



A Derelict House

*A d20 adventure supplement suitable
for four characters of levels 3-4*

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Getting Started

To use this adventure supplement you will require use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Players Handbook (third edition) published by Wizards of the Coast®.

Introduction

PC's, on the whole, can be an unpredictable lot, suddenly going off in completely the opposite direction to that which you (the DM) had planned, **or** insisting on visiting a possible adventure area that appears on their campaign map - but which you have not designed yet. This is where a 'side-track' adventure may be able to help. The basic idea behind these 'mini-adventure' supplements is that, while they can be used as small adventures on their own, they can also be 'inserted' into an existing adventure or campaign as an extra area for your players to explore.

This 'side-track' adventure therefore concentrates solely on the 'dungeon' aspect of the encounter(s), and can be used in conjunction with the full colour dungeon floorplans that are available from the CSP website (<http://enworld.cyberstreet.com/hosted/csp>). Even if you don't use miniatures, using the floorplans to show the layout of the dungeon is a great time saver (rather than having to quote the exact room dimensions for the party's mapper all the time).

With any luck, these 'side-track' adventures may help you create a more believable world for your players to explore - after all, it's always a good idea to have a back-up dungeon or two up your sleeve for those times when your players seem to ignore every hint you throw at them and go off at a complete tangent.

Background Information & Adventure Summary

This adventure supplement details a number of simple encounters that take place in an old (seemingly abandoned) house. The building itself could easily be located on the edge of any rural settlement, at the end of a remote trail, or even part of a long abandoned village - the possibilities are only limited by your own imagination.

Within the house itself there lurks an evil, cannibalistic wererat who has preyed upon the local inhabitants (or passing travellers/explorers - depending on the building's location) during the course of its lifetime (though somewhat sporadically to avoid too much attention). The creature has also taken a keen interest in some of the original tenant's collection of strange antiques - especially the gruesome images found within a timeworn book that details many strange and villainous rituals and practices.

Adventure Hooks

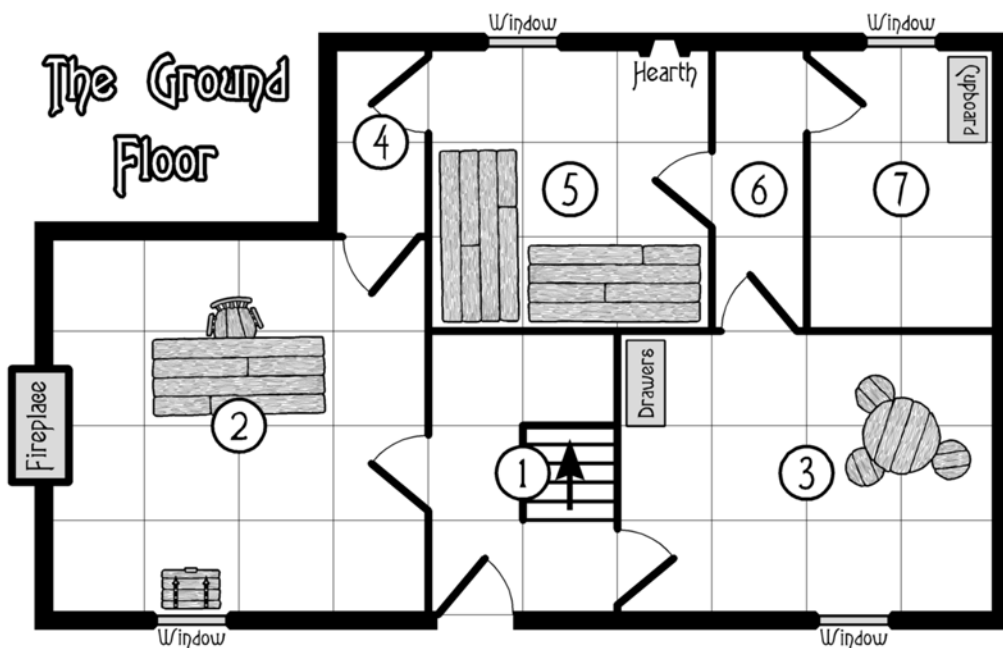
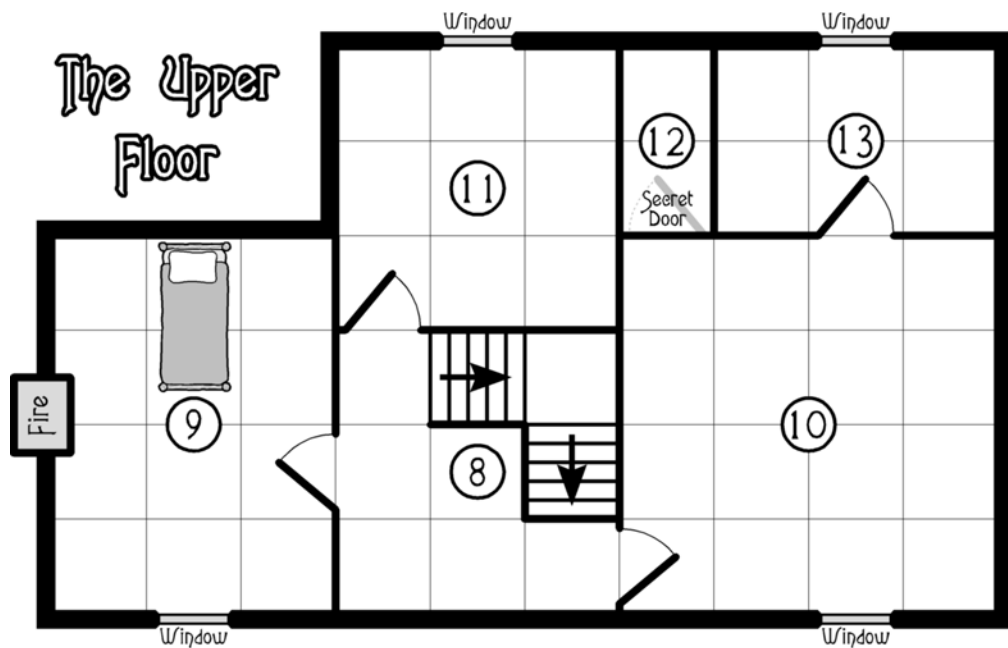
Following are a number of circumstances in which you may find this mini-adventure useful, as well as several ideas on how to use this supplement as an adventure in itself.

- The adventurers have been hunting for a lost tome of forbidden law (for whatever reason), and their inquiries lead them to the old abandoned house that was once owned by a great (though reclusive) scholar.
- The house is but part of a larger 'ghost town' that the PC's are exploring or passing through, and you find yourself in need of an encounter due to the characters spending more time in the area (or exploring more of the area) than you had originally planned.
- The characters are simply passing through an area thought to be uninhabited, when they spot the outline of what appears to be an old run-down house. For added effect, you may like to have the PC's encounter the house during a thunderstorm, or at the end of a long days hike - in other words, when they are more likely to be appreciate the benefits of a little added shelter.
- People have begun to go missing in the rural settlement where the characters are staying. The strange old man who lives in 'the haunted house' out on the outskirts of town is obviously the prime suspect.
- Many small settlements are likely to have an old run-down building near the outskirts of town, as are the slums of numerous large cities. Therefore this supplement could be used in each of these scenarios - should a party of adventurers stray into such a building.



Additional Note : This mini-module has been inspired by H.P. Lovecraft's story 'The Picture In The House'

The Building Layout



For full colour dungeon tiles that can be used to represent the various rooms within this building, visit the following page of the CSP site:

<http://enworld.cyberstreet.com/hosted/csp/page7.html>

In addition, there are also several pieces of furniture that can be assembled to represent the various features shown above. These can be found on the following page:

<http://enworld.cyberstreet.com/hosted/csp/page11.html>

The House

Upon seeing the house:

Down a narrow, winding, overgrown path lies a old decrepit wooden building standing to the side of the blackened remains of a huge lightning-blasted oak tree.

Upon approaching the house:

The path runs up to an old rusty gate that is connected to a small 2ft tall rotten timber fence that surrounds the entire house. Although both fence and gate are barely visible and overgrown with weeds, they seem to retain their nature a little too well to argue many years of total desertion.

Upon crossing the gate/fence:

From here you can see that the old structure boasts the unusual luxury of glass windows, though they appear almost opaque with dirt, yet by some strange stroke of luck are still in one piece. The path, though partially obscured by overgrown grasses and tall nettles, continues to run past the gate and up to a moss covered stone doorstep which sits beneath a particularly feeble looking wooden door.

Knocking on the door, or making any amount of noise will gain no response from the building's occupant. However, the door is not locked (despite an old rusty keyhole that is in plain view of anyone who cares to look) though it is ill fitting in it's timber frame and should be considered stuck (see below for details).

Characters who attempt to peer through the grimy windows will not be able to discern much - other than vague shapes of what appears to be furniture and the like. Unlike the door, the windows have a latch upon the inside that prevents easy access.

- 🔪 **Door:** Hardness 5; hp 10; Break (open) DC 13.
- 🔪 **Windows:** Hardness 1; hp 1; Break (open) DC 15.
- 🔪 **Exterior Walls:** Hardness 5; hp 60; Break DC 20, Climb DC 20.

Particularly suspicious characters that circle the house (to get a complete feel of it's layout), or players that require additional information (for any reason) may also discern the following:

- The building is a two storey construction with a window flanking either side of the front door.
- Two similar windows grace the front of the upper floor.
- There is no other entry/exit to the house.
- There are four more windows at the rear of the house - two on each level.
- A crumbling chimney graces the left hand side (as viewed from the front) of the house.
- A successful search check (DC 20) also reveals a set of bare humanoid footprints leading from the house and out into the woods.

- Characters with the *Track* feat may follow any tracks that are discovered (on a successful *Wilderness Lore* check - DC 15), where they will discover (a short distance from the house), what appears to be, the site of a scuffle (judging by the intermingled human and bestial tracks). From here a character may attempt another *Wilderness Lore* check (DC 20), but will only be able to follow the bestial tracks (as the human tracks seem to disappear) for around half a mile - when the trail is lost as it crosses a shallow stream. Note that these tracks however, are not what they first seem, as they are actually from a wererat who has shifted from human, to animal form.

1. The Hallway

Upon entering the house via the front door:

The door creaks open, with a sound not to dissimilar to that of a hundred screeching rats, to reveal a small hallway with bare walls and a rather treacherous looking stairway off to the right. Old wooden doors sit closed in their warped frames on both the east and west walls, and you notice a faint, nauseous odour hanging in the stale tasting air.

Important Note: *All of the doors found within the house will swing shut of their own accord once they have been opened (unless of course a PC takes steps to prop the doors open).*

The stairs themselves are in a somewhat poor state of repair, and any PC weighing over 100lb who ascends the steps, runs the risk of putting his/her foot through a rotten step halfway up the staircase. In game terms this 'brittle step' should be treated as a trap (the details for which can be found below), and a PC may search the staircase in the normal way to attempt to spot this particularly feeble looking step. If however, the hazard is not discovered, it is assumed that the first character to ascend the stairs plunges his/her foot through the rotten timber step and may then suffer a small amount of damage caused by the splintered wood.

🔪 **Brittle Step:** CR½; +5 melee (1d4); Search (DC 15).

2. The Study

This small, square, low-ceilinged chamber is dimly illuminated by a dirty window in the southern wall, beneath which lies an archaic looking chest decorated with garish, gargoyle-like carvings. The remainder of the room is furnished in the barest and most primitive fashion, with but a single chair behind a decrepit old table. On the west wall lies an immense smoke-soiled fireplace, and upon the table rests large tome.

If the PC's examine the book:

Upon closer inspection, the book can be seen to be bound in some kind of leathery animal hide with rusty metal fittings, and seems to fall open, with repeated regularity at page XIII.

This page it would seem has received regular scrutiny, and depicts in gruesome bloody detail what appears to be some kind of cannibalistic butchers shop strewn with human looking appendages.

For players who attempt to discern what kind of 'leathery animal hide' the book cover is made from, you should consult the following table for relevant DC's and skills required to determine is grizzly secret:

Book Cover Information			
Information Revealed	Int DC	Knowledge Nature / Heal DC	Specialist Knowledge / Profession DC*
The cover is made from leather of an uncommon sort.	15	10	5
The leather of the book's cover comes from the flesh of some kind of humanoid.	20	15	10
The tome is bound in human flesh.	N/A	20	15
* The DM may allow characters with specialist skills/abilities relevant to discerning such things (such as Knowledge Anatomy or Profession Tanner) to utilise these skills and their bonuses (if he/she deems them applicable).			

The book itself is written in the infernal tongue, and therefore anyone who can read this language will find the book to be a dastardly tome detailing many dark rituals, cannibalistic practices, sacrificial ceremonies, and other sadistic topics. Similarly a successful Decipher Script check (DC25) will reveal the books general content.

Pictorially, the book contains a few additional illustrations, most of which are highly stylised images depicting scenes of diabolic torture and bloody sacrifices intermingled with cryptic pentagrams and archaic sigils.

The chest sitting beneath the window is not locked or trapped, though the item residing within (detailed below) is not as harmless as it may first appear.

If the chest is opened:

Although the rusted fittings of the heavy lid are somewhat stiff, you manage to raise it with some effort - thus revealing the gruesome contents within. Resting upon the bottom, under a shallow sprinkling of dust, lie the remnants of what appears to be a mummified skull, half wrapped in rigid and brittle looking bandages.

The mummified head is of little interest (or monetary value) to all but a specialist collector, and is probably nothing more an abstract ornament or a small part of the previous owner's grizzly collection of such objects (as is the aforementioned tome). However, the skull itself is affected by the supernatural disease 'mummy rot' - and anyone who touches it will be required to make the appropriate saving throw to avoid being infected with the disease themselves (see below for details).

☛ **Mummy Rot:** CR2; fortitude save (DC 20) negates; incubation period 1 day; 1d6 temporary constitution damage.

Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues to damage it's victim until his/her constitutions reaches zero (and the character dies), or until a remove disease spell (or similar) is cast upon the sufferer (see MM p138 & DMG p75 for further details).

3. The Dining Room

Light streaks into this dingy room through a single cracked windowpane, eerily illuminating a round oaken table in the far corner. Upon the table rests various pieces of antiquated crockery, and around it sit several matching stools in various states of repair.

Across the room, upon the opposite wall to the table, lies an old hoary chest of drawers, with several of the aforementioned draws missing from their slots and scattered about the floor in a multitude of broken pieces.

The table itself appears to be in reasonable condition, apart from a number of deep furrows running across it's surface. The various pieces of chipped and cracked crockery resting on top of it are quite worthless, and do not appear to have been used (or even moved) for quite some time.

The chest of drawers is quite empty apart from three grime-covered vials - one of which contains a thick purple-coloured liquid. This is in fact a potion of *remove disease* - though due to it's antiquity, the liquid has developed a strange side-effect which turns the drinker's skin a bright purple colour upon consumption. The drinker is allowed a fortitude save (DC13) to avoid this effect - though if this save is failed, the colour change is only temporary (lasting one hour), and is otherwise completely harmless.

4. The Corridor (EL1)

The dim light from the room behind you struggles to penetrate the gloom of this dark, shadowy corridor, creating a strange foreboding passage lined with what appear to be large picture frames hanging crookedly upon the walls. Stepping forward you notice an audible crunching underfoot, and are soon aware that the floor seems to be in motion with hundreds of crawling insects.

Each 5ft square of this area should be treated in a similar way as the *summon swarm* spell in the players hand book (page 261). Therefore anyone who occupies one of these 'squares' and takes any action (other than simply fighting off the insects) will suffer 1d4+1 points of damage. Alternately a character who does nothing other than stand still and fight off the bugs will only suffer 1 point of damage.

The insects themselves cannot be fought effectively with conventional weapons - but fire and damaging area effects may cause them to disperse. Therefore each 'square' that takes 6 points of damage in this way will become clear of the troublesome pests.

Examining the portraits within this passage will reveal little more than fragments of moth-eaten canvas and woodworm infested frames. However a successful search check (DC10) will reveal a rusty old key secreted away atop one of the tattered frames.

5. The Kitchen

At first glance, this large, open-plan room appears to be more akin to a primitive slaughterhouse than the quaint kitchen that it once must have been. Dark stains cover most of the ramshackle tabletops and upon the wall hang vicious looking cleavers, old knives, and oversized meat hooks.

The wooden floor appears to retain a certain reddish hue in the few places yet to be obscured by the dust, dirt, and grime, that seems to cling to everything in view - including a blackened hearth and stove built into the outer wall.

PC's who search the floor area around the hearth will discover (on a successful search check - DC20) the following items tucked away beneath a removable floorboard:

- ☛ Small gold bracelet (worth 50gp).
- ☛ Golden ring inset with a blue quartz gem (worth 20gp).
- ☛ Small finely wrought silver necklace (worth 25gp).
- ☛ Small silver goblet (worth 15gp).

These items are a few choice oddments (from the current resident's victims) that were removed from the bodies before they were incinerated in the stove. PC's examining the contents of the stove will discover it filled with ashes. Rummaging through these ashes

(requiring another search check - DC10) will also reveal several bone fragments amongst the pile. Note that these fragments are too small and damaged to attempt any kind of identification.

The tools hanging on the wall are somewhat worn and a bit rusty, however, they are perfectly usable (despite their condition and apparent worthlessness) and should be treated as follows:

Simple Weapons - Melee						
Weapon	Size	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Knife	tiny	1d3	x2	20 ft.	½ lb.	P
Cleaver	tiny	1d4	x3	-	3 lb.	S
Exotic Weapons - Melee						
Weapon	Size	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Hook	small	1d6	x3	-	3 lb.	P

Note that the above weapon details have been taken from *Gryphon's Armoury* a free pdf download written by 'Gryphon Demon Lord of the Meme' that is available from:

http://community3e.com/dn/equip/book_weapon_and_armor.zip

6. Corridor

The door upon the eastern wall (leading to area 7) is locked - the key to which can be found hidden away in area 4.

☛ **Door:** Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC20; Lock DC20.

7. Store Room

Diffused light fights its way into this area through a dirt encrusted windowpane to reveal a small desolate room. Directly opposite stands a tall, antique looking cupboard - which, apart from a myriad of translucent spider webs, is all that adorns this seemingly long deserted chamber.

Although the cupboard in this room is kept locked, any PC who moves in for a closer look will discover the key already located in the lock. PC's who listen at the doors, or search the cupboard before opening it will discover little of interest - apart from a sickly smell emanating from within.

If the cupboard is opened:

As the lock clicks open the doors swing apart as a bloated corpse, with white pupil-less eyes, falls forward, filling the room with the foul smell of its decaying flesh.

At this point you may like to allow any character who is standing in front of the cupboard a reflex save (DC15) - thus giving him/her a chance of leaping aside to avoid contact with the falling corpse. If this save is failed (and thus the body collides with the aforementioned character) the character then runs the risk of being infected with small 'rot grubs' (see entry below) that migrate from the dead flesh of the corpse, and attempt to burrow into the more favourable living flesh of the character.

Similarly, if any other character makes physical contact with the corpse (by searching it, etc.), he/she too may become infected.

☛ **Rot Grub (CR4):** These diminutive vermin crawl off carrion and infest living hosts. They cause a fatal illness unless cured or killed. When first encountered, a spot check (DC15) can be made to avoid them entirely. If this check is failed, the grubs have contacted the victim and penetrated the skin. Once this occurs, the victim may make a wisdom check (DC15). If successful, he/she notices strange burrowing below the surface of his/her skin. Each round thereafter, a fortitude save (DC17) must be made. If failed, the victim sustains 2d6 points of temporary constitution damage. At constitution 0, the victim dies. The grubs then look for a new host. During the first two rounds, the grubs can be killed by applying flame to or by cutting open the affected skin. The flame or cutting does 2d6 points of damage to the victim. If a heal check (DC15) is successful, cutting damage can be reduced to 1d6. After the second round, only a *remove disease* spell can save the victim.

8. Upper Hallway

The uneven, creaky, steps lead to the upper storey of the house, which appears to be in as much of a sorry state as the rest of the run-down building.

Although windowless, enough sunlight streaks down through the holes in roof of this small hallway to reveal a closed doorway upon each of the three interior walls.

Characters passing through this area are allowed a listen check (DC15) in order to notice the faint sound of someone crying coming from area 9. Note that the DC is reduced (to DC10) for characters who actively listen at the door.

Also be aware that the door leading to area 11 will have swollen in its frame and should be considered stuck (see below).

☛ **Door:** Hardness 5; hp 10; Break (open) DC 13.

9. Bedroom

As the door swings open with a loud creak, you are immediately hit in the face with a strong coppery odour that stings your nostrils and almost brings tears to your eyes. As you regain your senses you then notice that the room beyond is darkened by a shabby woollen blanket that has been hung over the window to form a makeshift curtain, and that upon the far wall, directly opposite, lies a small unkempt fireplace that appears to have fallen into disuse a long time ago.

Off to the right can be seen an old rickety bed with dark stains adorning much of the threadbare sheets atop it, beneath which is a vaguely humanoid-shape that lies motionless - despite your noisy entrance. In the far corner, between the bed and fireplace, sits a young woman dressed in tattered and torn rags, with her knees pulled up to her chest and her head bowed - sobbing uncontrollably.

The figure who sits in the corner of the room is actually the ghost of a young woman who has recently fallen victim to the house's current resident. She, herself, poses no threat to the characters - and should only be used to add a little flavour to the adventure. Therefore when/if a character steps into the room you should read/paraphrase the following:

As you step into the room the figure in the corner tries to shuffle backwards - in an attempt to put as much distance between you and herself as possible. The poor woman seems terrified and physically trembles at your approach.

If a character then attempts to speak with the woman (perhaps in an attempt to calm her down), or continues to approach her, you should then read/paraphrase the following:

"No! Keep away from me" whimpers the woman in shaky voice, "He'll kill us... he'll kill us all!"

Then suddenly, the woman looks up - thus revealing a dozen gruesome wounds about her neck and face. "GET OUT!" she screams in a shrill ear-piercing voice as she coughs up a mouthful of blood, "GET OUT... before it is too late!"

With that the figure is encompassed in a soft ethereal glow, and as she stares at you pleadingly, tears running down her face to mix with the blood upon her cheek, she takes on strange ghostly quality and fades away into nothingness.

Characters who search the room (after the ghost vanishes) will discover (on a successful search check DC10) various 'splats' of dried blood scattered about the wall and floor. The PC's should also be allowed an easy listen check (DC5) in order to discern the buzzing sound of several flies in the area around the bed.

If a character examines the bed:

Although the figure beneath the sheets is completely covered, it looks to be humanoid in shape, and lies completely still - devoid of any movement. The sheets themselves appear to be wet, and about them swarm a score or more buzzing flies.

Characters who touch the bed sheets (or use an item to prod the figure beneath the sheets) will notice that their fingers (or whatever item is used) comes away covered in a sticky, crimson coloured substance (which is of course blood).

If a character pulls back the sheets:

As the sheets fall back, the room is filled with a sickening stench, and revealed in all it's gruesome horror is a the mutilated corpse of a young woman (or at least what appears to be a young woman), stretched out upon the bed.

Characters who decide to examine the corpse (or choose to take a closer look) will discover that this appears to be the same woman as the one that just disappeared before their very eyes (or more correctly the mortal remains of the ghost that they have just encountered).

10. Master Bedroom

The door opens into a large wood-panelled chamber that is in darkness apart from a solitary low burning candle that rests upon a wax filled saucer in the centre of the room. Upon the wall to your right is what appears to be a window - though it has been covered with a heavy woollen blanket, through which only the faintest amount of sunlight/moonlight* is able to seep through.

Directly opposite the window is an old timeworn oaken door, upon either side of which is piled various broken pieces of antiquated furniture, tattered books, and other junk – a few items of which have toppled over, spilling out onto the dirt-encrusted rug that covers most of the dusty floor.

** depending of the time of day*

Scattered about this room (in and amongst the debris) can be found a number of oddments belonging to the original occupant. These items include the following:

No search check required:

- ☒ Several books with most of the pages torn out (note that the few pages that remain are unreadable).
- ☒ Numerous broken vials and potion bottles.
- ☒ The half burnt remains of and old wooden chair.
- ☒ Various woodworm ridden panels and shelves that appear to be from old bookcases and cupboards.

A successful search check (DC10) also reveals:

- ☒ A vial of alchemist's fire.
- ☒ A sunrod.
- ☒ A jar of dead insects.
- ☒ 3 half-used candles.
- ☒ 4 copper coins and 1 silver coin.

Note that a successful search check (DC15) reveals the secret door leading into area 12.

11. Ritual Room

With some effort you finally manage to force the door open and gain entry to the room beyond. However, the room itself appears to be totally empty apart from several blood stained hooks and rusted chains that hang ominously from the rafters overhead.

PC's who search this room will discover (on a successful search check DC10) a faint pentagram-like inscription inscribed crudely into the floor's wooden boards (approximately 5ft in diameter).

Characters who have examined the book in area 2 (the study) are allowed a Intelligence check (DC10) to recall a similar ritualistic design appearing upon one of the pages within the tome. Characters who actively compare the markings upon the floor to the image found in the book will notice several imperfections in it's reproduction (which has thus hindered any ritualistic ceremonies that have been attempted by the current resident).

12. Secret Room

Beyond the secret door in the wood panelled wall lies a cramped chamber littered with humanoid remains. Here and there a gruesome skull leers out from beneath a pile of yellowing bones, it's eye-less sockets seemingly staring down into the very pit of your soul.



As described above, this room is full of the skeletal remains of the various victims of the current resident. Inspection of these bones reveals around a dozen different sets (judging by the number of skulls and other identifiable pieces) - all of which can be examined closer (using the table below), to reveal more race-specific information:

Skeleton Information			
Information Revealed	Int DC	Knowledge Nature / Heal DC	Specialist Knowledge / Profession DC*
All of the bones appear to be from humanoid creatures, and are of several differing shapes and sizes.	15	10	5
Most of the bones seem to be human in appearance (i.e. there are no prominent fangs or other monstrous signs), though a number of smaller remains are also present - thus suggesting children or small humanoids (such as dwarves or halflings) are also present.	20	15	10
Most of the bones can be identified as adult humans, though the remains of two children and a dwarf are also present.	N/A	20	15
* The DM may allow characters with specialist skills/abilities relevant to discerning such things (such as Knowledge Anatomy or Profession Physician) to utilise these skills and their bonuses (if he/she deems them applicable).			

It is this small room that the current occupant utilises as a makeshift bedroom (as can be seen by the animal-hide bedding found upon the floor). Characters who decide to search the bedding will discover (on a successful search check DC10) a large, seemingly empty, cloth sack hidden away beneath the pile. However, this sack is actually a bag of holding (capable of storing 250 lb of equipment/goods - see DMG p207). If the PC's manage to discover the sack's secret (by reaching inside, or turning the sack upside-down / inside-out) they will discover the following items secreted away inside (though the magical bag itself should be considered the real treasure):

- ❖ 27 gold coins.
- ❖ 163 silver coins.
- ❖ 229 copper coins.
- ❖ A grizzly looking necklace comprising thirteen humanoid teeth that have been strung upon a leather thong.
- ❖ A small leather pouch containing ten finger bones (possibly all from the same humanoid creature).
- ❖ Three waterskins (two full and one empty).



A successful search check (DC15) amongst the bodies reveals the following:

- ❖ A beautiful golden ring inset with a small, yet stunning amethyst gem (worth 50gp) that is attached to a skeletal finger of one of the bodies.
- ❖ A tattered purse containing 17 copper coins.

13. Store Room

The old door creaks open into a small rectangular room that contains several dark animal pelts lying in a nest-like heap beneath a filthy looking window. You also notice a repugnant odour of sweat, mixed with that of damp fur, hanging heavily in the air, while the faint buzzing sound of several flies darting about the room struggles to break the eerie silence.

Introducing The Antagonist

Rather than having the characters' main opponent in this mini-adventure be tied to a specific area within the house, their adversary (in this case, a hostile wererat creature in human form) should be introduced at such a time as to enhance the tension of the adventure. Therefore it is up to the DM to use his/her discretion as to when the wererat should appear, though a number suggestions have been detailed below for your convenience:

- If the PC's have paused in area 2 (the study) to examine the book upon the table, have the characters make an easy listen check (DC10) to hear creaking floorboards and footsteps overhead. The wererat will then make his way downstairs to confront the adventurers - maybe even appearing friendly at first, until such a time as he is in a better position to attack the intruders. You may choose to have the wererat ask the PC's to examine the book with him (as he cannot read the text within and would dearly like to learn of it's secrets) and as they all do so, small droplets of blood (from the body in the room above) begin to fall down onto the table or the tome itself - thus alerting the characters to the creature's dastardly deeds.
- After encountering the ghost in area 9 (the bedroom), and the subsequent corpse beneath the bed sheets, the wererat suddenly appears at the doorway (perhaps coming from an unexplored area of the house). At this point the creature does not act particularly hostile toward the party (again, biding his time and waiting for a more appropriate time to launch an attack), and will attempt to appear friendly - perhaps explaining that the corpse in the bed was the victim of a recent orc raid or animal attack.
- As the characters are preparing to leave the house, they find the exit/entry barred by the wererat - who will of course demand to know what the intruders are doing in his home. Characters who give a good account of themselves and act as though they have seen nothing untoward within the house may then be allowed to leave without further ado (though the wererat creature will likely be very suspicious). Thereafter when/if the wererat discovers that any of his possessions have been disturbed (or have gone missing) he will attempt to track the party down - and deal with them accordingly (in a hope to eliminate any witnesses who may now be aware of the goings-on at the house).
- Alternately, instead of the adventurers making their own way into the house, you may like to have the wererat himself invite the PC's inside (perhaps they are passing by and need to shelter from torrential rain). Of course the real reason for it's (seemingly kindly) actions would be to lure more victims into it's lair, and thus the adventure begins...

When the wererat appears:

In the doorway stands a tall, white-bearded old man possessing a certain air of poverty and a general unkempt appearance. However, despite his advanced age, the figure appears stout and powerfully built, though his swollen, bloodshot eyes betray many a sleepless night, as he proceeds to look you up and down - his oversized nose twitching as if searching for a scent as he does so.

In each of the suggested 'introducing the antagonist' examples previously described, the DM should assess what skill checks are required from both the PC's and the wererat (e.g. sense motive checks, bluff checks, etc.) depending on what the situation calls for. Of course there are many other ways to introduce the antagonist (and many other situations that could present themselves - far too many than can be detailed here), but all the DM really needs to keep in mind are the following points:

- In truth the wererat simply stumbled upon this dwelling in his youth and has taken claim of it and it's contents ever since. He therefore knows very little with regard to the history of the house's contents - though he has become obsessed with the grizzly images in the ancient tome in the study, and has attempted many of the rituals within (though with little success).
- The wererat will always be suspicious of the intruders, and should be treated as having a 'hostile' attitude toward the PC's when first encountered (even when pretending to be friendly).
- The wererat will stop at nothing to keep his dastardly deeds a secret, and will attack the PC's if they anger him, attempt to flee, or seem to know too much.
- The wererat speaks in a curious accent that the PC's are unable to place and will try to avoid answering any questions (or simply lie) about himself, the house, or any of it's contents.

Scaling The Adventure

For a higher level party (e.g. level 5-7) you may find it beneficial to alter this adventure slightly - so that it proves more challenging to your players. If this is the case, it is suggested that you make the following simple changes.

- Substitute the wererat with a (CR7) vampire (the statistics for which can be found on page 11).
- Replace the animal pelt bedding found in area 13 with a ancient looking wooden casket with a thick layer of compacted earth at it's bottom.
- Add a suitable magical item(s), up to 2000gp in value, to the contents of the bag of holding.

The Wererat's Statistics Block

🦋 **lvl 3 Warrior Wererat (human form):** CR4; medium size shapechanger; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +2 Feat); Spd 30ft; AC14 (12 flatfooted, 12 touch); Atk +5 melee (1d6+2 light mace); SQ alternate form, rat empathy; AL LE; Sv Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Hide +5, Listen +4, Search +4, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Control Shape, Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Special Qualities: Alternate Form (Su): Wererats can shift into animal form, human form, and a bipedal hybrid form as though using the polymorph self spell (though their gear does not change). Changing to or from animal or hybrid form is a standard action. Upon assuming either form, the lycanthrope regains hit points as if having rested for a day (i.e. 3hp in this case); Rat Empathy (Ex): Lycanthropes can communicate and empathise with normal or dire animals of their animal form. This gives them a +4 racial bonus to checks when influencing the animal's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands, such as friend, foe, flee, and attack.

Possessions: Light mace.

🦋 **lvl 3 Warrior Wererat (dire-rat form):** CR4; small shapechanger; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Feat); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; AC19 (14 flatfooted, 16 touch); Atk +6 melee (1d4+2 bite); SA curse of lycanthropy, disease; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 15/silver, rat empathy, scent; AL LE; Sv Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +8, Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Spot +8; Dodge, Improved Control Shape, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Special Attacks: Curse of Lycanthropy (Su): Any humanoid hit by a lycanthrope's bite attack in animal form must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or contract lycanthropy; Disease (Ex): Filth fever-bite, Fortitude save (DC 12), incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Constitution.

Special Qualities: Alternate Form (Su): Wererats can shift into animal form, human form, and a bipedal hybrid form as though using the polymorph self spell (though their gear does not change). Changing to or from animal or hybrid form is a standard action. Upon assuming either form, the lycanthrope regains hit points as if having rested for a day (i.e. 3hp in this case); Rat Empathy (Ex): Lycanthropes can communicate and empathise with normal or dire animals of their animal form. This gives them a +4 racial bonus to checks when influencing the animal's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands, such as friend, foe, flee, and attack; Scent (Ex): In dire rat form, lycanthropes can detect an opponent's presence but not its specific location within 30 ft (60ft upwind / 15ft downwind). If it moves within 5 feet of the scent's source, the lycanthrope can pinpoint that source. The lycanthrope can also follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

🦋 **lvl 3 Warrior Wererat (hybrid form):** CR4; medium size shapechanger; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Feat); Spd 30ft; AC18 (13 flatfooted, 15 touch); Atk +7 melee (1d6+2 light mace), +5 melee (1d4+2 bite); SA curse of lycanthropy, disease; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 15/silver, rat empathy, scent; AL LE; Sv Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +8, Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Search +8, Spot +8; Dodge, Improved Control Shape, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Special Attacks: Curse of Lycanthropy (Su): Any humanoid hit by a lycanthrope's bite attack in hybrid form must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or contract lycanthropy. A wererat can also spread lycanthropy or by hitting with a piercing or slashing weapon. Bludgeoning or non-penetrating attacks do not transmit the condition; Disease (Ex): Filth fever-bite, Fortitude save (DC 12), incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Constitution.

Special Qualities: Alternate Form (Su): Wererats can shift into animal form, human form, and a bipedal hybrid form as though using the polymorph self spell (though their gear does not change). Changing to or from animal or hybrid form is a standard action. Upon assuming either form, the lycanthrope regains hit points as if having rested for a day (i.e. 3hp in this case); Rat Empathy (Ex): Lycanthropes can communicate and empathise with normal or dire animals of their animal form. This gives them a +4 racial bonus to checks when influencing the animal's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands, such as friend, foe, flee, and attack; Scent (Ex): In dire rat form, lycanthropes can detect an opponent's presence but not its specific location within 30 ft (60ft upwind / 15ft downwind). If it moves within 5 feet of the scent's source, the lycanthrope can pinpoint that source. The lycanthrope can also follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

Possessions: Light mace.

The Vampire's Statistics Block

☛ **Vampire:** CR7; medium size undead; HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 30ft; AC25 (22 flatfooted, 13 touch); Atk +11 melee (1d10+11 masterwork bastard sword) *or* +11 melee (1d6+6 slam plus energy drain), +9 ranged (1d6 masterwork shortbow); SA domination, energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn; SQ undead, damage reduction 15/+1, turn resistance +4, cold and electricity resistance 20, gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing 5, vampire weaknesses; AL CE; Sv Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 17, Con -, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Climb +10, Hide +11, Listen +17, Move silently +11, Ride +11, Search +9, Sense Motive +11, Spot +17.

Special Attacks: Domination (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed at a Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a dominate person spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer. The ability has a range of 30 feet; Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack suffer 2 negative levels; Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained; Children of the Night (Su): Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth a pack of 4d8 dire rats, a swarm of 10d10 bats, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour; Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a vampire's energy drain attack rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial. If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or less, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master's death.

Special Qualities: Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage; Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume gaseous form at will, as the spell cast by a 5th level sorcerer, but can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability; Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a spider climb spell; Alternate Form (Su): A vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a polymorph self spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer, except that the vampire can assume only one of the forms listed here. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise; Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a vampire automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (It can travel up to nine miles in 2 hours.) Once at rest in its coffin, it rises to 1 hit point after 1 hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round; Vampire Weaknesses: Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from a mirror or a strongly presented, holy symbol. These things don't harm the vampire—they merely keep it at bay. Vampires are also unable to cross running water, although they can be carried over it while resting in their coffins or aboard a ship. They are utterly unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all. Simply reducing a vampire's hit points to 0 or below incapacitates but doesn't destroy it. However, certain attacks can slay vampires. Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight disorients it: It can take only partial actions and is destroyed utterly on the next round if it cannot escape. Similarly, immersing a vampire in running water robs it of one-third of its hit points each round until it is destroyed at the end of the third round. Driving a wooden stake through a vampire's heart instantly slays the monster. However, it returns to life if the stake is removed, unless the body is destroyed. A popular tactic is to cut off the creature's head and fill its mouth with holy wafers (or their equivalent).

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, large shield, masterwork bastard sword, masterwork shortbow, and a potion of haste.



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