

BATS IN DABELFRY!

BY JASON MILLS



A FREE GM ADVENTURE
FOR TUNNELS & TROLLS™

TAVERNMASTER
— LIBRARY —

Bats In Dabelfry!

**A TUNNELS AND TROLLS™
GM ADVENTURE**

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GAMEMASTER'S INTRODUCTION

This is short, fun and gruesome adventure in poor taste, for a handful of low-level characters. It's written for *Tunnels & Trolls* version 7.5, but nothing prevents the use of earlier editions of the rules. It will probably be completed in a single session and requires no special preparation beyond familiarising oneself with the text. Illustrations are provided in the **Appendix** so that they can be easily presented to the players.

INTRODUCTION

Attic Clearance Required

Count Battory seeks hardy roustabouts to empty the roof spaces of **Dabelfry Manor**.

All vermin to be exterminated.

All other contents to be removed, becoming the property and responsibility of the clearance operatives in lieu of fee.

The attic rooms of Dabelfry Manor have unfortunately been neglected for some time, but they are believed to contain many antiques and curios likely to be of value.

Apply in person at Dabelfry Manor.

Although the Battory family strives to be an equal opportunities employer, this post is not considered suitable for animal-lovers.

Our heroes are staying a night at *The Battered Hope*, an inn in Dabelfry, when they discover the above notice on the wall. It's a friendly tavern in a friendly town: Dabelfry is well-kept and moderately prosperous, its neat stone buildings displaying civic pride along the main street.

The delvers will have noticed Dabelfry Manor on their way into town. It's a modest but handsome L-shaped mansion in walled grounds on a wooded hill. On this minimal evidence, they can expect the proposed attic clearance to be a lucrative venture.

If our heroes choose to ask around, improvise some Local Characters for them to talk to. People will readily explain that Count Simon Battory is a nice man (a comment invariably accompanied by a slightly knowing smile – he is considered a bit wet). However, probing about the Manor's history or the Battory family will be met with a certain nervous resistance. An L2SR on CHR will be needed to get an answer to *each* such question (this can be reduced to L1 by plying the subject with ale), and only the following information is available:

The (unmarried) Count has quite recently inherited both the Manor and his title, moving here from many leagues away. This followed the mysterious disappearance of his aunt, Countess Bethalize Battory, and her young children, Pippy and Peter. The Countess rarely left the Manor in the past few years and there were rumours that she was mad. There were also tales that she "did spearmints in the attic". (No one speaking to our heroes knows what this actually means, but it is always muttered darkly.) The fierce guards at Dabelfry Manor demand passwords from strangers.

If the delvers think to enquire about the *father* of the Countess's children, they will need an L3SR on CHR to get even a drunken tavern-goer to supply any of the following information:

Count Louis Battory "died" (the speaker will use the scare-quotes gesture) a few years ago. It was said that he had "turned" (scare-quotes again). A speaker pressed to elaborate (another L3SR on CHR) will glance furtively around and then quickly use his bent forefingers to indicate Great Big Teeth. (If anyone mentions the 'V'-word, the

speaker will clam up and scarper.) The Countess's madness is thought to stem from this incident.

This may clue the delvers in to the fact that this is a **Vampire** scenario. (Even though it isn't.) So by all means allow them to stock up on useless stakes and garlic before proceeding to the Manor. (Note that garlic doesn't prosper in this climate (unlike garlic-vendors), so it's at least 1 GP per clove.)

THE GUARDS

The guards at Dabelfry Manor are for show. They wear tidy brown and red uniforms beneath ageing but serviceable armour. Their helmets have little metal bat wings and each guard is armed with a short sword and a dirk. They do indeed require passwords from strangers before admitting them to the grounds, to the Manor, to rooms; and before letting them *out* of rooms, Manor, grounds... A guard will make a demand like, "What tree?" or "What sword?" or "What woodland creature?" The delvers must choose an appropriate response ("Elm?"; "Falchion?"; "Er, hyena?"), which the guard will chew over for a moment with narrowed eyes. You should consult your papers to give the players the impression that you are checking the suitability of the answer. Roll a dice now and again.

In fact, any intelligible answer will suffice, prompting a curt nod from the guard. This little farce is a fossilised tradition: a century ago the Manor was besieged by zombies, and this ritual served to distinguish the articulate living from the grunting undead in the dark. This generation of guards are as flummoxed by the process as the delvers and townsfolk, but would not compromise their dignity by admitting it. Frankly, if the delvers answered "What tree?" with "Strawberry ice cream", the guards would be at a loss for any better response than "Hmm..."

(Oh, and they aren't "fierce" either.)

Guard: Human Warrior, Level 1.

STR: 18 **CON:** 14 **DEX:** 15 **SPD:** 13

INT: 11 **WIZ:** 14 **LK:** 14 **CHR:** 12

Combat Adds: +12

Weapons: Short sword (3+0), dirk (2+1). **Note:** Their weapons are rarely used: when drawing a blade, 1 on a D6 means it's rusted into the scabbard!

Armor: Light plate armour (10x2).

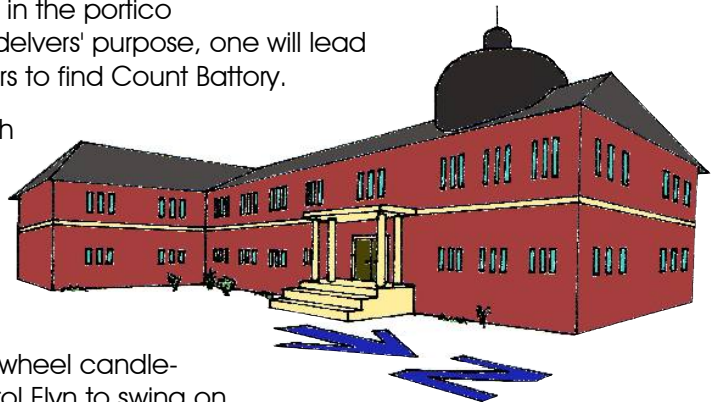
THE MANOR

The grounds of Dabelfry Manor, in woods on a gentle hill north of the town, are entered through a gate to the east. The wall around the estate is six feet high, enclosing a few acres. Behind the wrought-iron gate (which stands open) is a hard-packed dirt driveway between flowering rhododendron bushes. The bushes are sprawling and the grass is kind of shaggy. Weeds growing around the gate suggest it hasn't been closed in years. Nonetheless, two guards are casually guarding it (and will naturally require a password). One guard will accompany the delvers the hundred yards up to the Manor itself. (He could be pumped for information like the townsfolk.)

The Manor is a two-storey mansion in the shape of an L whose short stroke points east. Almost at the northern end of the peaked roof is a wide turret. The windows all along the building are narrow but there are many of them. The main entrance is in the middle of the long wall, facing east, fronted by a few steps up to a pillared portico. The Manor is well-built and dignified, if a little run-down: weeds grow out of cracks and dripping gutters have stained the walls. It's perhaps a century old. (Should the delvers take a circuit, all they'll notice out of the ordinary is a red-mouthed gargoyle high on the west wall, beneath which the wall is thickly stained with, well, blood. The Count thinks it's rust.)

The guard will leave the delvers at the foot of the steps. Two more guards are leaning and day-dreaming in the portico (and will want a password). Ascertaining the delvers' purpose, one will lead them into the entrance hall and scoot upstairs to find Count Battory.

The hall is floored with checkerboard tiles, with various doors leading off and a wide darkwood stairway rising from the centre. Over the top of the stairs hang the Battory arms, a black shield with a brown bat spread across it. A balcony landing runs around all four walls and more doors and corridors can be seen leading off. Three cartwheel candle-chandeliers hang from the high ceiling for Errol Flynn to swing on.



While waiting, magic-users may notice weak vibes from a pair of fine black-lacquered cabinets that face each other across the room. These cupboards, on carved legs, are of a size sufficient to hold a curled-up human and each is fronted with two doors bearing little silver handles. (L2SR on INT to notice that the south cabinet's handles are dusty – those doors haven't been opened for a long time.) If opened, the north one will be found to be empty, whilst from the south one will pour a clanging, clattering cascade of vases, glassware, boots, hats, gloves, keys, coins, cutlery, bottles, paper knives, ornaments and the disjointed skeleton of a cat. This racket and mess are unlikely to win favour...

The cabinets are enchanted. An *Omnipotent Eye* spell will reveal that whatever is placed in the north one will teleport into the south one when the doors are closed. This knowledge having been lost, generations of Battorys and butlers have routinely placed bric-a-brac in the north cabinet and later assumed that someone else must have moved it. Traditionally no one touches the south one. Each cabinet weighs 100lbs and the pair is worth 1500GP. However, since they're not in the attic, they're not up for grabs (by legitimate means).

Whether summoned by a din or merely by the guard, Count Battory arrives at the top of the stairs. He's a slim sandy-haired fellow, not older than 30, with a good-natured look about him. He is enveloped in a richly-furred black robe that's too big for him, and indeed it's so under his feet that he almost tumbles down the stairs. The guard descending behind him frequently reaches out nervously to catch him.

Name: Count Simon Battory, L2 Male Human Citizen.

STR: 14

CON: 14

DEX: 12

SPD: 16

INT: 17

WIZ: 18

LK: 24

CHR: 17

Combat Adds: +18

Weapons: Unarmed.

Armor: Voluminous robe (6).

Character: Just a pleasant chap a little out of his depth.

"Welcome to Dabelfry Manor, my bold friends!" the Count gushes, coming forward to shake hands vigorously. "My, what a fine bunch of, er, specimens! I trust you know what this little job entails? Just clear out the attic rooms. We can lend you a cart to take things away, and you can build a bonfire round the back for anything that's not worth keeping. And naturally, you'll, er, *deal with* any, er..."

He looks at the guard for aid. The guard stares back flatly. "Pests," he offers eventually.

"Pests!" the Count enthuses. "Yes! Well! All set? Any questions?"

The following information is available from the Count, if the right questions are asked. He will not be more specific.

His aunt, Countess Bethalze Battory, spent a lot of her time in the attics, pursuing her hobbies. She and her children Pippy and Peter disappeared two months ago, along with her dwarfservant Gruntkithrask. There have been some indications of verminous infestations. The delvers are needed because apparently, under the terms of their contracts, neither the servants nor the guards can be required to work more than one storey above ground level. (The Count seems a little puzzled by this, and with an L1SR on INT a delver will notice that the guard is whistling tunelessly and staring at the ceiling.) Some of the Countess's activities were of an *eccentric* nature and it's possible that the pests in the attic are of an *unusual* nature. The stairway in the **Bell Tower** is in disrepair, so there is presently only one way in and out of the attic rooms. The Count has not been up there himself.

(Any mention of ***Vampires*** will be met with genuine bemusement and incredulity from the Count, who, having lived far from here till now, has never even heard the stories about his uncle.)

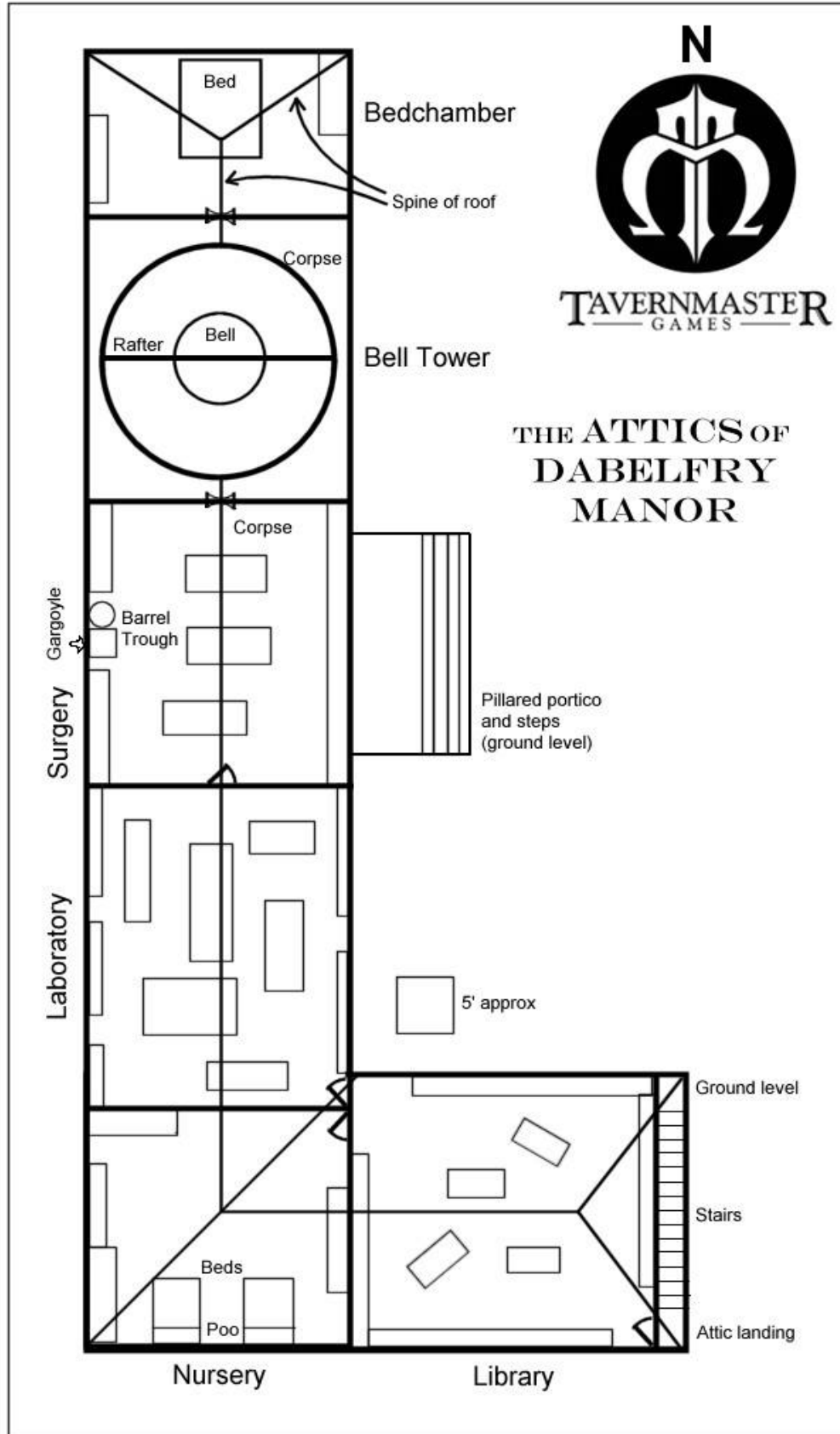
With a cheery "Best of luck!" the Count waves and takes himself back upstairs, slipping on his robe more than once. (From behind, the brown bat motif can be seen spread across the robe.) The guard leads the delvers down a southward corridor, then east to the end of the short wing of the building. "Up there," he says, pointing up stairs that rise to the south, and turns on his heel.

These are service stairs, narrow, steep and plain. They rise about twenty feet, almost to the height of the eaves, over the same horizontal distance. The delvers must plod up single-file to a small landing at the top, where a sleepy guard is hastily standing up and straightening his helmet. He will require a password...

The east wall of the landing holds a large painting of the Countess. She grins maniacally out of the picture, surrounded by darkness. Her chestnut hair is coiffured in two high cones either side of her head (not unlike a bat's ears, as it happens). She is depicted as a very handsome and striking woman, perhaps 40 years old, and quite obviously insane. Her eyes don't just follow you around the room, but down the stairs and round the corner.

The west wall bears a quite ordinary, yet somehow ominous, panelled door. A large ornate key protrudes from the lock, which the guard, after initial surprise, will turn for the delvers, allowing

them through into the attic. He will immediately lock the door behind them. Whatever happens beyond it, he will not open the door without a password...



THE ATTIC ROOMS

The attic rooms of Dabelfry Manor are a curious mixture of bare building materials and luxuriously appointed chambers. The roof throughout is unconcealed, sunlight glinting between the slates above the rough beams and tresses. The fine rugs don't hide the dusty grey floorboards, and beautiful cabinets and bookcases stand against naked brickwork. There is only about six feet of vertical wall all around, below where the slope of the roof begins, so the beams are uncomfortably low. The delvers would do well to light a lantern, although some dim daylight does squeeze through the cracks. The undressed stonework makes for an echoey ambience and dust floats everywhere.

THE LIBRARY

The first room is about twenty-five feet square. With some vague notion of receiving visitors here, the Countess filled it with presentable furnishings. The central space contains numerous armchairs and chaise longues, low lacquered tables and elaborate rugs and mats. There are two doors in the (wooden) west wall, one at the northern end and the other just south of it. There's a small dead bat on a table, next to a recipe book open at *Thick Strawberry Jelly*.

Around the walls are many bookcases, each finely made but no two alike, all stuffed with hundreds of volumes. Whilst most of these shelves are dusty and orderly, an L2SR on INT (L1 if looking for anomalies) will draw a delver to notice that the bookcase in the north-east corner of the room is a little different. Here the books are less dusty and their higgledy-piggledy arrangement suggests they have been much used: a few are piled on the floor in front, others stacked on top. The books all around the room are neatly shelved but in no particular order: myths and legends rub up against romances and demonic bestiaries; atlases are interspersed with cookbooks. However, all those in the north-east bookcase are focussed on anatomy, medicine, zoology and alchemy, and are sprinkled with bookmarks and illegible marginal notes.

There are magical vibes from two books. (They aren't easy to isolate, but if a magic-user narrows it down to a particular bookcase, the delvers can pull books off the shelf and wave them at the wizard until the right one is discovered. So no SR required, unless the players are too dense to think of this.) On the south wall is:

The Tome of Bodily Fulfilment

A small volume bound in human skin. Most of the pages have been torn out, leaving only a dozen, all blank. An *Omnipotent Eye* spell will reveal that if a wish is written on a page, and that page is then eaten by the writer, the wish will come true. (The GM will of course interpret the wish as perversely as possible, within the confines of what the player writes down.)

A second *Omnipotent Eye* will explain that this wish lasts only until the page leaves the delver's body, 7D6 hours later. (There is no effect on the delver if the page is eaten a second time, although the effect on his companions may be to induce vomiting...)

On the west wall is:

The Adulterer's Atlas

An old, large atlas of the world, containing many omissions and inaccuracies. *Dabelfry Manor* is scribbled over an X on one of the maps. Attached to the spine is a red ribbon with a large gold pin on the end. Along the ribbon are embroidered the words:

Take this shaffe in hande and folowe yourr pricke!

An *Omnipotent Eye* spell will reveal that stabbing the pin in a page will teleport the reader and the atlas to the place shown on the map. However, the quality of the maps and their inadequate scale mean that the traveller may fetch up rather off-target. In game terms (don't tell 'em till they try it), an L6SR on LK is needed: if you make it, you're bang on; if not, the amount by which you failed is the number of *miles* by which you missed. If you don't make even a 'level 0', you'll go somewhere entirely at random.

Alas, the *OE* does not reveal that the traveller's equipment and clothes will be left behind! The book is intended to permit a Lothario to visit his mistress in her chamber, ready for passion and with little risk of detection. (Following complaints, the publisher decided against a second edition...)

If the delvers get around to it later, the furniture, rugs and books in here could be sold as a job lot for about 1000GP.

THE NURSERY

The south door in the west wall opens on a room twenty-two feet square. It smells bad. Its east and north walls are wooden partitions, reaching to the roof and obviously added after the original construction. By the south wall are two charming children's beds. All around the room are shelves and cupboards, bulging with toys and children's clothes. A large circular rug depicting a smiling yellow sun fills most of the floor, although large chunks of it seem to have been chewed out. And in the middle of the rug there are two animals.

One is a beautiful seated wildcat, licking its sleek, dappled fur, its shoulder reaching knee-high on a human. The other is a hefty badger, lying on its belly. Both raise themselves to stare at the delvers. A strange sound fills the air, the combined, echoing growls of badger and feline. With an L2SR on INT (L3 if the delvers aren't using a light source), a delver will notice that each animal has a crude scar around the top of its skull.

The animals will not initiate action. If they are attacked, they will fight fiercely (each has MR40), but will break off if given the opportunity. If the delvers ignore them, they will watch the delvers explore the room and will leave before the door is closed, waiting by the stair-door for a chance to get out of the attic. If the delvers attempt to befriend them, an L3SR on CHR (L2 if their names are used) will secure them as permanent followers. They will join in combat with the delvers (but will not go into combat without them) and they respond well to verbal commands, being smarter than the average animals of their kind. In all circumstances, they will defend each other to the death.

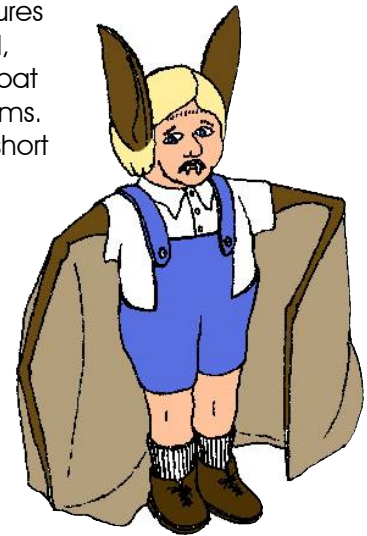
(In fact, as a result of a bizarre experiment, these animals' skulls contain the brains of the Countess's children, Pippy (wildcat) and Peter (badger). She had to squeeze the brains a bit to get them in, and throw some bits away, so not much of their personalities has been preserved, apart from their mutual affection and a liking for novelty and play. Disturbingly, they will respond to their names...)

Apart from lots of nice toys, including fluffy bats in place of teddy bears on the pillows, there is little to find in here. The beds are worth 100GP as a pair. Between them there is a painting (30GP) of the Countess (mad staring eyes as usual) with her arms around the shoulders of her pretty children, a blond-haired, round-faced little boy and a freckled girl with chestnut curls. Both look deeply anxious. Underneath the painting is a pile of badger and wildcat poo.

THE LABORATORY

The north door from the **Library** leads into the **Laboratory**. The room is twenty-two feet wide and twenty-five feet long (north to south), with a door in the middle of the north wall. This room is crammed with workbenches and shelves, and these in turn are crammed with alchemical equipment and specimens. There are beakers, helical tubes, crucibles, alembics, flasks and bottles, most containing unknown fluids, powders and sludges of many hues, some bubbling thickly or hissing occasionally. The air is filled with a kaleidoscope of smells and clouds of coloured smoke. Odd embryos and body parts from mysterious creatures float in wide bottles of yellow formaldehyde on the shelves, some grasping or blinking faintly. There are vibes in here, but not from anywhere in particular: just a foggy miasma of formless magic. Anyone casting a spell in here must make an L2SR on LK. If they fail, the spell which actually takes effect (for the same cost) is one chosen randomly by the GM at the same level.

In all this clutter, the delvers will not immediately notice two strange creatures shuffling about the room. By the west wall is what looks like a blond-haired, round-faced little boy, with enormous protruding fangs. He has great big bat ears grafted on to the side of his head and huge bat wings in place of arms. He is dressed in a crisp white shirt (stained now by drool and chemicals), short lederhosen, white socks and shiny black boots. The other creature, in the middle of the room, could be taken for a cute little girl with freckles and chestnut curls, although she too has large bat wings, as well as big hairy claws emerging beneath her neat cornflower-blue pinafore dress. Both have a somewhat vacant expression and (L2SR on INT to spot this) a crude scar around the top of the skull. They will not respond to speech, even the names Pippy and Peter.



The little boy-creature has the brain of a wildcat, the little girl that of a badger. (The brains being too small for the skulls, the Countess packed the space with *Thick Strawberry Jelly*, to little useful effect.) The creatures will seek to attack the delvers, though the brains aren't very good at controlling these awkward bodies. With teeth, boots and claws and some half-hearted flapping that lifts them above the ground sporadically, the creatures manage an MR of 60 each. Naturally, combat in here will result in all manner of glassware smashing, releasing sizzling pools and clouds of noxious fumes.

Hacking at what appear to be abused children takes a special kind of delver. Each round, delvers must roll an L1SR on CHR. Any delver who *makes* the roll must halve his combat score for the round, being in a state of disturbed horror and unable for pity's sake to press home the attack. Note that the badger and wildcat from the **Nursery** will *not* fight these creatures, but will only draw back in a confusion of whimpers and growls.

If the delvers want to search this place for anything useful, it will take half an hour. Even then, someone will need an L3SR on LK to spot and decipher the scribbled label on a large jar of grey powder. It reads: *Mithril filings*. There's 120WU here – enough mithril to melt down and turn into a sword or a shield, for 50% greater effect than the equivalent steel weapon. Or it could be sold for up to 1200GP. (Alchemical interests notwithstanding, the Countess has not managed to turn lead into gold, so our heroes won't find any handy ingots.)

The lucky delver, however, needs an L2SR on INT to notice that the jar is coated with a film of clear liquid that has dripped from a cracked bottle on the shelf above. That bottle is labelled *Devilspit* – a form of acid. If the mithril filings jar is handled with bare hands, the liquid will burn the skin, causing 2D6 damage to CON *and* DEX before evaporating. (Both attributes will recover in time.) If it is handled with gloves or gauntlets, it will eat through them in seconds, rendering them useless, but doing no other harm. The jar can be wiped clean with a (disposable) rag.

THE SURGERY

This room presents a grisly spectacle. It's twenty-two feet wide by twenty-five feet long (north to south), with an archway in the middle of the north wall, closed by heavy black curtains. Along the centre of the room are spaced three benches of thick planking, each slightly longer and wider than a man. These are heavily bloodstained, and here and there the wood is actually saturated – spongy to the touch and oozing blood if squeezed. Unidentifiable gobbets of flesh and shards of gooey bone are splattered on and around the benches. The southern bench is draped with a giant ripped bat-wing. From the rafters hang lethal hooks and also dozens of weird clamps, knives, cleavers and other scarily-shaped instruments for which the world has no names, all dirty and rusty. There are workbenches atop cupboards along the east and west wall, scattered with hands, toes, eyeballs, scalps, tongues, elbows and so forth, from a variety of kindreds and species. On the south wall many faces have been nailed up. The place stinks of rancid carrion and the ill-advised carpets squelch.

In the middle of the west wall, on a hefty shelf at waist height, is a large barrel filled with rainwater, fed by a pipe from the roof gutter. Beside this shelf, at floor level, is a large trough with a three-inch-diameter plug on a chain. A spigot on the side of the barrel empties water into the trough, and the plug empties the trough out through the wall via a gargoyle's mouth. The trough is presently full of stagnant, scummy, bloodied water and a head floats face-down, almost submerged. Bad vibes hang over the murky fluid. Meanwhile, near to the curtain in the north wall, a body lies in a manner that cannot be called face-down, for want of a face. It has no head. There are dim vibes from somewhere on the body.

Whosoever pulleth out this filthy head from this fetid trough shall be set upon by the (bad-vibey) Mouthball, which (somehow) cannonballs out of the water, heading for the delver's face. It's a ball of mouths, mainly human, sewn together with thick twine, and wherever it lands it bites and begins to chew. A delver with a close-faced helmet is safe; a delver in open-faced helm can avoid the Mouthball with an L1SR on SPD (by turning his head); an unhelmed delver will be gnashed unless he makes an L2SR on SPD. The Mouthball can be killed easily by poking daggers into its other mouths, but not before knocking 1D6 off the victim's CON and 1D6 off CHR for horrible disfigurement. (The CHR damage is permanent.) Should anyone think to simply bat the Mouthball across the room, the effect on the victim is *doubled*, as a good portion of his face will go with it.

The head, though not seen here at its best, was clearly ugly long before it hit the water. It appears to have belonged to a dwarf, perhaps one whose hobby was nutting anvils. It's pretty clear that it has been untimely ripped from its body, rather than neatly severed. (It is in fact the head of Grumtkithrask, the Countess's assistant. In a state of heightened emotion, she ripped his head off after he completed his last operation...)

The headless corpse, meanwhile, is rather more attractive, barring the obvious omission. It wears a dress of fine red silk (which hides the bloodstains well), with a stole around its shoulders made from dead bats threaded together like pearls. It is a curvaceous female, although the curves are tending to flat after two months on this floor. It is, of course, the mortal remains of Countess Bethalize Battery. (That is to say, the discarded portion thereof.) The badger and wildcat, if present, will paw and snuffle at this corpse pitifully.

On her left hand is a gold ring bearing a brown carnelian carved into the shape of a bat. (Her finger would have to be cut off to remove the ring, the corpse having swollen unpleasantly.) The Countess believed that while wearing this ring she would never be stung by a bat (this is called "right for the wrong reasons"). In fact, the ring has the property of drawing bats while the wearer sleeps. They can't be made to do anything special, they just gather on and around the slumbering plunderer. This weird magic cannot be revealed by an *Omnipotent Eye*.

The cupboards along the walls contain the Countess's extensive collection of loose entrails, which will slop out onto the delvers' feet at the slightest provocation.

(Should anybody examine the discoloured rugs, by the way, they will discover them to be complete human skins. Not worth much in this condition...)

THE BELL TOWER

This chamber is twenty-five feet north to south and twenty-two feet wide, with a black-curtained archway in the centre of both the south and the north walls. A circular turret eighteen feet wide rises from the roof and the floor contains a matching hole, leaving only a narrow ledge by which to get round the edge of the room. The hole was evidently smaller but much of the flooring has collapsed, taking with it a narrow stairway that spiralled up from the ground floor. The rubble and wreckage from this disaster has blocked all entrances to this tower on the lower floors (incidentally blocking off the northernmost rooms of the Manor too).

However, these details will not be the first things on the delvers' tiny minds. Crossing the turret is a sturdy rafter framework. Hanging from this is a huge cracked bell. Hanging from the bell is its clapper. Hanging from the clapper is a giant bat. It's about eight feet deep (it would be eight feet high if it was the right way up) and logically its wingspan would be too big to fly in this small space, but let's not worry about that. Between the legs of the bat, where you would expect to find its unmentionables, there is grafted instead the head of the Countess (the right way up from the delvers' point of view). She is grinning madly at our heroes.

(Her head was sewn in place, at her instruction, by the faithful Gruntkithrask, whose headless and heavily chewed corpse is hanging over the ledge in the north-east of the room, oozing a gore stain right down the wall to the ground level.)

The Countess will not stand on ceremony, merely cackling wildly (obviously) before taking off and attacking the delvers in all possible ways. (Naturally this sets the cracked bell clanging ominously and discordantly.) She flies with her human head upside down and attacks with Great Big Claws and Great Big Teeth, whilst casting spells from the brainy end. She repeatedly shrieks, "*Comm to mee, my daarlingsss!*" with a husky and inexplicable Transylvanian accent, grinning all the time.

The delvers could retreat through the archway, but she will cast her spell whenever she can see a delver. There's no way past while she's alive, and she clearly falls within the Count's brief of 'pests' to be eradicated... (The badger and wildcat will only whimper in a corner, occasionally spitting or barking or whatever it is badgers do.)



Each round, the Countess picks a delver at random and casts *Butcher's Thrift* at him. This is a level 4 spell she found in a thrice-damned grimoire, costing 18 WIZ (5th edition: 18 STR), range fifty feet, duration 2 rounds (live flesh) or permanent (dead flesh), no power-up.

The purpose of the spell is to animate dead body parts (originally to keep the meat fresh). The Countess uses it to make crawling hands and Mouthballs and such, but it is also useful in combat, when it temporarily gives part of an opponent's body a 'mind' of its own. Roll D6 for the affected part: 1 – right arm; 2-3 – right leg; 4 – left arm; 5-6 – left leg. If a leg is affected, the delver's combat score is halved for 2 rounds as the poor fool randomly squats, kneels or waddles around. If an arm is affected, the delver scores nothing, having to concentrate all his efforts on fighting off his own hand. If 2 limbs are affected, improvise hard DEX, LK or SPD SRs, bearing in mind that this is a Dire Situation.

All this should make for a manic combat, with delvers dancing round the edge of a deep pit, struggling to control their own limbs, fighting a giant mad shrieking bat-creature in a confined space containing a deafening clanging cracked bell. (If the party is large, beef up the Countess's STR for more adds and make *Butcher's Thrift* last for 3 rounds, so that in due course 3 delvers can be incapacitated simultaneously.)

Name: Countess Bethalize Battory, L9 Female Human-Bat-Hybrid Rogue.

STR: 70	CON: 46	DEX: 20	SPD: 17
INT: 38	WIZ: 125	LK: 24	CHR: 45

Combat Adds: +83

(5th Edition: STR 125, adds 138 but falling as the Countess casts spells.)

Weapons: Great Big Teeth (3+0), Great Big Claws (5+0).

Armor: None.

Spell: *Butcher's Thrift* (see text).

Character: Completely batty.

If surviving delvers wish to search the much-munched two-months-dead corpse of Gruntkithrask, they will need to make an L3SR on CHR to stomach the close examination. In that event, they will find a tube of *Surgeon's Filler*, a sickly yellow goo that can be spread on wounds immediately after combat to restore CON. There's enough here to restore 100 points. (This is an alchemical compound – not magical.)

THE BEDCHAMBER

Beyond the curtain at the north side of the **Bell Tower** is the Countess's **Bedchamber**. It's about twenty-two feet wide and fifteen feet north to south, with no other exits. In the centre is an ornate ebony four-poster bed, whose heavy red velvet curtains are drawn closed all around. Bad vibes emerge from this ominous bed. On the west wall hangs a painting (25GP) of her dead(?) husband, Count Louis Battory, with weasely in-bred aristocratic features and Great Big (Buck) Teeth, against a blood-red background. Over the corners of the painting there are dangling strings of rotting garlic cloves. (These are here not because the Count was a vampire, but because the Countess is a lunatic.)

Under the painting is a dressing table with an oval mirror frame, but the mirror has been painted black (so as to show no reflection, as part of the Countess's incoherent vampire fixation). On the table are various items of worthless womanly paraphernalia and a gold chain necklace bearing a ruby pendant in the shape of a – bell, for a change. This is the *Bell-Can't-oh Necklace*. It's worth 100GP and is faintly magical: whoever wears it can't hear bells.

On the east wall is a grand ebony wardrobe containing a dozen fabulous gowns, though they're a bit old-fashioned. They could each be sold for D6x10GP. Delvers making an L3SR on INT will twig that the wardrobe may have a false bottom, but will still need an L2SR on LK to find the catch that opens it. Within is *The Thrice-Damned Grimoire*, a black book written in blood, containing the *Butcher's Thrift* spell and all level 4 spells (which were of no interest to our crazy lady). These can be learned slowly at leisure.

When the delvers open the curtains on the bed (and they will), 271 bats will burst out, filling the room with frantic flapping and chittering. Delvers must make an L2SR on CHR not to panic in this frenzy. Any who fail will flee from the room and must make an L1SR on LK not to stumble into the **Bell Tower's** pit. (This would incur 6D6 damage, unaffected by armour. You might allow them a grab at the bell-rope...)

The bats are harmless and will settle or flutter out: they have exit routes through corners of the roof. In the relative calm that follows, it is possible to see the corpse of Count Louis Battory on the bed, in black silk suit and red-lined cape, apparently very much dead and rotted, with a clove of still-fresh garlic clenched between his teeth. What will happen if the garlic is removed?

The delvers may find out to their cost, for whilst the rotted corpse is merely a well-dressed rotted corpse (devoid of treasure), the garlic is Chaos Garlic! It immediately leaps from the delver's hand and bounces wildly and furiously off the delvers' faces at tremendous speed! It's like a Golden Snitch™ in need of anger management. (That said, it won't attack the badger and wildcat, being enchanted to do no harm to those of Battory blood.)

The Chaos Garlic's high-speed hammer-blow attacks target unprotected areas of each delver's body. The only way to stop it (short of resourceful magic) is to grab it in a tight fist. To do this requires an L3SR on DEX, an L2SR on SPD and an L1SR on LK. All delvers can make one attempt at these rolls: if nobody succeeds in all three, each delver is deemed to have taken D6 hits to CON. They can then make another attempt at the rolls, and receive damage, and so on, until someone catches the damn thing. It will target all delvers who remain in the room, but if they *all* leave it will follow and continue its attack. Once caught, it can simply be crushed underfoot or stabbed to 'death'. Anyone eating it alive will be pounded to death from the inside within a minute, after which it will burst out. Eaten dead, it will add 2D6 to STR, DEX and SPD.

CLOSURE

Surviving delvers may gather what they will from the attic rooms for their own gain. They still have a hefty job of work to do in removing all the furniture and, ah, dead matter, and making a bonfire in the grounds (but this would make for tedious role-playing...). Should the delvers enlighten Count Simon Battory with their guesses about the fates of his relatives, the poor man will be shaken (but privately glad that he doesn't need to deal with what they became). However, if the Countess or the bat-children remain alive, I suggest you contrive to keep the delvers away from the busy Count by means of obstructive and unhelpful guards (demanding passwords), thereby forcing the delvers back to 'finish off'. (It's entirely possible that the Count has some dark suspicions about what's in the attic and Doesn't Want To Be Involved. The clanging bell upstairs is a definite cue to make himself scarce!)

Once everything is resolved and the bonfire's a-blaazin' (no doubt it will be night-time by then), the Count will be happy to join the delvers sitting around it to scoff jacket potatoes and sticky roasted marshmallows. He will express his gratitude for their efforts, adding: "I'm so glad the attics are cleared out at last. Now I can start work on my werewolf museum!" [Duddle-um *tshhh!*]

Delvers surviving this scenario stand to make a pretty penny and there are numerous magical goodies to be had, so depending on the power of the delvers you may wish to toughen up the monsters to ensure they provide sufficient challenge. It's certainly an unusual experience though, so be liberal with the Adventure Points.

APPENDIX: PLAYER HANDOUTS

These handouts should be printed out and cut up, ready to give to the players at the appropriate points in the adventure.

Attic Clearance Required

Count Batory seeks hardy roustabouts to empty the roof spaces of **Dabelfry Manor**.

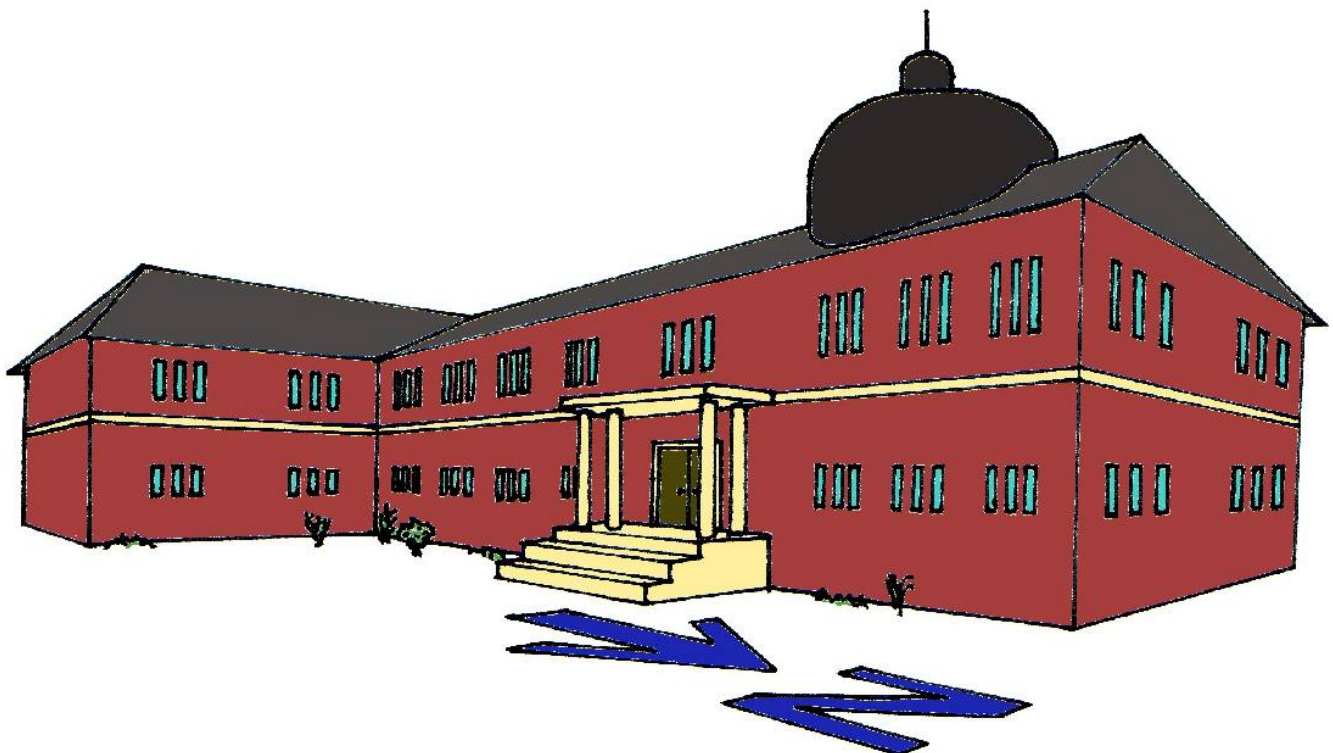
All vermin to be exterminated.

All other contents to be removed, becoming the property and responsibility of the clearance operatives in lieu of fee.

The attic rooms of Dabelfry Manor have unfortunately been neglected for some time, but they are believed to contain many antiques and curios likely to be of value.

Apply in person at Dabelfry Manor.

Although the Batory family strives to be an equal opportunities employer, this post is not considered suitable for animal-lovers.





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