

Mirror Show

(Content warning: light body horror themes)

The 5 leading members of a small circus troupe (Hancar the Tiger Trainer, Aldra the Strong Woman, Witt the Clown, Edric the Illusionist, and his familiar Creech, the Talking Raven) have left the rest of the group behind for a short break to improve their respective performances. They have taken up residence in a one-story building in town but during the past night, horrible screams and unnatural sounds have been heard coming from the building. The townspeople and the rest of the circus troupe are terrified and have asked the PCs to investigate, offering them 1000 gold coins as a reward if they bring their comrades back alive or half in case of proof of their death. The cause of the event lies in an evil artifact, a cursed mirror able to create a twisted copy of reality: this object, found by the illusionist of the company, was activated by him without knowing what he was getting into...

1. ENTRANCE. The building, single-story and fenced, has a private garden.

2. DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN. A common room and a kitchen with a small pantry. There are no clues, no one died here.

3. GARDEN. The tiger trainer Hancar, a human in his forties, is lying on the ground a short distance from the entrance to the house: his body seems scratched and bitten as if by a large beast. If the body is examined, the PCs will notice that, although he has a sheathed longsword, he has pulled out a small knife (if examined, it is silvered).

4. BIG BEDROOM. This room was Hancar and Aldra the Mighty's (the two were a couple). The body of Aldra, a half-orc and the strong woman of the company, can be found here. Several wounds caused by claws (but not bites) are the cause of her death.

5. SMALL BEDROOM. The corpse of Witt the Clown can be found here: he is wearing the bright red cape and the jester's mask that he used on stage, but taking the mask off shows that his face has been completely cut off until it is unrecognizable

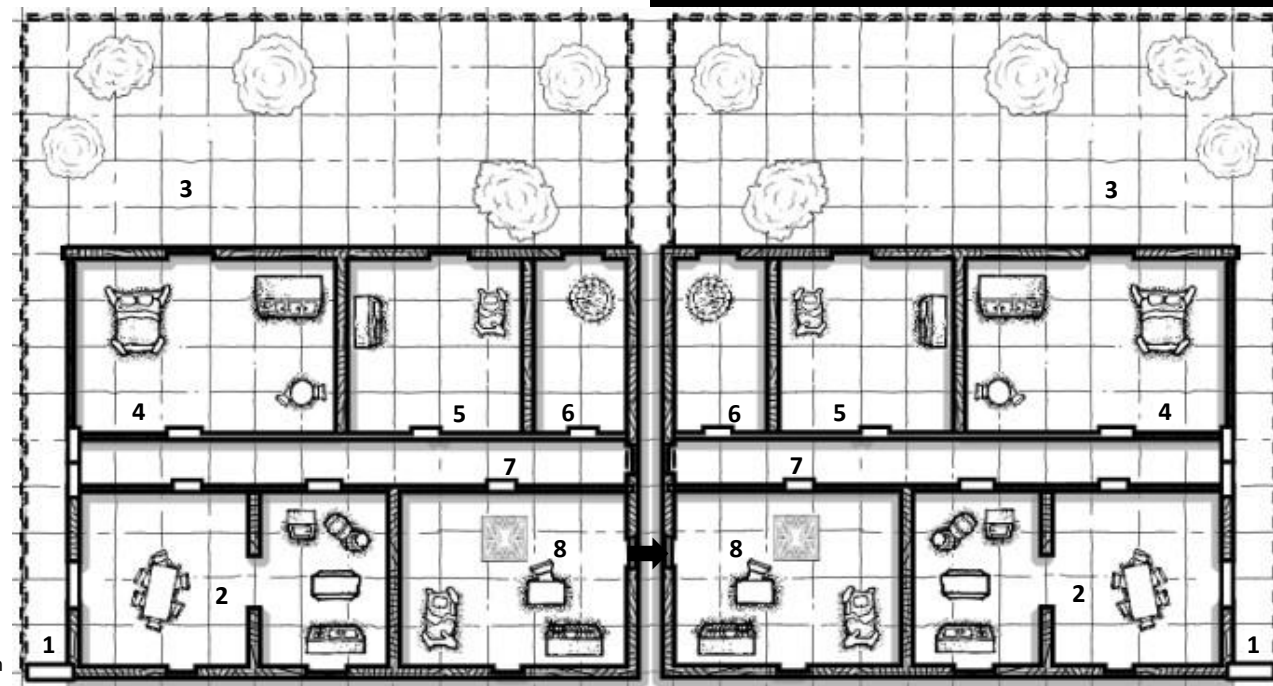
6. BATHROOM. A basin filled with water is found here. Investigating the room will show small specks of blood mixed with water here and there, as if someone had cleaned up some blood. Also hidden in a vase are some raven feathers, broken and bloody. This is an attempt to cover up the death of the illusionist and his familiar.

7. CORRIDOR. An inner corridor, devoid of any decoration except several portraits hanging on the walls in the eastern part.

8. STUDY. This was Edric's room; in this room there is a bookcase, an armchair and a small bed. Opened books talk about illusions and the various spells that can be used to evoke illusory duplicates of oneself. A concealed trapdoor, empty, is under the carpet. The magic mirror, if observed, shows on the other side a room similar to the current one, but much darker. Investigating the mirror will show small bloodstains on the mirror's frame, as if someone had cut themselves on it. In fact, Edric was killed in the bathroom, then his wounds were washed, and he was moved to the other plane as part of his double's plan, to pretend to be Edric in case people from his plane of origin would come to find him. Touching the mirror is enough to be transported to the mirror demi-plane, with no save.

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A One Page Adventure

The mirror has created a demi-plane of existence accessible only through the mirror itself. Included in it is a mirror duplicate of the house and twisted duplicates of the circusmen, who at night moved into the corresponding building on the First Material Plane. Each of them killed its counterpart and then went back. The passage is only one way; the duplicate mirror in the demi-plane could be used to return, but the five duplicates have broken it into fragments and each one carries one of it with them, so after the PCs pass through the mirror, they must recover all the pieces to go back.

In the demi-plane it's always dark, so the visibility is low (dim light unless the PCs bring their own light sources). The alternate versions of the circusmen become aware of the PCs at the very moment they enter their plane and will ambush them in various ways. They are bloodthirsty; even if it is possible to talk to them, their ultimate goal will always be to kill any living being they come across. They are also very suspicious of their fellows, though. If the PCs wish to take the diplomatic route, strategies aimed at turning them against each other or giving them the opportunity to bring chaos into the PC's world will work best.

1. ENTRANCE. If the PCs try to explore the demi-plane outside the room, it will only continue for a few hundred feet all around. Semi-sentient duplicates of the townsfolk lurk here and will attack the PCs during exploration: they are (weak) Shadows, in numbers equal to the PCs. The Shadows will reform every hour; a group of Shadows will also attack them at the end of each hour of rest in the mansion on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6.

2. DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN. There are no clues in this room; the food is withered and rotten.

3. GARDEN. The courtyard has become a veritable jungle full of creepers. Hancar is here: his human form looks identical to his counterpart, but he is an evil were-tiger. He is in ambush: he will attack PCs unexpectedly at the first opportunity unless they spot him.

4. BIG BEDROOM. A creature looking similar to Aldra is here: she's actually a Hag, which waits for PCs Invisible. She will create a noise, like a raven cawing (or some other sound), appearing from inside the cabinet and wait invisibly for PCs who approach it to attack them with her claws.

5. SMALL BEDROOM. A corrupted version of Witt the clown is here. He has the same mask and cape but is faceless. He's a spellcaster who knows the Mirror Image spell. He will stand just outside its room to face the PCs one at a time and use the mirrors in room 7 (see below) against them

6. BATHROOM. No clues, but from here the PCs can spot the were-tiger lurking in the garden by looking outside the windows.

7. CORRIDOR. In the westernmost part of the corridor (last 5 squares) the walls are covered with deforming mirrors. The Clown in room 5 can, once a day, cast a Fear spell on the whole corridor and at the same time give tangibility to the reflected images. This creates a reflection of the PCs in the corridor: use Shadows stats. The reflections cannot move and can attack only their original; they will crumble in one hit.

8. STUDY. When the PCs arrive, Edric will come out of the closet: he is actually a doppelganger who can also cast Illusion spells with a "raven familiar" (an Imp in raven form) with him. The fake Edric will claim to be extremely frightened, that he and his raven defeated their evil doubles, but they realized from overhearing other doubles that they were the only survivors and that the other doubles broke the mirror so that he would not escape. He is lying, but convincing. If the PCs listen to him, by the time they return with the mirror fragments, the mirror will be replaced by a mimic (the real mirror will be in the trapdoor, with Edric and his raven's body) and the mimic, Edric and the Raven-Imp will attack the group. The moment the last fragment is placed on the mirror, the demi-plane will shatter into a thousand pieces; everything from the PCs plane (living or not, including the corpses of NPCs) will return to its place of origin. The mirror in the PCs world will also shatter and cannot be restored.