

Blacksmith's Folley





Blacksmith's Folly

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THE SETUP

Marion, a lady from a once-wealthy family whose title and lands have long been lost, survives on a modest sum to maintain herself and her home. Four years ago, Marion lost her daughter, two-year-old Katya, to an illness that progressed rapidly and failed to respond to any treatment.

This tragedy caused a year-long depression which, in turn, pushed Marion to investigate an old family story. An ancient Warlock from her family's line, named Samuel, found a way to capture a Lamplighter and force it to grant a single wish. This story gave Marion hope.

With this hope Marion searched the dusty library in her home and found the long-forgotten diaries of Samuel. Marion learned that Samuel did indeed imprison a Lamplighter with the intention of forcing it to grant him a wish. Unfortunately, the final pages of the journal were blank, and Marion never learned if Samuel got his wish fulfilled.

Grief-stricken Marion, however, is certain it happened. It must have happened. She would MAKE it happen... and her daughter would live again.



Kind of a Downer - *This story is very dark and disturbing, and the end of this story can be a bit of a downer. The PCs most likely discover the answers to who did what and why, but this is a tragedy. Things aren't fair. Bad things happen to good people. Justice doesn't always work out the way folks want it to. This isn't how everything works out in Avalon, but it's how some things end. If you have players who are upset by sad stories, keep their mental health in mind as you progress.*

TIMELINE

Here is the timeline of events leading to where things stand right now:

1. Katya died a little over one year ago.
2. Marion convinced Horace, the neighborhood blacksmith, that she was in love with him. Horace fell for the beautiful Marion, vowing that he'd do anything to make her happy.
3. Marion tricked Horace into forging her a special pair of bracers of arcane design based on her ancestor Samuel's journals.
4. Once the work was done, Marion drugged Horace, chained him to his anvil, and cut off his hands while collecting his blood in a copper bowl. Horace died as a result of this process.
5. The blood from Horace's hands was used to draw the summoning and binding spells in Marion's cellar.
6. A Lamplighter was summoned, bound, and is being tortured by Marion as she tries to force it to grant her wish to resurrect her child.
7. The Lamplighter has tried, many, many times, to convince Marion that it cannot do what she wishes, but she doesn't believe it. In fact, she's only falling further into her madness.
8. Marion's evil actions caused the shades of the dead to appear inside Horace's shop and within her home.

KICKING IT OFF

Begin by relating the following information:

1. The neighborhood is afire with the news that Horace the blacksmith was found dead at his anvil by Lorraine the Liché.
2. Lorraine stopped by to see why the shop had not been opened at sunrise as was Horace's usual practice.
3. Lorraine found the smith with his arms tightly bound with chains to the anvil where his hands were hacked off, causing him to die from blood loss.
4. The Griffins were called and, after a hasty investigation, labeled the tragedy as a "robbery gone wrong."
5. The formal funeral for Horace will be held the morning after the wake, in the neighborhood graveyard tended by Lorraine.
6. This story starts a day after the murder at a local tavern called the Copper Cup, where the neighborhood is holding an evening wake for Horace. This is a chance for the locals to mourn the loss of a dear friend and, of course, gossip and speculate on what happened.

▣ The Opening Scene: The Copper Cup

The Copper Cup can be described using the following information:

- The room is filled with patrons telling stories about Horace.
- The bar runs along the left wall when you enter. A number of stools line the bar and a half-dozen tables fill the space to the right of the bar.
- A single window to the right of the door shows the outside, and a fire smolders in the fireplace in the back of the room.
- A half-dozen oil lamps light the place, along with the remnants of the fire.
- People of note in the Copper Cup include Zoe the alchemist, Lorraine the Liché priest, Max the retired guild thief, Nofret the owner of the Copper Cup, and Tamara the Leatherworker. They had the closest relationships with Horace of the folks in the neighborhood.

There are two goals for this scene:

- The PCs should walk away from the Copper Cup with information to act on.
- Show the PCs that the neighborhood believes the PCs are the only ones with the courage and skill to determine and apprehend Horace's killer or killers.

▣ Looking for a Firmer Hook

If the PCs' investigation stalls or they aren't sure what to do, it may help to have a few of the NPCs "speak their minds" about recent events to kick things off (see the NPC section below for ideas on what could be said). If that doesn't work, the NPCs can push the PCs to act, calling upon them to find whomever is responsible for Horace's death and bring them to justice. If you need to, make it known the PCs are the most capable in the neighborhood to do this.

▣ What about the Griffins

If anyone asks about the possibility of the Griffins helping, the following response can be provided: *"HA! They've already done their 'investigation' and called the whole thing a 'robbery gone wrong.' Imagine that!"*

▣ NPC Introductions

Each of the named NPCs inside the Copper Cup has an interest in solving Horace's murder. He was well loved, helped folks in the neighborhood, and was generally seen as an all-around good person. No one in the Copper Cup is interested in anything other than justice for Horace.

Those not in the Copper Cup, however... well... everyone at the wake is happy to gossip and draw conclusions, no matter how erroneous, in order to "help" the PCs solve the crime. Be sure to use the information listed in the NPC listing below to provide clues and insight.

▣ NPCs in this adventure:

- **Zoe.** An alchemist.
- **Lorance.** Liché priest.
- **Marion.** Murdered Horace and has a Lamplighter imprisoned.
- **Max.** Retired guild thief.
- **Reorx.** A wanna-be thief, currently alive in the blacksmith's shop.
- **Corbie.** A wanna-be thief, currently dead in the blacksmith's shop.
- **Tamara.** A leatherworker.

▣ NPCs at the Copper Cup

Zoe, Alchemist

Personality

- Quiet, listens before speaking.
- Speaks with intelligent, complete sentences and maintains eye contact with anyone she speaks with.

Clues

- *"Horace bought a lot of quicksilver from me a week before he was murdered."*
- *"I could not convince Horace to explain why he needed the quicksilver. He would only say it was for some special rings he was making for Marion."*
- *"Quicksilver wouldn't be used for jewelry, and Horace wasn't a jeweler. The only thing that would make sense is for some sort of magical forging."*
- *"He looked like a man who hadn't slept well for days. He always worked long days, but I fear he was overdoing it."*

Lorance, Liché Priest

Personality

- Pious, devout, friendly, and tries to only speak kind words.
- Speaks calmly and pleasantly, but with many a religious reference - *"As the Book tells"* or *"By the Bones of the Masters"* or *"The Gods willing and I be blessed enough."*

Clues

- *"Horace did speak to me often of a fear he had for Marion. He asked that I pray for her to be healed of the pain from her loss, Gods grant her grace."*
- *"I told Horace that hard work is good, but he was overdoing it. He promised me that after this last thing was done he'd slow down."*
- *"The Bones of the Master refuse to allow me to gossip, but I will tell you the truth: Reorx did ask me how much Horace had tithed as of late. I divulged nothing, but I fear the young cutpurse guessed more than he should have."*
- *"I know that Tamara and Marion were friends, but I fear that the love of Horace came between them. I see that Marion did not attend our wake, which is not in keeping with what the Book tells us."*
- With a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Lorance reveals the following:
 - *"If you want to get into the shop, I do have Horace's key that I can lend you. I locked the shop with it when we carried him to the graveyard."*
 - *(Reveal this if Lorance is spoken to again after going to Horace's shop.) "That symbol in Horace's shop was one I taught to him a couple of weeks ago."*

Max, Retired Guild Thief

Personality

- Calm and nearly impossible to surprise. He's seen it all before and is confident of his status as an accomplished thief.
- Speaks in a whisper due to an old injury that left a wide and ragged scar across his throat.

Clues

- *"Pretty sure Horace had more coin around the shop than he let on, for he was buying a lot of expensive material over the last month."*
- *"Word got out to Reorx and Corbie that Horace had some coin lying about. Word is those two wanna-be thieves might have made a play last night after the murder was all 'solved' by the Griffins."*
- *"Can't blame Horace for falling for Marion. She's a beautiful woman, and she still had some of that old family money - which is always helpful."*
- With a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) or DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) check, Max reveals the following two points:
 - *"Yeah, I sold him some special stuff. He needed some silver, a bit of iron from an old tomb, and the bones of a goblin. I was fair in my prices, and I didn't ask questions."*
 - *"I'd appreciate it if you didn't mention any of this to Lorance. The old boy isn't too fond of me as it is. I'd owe you one, if you know what I mean."*

Tamara, Leatherworker

Personality

- Nervous and evasive when she speaks.
- She was jealous of Marion and Horace's relationship, as she has been quietly in love with Marion for years, but was too afraid to speak up.
- Tamara feels that she will be a suspect if the PCs find out about her jealousy.
- She denies any accusations or implications that Marion is involved in the murder: *"That's not possible. She would never hurt anyone she loved."*

Clues

- *"Marion was troubled after her daughter, Katya, died. I think... maybe... I think Horace gave her support through that grief."*
- *"Horace did anything Marion asked. It was like he was bewitched by her... she is beautiful, but it seemed she had something over him."*
- With a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) or DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) check, Tamara reveals the following two points:
 - *"I loved Marion. I wish I could have helped her when she needed it, but I didn't know how to bring her out of the shadows after her Katya died."*
 - *"Marion and I did have a fight a week or so ago. I was angry with her. She and I used to be close, but since Katya died she shut herself off from me and turned to Horace."*

Nofret, Owner of the Copper Cup

Personality

- Talks. A lot. Only stops if forcefully interrupted, or if something grabs his attention in his tavern that he needs to see to.
- Old, a long-time bachelor, and well-liked by everyone in the neighborhood.

Clues

- *"Any of you seen Reorx or Corbie recently? Those two young rats... got minds to be thieves. I don't mind anyone in the guild or anything, but I swear if they break into Horace's place now that he's dead, I'll cut their ears off."*
- *"Can't believe Horace fell for Marion. I mean, beauty is one thing, but it's not the whole thing, if you get what I'm saying. If I told you she's a doomed soul, I'd be telling you nothing that Lorange wouldn't agree to. Never even got her daughter buried proper as she should have."*
- *"We'd not seen much of Horace the last week he was with us. Used to come in for an ale every night. He must have been working too hard again."*
- *"Word is that Zoe and Tamara were both sweet on Horace. Heard Tamara and Marion fighting about it one night outside Tamara's shop." (While the fight did take place, it isn't why Nofret believes it happened.)*
- *"Good thing that Lorange locked up the shop after we took poor Horace out or else we'd never get another blacksmith to take over. I mean, the shop will be city property in a week if we can't get another smith to take it."*

► Moving On

At some point before the PCs leave the Copper Cup, an NPC (Max would be a good choice) mentions the following:

“Be careful out there. It’s darker than usual. Seems the Lamplighters aren’t lighting any of the lamps in the neighborhood other than the single lamp in front of Horace’s blacksmith shop.”

A quick glance outside the tavern shows that the only lamp lit is indeed outside the closed and shuttered blacksmith’s shop. A Lamplighter is standing underneath it.



Off to the blacksmith’s Shop... right? - *The information provided here should help point the PCs to the blacksmith’s shop as the first place to go. Starting at the “scene of the crime” does make sense for most. However, some players may choose to start somewhere else.*

This is fine. You can point the PCs to the blacksmith’s shop with the information that follows. However, if the players avoid the blacksmith’s shop, you can get them the information in other ways: using NPCs or placing the information in other scenes as it makes sense in the narrative.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Once the PCs leave the Copper Cup, they most likely take one of the following options:

- Talk to the Lamplighter outside the blacksmith’s shop
- Enter the blacksmith’s shop
- Go directly to Marion’s house

Below are the details around these options:

► Talking to the Lamplighter

The Lamplighters are distraught at the capture of one of their own. Not since the horrible event with the Warlock Samuel have they dealt with such an affront that leaves them powerless to take action.

Lamplighters use a “hive mind” link that connects all of them together. It also drastically limits their ability to deal with Marion. The mystical binding of one of their own has created a barrier, a magical static preventing them from directly dealing with Marion or providing specific/direct information to anyone on what is actually happening. Samuel’s work was impressive, and remains powerful in its new form.

A single Lamplighter stands directly beneath the lamp outside the blacksmith’s shop. The shop is close enough to be seen from the front door of the tavern.

This Lamplighter greets the PCs by name if they approach. Without requesting any payment up front (which is highly unusual) it tells them the following, with no preamble — chanting each sentence as if it were a prepared speech:

- *“The mistress of the house has a sickness.”*
- *“A thief lies inside; darkness caused his death.”*
- *“A thief remains above; the shelf retains the book to damn the Mother.”*
- *“Beware the shadows within and with the Mother.”*
- *“A boon will be yours should you unbind us.”*

The Lamplighter struggles to say more if the PCs ask questions. They can only respond, due to the impact of the binding, to any questions with one or both of the following statements:

- *“The binding of one binds us all.”*
- *“Only the key of blood releases the binding.”*

▣ Blacksmith’s Shop

Horace’s shop is located on the corner of two heavily trafficked streets in the neighborhood. The two-story building has a connected forge on the first floor, separated from the main shop by a single heavy wooden door, along with the living quarters. The second floor has Horace’s bedroom. There is no stairway or ladder to the second story from the outside, and Horace removed and boarded up the old back door.

A couple of things have happened since Marion killed Horace. First, Marion’s magic attracted several shadows to the shop, drawn to the smith’s death. Second, two locals who fancy themselves thieves, Reorx and Corbie, broke in to steal from the dead smith. They unfortunately ran into the shadows. Corbie was killed, while Reorx got lucky and is hiding in Horace’s bedroom, which the shadows can’t seem to enter.

The Forge

Normally wide open to the streets during the day, the heavy wood-paneled shutters have been put into place since the Griffins completed their investigation. There is an external door in the shutters that hangs slightly ajar, a clear sign that the door that Lorange had locked upon removal of Horace’s body is no longer secured. Unless the PCs bring a light with them, or open the shutters, the forge is too dark for most to see into. The light from the single lamp outside fully illuminates the forge if the shutters are pulled down.

The anvil is in the center of the forge. Dried blood, and the chains and ropes used to bind Horace to the device, can be clearly seen if a light is brought into the dark room.



Clues

- As a whole, the room is very well organized - except for the forge itself.
 - *It is obvious that a pair of blacksmith's tongs are missing from their space on the wall. The smith's hammer is also missing. These tongs and the hammer cannot be found anywhere in the building.*
 - *Within the ashes of the forge are the following:*
 - ▶ The remains of two severed hands that were tossed into the coals.
 - ▶ A pair of broken manacles, cracked during a quench. There is no hinge or locking mechanism on them, making them look like a strange pair of bracelets or bracers.
- A solid copper bowl sits near the regular quench tank (which is oddly empty).
 - *The copper bowl is etched with strange runes. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check reveals that they are connected to a ritual for binding an unwilling creature.*
 - *The bowl contains traces of quicksilver and dried blood.*

Danger!

Within the forge room are **2 shadows**. These creatures, drawn here by the dark magics performed by Marion and an unwitting Horace, employ one of the following strategies for combat:

- If the PCs do not bring a light source or only use a handheld light source:
 - *Using their stealth to hide in the darkness, the shadows attempt a surprise attack against either the holder of the light source or the strongest-looking PC.*
- If the PCs attempt to open the shutters or otherwise fully illuminate the area:
 - *Using their stealth to remain hidden as long as possible, if it is clear that a PC is going to open the shutters, the shadows attempt to stealthily slide under the door and join their fellows in the ground-floor room beyond.*

Ground Floor - Living Quarters

A set of stairs on one side of the room leads up to a closed door on the second floor. Apart from this, the ground floor contains a cooking stove, small table, a few chairs, stacked wood, and a few buckets of coal for the forge. Two windows, both shuttered, adorn the walls, and the back door has clearly been transformed into a piece of the wall - its hinges removed and nailed tight with supporting boards.

The desiccated corpse of a dark-clad person lies on the floor at the base of the stairs.

Clues

- Apart from the corpse, the room is very well organized:
 - *Three hand crossbow bolts are lodged, seemingly at random, in the far wall.*

- The body is clothed in black and grey with a deep hood and scarf:
 - *Close inspection identifies the body as Corbie, a local who, along with his friend Reorx, fancied themselves thieves.*
 - *A hand crossbow is clutched in Corbie's right hand, a dagger is in his belt, and a set of lockpicks are in his belt pouch.*
 - *Corbie has no obvious wounds, but his flesh is drawn tight and the moisture in his body has been removed, leaving red dust where blood would be.*

Danger!

Within the forge room are either **2 shadows** (one original and one that was once Corbie); or **4 shadows** if the two from the forge room fled here. These creatures employ one of the following strategies for combat:

- As soon as the PCs all enter and are busy poking about the room and/or body:
 - *One shadow slams the door shut, revealing itself.*
 - *The others, using stealth, attack the PCs from behind.*
- If the PCs attempt to open the shutters or otherwise fully illuminate the area:
 - *Using their stealth to remain hidden as long as possible, they attempt to attack the PCs from behind.*

Due to the symbol on the floor of the room above, Horace's bedroom, the shadows cannot enter that room.

Second Floor - Horace's Bedroom

The door leading to this floor, and the single room behind the door, are shut and barred from the inside. Reox has been hiding in here out of fear since last night's encounter with the shadows.

Clues

- A simple bed and wardrobe line the left hand wall.
- The right side of the room holds a stout bookshelf and a writing desk:
 - *The desk holds a copy of Horace's ledger - indicating payments to Zoe and Max for "special supplies."*
 - *The shelf holds old ledgers and a smaller, diary-sized book. The diary is filled with short notes and comments of interest to Horace. Of interest to the PCs are these pages:*
 - ▶ *"She's driven and strong willed, but I think she does love me no matter what Tamara says."*
 - ▶ *"I'm not allowed to see her at home anymore. Says she's having work done on the house. I think she may be hiding something from me."*
 - ▶ *"She says she needs me to forge her something special. Made me promise to tell no one until it was done. I'm worried, but she loves me and I'm sure it'll be fine."*
 - ▶ *"She's told me more after dinner last night. Says it's for her daughter. I said I don't want to be part of this*

blasphemy, but her rage was terrible. I dared not agree, but I cannot disobey her. I don't have the will."

- ▶ "I have no choice, I've tried to use the old sign on the floor, but she can still call me to her."
- ▶ "Tonight she says I'll be free of it and of her. I just need to do one more thing."
- The floor has a symbol of protection against evil drawn on it in red chalk. It is a crude image made by an unskilled hand.
 - *A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana, History, or Religion) check shows it to be commonly used by the Liché as a ward against dark forces.*
 - *A check of 15 or more notes there is quicksilver in the chalk.*
 - *A check of 20 or more notes the quicksilver combined with the red chalk symbol are a combination that keeps shadows and other minor spirits at bay. It can be reproduced with red chalk and quicksilver on a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana, History, or Religion) check.*

Danger!

Reorx has no idea why he is safe up here, but once the PCs start making noise downstairs or working on the door, he tries to escape through the single window on the far side of the room. If he is cornered he does not fight, but surrenders and begs: "Let me go from here! I swear by Odin I'll never steal again! Don't let the shadows eat my soul!"

Reorx carries a hand crossbow, a handful of bolts, and a pair of daggers.

▣ Marion's House

Once a beautiful three-story guildhouse, the building has, much like its owner, fallen on difficult times. The brickwork is crumbling but propped up as expertly as possible. There is a once-grand arched doorway in the front (now in disrepair), and a smaller servant's entrance in the rear. Marion has one servant left, old Malchet, who does the best he can to aid his lady, despite his blindness.

The Ground Floor

This floor holds a sitting parlor of faded and decayed elegance, a dusty dining hall, the ill-supplied kitchen, a narrow stairway that leads to the cellar, a wide stairway leading up, and a small servant's chamber where Malchet sleeps. All windows on this floor are shuttered, with heavy drapes drawn across them as well. The only illumination comes from candles sporadically lit throughout the home. Malchet is only allowed access to this floor, and he never goes upstairs or to the cellar.

Malchet answers the front door, asking in a sonorous voice "*May I help you?*" The servant does his best to assist the PCs; however, any attempt to speak with or see Marion is met with one response: "*I'm sorry, but my Lady is not available right now. If you would wait in the parlor, I will summon you once she arrives.*"

Danger!

Within the parlor are **3 shadows**. These creatures, drawn here by the dark magics and constant torture of the Lamplighter, have taken up residence here.

They do not leave this room, and Malchet avoids the room, as Marion has forbidden him to enter as *“it is only for guests.”* The shadows employ one of the following strategies for combat:

- If the PCs attempt to open a curtain:
 - *Using their stealth to hide in the darkness, they attempt a surprise attack against the holder of the light source or the strongest-looking PC.*
- If the PCs wait patiently:
 - *Using their stealth to remain hidden as long as possible, they ambush the PCs after two rounds of waiting for Marion.*

The Second Floor

This floor holds three rooms: Marion’s private chamber, a child’s nursery, and a library. The windows are shuttered and covered with the same heavy drapes as those on the other floors. None of the doors are closed or locked. In fact, every aspect of this floor indicates that no one has been here for many weeks.

Clues

- Within Marion’s private chamber is her bed, dresser, wardrobe, and a writing desk:
 - *The desk contains her notes, drafts, and drawings. These jumbled documents outline Marion’s plans to capture and bind a Lamplighter, forcing it to grant her a single wish.*
- The nursery contains a child’s bed, toys, and dresser. The walls are covered in pleasant images of farm animals at play across a rolling hilltop landscape. Everything is covered in finely woven black cloth, indicating mourning as Marion still grieves for her child.
 - *Laying on the bed, wrapped completely in funeral cloth, is the body of Katya, Marion’s daughter.*
 - *The funeral cloth has runes painted on it in a dull red ink. These runes match some of the runes on the documents on Marion’s writing desk. The runes power preservation magic that keeps the body from decomposing.*
- The large and well-stocked library is filled with mundane and prosaic books. A gaping hole in the collection shows that a small stack of books has been taken from this room:
 - *The books near the empty space are all dealing with alchemy, but the characters have no way of knowing that.*

The Third Floor

Completely abandoned by Marion, the four rooms on this floor are dust-covered, unlocked, and completely shuttered from any outside light. There are no functional lamps or candles on this floor.

Danger!

On this floor lurks a single **greater shadow**. This creature is much more powerful than the other shadows here. It arrived after the Lamplighter was bound in the cellar, a reaction to the communal pain and torment of the Lamplighter. This greater shadow employs the following strategies for combat:

- Using its stealth to hide in the darkness, it attacks anyone who holds a light source. It then attempts to meld back into the shadows to hide again.
- If there are multiple light sources, it attacks the weakest PC carrying a light source.
- Whenever possible, this greater shadow strikes and then hides - attempting to surprise and ambush as often as possible, often seeking out the weakest-looking PC.

➤ Greater Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages --

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amorphous. The greater shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the greater shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the greater shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Devastating Shadow Strike. If the greater shadow strikes while having advantage, it does an extra 6 (1d12) damage.

Actions

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

The Cellar

The narrow, unlit, dust-covered stairs run down 20 feet, emptying into a small chamber with a single arched doorway leading out of it.

- The first room contains a plain wooden straight-backed chair with a small side table next to it:
 - *The table has a stack of four books (taken from the second floor library), topped with a water pitcher and an empty clay mug.*
 - *There are crumbs of food, long stale, littering the floor near the table and chair.*
 - *The books are a treatise on combining alchemy with sorcery, and would take concentrated study for years to comprehend.*
 - *On the floor beneath the table is a black clay jar, sealed in red wax, with an alchemical symbol for Forge and another for Blood carved into the side of the jar.*

Through the doorway lies a larger room that once served as a wine cellar. The walls, ceiling, and floor are covered in arcane and religious runes, sigils, and symbolism. The entire chamber is mystically designed so that, once she attained the proper outside knowledge, Marion was able to summon a Lamplighter and bind it with the magical manacles that she forced Horace to forge for her.

In one corner is a brasier of white hot coals, with a number of brands and iron bars thrust deep into the coals. Against the opposite wall is a cobweb-covered, dirty wine rack holding twenty bottles of unopened wine.

Marion is here, in the center of the room. She stands above what was once a proud Lamplighter, holding Horace's hammer in her right hand and a pair of blacksmith's tongs in the other. She whispers to the Lamplighter, *"This is the last. You will bring her back, or I will destroy you."*

She is oblivious to the PCs when they enter the room. They must do something to get her attention as she raises the smithy hammer...

How Does This Work?

This is a sad encounter. Marion is broken and seemingly damned by her actions. The Lamplighter is smashed, burned, and crippled by the torture that Marion has used to force her wishes to come true.

The goal for this encounter is for the PCs to figure out how to save the Lamplighter. Two possible ways to accomplish this are outlined below.



Variations on the Theme - *Certainly there are variations to the options presented here. You are free to improvise reactions, change outcomes, adjust the flow, modify the reactions of the NPCs, and even make a happier ending if you and your group prefer that.*

The only way to run this final encounter "wrong" would be to try and transform it into a bloodbath. But, then again, this is your adventure. Do what is most enjoyable for you and your group.

1. Attempt to help Marion and free the Lamplighter

- a. Genuine offers of aid see Marion collapse, sobbing out her sorrow and guilt, and, through streaming tears, ask the PCs to release the Lamplighter with the blood from the jar in the other room.
- b. Upon its release the Lamplighter stands, its form knitting back together with ugly popping, grinding, and squishing noises. It comes to Marion and says, *"Your pain brought you to this, so let me take you to a place where you can be free of it."*
- c. The Lamplighter lifts Marion's limp, sobbing form, carrying her from the building where it joins its fellows outside the house. These Lamplighters take Marion and the Lamplighter from the cellar and, assuming the PCs followed, say to them, *"Your compassion and honor have delivered us. We will provide you with knowledge when your need is greatest."*
- d. They do not discuss where they are taking Marion, but they carry her off into the shadows and disappear.

2. Free the Lamplighter without attempting to help Marion

- a. Marion is furious and struggles to stop the PCs from taking actions to free the Lamplighter. She is easily detained, as she is weak and not a skilled fighter.
- b. The tortured Lamplighter tells the PCs that *"Our freedom is with the blood of the Smith, so place it upon our bonds."*
- c. Marion screams and shrieks at the PCs, *"DAMN YOU! I'LL SMASH YOU! I'LL BURN YOU! YOU CANNOT TAKE MY CHILD AGAIN!"*
- d. Once freed, the Lamplighter's form mends together with ugly popping, grinding, and squishing noises. It strides toward Marion, who cowers in a rage and fearful shaking.
- e. The Lamplighter says, *"Your pain may have been great, but it does not excuse your actions. We will decide your end."* The Lamplighter grabs her as she falls limp and carries her to its fellows outside the house.
- f. The mass of Lamplighters surround Marion's form, blotting her from sight. There is a sharp scream, the sound of flesh rending and bones being ground by stone, and then silence.
- g. The Lamplighter from the cellar, assuming the PCs are there, says to them, *"Your actions have freed us, as we hoped to have saved her as well. We will provide you with knowledge when your need is greatest."*
- h. The Lamplighters move toward the shadows and disappear, leaving no sign of Marion.

Below are some pointers to help run this final encounter. Some key things to remember and use regardless of what the PCs do:

- **Marion's Condition**

- *Marion is insane but talks to the PCs if they talk with her. She does not fight the PCs.*
- *Killing Marion is easy. She is weak and any strong blow slays her.*
- *Marion states that she will gladly free the Lamplighter once it has brought her daughter back: "Once I have my daughter, I will use the*

smiths blood and free the creature, but not until then."

- *If the PCs mention that they were on the second floor, she wants to leave the cellar to make sure that Katya is still "sleeping and resting."*
- *If the PCs try and stop her from harming the Lamplighter further, she breaks down and sobs, begging the PCs to save her daughter.*

- **The Lamplighter and its fellows**

- *The Lamplighter **cannot** grant Marion's wish. This is a power beyond any of these beings, and it has tried and tried to explain this to Marion, but she refuses to understand.*
- *A host of Lamplighters encircle the house as soon as the PCs start down the stairs. They are ready to react based on what the outcome of the encounter with Marion is.*
- *The blood from the jar in the other room is from Horace. If it is spilled onto the manacles, the Lamplighter is freed.*
- *Killing Marion causes the Lamplighter to mumble through its smashed and broken mouth: "You have stolen justice from us, but by her blood I can be freed." The PCs must use Marion's blood to touch the manacles that bind the Lamplighter, causing them to crumble and free the creature. After this, no Lamplighter speaks to any of these PCs again for a year, no matter the offering.*
- *If the PCs attempt to kill the Lamplighter... well... that's not going to go over very well. The Lamplighters outside have no mercy for anyone attacking one of their own.*



• **Lamplighter Rage** - Lamplighters are NOT easy foes to fight. A single Lamplighter is a CR 7 creature, and the PCs would have to deal with many of them if they were to be foolish enough to try and slay the bound Lamplighter.

• *It's not easy to stop some PCs from trying to kill monsters sometimes, even after plenty of warnings. Sometimes... well... actions have consequences, and sometimes fools die.*



CREATURE STATS

Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Actions

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

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