

The Little Shop of Herbalism

(A D&D One Shot Adventure)

One shot adventure: Little Shop of Herbalism

The Little Shop of Herbalism:

This a very bare bones adventure, effectively a series of encounters to lead a party on a story, very much investigation driven with a big fight at the end.

There are no maps or stat blocks, just descriptions and types of skills checks so anyone reading this is free to use it and tweak it to fit into their own campaign or desired format and so you can design your own layouts for each location.

For inspiration, think of the Little Shop of Horrors musical, by turns comical and darkly disturbing or if you want to go more horror orientated read some HP Lovecraft (The Shadow over Innsmouth would be good).

I've set the adventure in the town of New Yrk, which is a town in my campaign setting where not much is happening but you can switch it anywhere you like.

Note for certain character classes and DM should play up these at every chance:

Anyone singing or playing a musical instrument in town have a chance to notice that the plant life around them has withered.

Bards: If using Song of Rest either within or near the town when the party wake up they find the plant life has withered and died around the campsite.

Clerics with Nature domain: Receive a vision from their Deity warning of Aberrations in the local plant life.

Druids: when they rest feel unsettled and like the plant life is actively hostile.

Paladins with Oath of Ancients: As per Cleric.

Rangers: As per Druids and Primeval Awareness reveals Aberration energy/magic in all plant life.

Warlocks: May get a warning from their patron depending on their patrons mentality.



The Plot:

Whilst travelling the countryside, the party stop at an tavern and find some flyers put up by the local Shire Reave asking for adventurers/mercenaries/volunteers to help out in the coastal town of New Yrk. Asking around the tavern the party can find out various rumours about smugglers, murders and more outlandish claims about the town.

The flyers were left about 3 weeks ago.

New Yrk is a town on the east coast and is recovering after it was almost destroyed by a tsunami a few years ago.

Most of the town has been rebuild with only those area's closest to the coast line remaining in a dilapidated state.

Weather wise a soft fog is present most mornings and the overall atmosphere is, literally and figuratively, quite damp.

Roads and pathways are earth and mud affairs, there is no real pathways and people generally just try to walk/travel to their destination by the least muddy route available.

Encounter 1: Meeting Shire Reave Tomasz Orin.

Note: Shire Reave is a job title, think of it as a Sheriff that oversees a region of the country side as opposed to an single town.

The party arrive in town and after locating lodgings and stables for horses etc are directed to the Reave Hut to Speak with the Shire Reave about the murders.

The Reave Hut is the most heavily built and defended building in town and serves as a small jail and a general location for the regions peace keepers to work from, rest up and restock on supplies if they need them.

The building itself is your stereotypical wild west building, weathered wood construction, bars across glassless windows, rickety furniture and jail cells that are just metal bars with an old straw mattress for the inmate to sleep on.

Shire Reave Tomasz Orin is a large human male, standing about 6'6 tall, powerfully built and physically imposing. He wears well worn and battered chain mail armour and has a club in a belt loop always on his hip and a sword always within reach.

He has a well maintained head of blonde hair tied back in a top knot and a rather ill maintained full beard. His light blue eyes constantly flick around seemingly taking in everything as if he is always making a mental note of each change in his surroundings. He is honest and open with the party and says specifically he needs help trying to end a series of murders, he wants the party to find the murderer and bring him/her/it to justice.

(Insert roleplay where party negotiate their fees for helping asking questions etc).

Information to be gained:

- 1) There has been 5 murders so far.
- 2) Each murder has been about 1 week apart aside from the last one which was 4 days after the previous one.
- 3) The Reave is concerned that this means an escalation.
- 4) If the current time frame continues another murder will happen in the next 1-3 days.
- 5) The Reave can furnish the party with a rough map of the town and marks the locations of the murder victims so far.
- 6) The Reave is sure the murders are connected as it is a small town that has had one murder in the last 2 years so to have 5 in quick succession is alarming, also the first four bodies were missing a single limb, but the last victim was missing both legs.
- 7) There has been no unusual visitors (aside form the PC's) in town for a few months.
- 8) There has been a noticeable increase in plant growth recently.
- 9) A couple of merchant caravans were expected but they are currently 3 days over due. This is not uncommon due tot eh inadequate roads etc in the area.

10) The murder victims, in order, are: Jiff Goldcrown (a barber and owner of the Stroppy Barber), Wee Jock (a tanner and leather worker who owns the Mac Plopplop Tannery), Psyreen (a very old elven lady/fisherwoman/trader), Von Nickleback (a young stable lad), Reema (a barmaid)
The party should (hopefully) set about visiting the murder sites and familiarizing themselves with the area.

These next few encounters can be mixed up depending on where the party want to go first and depending on how quickly they draw their conclusions you may end up jumping to encounter 7. Should the party desire to, they could exhume any buried remains and use Speak with dead spells and abilities but they would need to get the Shire Reaves permission.
All Skill checks noted below can be either individual ones, so one roll yields one piece of information or you can do just one roll and reveal everything up to the number rolled.

Encounter 2: The Stroppy Barber.

You approach a small building that is used as a barbers and general hair styling salon, the sides and rear of the building are overgrown with some sort of creeping vine. The body of the Halfling barber, Jif Goldcrown, was discovered 5 weeks ago. He was missing his left arm which appeared to have been crudely hacked of. The blood stain is still present alongside a chalk outline of where the body was found, judging by the blood stain Jif did not die straight away as there are smears of blood that make it look like he tried to crawl out the shop for help.
Jif's body has been buried in the graveyard.
The shop and living space above it are meticulously clean and tidy.

Charisma Skills Checks/Asking around town:

DC5	(just general info) Asking around about Jif does not reveal anything suspicious only that his was a much loved member of the community.
DC10	If they ask about other acquaintances etc then it is revealed that Jif was a part time member of a band that performed at the town tavern.
DC15	If asking about anything weird or unusual then there is a comment about rampant plant growth and it'll be a shame Jif can no longer tend to his garden.

Investigation/Perception Skill Checks/Looking around the murder site:

DC10	No signs of forced entry.
DC10	A trail of small blood spots leads to the back door
DC10	A small trail of blood specks also leads to, and disappear under, a cabinet, moving the cabinet reveals a hole in the wall, it appears mice or rats live nearby and may have had a nibble on the corpse.
DC15	Muddy foot prints leading away through an overgrown back garden appear human sized.
DC15	Under a cluttered chest of drawers lies a bundle of rags containing some dried leaves/herbs that smell slightly sweet.
DC20	In the back garden, covered by a thick bush, is a small knife about 4" long that is covered in blood. The blade is long and flat with a single cutting edge but a blunt tip (A shaving razor).

Subsequent checks:

Survival	If the foot prints are found in the back garden: Survival check can be used to track the prints but they disappear about 100ft down the road.
Survival or Arcana	Should anyone ponder how tracks can disappear, then Survival checks reveal there are ways to hide your tracks and Arcana checks confirm there are mystical means to obscure yourself
Medicine	If blood spots found: Medicine check reveals the blood spots are not all the same and it appears a second person also spilt some blood in the area.
Nature	If bundle of rags found then Nature check reveals the leaves/herbs are inhaled and used to help people sleep and this appears to be a very potent mix. The smell of these herbs is different to the smell found in the bottles at the Wee Jock murder scene.
Nature or Arcana	A Nature or Arcana check on the garden reveals some magically induced growth in the local plant life.

Polymorph or Wildshape	Should anyone polymorph/wildshape and enter the mice/rat hole then they can follow it into the sewer system.
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What actually happened?

The assailant entered the building just as Jif was closing and used the herbal cloth to put him to sleep. Jif fought back and slashed the assailant with his barbers razor but could not stop the attack. Jif fell unconscious and the assailant hacked off Jifs left arm using a rather blunt meat cleaver and left him to bleed to death. Jif came to and tried to crawl out the shop to get help but succumbed to blood loss and died. At some point during the night rats discovered the body and ate some of it. The assailant stumbled out the back door and through the garden, removing and discarding the razor and staunching the wound that it caused before moving off. The tracks disappear as they are a false lead, after about 100ft or so the assailant cast Pass Without Trace which hid all their tracks from then on.

Encounter 3: Wee Jocks House and the "Mac Plooplop Tannery".

Wee Jock was a very large, some would say overweight, male half orc.

He was the towns tanner/leather merchant. He lived on the very outskirts of town due to the tanning process being very smelly.

Wee Jock was found face down in one of the tanning vats, at first it was thought he had just had an accident and drowned but when the body was pulled out of the vat he was found to be missing his right arm. The vat was drained in case it was just a case of decomposition but no arm could be found. It also appears the back of Wee Jocks head was caved in by some sort of blunt instrument.

Wee Jock was found dead about 4 weeks ago and was then buried in the local graveyard.

The Tannery itself is a walled courtyard with several sunken vats filled with various extremely unpleasant smelling liquids.

The courtyard backs onto a small cottage style building which is filled with all manner of clutter, boxes, pieces of equipment in mid repair, various tools and blades being set for cleaning or maintenance as well as freshly tanned leathers and hides, it would seem Wee Jock was a bit of a hoarder.

Charisma Skills Checks/Asking around town:

DC5	(just general info) He was a large smelly half orc and never bathed.
DC10	He had a very boisterous sense of humour and could easily rub people the wrong way.
DC15	Some times the sound of drumming and yelling could be heard coming from his tannery late at nigh and if the wind was blowing into town on those nights the air would also turn foul.
DC15	Wee Jock often seemed drunk but no-one recalls him ever going to the tavern.

Investigation/Perception Skill Checks/Looking around the murder site:

DC10	No signs of forced entry.
DC10	The woods are thick and encroaching on the property.
DC10	There is an area where the ground is darker to one side of a tanning vat, it looks like some form of splash from the vat and on the other side of the vat is a small pool of dried blood.
DC10	A large pair of bongo drums is located near a pile of wood with a pillow on it and the pile of wood appears to be some form of make shift bed.
DC10	empty bottles can be found all over the yard and inside the cottage, they have a strong "medicinal" and alcoholic smell to them. The bottles are all shapes and sizes. The smell is different to the herbs found at the Jiff Goldcrown murder scene.
DC15	On the outside of the north wall lies a thick branch, one end of which weeps dark viscous sap.
DC20	Under a large pile of old furs and unusable leathers is a trap door (DC10 to unlock it). Opening the trap door immediately assaults the party with a very strong odour of stale alcohol. A series of five steps lead down into a cellar which contains a brewing still and bottles of moonshine.

Subsequent checks:

Nature	If the branch is discovered then a nature check confirms it is not a natural sap and appears to be blood that is covering the branch.
Medicine	If the Moonshine still is found then a medicine check reveals the alcohol is very strong, almost lethal levels of alcohol (DC20 cons save if drunk, failure results in drunkenness within minutes and treat each failed save as a level of exhaustion with relevant penalties).
Investigation	If Moonshine still is found then further investigation check also reveals various ingredients (sugar cane, malt, corn, potatoes etc).
Nature or Arcana	A Nature or Arcana check on the garden reveals some magically induced growth in the local plant life.

What actually happened?

Wee Jock liked to drink and brewed his own moonshine. The assailant climbed over a wall and picked up a large branch that Wee Jock used to stir the tanning vats. They snuck up on Wee Jock whilst he was having a drunken sing song. The assailant struck Wee Jock in the back of the head which sent Wee Jock falling into the vat. Wee Jock was not killed and tried to get out the other side of the vat but the assailant walked around and bludgeoned the unfortunate Wee Jock to death before hacking off the arm and pushing the body back into the vat. The assailant discarded the branch near the wall and made their escape not realising that the liquid from the vat had seeped into the blood on the branch and caused it to become a sticky sap like substance.

Encounter 4: Psyreen the fishwife.

Psyreen was known as a fishwife (the wife of a fisherman) but was often found either sitting on the shore mending fishing lines and nets or actually out to sea helping different fisherman or in the market selling the daily catch. Not bad for an elderly elf woman. Psyreen was approximately 700 year old as far as any of the locals know and many of them loved her like a 2nd mother.

Psyreen was found hanged in her house, if it was not for her missing left leg, it would have been put down as a suicide. She was given a burial at sea by the local fisherman.

Charisma Skills Checks/Asking around town:

DC5	(just general info) No one seems to have a bad word to say about Psyreen, she always seemed happy and cheerful and a beautiful flute player.
DC10	A couple of the traders do confide that over the last 20 years or so Psyreen has become a little distant and many believe she had hid her grief at her husbands passing from the community.
DC15	Of all the deaths, this one has hit the community the hardest, so much so that one person says that should the party find the killer, and bring them in alive, there may be a lynch mob

Investigation/Perception Skill Checks/Looking around the murder site:

DC10	The house is spic and span and everything seems to have a place. A small scrape on the floor boards is visible in front of a ground floor window. It appears a small, heavy desk was moved away from the window.
DC10	Checking the Kitchen, a knife appears to be missing from a rack in the kitchen.
DC10	The rope which Psyreen was found hanging by has been placed in a coil near the front door, it was found tied to a banister upstairs and was long enough that Psyreen would have been suspended about an inch above the floor. Looking over the rope, faint traces of mud and soil can be seen and a dried blood stain is located in the main stairwell under where Psyreen was found hanging.
DC15	Investigating the window reveals a faint blood stain, it appears someone tried to wipe a splash of blood off the window sill.
DC15	Under a bed upstairs is a flute, broken into several pieces.
DC15	Investigating the garden area outside the window reveals a small mound of earth covered by a overhanging bush, in this mound is a Fishermans filleting knife covered in dried blood.
DC15	Investigating the window reveals a faint blood stain, it appears someone tried to wipe a splash of blood off the window sill.

Subsequent checks:

Thieves Tools	If the downstairs window is checked then a successful Thieves Tools check reveals that the window was forced open using a crowbar or similar implement, a very basic form of breaking and entering in rogue terms.
Investigation	If the kitchen is investigated no sign of the missing knife can be found but if they also find the knife under the bush in the garden then they realize this is the missing knife.
Nature or Arcana	If the mound of earth where the knife is found is searched further, a Nature or Arcana check on the garden reveals some magically induced growth in the local plant life.
Nature	If the mud and soil marks are found on the rope then a Nature check reveals it is not mud or soil, it is effluent from a out house or sewer.

What actually happened?

The assailant snuck in to the house through window and had to move a desk out the way to gain entry. The assailant then snuck upstairs and easily overpowered the aged elf, knocking her unconscious before hanging her and using the filleting knife to remove the leg. and then made their escape via the window and realising they had left a large blood pool on the window seal, they cleaned it with a piece of their clothing and then hid the knife in the earth.

Encounter 5: Von Nickleback and the Thousand Horse Stables.

Von Nickleback, or "Ickle Nickle" as most of the town new him, was a human male in his late teens, he was a relative new comer to town having arrived seeking work a year or two earlier. He was a thin, gangly youth, prone to all the problems teenagers suffer from. Von's death would have been put down as an unfortunate accident had it not been for his missing right leg. Von had an obvious head injury and it was decided that Von was kicked in the head and killed by one of the horses, but no-one knows who may have then taken the leg. The stable he worked in was capable of housing upto 6 horses but only one horse was stabled at the time of Vons death. His body is buried in the local graveyard.

Charisma Skills Checks/Asking around town:

DC5	(just general info) Basic rumour mill is that Von was a bit weird and was lusting after one of the barmaids but that is not uncommon in the towns youth and he was also a very bad lute player.
DC10	The horse they think was responsible for kicking Von in head (a mare called Pumpkin) is an otherwise peaceful and easy to work with animal and has been used by many traders and messengers and is often used by the townsfolk to teach children to ride.
DC15	The stable owner (a human woman called Jill Townsend) says Von was a hard worker but she had some misgivings as he could be heard berating horses and it is believed he may have mistreated them when no-one was looking.

Investigation/Perception Skill Checks/Looking around the murder site:

DC10	The stable is like any other, stacked and lined with hay, nothing seems out of place. A blood splatter can be traced from one stall across the ground to an area where it becomes a dark pool of hay, it appears that once Von was struck he staggered across the floor and fell over. This site, more than any other, is untouched and has no signs of forced entry or any breakages. In fact the stables are open pretty much all day every day so unless they are expecting a storm, they do no lock the stable doors.
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Subsequent checks:

Animal Handling	If the party check on the horse then Animal handling confirms the horse is very easy to work with and a friendly beast all round.
Speak With Animals or Beast Speech	Should the party use a spell or ability such as Speak with Animals or Beast Speech, they can talk to the horse (called Pumpkin) who says that she does not recall what happened exactly, she remembers Von and didn't like him, he was too rough and forceful, where others would ask and reward, he would demand and punish. Pumpkin

	does recall a sensation of falling asleep shortly after Von started the daily grooming and waking to see a hunched figure removing Vons leg. If pressed for details Pumpkin can confirm it was a human but could not identify who it was specifically. Recalling that event and the sensation of being asleep causes Pumpkin a lot of distress and is noticeably skittish to anyone watching the conversation.
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What actually happened?

Pumpkin (the horse) was dominated and made to kick Von in the head. This killed Von almost instantly and allowed the assailant to enter the stable and cut off Vons leg.

Encounter 6: Reema the barmaid and the Dripping Tap Tavern.

The Dripping Tap is the main tavern and boarding house in town.

Reema was a human female in her mid 40's. She had worked at the Dripping Tap all her adult life. Reema was found in the cellar. She appears to have died very quickly. Her body was discovered after she had gone into the cellar to get a new barrel of wine and hadn't returned after about 30 minutes. Her body was blackened and on the verge of decay. Both her legs were missing. Her body was cremated as it was thought she may have suffered some disease. Her ashes buried in the local graveyard.

Charisma Skills Checks/Asking around town:

DC5	(just general info) No one seems to have a bad word to say about Reema other that she was a shameless flirt.
DC10	All the locals that frequented the tavern have a story or two about Reema, most quite bawdy but overall she was much loved and respected and the patrons knew exactly how far they could push things before Reema would give them a gentle reminder to be good (usually involving a drink being poured over their head or lap with a comment to "cool off"), many stories tell of the sea shanties she would sing most evenings.
DC10	One of the locals recalls seeing someone coming out of the cellar a few minutes before Reema was discovered and they may have been carrying a crate but could not make out any details, he assumed it was just another patron sneaking downstairs and stealing a brew or three.
DC15	The owner of the bar (a human male called Jason) is very upset and depressed and eventually confides that he and Reema were actually husband and wife but had hid this fact form the patrons. They were married 3 years prior at the local temple.
DC15	One of the other bar maids confirms that the stable lad Von was spying on Reema and had been caught more than once in a tree that looked into her room upstairs.

Investigation/Perception Skill Checks/Looking around the murder site:

DC10	The plant life around the tavern is noticeably unhealthy, it appears shrivelled and dried up.
DC15	Rat dropping can be found amongst the general barrels and crates of the cellar, following these leads to a small hole.
DC15	Some marks and remains can be found in the are where Reema's body can be found.

Subsequent checks:

Polymorph or Wildshape	If anyone polymorphs/Wildshape and enters the hole in the wall they travel through some rat warrens and eventually come out in the sewers.
Medicine	If they check the remains/marks in the cellar then a medicine check confirms advance decomposition, a further Arcana check confirms it is consistent with the use of necrotic magic.

What actually happened?

The assailant enter the Cellar via the rat hole using Polymorph or Wildshape and laid in wait. Reema was not the target just the first unfortunate to enter the cellar.

She was struck with a necrotic damage dealing spell, killing her instantly. The assailant then removed both her legs and snuck out of the cellar with the legs hidden in a crate.

Encounter 7: Profiling 101.

So hopefully the party have travelled to each location and talked to the general populace and pieced together some clues and should hopefully have an idea of the style and nature of the killer.

Some of the clues should be:

Magically enhance plant growth in the area's of some of the murders.

Apparent control of a horse through mystical means.

Tracks that disappear suddenly.

Possibly able to change shape.

Adept at sneaking around.

Someone who does not like those who are musically inclined.

They should hopefully be building up a picture of a druid, rogue or exceptionally sneaky spell caster.

If the party ask around about druids in the area, the locals confirms there are no druids that they know of, the closest would be Audrey the towns herbalist and can be given directions to her shop called "Sweet Aromatics".

*If the party go to the herbalists before going to any of the murder sites to get supplies, potions etc then they are greeted by a human woman, quite thin and overly nice and jolly (just picture Audrey from the Film "Little Shop of Horrors"), she has a bandage on her right hand, the result of an accident whilst trimming a plant.

She has plenty of herbal remedies, potions and the like for sale.

**If the party go there after hours (8pm) or after they have visited the murder sites then the shop is shut and the windows covered by curtains. There are several viable means of entry, from blatant breaking of shop windows, to picking the door locks, to climbing up to the next floor and entering through an unlocked window, or any other means the party can devise.

The back of house, those parts not directly part of the shop itself, includes a bedroom, bathroom area, kitchen, spare room and a cellar. Plants are present in every room, the bathroom area appears to be used to cultivate various moulds and fungus, pleasant smelling flowers are present in the bedroom and herbs of all types are in the kitchen.

The cellar houses a small alchemy lab and a area for the preparation and creation of herbalism and medicine kits.

Staking out the shop does not show any unusual activity.

Charisma Skills Checks/Asking around town:

DC5	(just general info) No one seems to have a bad word to say about Audrey other than she was a bit too happy.
DC10	All know Audrey and have used her service over the years, she is known as a wise woman and healer.
DC10	The locals remember how she would always be singing and playing various musical instruments but in the last few months it had become harder to convince her to play or sing.
DC15	Some of the locals recall she was always happy but her happiness has seemed a bit more forced following the death of her husband (a fisherman named Seymour) about 10 years ago

Investigation/Perception Skill Checks/Looking around the Shop:

DC15	A secret door is located to one side of the cellar, this leads into the sewers under the town.
DC15	In a secret compartment in a desk in the bedroom is a diary, a few recent entries state: 1) How happy Audrey is since Seymour returned and she hopes he'll be fit enough to come back to work soon. 2) That it appears Seymour returned about 2 months ago and has been hiding in the sewers.

	3) That Seymour does not like music or singing and says it sickens him. 4) A few entries are a bit ambiguous but state Audrey has had trouble finding things that Seymour can eat.
DC20	In the shop cellar is a secret passage that leads into the sewers.

Subsequent checks:

Nature	Nature checks on the plant life around the shop and back of house reveal they are used for all manner of herbal remedies.
Nature or Arcane	Further Arcana or Nature checks reveal all plant growth in the area in and around the shop is magically enhanced.
Survival	If the Secret door is discovered further survival checks can discern human sized tracks entering and exiting the sewers. They all appear to be made by the same person.

What actually happened?

A couple of months ago Audrey started to receive visions that Seymour had returned to her and was in the sewers, she found a old hidden door in the shops cellar and after a few days of searching the sewers found a place where the sewers merged with some deeper/older ruins. The ruins were sealed off by a sturdy metal door which ground open as Audrey approached. Entering, Audrey found her beloved Seymour, still injured and near death but on the road to recovery. Since then Audrey has been procuring food for Seymour and has trapped large sections of the sewers around the entrance to protect him while he fully recovers.

Encounter 8: Into the Sewers.

The sewers are pitch black, so light sources will be mandatory.

If the party rely on Darkvision then they will fail to notice some traps and may also end up walking into deeper areas of the sewer as they cannot differentiate between the different depths.

If the party move into the sewers they come across several sprung traps, traps designed for human sized targets not vermin.

Audrey disarms each trap as he goes to visit Seymour and then resets them when she goes back to the shop.

Eventually the party come across Audrey on her way back to the shop, she will get very angry and defensive and will want the party to leave her and Seymour alone. Depending on the roleplay...Roll initiative and see what happens....

Depending on the party level/strength I would place Audrey's spellcasting as a level 10 Bard, College of Lore with her Magic Secrets being: Inflict Wound and Pass Without Trace as the lvl 6 college magical secrets and Anti-Life Shell (lvl 5) and Dominate Beast (lvl 4) as the bard level 10 magic secrets.

Spells known would include: Polymorph (lvl 4), Plant Growth (lvl 3), Speak With Animals (lvl 2), Speak with Plants (lvl 3).

Other spells/HP etc at DM discretion.

After Audrey is defeated the party can take her (dead or alive) back to the Shire Reave and that is effectively where it ends for them. Should they explore further than they will have to negotiate a sewer system full of traps.

Anyone with a nature based class (druid, ranger, nature domain, oath of ancients etc) feels as if the walls are closing in on them and the oppressive feeling of being watched by some angry force is constant.

Encounter 9: Navigating the sewers.

The traps in the sewers are meant to incapacitate and kill human sized creatures so small animals and vermin are mostly ignored.

The traps are mostly plant based with whipping and grasping vines, Venus fly trap style effects to trap legs, quicksand style areas submerged under the sewer filth.

The traps should litter about a mile of sewers and underground tunnels leading to a sealed door.

Throughout travelling the sewers, nature based classes are targeted by spells cast through vines and plant life in the walls. These spells would be drawn from the druid and ranger spell lists, treat these as lair actions that target nature based classes as preference.

A side effect of this is that anyone can sing or play a musical instrument and spend their action performing and if they succeed on a performance role they gain the benefit of an Anti Life Shell as long as they do nothing other than perform. This Anti Life shell effect would then make them immune to the plant based traps. As they sing/play instruments they can see the plant life actively recoil from their presence.

Encounter 10: The door of destiny!

The party arrive at a large rusty metal door, roughly 10ft wide and 20ft tall.

There is a secret lever to open the door, it is submerged under the sewer water, requiring a DC15 investigation check to locate it and a DC15 strength check to pull the rusty lever.

Aberration energy permeates the entire area and each turn a random player is targeted by a lvl1 Dissonant Whispers spell. Any character can spend their action to perform and if they succeeds on a performance check gains immunity to this dissonant whispers as well as maintaining the Anti Life Shell effect.

Once the door is opened, the smell of the sewer is almost immediately changed from one of foulness to and overwhelming sweetness and a wave of oppression flows out.

Entering the room reveals (party light sources permitting) a room covered in all forms of plant life but all infused with aberration energy. It is about 100ft on each side. A large shape moves in the darkness, no foot falls can be heard just a sound of slurping and slithering and strange sucking noises.

This is Seymour, a large aberration from the far realm who has infected all plant life in the area. His weaknesses are music and singing. In order to damage Seymour the party will need to attack him by targeting their performance at him and the PC's must succeed on a total of five performance checks, each successful check can be seen to cause Seymour visible pain and lose some of its physical essence. However, each successful skill check also prompts a wave of twig, needle and vine blights to manifest from the vegetation on the walls. Each wave sends out one of each blight per character in the room.

Seymour:

Stat and ability wise, treat as a Shambling Mound but it also has the Aberration sub type and the spell casting of a level 12 Druid and with a lair action (activating on initiative roll 20) which duplicates any spell on the druid or ranger spell list up to level 3.

Seymour is Immune to all damage unless the party can lower its resistances by succeeding at 5 performance checks that involve either singing to or playing musical instruments at Seymour. the DC for these skill checks decreases as each check weakens Seymour.

The first is DC25, the second DC20, third DC15, fourth DC10, the last one is DC5.

A botch on any roll increases the difficulty of all further rolls by 5 and the player with the botch is subjected to a lvl1 Dissonant Whispers spell (with no saving throw). A player must be within 60ft of Seymour in order to lower its resistance.

Once Seymour is defeated the cavernous area starts to shake and rumble and a small tear/portal in reality forms at the back of the room and starts to suck all organic life into it. The party have to succeed in an athletics check to move out of the room, DC5 on the first turn, DC10 the second and so on. A successful athletics check means they can move up to their speed away from the portal and use their action to dash but any failed check results in the character being pulled d20ft towards the portal, a botch results in a d20x2 move towards the portal and the character being knocked prone. After five turns, the portal snaps closed trapping anything that was sucked through on the other side (the Far Realm). When the portal closes everything returns to normal, aberration energy is no longer felt in the area, there is no feeling of oppression and the plant based traps in the sewer wither and die. All that is left is for the party to report back to the Shire Reave.

So what was actually going on???

Seymour was actually some entity from the Far Realm that sensed Audrey's sorrow and latched onto it and used her as a conduit to manifest in the material realm.

It twisted Audrey's perceptions so she could only see her dead husband when they were together and she was occasionally possessed by the entity and these episodes are when the killings occurred.

Seymour initially sustained itself by eating the vermin in the sewers but found the mortals in the town above more interesting and much more satisfying to eat.

Although they are not known about, several merchant caravans will never reach their destinations having been attacked and consumed by Seymour reaching out and attacking them through the local plant life outside of town.

Music and Song caused Seymour physical pain. This weakness is a side effect of using Audrey as a conduit to manifest into the material plane, Audrey loved to sing and dance with her husband and on some deep, subconscious level, Audrey knew this entity was not her husband and this is also partly why the victims in town were targeted.

The victims' performances, no matter how bad, had stopped Seymour's ability to infect the plant life around the town and were like a constant unscratchable itch to the entity, the missing limbs were just a little reward for a successful kill and something to enjoy as a snack later on.

So there we go, a hopefully enjoyable journey into a little dark and faintly musical area of roleplaying. If you have any comments, feedback etc, please feel free to ping me an email at: rob76masters@gmail.com