

THE HARVEST CARNIVAL

AN ADVENTURE FOR 3RD-LEVEL CHARACTERS

THE PARTY ARRIVES AT THE FINAL NIGHT OF THE Addlersfield harvest carnival. Expecting an evening of relaxation and revelry, the characters spend time enjoying food, games, and other activities within the carnival. After an hour or two, a large crowd grows around the center stage to watch a magic show put on by the carnival ringmaster. He brings a crowd participant on stage only to kill her in a ritual sacrifice, beginning a night of revenge.

BACKGROUND

Ten years ago on a hot summer evening, a raging fire tore through the outer edge of Addlersfield, destroying Mar Quen's farm and killing his wife and daughter. The fire was accidentally started by the neighbor's children playing with sparklers. Due to their age, the children received a light punishment, infuriating Mar Quen. He left town after the judgement. Nobody has heard from him since, but most remember the fire and the grisly deaths.

VISITING THE CARNIVAL

The Harvest Carnival could be outside any farming town or village at the end of the harvesting season. Use the following hooks or work with players to determine why the group has come to the carnival:

Local. A character grew up in a neighboring town and visited the carnival every year with their family. They're excited to share the experience with friends.

Passing By. The town is on the way to another point of interest for the group. While looking for an inn for the night they see advertisements for the carnival.

Rest and Relaxation. The group just finished delving into a dungeon or defeating a villain and are looking for a night to recuperate before their next quest.

A NIGHT AT THE CARNIVAL

Temporary tents and vendor carts are set up around a main stage, offering food, games, and entertainment for townsfolk and visiting travelers. The carnival has been in town for two weeks and the final night has drawn the largest crowds.

The vendors are a mix of locals from Addlersfield or nearby towns and those that travel with the carnival. Adventuring gear worth 25 gp or less is easily found among the vendors. Notable vendors include the following:

Can You Fry It. A tent dedicated to deep fried food such as their double scoop deep fried ice cream for 4 cp.

Grindstone Bakery. This group of large red tents sells artisan bread with butter or cheese for 6 cp a loaf.

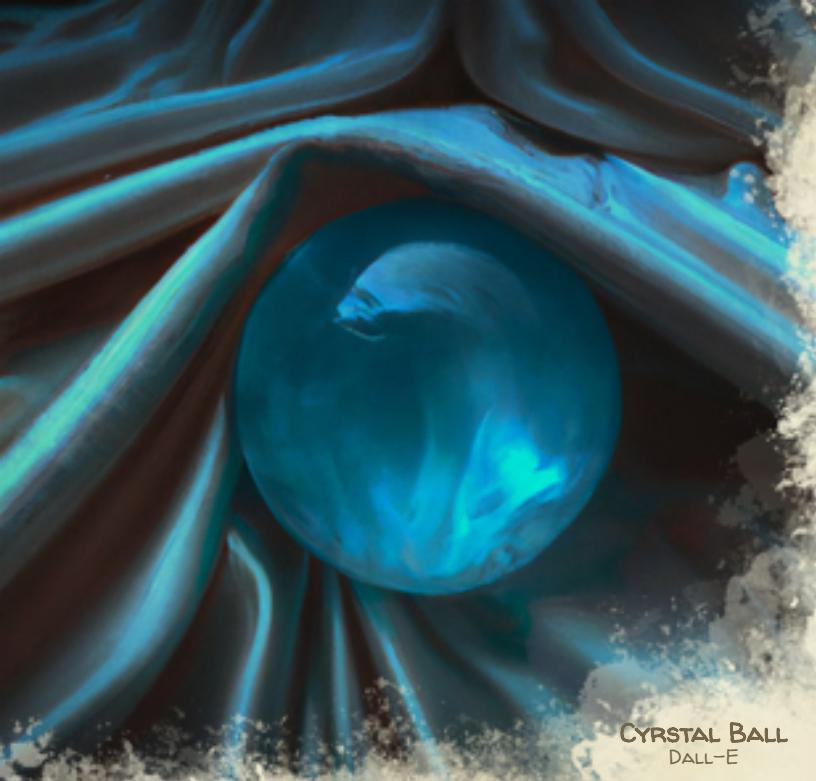
Henly Farm's Winery. This array of tents houses a variety of local wines. A glass of wine is 1 sp.

Orpine's Colored Hen Eggs. A table setup beneath a large tree sells brightly colored boiled eggs for 1 cp, or 1 sp for a dozen.

Piper's Pickles. This table sells pickled vegetables. Their foot-long dill pickle for 5 cp is a crowd favorite.

Wee Pints. Manned by halflings and gnomes, this tent sells mugs of ale and mead for 6 cp.

HARVEST FESTIVAL
DALL-E



CARNIVAL GAMES

Most popular with the younger crowd are the tents and tables dedicated to games and contests, rewarding skill or luck with prize tickets. These tickets can be exchanged for trinkets or magic items at the prize booth.

Taking part in a game or contest costs 1 gp each time. A character chooses the difficulty of the challenge from the Challenge table. They then make an ability check that corresponds to the game they're playing. On a success, they receive prize tickets based on the challenge. Some example games at the festival:

Foot-High Tight Rope. A Dexterity (Acrobatics) game with shorter and wider rope widths stretched between two raised platforms that must be walked along without falling.

Hammer Strike. A Strength (Athletics) game involving striking a metal pad on the ground to knock a puck up a track with various height markers.

Shell Game. A Wisdom (Perception) game involving a hidden ball beneath a set of cups that are randomly mixed in front of a participant and they have to pick the cup with the ball.

Talent Contest. A Charisma (Performance) contest with a panel of judges that rate presented talents.

Trivia Game. An Intelligence (History) game with sets of questions of varying difficulty.

CHALLENGE

Difficulty	DC	Tickets
Easy	12	1
Medium	14	2
Hard	16	4

PRIZE BOOTH

A golden tent near the center of the carnival displays a wall of prizes. The party can choose to pool their tickets together or spend them individually. The Carnival Prizes table provides example prizes and ticket prices.

CARNIVAL PRIZES

Tickets	Prize
2	A box with a random trinket inside.
3	An explorers pack.
5	A handaxe that makes no sound when it strikes wood.
5	A dagger with a handle that always feels warm.
10	A spell scroll of <i>trick or treat</i> .
15	A potion of healing.
30	A packet of dust of disappearance (one available).

TENT OF FORTUNE

Lavern ClearSight has setup her tent on the edge of the carnival with a sign on the outside offering fortune telling for 3 gp. Beneath the small tent is a round table with a glass sphere resting on it, wrapped in satin cloth. The only light within the tent is a dimly lit lantern hanging above the table.

Lavern's fortunes are obscure and widely applicable. One of her favorites to share is "You will soon face an exciting challenge." She hopes to entice a visitor with the initial fortune and pay for her divine magic. Lavern can cast the spell *augury* three times a day and charges 60 gp for the service.

PICKLE EATING CONTEST

Piper runs a pickle eating contest at the center stage to build up the crowd for the magic show that follows.

Entry to the pickle contest costs 1 gp and easily attracts a full table of contestants. A character that takes part in the contest can make a DC 14 Constitution check. On a success, they claim the top prize of 10 gp and a free pickle everyday for a year from Piper's Pickles. If more than one character succeeds, the gold is shared, but each character gets their own daily free pickle.

CARNIVAL FOLK

The night's festivities have attracted a large portion of the local community. Some notable characters are:

Falkoris. A young male half-elf who is trying to impress his girlfriend, Tammy Fumble, by winning carnival games.

Mariel. A female tiefling with burgundy skin. She works for the carnival as a sword swallower and juggler. She's been with the carnival for five years and remembers when Vonvar took over the show, trading his former name, Mar, to his stage name.



VONVAR VESCEGO
DALL-E

Olo Diggler. A young female halfling who leads a group of prospective adventurers. She has her eye on the top prize and is willing to pay 3 gp per ticket for the remaining 12 tickets she needs.

Pronex. A male dragonborn of copper ancestry. He works for the carnival as a firebreather.

Rogmesh. A middle-aged male half-orc is visiting the carnival with his 8 year-old son Rognesh who is hoping to win enough tickets for a trinket.

Solan Olerys. A male elf who thinks all the games are rigged. He can provide tips in the form of the *guidance* spell for 5 gp.

Tammy Fumble. A young female human with long braided hair. She has a faded scar from a burn on her hands that she got as a child when playing with sparklers. A character notices the scar with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

THE RINGMASTER

Vonvar Vescego (a chaotic evil human **commoner**) is the charismatic ringmaster of the carnival. He wears a long red coat with a tall black hat that covers most of his curly brown hair. He greets every attendee with a smile and reminds them to join him later this evening for the magic show, claiming that the final show is always the best.

TRUE IDENTITY

Vonvar is Mar Quen in disguise, having significantly changed his appearance. A character notices the dyed hair and makeup with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. Makeup also hides a burn scar near his neck that can be discerned with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

MAR QUEN

After leaving Addlersfield, Mar Quen joined a traveling carnival in search of distraction from his woes. He went by Mar, for short, and gained more and more responsibility over the years until he ranked just below the ringmaster, Bruenor Earthcoat.

One drunken night, Bruenor told the story of a carnival that kidnapped and sacrificed townsfolk to gain favor with an evil entity. The creature would perform favors for each sacrifice. People eventually figured out who was kidnapping townsfolk and an angry mob destroyed the carnival and killed the carnival workers. Bruenor revealed the details of the ritual to Mar Quen but didn't say how he knew. When Bruenor retired, Mar Quen took over and began plotting his revenge.

LEARNING MORE

The carnival workers know Vonvar as tough but fair and he always pushes them to perform their absolute best.

Vonvar has been more gleeful than usual and particularly excited for his performance this evening. He even went as far as carefully setting out the pumpkins and other decorations around the stage and throughout the carnival this morning.

EXPLORING THE CARNIVAL

Read the following text when the group enters the harvest carnival:

As the sun sets beneath the horizon, the warm twinkling lights of the festival provide a golden glow to the tents and trees of the carnival. The smell of fried food, fresh bread, red wine, autumn flowers, and more fill your senses. Crowds of townsfolk and visitors wander the tents, tables, and carts, enticed by the smells and the arcane sounds of carnival games.

Give the party an opportunity to explore the carnival and visit some of the aforementioned vendors and meet some of the other visitors.

If the party decides to take part in games or contests, proceed to the next section after two or three rounds of games and after they've had a chance to exchange tickets for prizes.

STAT BLOCKS AND STUFF

Most characters in the carnival are **commoners** with workers being proficient in the Performance skill. Olo Diggler and her group can use the **scout** or **thug** stats if needed.

Other creatures mentioned in this adventure can be found in the appendix such as the **carnival creeper** and the **pumpkindred**.

Included in the appendix is the *trick or treat* spell and the *macabre mask* magic item.

THE MAGIC SHOW

Read or paraphrase the following once the characters are ready to proceed:

A large crowd has built up around the center stage in anticipation of tonight's magic show by the ringmaster, Vonvar Vescego. The seating and tables near the stage are full with only standing room behind. Nearly a hundred pumpkins of various shapes and sizes are arranged along the perimeter of the stage.

Vonvar is leading a young woman with braided hair up to the stage as the crowd excitedly waits. She is presented with a chair to sit in while Vonvar stands behind her. With a flourish, a dagger appears in Vonvar's hand and he quickly plunges it into her chest. Yells and screams fill the horrified crowd.

Suddenly, half of the pumpkins around the stage spring to life with toothy maws and orange glowing eyes. Panic ensues as the crowd disperses in every direction, chased by rolling and hopping pumpkins.

Vonvar has finished the first step of the ritual as he stares at the chaos he's created. He patiently waits for the ritual to complete. He will surrender if attacked, knowing his work is done.

Each character is threatened by a **pumpkindred** determined to knock them unconscious and drag them to one of the pumpkin patches scattered around the carnival. While the party fights, other **pumpkindred** drag unconscious crowd members to the pumpkin patches, before melding with the patch and creating a cage around the captive.

PUMPKIN CAGE
DALL-E

THE CREEPER'S REAPING

Read or paraphrase the following once the characters have defeated the **pumpkindred**:

The sounds of squishing pumpkins and vines rustling through leaves masks the faint moans of those encapsulated by the vine and pumpkin cages scattered about.

A sudden, sharp crack of bones draws your attention to the dead woman on stage. Unnaturally long arms wreathed in shadow and blood emerge from the dagger wound as a 9-foot tall, lanky creature crawls out of the corpse. As its feet touch the stage, its skin takes on the appearance of wooden planks.

The pumpkin cages begin to writhe. Thin wispy tendrils of shadow stretch from the cages to the maw of the creature standing before you on stage.

The **carnival creeper** is draining the life essence of those held within the six pumpkin cages. Some of the aforementioned notable characters can be seen held within the pumpkin cages.

The creeper will focus on eating nearby characters or ones that look like easy prey. It recognizes Vonvar as its summoner and won't eat him.

PUMPKIN CAGES

Pumpkin cages can be attacked and destroyed (AC 13, 10 hp, immunity to psychic damage) or torn apart with a successful DC 12 Strength check, freeing the captive inside, and dealing 10 (3d6) psychic damage to the **carnival creeper**.

If at least one pumpkin cage isn't destroyed or torn apart by the end of each round, the **carnival creeper** consumes the essence of the captives in one of the remaining cages, chosen at random, turning them to husks.

TUNING FOR YOUR GROUP

You can make the fight easier by having a destroyed pumpkin cage deal an additional 1d6 psychic damage. Conversely, the **carnival creeper** can regain 1d8 hit points when it consumes the essence of captives, making the fight harder.

CONCLUSION

Once the creeper is defeated, any remaining pumpkin cages collapse, releasing their unconscious captives. Eventually the sheriff and locals armed with spears and pitchforks arrive to gather up the fallen and take the unconscious back home to rest and recover. If Vovnar is alive, the sheriff takes him into custody to face punishment.

REWARDS AND CLUES

The remaining townsfolk are appreciative of the party for saving them from certain death and offer free lodging and meals whenever they are in town.

CLOSER INSPECTION

A character that inspects the body of the **carnival creeper** and succeeds on a DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) check learns about crafting a cloak from its hide as per the Creeper Skin feature.

Within the corpse of each **pumpkindred** is a single gold coin. The face of the coin has a deep scratch. The group can recover 100 gp in coins from the pumpkin remains.

VOVNAR'S CABIN

Searching Vovnar's cabin reveals a journal he began writing a few days after the fire and detailing his plans for revenge and the ritual Bruenor told him about. It includes the process of enchanting coins that animate plants when a sacrifice is made to a creeper. In an entry describing Bruenor's retirement, it mentions him leaving a mask behind that Vovnar kept.

In a chest hidden beneath Vovnar's bed is a *macabre mask* and a *spell scroll of speak with plants*. Wrapped in cloth are two garnets marked with fiendish runes worth 100 gp each.

CAPTURED AND UNCONSCIOUS

If the entire party was knocked unconscious, they could be saved by Olo's adventuring party and other townsfolk. The creeper would have been scared off, but not before killing a large number of townsfolk and carnival workers.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

The characters are left with some mysteries tied to Bruenor Earthcoat such as how he learned the ritual or why he left the mask behind? The journal could include hints of Bruenor's last location five years ago.

The journal detailing the summoning of a fiend could be quite valuable to the right buyer if the party is interested in selling it.

If the creeper escaped, the party might be interested in tracking it down by following a trail of missing persons.

HALLOWEEN HOMEBREW

Some other content that we've created that can be incorporated in your adventures, especially Halloween themed adventures.

Boneyard Shovel. Dig up bodies and animate them, all with the same weapon!

Final One. A perfect feat for survivors of the harvest carnival or other horrific event.

Infernal Helm. Built for devils from the remnants of fighting with demons.

Possessed. A lineage about being haunted by a ghost.

Swarm of Sweetipedes. Adorable, irresistible and deliciously sweet oozes.

THE GOBLIN COACH

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MACABRE MASK
DALL-E

APPENDIX

CARNIVAL CREEPER

Carnival creepers like to haunt carnivals and other amusements, camouflaged in darkness, waiting for stragglers to wander off alone. Then, when nobody is looking, they strike, elongating their arms, snatching their victims to be dragged back to their lairs.

Big Top Justice. A desperate carnival worker can summon a carnival creeper as part of a blood ritual. In trade for a willing soul, it will perform one task, usually of the revengeful type, for the summoner.

Carnival Keeper. Occasionally, a wealthy carnival creeper will fund a carnival of its own, funneling secret payments through a colluding ringmaster. It will also keep carnival workers under its employ well-protected from outside interference, as long as it can continue to take victims unabated.

Creepers Skin. A carnival creeper's flesh retains some of its camouflaging capabilities even after death. As part of a long rest, if you have proficiency with leatherworker's tools, you can use your tools to combine the carnival creeper's remains and 100 gp in additional materials to create a special cloak. While worn, it grants advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide. The cloak loses this property 1d10 days after it was created.

CARNIVAL CREEPER
DALL-E

CARNIVAL CREEPER

Large Fiend, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Chameleon Skin. The carnival creeper has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide.

Hauler. The carnival creeper's speed is not halved when dragging or carrying grappled creatures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The carnival creeper makes two Grasping Claw attacks and one Chomp attack.

Chomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15). The carnival creeper can grapple one target at a time with its chomp.

Grasping Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 20 ft. one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is pulled up to 20 feet towards the carnival creeper.

PUMPKINDRED

The exact origin of the pumpkindred is unknown as they are nearly impossible to capture and study without causing significant harm to their captors. Whether they were awakened by a corrupted druid, supernatural beings from another plane, or the product an experiment gone awry, one thing is for certain: when the harvest season arrives so do the pumpkindred.

Pumpkindred hide among pumpkin patches or other crops, appearing to be a normal variety of squash. However, once a living creature passes close enough for the pumpkindred to detect, it will reveal its true, violent nature. It quickly rolls at its prey, knocking it over, furiously gnashing at vital areas with its fangs. Even if its quarry manages to defeat the pumpkindred, it will burst, flinging high-velocity seeds in a fragmentation pattern around it, piercing armor and flesh. If the seeds aren't dealt with swiftly they will feed on their host, eventually growing into a new pumpkindred.



PUMPKINDRED
DALL-E

PUMPKINDRED

Small Plant, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 18 (4d6+4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +2

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

False Appearance. While the pumpkindred remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a pumpkin.

Pounce. If the pumpkindred moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Bite attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength

saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the pumpkindred can make one Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Seed Burst. When the pumpkindred is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes in a burst of seed shrapnel. Each creature in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on the pumpkindred must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be infested by pumpkindred seeds. Pumpkindred and undead creatures are immune to this effect.

At the start of each of the infested target's turns, the target takes 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the infested target is willing, a creature can use an action to dig the seed out of the target with a non-bludgeoning weapon, dealing 4 (1d8) piercing damage to the target and ending the effect. A *lesser restoration* spell or similar magic can also end the effect. If the infested target ends its turn with 0 hit points, the effect ends and a pumpkindred spawns from its wounds.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SPELLS AND MAGIC ITEMS

The spell *trick or treat* is available to any character with the Pact Magic or Spellcasting feature.

MACABRE MASK

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

While wearing the mask, you can use an action to transform into either a **ghoul**, a **dire wolf**, or a **scarecrow** for one hour or until you drop to 0 hit points or die.

Your game statistics, including mental ability scores, are replaced by the statistics of the chosen form. You retain your alignment and personality. Your gear and equipment melds into the new form and you can't activate, use, wield, or otherwise benefit from any of your equipment.

Once you use this action, you can't use it again until the next dawn.

As long as you are wearing the mask, you exhibit a small physical feature of one of the forms such as lengthened fingernails, pronounced canine teeth, or making subtle creaking noises when you move. These features are cosmetic in nature.

Curse. This item is cursed and attuning to it, or casting identify, on the mask reveals the curse. Whenever you wear the mask, you cannot remove it until you reduce a creature to 0 hit points, or a remove curse spell is used on it.

TRICK OR TREAT

1st-Level Evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a wrapped sweet or candy)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You imbue a wrapped piece of candy with chaotic magic and throw it at a creature you can see within range (you can choose yourself). Choose either trick or treat, and roll on the corresponding table to determine the effect you bestow upon the creature.

TRICK OR TREAT
DALL-E

TRICK

d6 Effect

- 1 **Blankheads.** The creature must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is distracted by hallucinations. Attack rolls against the creature have advantage until the spell ends.
- 2 **Burst Rocks.** The creature must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes $3d6$ Thunder damage and is pushed up to 10 feet away. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.
- 3 **Candy Kernel.** The creature must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes $2d8$ Poison damage and is poisoned for the duration. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.
- 4 **Confection Apple.** The creature must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened of you for the duration. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.
- 5 **Crimson Hots.** The creature must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes $4d6$ Fire damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage.
- 6 **Minor Mints.** The creature must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, whenever the creature makes an attack roll or saving throw until the spell ends, it must roll a d6 and subtract the number rolled from the attack roll or saving throw.

TREAT

d6 Effect

- 1 **Butterdigit.** Whenever the creature makes an attack roll or a saving throw before the spell ends, the target can roll a d6 and add the number rolled to the attack roll or saving throw.
- 2 **Chuckles.** The creature laughs off previous wounds. It regains $2d8$ hit points.
- 3 **Gearkat.** The creature experiences a sugary rush, gaining $4d4$ temporary hit points.
- 4 **N&N's.** The creature's speed increases by 10 feet and it gains a climbing speed and swimming speed equal to its walking speed.
- 5 **Peanut Butter Cup.** The creature gains resistance to a damage type (your choice) for the duration.
- 6 **Twin Bix.** The creature's shape appears blurred. Attack rolls against the creature have disadvantage until the spell ends.

THE CARNIVAL BATTLE MAP

The map is 29 5-foot squares on each side. The areas denoted with a P are the location of pumpkin cages. You can download free digital versions of the map, as well as a pumpkin cage token, at goblincoach.com.

