys red. The piece of music has a melancholic quality that sounds like a dirge.

Get Spooky: After the characters leave and are three or more rooms away, they hear the piano playing, but upon returning, find no one.

17. Dining Hall

In the center of this large room is a fifteen-foot dining table flanked by high-backed **chairs**. Silver **candelabras** run the length of the table with candles of red wax. Silver dinnerware is set out, as though a feast were about to be served. The northern wall has several large **windows** that look out into the estate's grounds. The southern walls contain a set of **hutches** for dinnerware. The eastern wall is set with a small **fireplace**, and a door blocks the way to the west.

Key Features

Chairs. Any character who sits at a chair can hear whispers of conversation to their left and right. With a DC 15 Perception check, they can make out a snippet of conversation. Each of the eight chairs yields a different result:

- *"Where is Helen? She should be done with her music lessons by now."*
- *"Have you heard anything from Harper? It's been a year."*
- *"Mother is mourning tonight. It's been ten years since Victor was killed."*
- *"Quiet, if grandma hears you talking about him."*
- *"Her musical talents are really otherworldly."*
- *"You know mother wouldn't approve if she knew you were going to the tournament."*
- *"Can we go stargazing tonight, uncle?"*
- a **Clue** (unlike the others, this is in the voice of a little girl, Helen)

Candelabras. When the candles are lit, a red liquid more like blood than wax begins to flow freely down, where it is absorbed into the tablecloth and disappears. While the flames burn and the liquid flows out, delicious food appears on the nearby dishes. If any character braves eating it, they find it tastes delicious and gain 1d6 temporary hit points. After 5 minutes of eating, though, their mouth is filled with the pungent taste of blood, which remains for 1 hour. A character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they are sickened by the experience and become poisoned for 1 hour.

Windows. The exterior windows look out on the darkened estate, where a private **graveyard** is visible in the light of the full moon. The windows can open but are locked shut (DC 15 Dexterity check). A character who steps outside onto the estate is beset by 4 [crawling claws](#). Each round, 1d4+1 additional crawling claws appear and attack for as long as one or more character remain outside.

Graveyard. Persistent players might endure the attacks of the crawling claws to investigate the graveyard, which is fifty feet from the house. If they do, they find no evidence of the graves of the Hargraves described in *The Hargraves*, with the exception of Victor Hargrave. Victor's large, ornamented headstone shows the date of his death (20 years ago). The inscription reads "Son, Father, and Grandfather, brutally murdered by Lord Ambrose, who will pay for his crime." All the other graves are for Hargraves not relevant to the adventure.

Hutches. The hutches contain additional silver dining ware. All told, the collection is worth about 700 gp.

Fireplace. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Investigation check finds among the ashes in the fireplace a scrap of paper in the corner of the fireplace. In a hastily scrawled script, it reads "GET OUT NOW."

18. Kitchen

This room contains a **Clue**.

A scent of meat and spices fills this room, which is lined with cabinets and shelves. Most of the shelves carry **copperware**, while cooking utensils of all shapes and sizes hang from the hooks. An island for food preparation runs the length of the room. In the southwest corner of the room is a large fireplace with a cast iron setting built for cookware. A door blocks the way to the south.

Key Features

Copperware. The pots, pans, and utensils in this room are of little value. Any character who touches them finds that they're unusually cold. **Get Spooky:** Once the characters leave this room, they hear something clang to the ground. Investigating, they will find no evidence of any creatures. Two things fell: an empty a can and a

sieve. If the characters put the objects back up and then leave again, the same two objects fall (this continues indefinitely). The message the spirits are trying to get across is a veiled plea "can save?" If a character runs water through the sieve, the water drops form seem to form script. With a DC 15 Intelligence check, a character can make them out enough to reveal a **Clue**.

Door. A door opens to a stone path that circles the house. A character who strays from the path is beset by 4 crawling claws. Each round, 1d4+1 addition crawling claws appear and attack for as long as one or more character remain off the path. A character who traverses the path discovers a skeleton near the dining hall (see Room 28).

19. Scullery

This tiled room has several faucets and large **basins** built into the wall. In one corner of the room, a planked **door** is set into the floor. Drying racks for dishes and laundry are set out.

Key Features

Basins. One of the wash basins appears to have a girl's dress in it, covered in blood. If a character tries to withdraw the dress they find it to just be a simple towel, and any sign of blood disappears.

Door. The wooden door can be lifted up and hooks into the wall to keep it open and allow passers to move up and down the steps between the scullery and larder. **Get Spooky.** When the last member of the party descends down the steps to the larder, the latch holding the door gives way. The character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 1d6 bludgeoning damage and require a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check to stay on their feet. Otherwise,

they go tumbling down the steps, taking an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage, as well as any other creatures on the steps.

20. Larder

A set of steep steps descend twenty feet below the Hargrave house and opens into a large chamber lined with wooden **shelves**. The room has a pungent scent of rot mingled with wine. One side of the room has several **barrels**, each about two to three feet in diameter and four feet in length. They are mounted on tresses and have corks hammered into them

Key Features

Shelves. A DC 12 Investigation or Perception check is sufficient to determine that no foodstuffs of any value remain in the larder. Whatever might have once been on the shelves has long since rotted away.

Barrels. There are four barrels, and each contains something different:

- One contains three swarms of insects that pour out, attacking any player that removes the cork. These famished bugs will bite anything they can.
- One contains a cheap ale that has now gone rank.
- One contains a wine that, while not especially tasty, is still drinkable.
- One barrel doesn't seem to have a cork. A successful DC 15 Investigation check reveals that there is a secret hatch built into the barrel. The contents within are a potion of healing, a potion of poison (appears like a potion of healing), a potion of invisibility, and potion of speed. In addition, there is a bag of exactly 500gp in 10gp gems, a scholar's backpack containing several changes of fine clothes, and a bag of tricks (rust).

21. Drawing Room

Fine upholstered chairs and couches are arrayed around this room, encircling a lacquered wooden table containing a stone **chess set**. A large **portrait** of the Hargrave family hangs on the western wall. A **liquor cabinet** stands against the northern wall, a beautiful **crystal decanter** resting atop it. A set of wooden double doors leads to the east, while to the south the path opens into another room.

Key Features

Chess Set. The black pieces on the board are depicted as skeletal figures, with the Black King carved as a hooded figure wielding a scythe. The white pieces are carved as humans. The chess board is set up with a game already in progress. With a DC 12 Intelligence check a character can conclude that the White Queen can put the Black King in check by sacrificing one of its pawns. If a character moves the piece to secure a check, the table is suddenly flipped by an unseen force. The character who makes the move must

succeed on a Dexterity 12 saving throw. On a failed save, they take 1d6 bludgeoning damage, half on a success.

Portrait. This portrait depicts the family members described in the Gallery. One of the family members has been painted out of the painting. A clever player who's playing the elf bard might conclude they can use *prestidigitation* to reveal the identity of the blacked out family member. Doing so reveals a fifteen-year-old [describe the race of Harper]. Any character examining the portrait gets an automatic DC 12 Intelligence check. On a success, that character recognized the figure in the painting as a younger version of the member of the party playing the Hargrave family heir.

Liquor Cabinet. The cabinet has keyhole on the front, and anyone attempting to open the object finds it locked. A character inspecting the room can find the key fastened to the underside of the table with a DC 20 Investigation check. If the table has already been flipped (see "Chess Set"), a DC 15 Perception or Investigation check suffices to find the key. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check is also sufficient to open the lock. The cabinet can be broken with a DC 20 Strength check, but doing so shatters the bottle within. Inside is a full bottle of a whisky labeled "Bard's Friend," which has the same effects described in "Crystal Decanter." There is enough in the bottle for five more drinks.

Crystal Decanter. Atop the liquor cabinet sits a crystal decanter with a small portion of golden brown liquid at the bottom. A character smelling it can identify the liquid as whisky with a unique fragrance that matches whatever inspires them, such as the smell of books, the scent of wildflowers, to smell of the forest, or the perfume or cologne of a lover. This whisky has especially potent intoxicating effects. The decanter contains approximately one ounce. If a character drinks all of it, they must make a DC 15 Constitution (poison) saving throw. On a failure, the character has disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Dexterity checks for 1 hour. Regardless of success or failure, they gain Inspiration if they don't already have it.

22. Gallery

This room contains a **Clue**.

Exquisitely detailed oil **paintings** cover the wall of this long hall. Most are portraits, depicting what must be members of the Hargrave family. A thick carpet of rich red stretches most of the length of the gallery. The hall opens to a chamber to the north.

The portraits in this room depict the Hargrave family, going back to the house's matriarch, Helga, and her husband Victor. The portraits don't necessarily reflect the age of each of the house's residents at the time the curse occurred. Harper's portrait is missing. Helga removed it after Harper left the family to go abroad and never came back.

Key Features

Paintings. The northern wall holds paintings of several beautiful landscapes, many featuring horses engaged in dressage. The southern wall of the gallery depicts the

Hargrave family line. Each painting has a placard below it that identifies the family member. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Perception check to examine the paintings notices that all most have the signature of Henry or Gladys Hargrave.

- **Helga Hargrave.** This portrait depicts a stately looking woman in riding clothes beside a horse and holding a lance. She wears a serious expression, gazed fixed on the portrait's viewer. **Get Spooky:** Helga ages before the viewer's eyes—her face wrinkling and her expression hardening. She seems to shrivel up as the oil on the canvas forms long cracks across her face.
- **Victor Hargrave.** This portrait depicts a strapping man with regal bearing, sitting atop a horse. He smiles broadly at the portrait's viewer.
- **Henry and Gladys Hargrave.** This portrait depicts a man and woman in their thirties, sitting behind a pair of easels, apparently painting themselves.
- **Hazel Hargrave.** This portrait depicts a young woman, perhaps 12 or 13.
- **Helen Hargrave.** This portrait depicts a young girl, likely 4 or 5. The canvas at her neck is slashed and blood seeps from the wound. **Get Spooky:** If a character tries to staunch the bleeding, the flow only thickens until blood covers the lower portion of the portrait. The blood is captured by the portrait's frame. If a character tries to taste the blood or remove it from the portrait, they find it has no taste and disappears once removed. Using *mending*, *cure wounds*, or *healing word* on the canvas requires a contested Arcana check from the house (+5 Arcana). Once failed, trying again has no effect. On a success, the canvas is repaired and the wound is healed. The character hears a young girl's voice, thanking them and offering one *Clue*.

- **Harper Hargrave.** This portrait is missing, though the placard remains.
- **Holly and Lillian Hargrave.** This portrait depicts two middle-aged women, one wrapped in the other's arms. Behind them is an array of exotic-looking plants.
- **Harold Hargrave.** This portrait depicts a middle-aged man in robes, standing in a study and clutching a gnarled wooden staff. His head is tilted slightly, and he looks at the portrait's viewer, as though inspecting them. **Get Spooky:** The first time a character views and then looks away from this painting, Harold disappears from it.

A character with a 13 or greater passive Perception notices the family resemblance of the Hargraves, enough to deduce the Hargrave family line is Helga, whose children are Holly, Harold, and Henry. They also see enough resemblance in Helen and Hazel to recognize them as the children of Henry and Gladys.

23. Studio

The smell of clay and paint fills this room. Two **easels** stand along the eastern wall. In the southwest corner of the studio, a table holds several incomplete **sculptures** along with an array of sculpting tools.

Key Features

Sculptures. The table contains the following three unfinished sculptures.

- **Sculpture of a head.** The features are crude and hard to distinguish. A carving knife is plunged into the head of the sculpture. **Get Spooky:** A character examining the sculpture begins to get a headache in a similar location to where the knife is plunged into the sculpture, taking 1 psychic damage. Removing the knife stops the headache and causes **black ichor** to ooze out.
- **Sculpture of a horse.**
- **Sculpture of a tiny adventurer.** If a character picks up this sculpture, the sculpture attacks their hand (+0 vs. AC, ignores armor while being held), doing 1 point of piercing damage on a hit. The adventurer has AC 5, 1 hit point, and will continue to attack.

Easels. One of the easels contains a blank canvas. The other is a mostly finished oil painting. The painting is a pastoral setting with fields filled with horse. However, all of the horses appear decapitated, their bodies still standing upright but their heads lying on the ground. There is no artist signature.

24. Library

This large room boasts floor to ceiling **shelves**, brimming with tomes. The smell of aging paper fills the room. On the right side of the room is a **lectern**, while the left side of the room holds several upholstered chairs and side tables. A **door** blocks the way to the south.

Key Features

Shelves. The bookshelves contain books in a variety of shapes and sizes. With a successful DC 15 Perception check, a character will notice that the bizarre author names on the spines are anagrams of the same set of letters. Author names include:

- Ahmed Grendel Hurlee
- Hedge Renelle Durham
- Hagen Dreed Muehller
- Meegren D.E. Hullheard
- Hermane H.D. LeGrueled

The anagrams reveal the following secret message: Helga murdered Helen.

Inspecting the pages of any one of the books, a character finds the pages blank except for a single phrase. (Share this with the character in secret, if possible, to let them determine how they react.) The message is: "Someone is lying to you." If the character attempts to show the book to another character, the text changes. Again, sharing in secret if possible, the text reads: "Someone will betray you." The pages are revealed to be blank upon any further sharing.

Lectern. The lectern has on it a large closed book, the title of which is *The Winds of Winter*. If a character opens it, they are blasted with cold and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, they take 2d6 cold damage, half on a success. The inside of the book is hollowed out and contains a key of cold iron for the door to

the south. Once used, the book will not unleash a blast of cold again until the next night.

Door. The door to the south is locked and made of solid oak banded with iron. A character who makes a Perception or Investigation check (DC 10) on the door finds that the iron in it is unusually cold. A character who tries to pick the lock finds their lockpicking tools get unbearably cold, dealing 1 cold damage. Opening the lock requires a DC 20 Dexterity check, and each successive attempt made without gloves deals 1 cold damage. The key to the lock is in the book on the lectern.

25. Observatory

This room contains a **Clue**.

In the center of this large, circular building stands a 10-foot-long **telescope**, aimed upward at a panel in the ceiling. The panel is supported by wood struts that appear connected by cables to a nearby **winch**. A stepladder leads up to the eyepiece of the telescope.

The **Astronomer** died here. If a player is playing the human wizard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, add the following:

Scattered around the room are **papers** scrawled with cryptic notes and mathematical figures. Amid the papers are the skeletal remains of a body.

Key Features

Telescope. Once the ceiling panel has been opened, a character looking through the eyepiece of the telescope can view the stars. Owing to planetary movement, the telescope is not currently pointed at any objects in space. The telescope has a pair of wheels for adjusting the declination and azimuth.

If a player is playing the human wizard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, the view through the telescope is obfuscated. A character who climbs (DC 10 Athletics check) up to investigate finds that the body of the telescope, along with the mirror inside, has been smeared with blood. **Get Spooky.** If a character looks through the eyepiece while the ceiling is still open, they create a bridge for the darkness. The shadows of the room thicken and manifest as a number of **shadows** equal to the number of characters. The shadows immediately attack.

Winch. The winch operates a mechanism to open the panel in the ceiling. Turning the winch and opening the ceiling reveals a clear sky and full moon.

Papers. This feature applies only if a player is playing the human wizard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir: The papers appear to be written by a mad person. Many of them show a formless darkness sketched in charcoal, its only features two white spots that appear to be eyes. Around it is a phrase “Only in lonely moonlight is truth revealed.”

This phrase is a minor riddle. If the ceiling is opened, revealing the moon, and if all other light sources are extinguished, then additional writing appears on the floor. Glowing with a bloodred light is a combination of

Common and Deep Speech. The hidden words chronicle the skeleton’s owner’s descent into madness. The words describe seeing something when they aimed the telescope into the nothingness, “a darkness that looks back.” The notes describe how the darkness required a sacrifice of the flesh to reveal its secrets. The chronicle describes how the author grew increasingly weak as they offered ever more blood. Among the writings is a Clue about the Hargrave curse.

Skeleton. This feature applies only if a player is playing the human wizard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir. The skeleton clutches an astrolabe, the point of which is covered in dry blood, apparently having been used to pierce skin. A DC 10 Medicine check confirms the skeleton’s race was a human, elf, or half-elf. A DC 15 confirms it was human.

26. Landing

At the top of the stairs is a hall with doors exiting to the east and west. Three suits of splint armor line the northern wall. Several windows look out on the grounds.

27. West Overlook

This long rectangular halls has doors to the north, south, and east. The western side of the room looks down forty feet on a chamber below that's lined with mirrors. A four-foot-high railing separates the hall from the overlook.

28. Helga & Victor's Room

This room contains a **Clue**.

This large, master bedroom is arrayed with fine furnishings. On one side of the room, a large, four-post bed with plush covers appears neatly made and undisturbed. The bed is flanked by two **nightstands** with marble stone tops and oil lamps. Across from the bed, a small fireplace sits unlit. Along the walls are several large **chests of drawers** carved with some kind of motif. Beside one of the chests stands a full length mirror. The exterior facing wall has a set of paneled glass doors that open onto a balcony.

The **Influencer** died here. If a player is playing the elf bard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir, add the following:

Out on the **balcony** is a tripod with a black box atop it, facing outward toward where a chunk of the balcony's **railing** is missing.

Key Features

Nightstand. On one nightstand rests a short journal without a name. The journal contains an account from its owner of an attempt to stay overnight at the house. The journal's entries start with humor and skepticism, with jokes about the strange sounds and happenings in the house. As the journal entries progress, the writing has a mounting intensity until the final entry provides an account of a **Clue** the owner discovered. Realizing the house may in fact be haunted and cursed, the journal's owner consigns in the final entry to take a photograph as proof of having stayed the night before leaving.

Chests of Drawers: The chests contain neatly folded pile of clothing belonging to an older woman. The fabrics are worn and slightly frayed, but still sturdy and well-kept. A sweet, musty fragrance escapes from the chest. The clothing consists of long, flowing dresses, slippers, shawls, blouses, trousers, and more. With a DC 12 Investigation check, a character can find a jewelry box in one of the chest containing assorted rings, necklaces, and earrings valuing about 500 gp.

Balcony. This feature applies only if a player is playing the elf bard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir. Any character who steps out onto the balcony can see that the railing is broken. The black box on the balcony requires a DC15 History check to recognize as a camera (the half-elf bard automatically succeeds on the check). A character who makes the check knows these rare and

valuable objects take still images. The camera has a self-activation mechanism and is aimed at where the railing is broken. (Players might rightfully conclude that someone was taking a selfie while leaning against the railing, which broke).

The camera has weathered under the elements outside, so the original image within it is damaged beyond repair. If a character uses *mending*, the picture inside is repaired and reveals a blurry image of someone falling through the broken balcony banister.

Railing. This feature applies only if a player is playing the elf bard **and is not** the Hargrave Family Heir. Any character who inspects the railing sees it broke outward and can spot a skeleton forty feet below on the stone path, surrounded by the wreckage of the railing. A character can climb down (DC 15 Athletics) to inspect the skeleton (the door in the kitchen also provides safe access). With a DC 10 Medicine check, a character can confirm the skeleton's owner died of blunt force from falling. A DC 15 Medicine check confirms it was a human, elf, or half-elf. A DC 20 confirms it was an elf.

29. Holly & Lillian's Room

This room contains a **Clue**.

This large, finely furnished bedroom features a four-poster bed on the west side of the room, with a set of bookshelves on the north and a couple **chests of drawers** on the south. A well-stocked **bookshelf** sits opposite the bed, and a lush **carpet** fills the center of the room.

Key Features

Chest of Drawers. These chests contain many articles of practical clothes—trousers, leggings tunics—tailored for women.

Bookshelf. The bookshelf is densely packed with books on horticulture, ranging from the mundane to the exotic. Most of the books look well-worn, and many have smudges of soil on their spines. With a successful DC 15 Perception check, a character discovers one book that lacks a title on the spine. A character who touches the spine feels a chill. Opening the book reveals it to be a journal. A character can learn the following if they spend 10 minutes perusing the journal entries from 10 years ago.

- This room belonged to Holly and Lillian Hargrave, who were married.
- They were plant lovers and collected exotic specimens from across the land.
- Holly and Lillian had an adopted child named Harper. (You can share the race and gender/pronouns of the Hargrave family heir.)
- Helga, Holly's mother, did not approve of Holly and Lillian adopting someone into the family. Helga treated Harper as a pariah, contributing to Harper's plans to leave abroad.
- Victor, Holly's father, was assassinated by a thug acting on behalf of "Lord Ambrose," after a humiliating loss at a tournament.
- "Justice was served" to Lord Ambrose and his assassin, but at great cost to the family's fortunes.
- Holly was also concerned about her mother's mental health. Helga was acting taciturn and withdrawn

as they approached the 10-year anniversary of her husband's death.

- Helga was spending increasing amounts of time locked away in the temple, allowing no one in.
- The last journal entry makes reference to an upcoming family dinner on the anniversary of Victor's death.
- As a character reaches the final page, ink appears on the page, forming crude letters that reveal a **Clue**.

Carpet. With a successful DC 20 Perception check (DC 15 if a character pulls up the carpet), a character notices a loose floorboard under the carpet. It has a niche containing a bag of beans with one bean left. Keep the effect table of the beans secret. Given some of the options on the bean table aren't feasible in the confines of a house, you can alter a roll to something more appropriate if the characters use the remaining bean.

30. East Overlook

This long rectangular halls has doors to the north, south, and west. The eastern side of the room looks down forty feet on a chamber with a large statue standing in a basin. A black liquid flows down from the statue into the basin. A four-foot-high railing separates the hall from the overlook. Above, the ceiling is paneled with skylights, allowing a view of the stars and full moon.

31. Henry & Gladys's Bedroom

Among the furnishings of this bedroom are a queen-sized bed, a large armoire, a chest, a bookshelf, and a carpet. A couple **paintings** hang on the wall, and a full-length mirror stands beside the armoire. The paintings in this room are several beautiful landscapes.

Key Features

Paintings. This room has several paintings created by Henry and Gladys, who were both artists. A character examining the paintings notices that the signatures on the paintings are "Gladys Hargrave" or "Henry Hargrave." The paintings also have titles.

- *Beyond the Ocean* by Henry Hargrave. This painting depicts the sea with a set of high cliffs rising starkly out of the ocean, as though the land had fallen away into it.
- **Get Spooky.** As a character studies the painting, they see someone hurtle themselves off the cliff, landing on sharp rocks below.
- *Infinite Fields* by Gladys Hargrave. This painting depicts rolling hills of wildflowers that blend together in rolling sea of color.
- *The Last Home* by Henry Hargrave. This painting depicts Hargrave House at night. **Get Spooky.** A character notices a light in one of the rooms on the second story, equivalent to the party's current location. If they look closely, they can see shapes moving around in that room in the painting. At the same time, any member of the party in the room who isn't currently examining the painting sees a massive, dark shape on the exterior

of the window. An massive eye suddenly appears, looking inward at the room, before withdrawing.

32. Hazel's Bedroom

Among the furnishings of this bedroom are a queen-sized bed, a large **armoire**, a chest, a bookshelf, and a carpet. A couple paintings hang on the wall, and a full-length mirror stands beside the armoire. This room has several **paintings** of jousting matches.

Key Features

Armoire. A cursory inspection of the armoire reveals this room likely belonged to a young woman. In addition to clothes, inside the armoire is a set of what looks like padded practice armor for jousting or swordplay.

Paintings. The paintings appear to all be illustrated by Henry Hargrave. One of the four paintings depicts a young woman at a jousting tournament.

33. Harold's Bedroom

This room contains a **Clue**.

Among the furnishings of this bedroom are a queen-sized bed, a large armoire, a chest, a bookshelf, and a carpet. A couple paintings hang on the wall, and a full-length **mirror** stands beside the armoire. This room also contains a desk with an **alchemist's kit** and a **book** set out on it.

Key Features

Mirror. A character who examines this mirror or room and succeeds on a DC 12 Perception check notices that the room reflected in the mirror is not exactly the same. In the mirror sitting on the bed, is a robed figure, his hands buried in his palms. If a character taps on the mirror, he looks up. If that character examined the portraits in the Gallery or the family portrait in the Drawing Room, they recognize the figure as Harold Hargrave. He doesn't seem to see the characters in the mirror and eventually goes back to sulking. If a character thinks to sit in the mirrored position of Harold in their room, they form a psychic connection. They hear a strangled voice and receive a **Clue**. Read the following:

"I never thought," the voice begins, before being strangled off by an anguished gasp. "When she asked about ritual magic and the Shadowfell, I thought it was her way of coping. If I'd known..." You hear a few sobs. "We're damned for this. Already I feel the cold fingers of Death squeezing us." The voice pauses. "There's something you should know... maybe you can help." [Provide the Clue] "I... I can say no more," the voice finishes, and descends into sobbing. In the mirror, the reflection of the robed man fades.

The character who received this message and the clue continues to hear sobbing for 1 hour, during which they

have disadvantage on Constitution checks to maintain concentration.

Alchemists Kit. There is an unlabeled red potion on the desk. It is a potion of healing.

Book. The book is titled *The One Who Watches* and appears to be an account of a scholar who traveled to the Shadowfell. Perusing the book, a character can piece together the following story, which you can read aloud or summarize:

The story tells of a scholar named Arin who, after losing his family, became obsessed with understanding the purpose of Death. He journeyed to the Shadowfell, a mysterious and treacherous plane of existence where death and darkness ruled.

As Arin traveled through the Shadowfell, he encountered many strange and unsettling creatures, but he pressed on, driven by his thirst for knowledge. Eventually, Arin reached Grave's End, a bleak and desolate palace, and the Domain of Death.

In Grave's End, he encountered a towering figure, draped in black robes and wielding a scythe. "Mortal," said Death in a voice like the rustling of dry leaves. "Why have you sought me, when I seek all in due time?" said Death.

Arin told Death his story, and said that he wished to understand if Death knew mercy. Death listened patiently, and then spoke in a gentle tone.

"I know mercy," said Death, "for a finite life is a mercy. Remaining on your mortal coils for all time would be a cruelty, as I well know."

"Is there nothing that yours eyes do not see?" Arin asked.

In answer, Death showed Arin a vision of the vastness of the planes, worlds full of life and death. When the vision ended, Death regarded Arin and said, "Now go, mortal, and await me. I will find you in time."

The back quarter of the book tells of Arin's experiments with creating demiplanes, where he put various animals and plants to see if Death would still find them. In all cases, Death did.

34. Helen's Bedroom

This bedroom once belonged to Helen, Henry and Gladys Hargraves's youngest daughter, who was sacrificed by Helga Hargrave as part of her profane ritual.

Frigid air unfurls from this room. The interior looks like a young child's room. Atop the **bed** rests half a dozen **dolls**, neatly positioned. Their heads are turned toward you. Among the other furnishings is a large armoire, a chest, a bookshelf, and a carpet.

Key Features

Bed. A successful DC 15 Investigation check of the room (or bed) yields a piece of art, tucked away under the mattress. It is crude but depicts a little girl with a doll, flanked by a man and woman. Beside the man and woman is an older looking woman who has a scowl on her face. The young girl in the illustration looks sad.

Dolls. The six dolls do not move while observed, but if a character is alone in the room, or if they are the last to leave, then the dolls strike. Use the **stirge** statistics for the dolls. Instead of a proboscis, the dolls have sharp fangs letting them clamp on to a creature. Their white porcelain faces turn red as they withdraw blood.



