



# THE HIDDEN CULT SCENARIO PACK

Your little village has become home to something unnatural and tainted. Strange events have led you to suspect the presence of dark magics, and you no longer know whom to trust. It is left to you and your friends to determine the nature of the corruption and free your neighbors from the sway of the forces of Chaos.

This Scenario Pack gives the GM several tables which will allow the quick creation of an adventure while the players are making their characters. You will find example names, reasons for the nefarious cult's activities, sample monsters, and an appendix at the end for designing your own demons.

If you need to come up with names of people and places on the fly, use the following tables. We have chosen to use primarily Anglo-Saxon names for this scenario pack.

1d6	Village Name
1	Herebury
2	Lundenfeld
3	Oxley
4	Turnford
5	Witanham
6	Wyrdford

## REMINDER!



= ADD A LOCATION TO THE MAP



= ADD AN NPC TO THE MAP

You will learn a lot about the characters' village from the events they roll while making their characters. This will include information on the people who live there.

Use this table to come up with names for some of those people or the characters themselves.

1d20	Female Names	1d20	Female Names	1d20	Male Names	1d20	Male Names
1	Aedre	11	Kendra	1	Aidan	11	Hrothgar
2	Audrey	12	Lora	2	Anson	12	Jeffrey
3	Bemia	13	Lynna	3	Caedmon	13	Lynn
4	Cate	14	May	4	Cenric	14	Manton
5	Cathrynn	15	Megan	5	Dalston	15	Osmond
6	Devona	16	Mercia	6	Douglas	16	Oswald
7	Esme	17	Rowen	7	Edmond	17	Russell
8	Ester	18	Shelley	8	Edred	18	Theomund
9	Hamia	19	Sun	9	Firman	19	Torr
10	Juliana	20	Willow	10	Gordon	20	Wulfgar

# THE BACKGROUND OF THE NEFAIRIOUS CULT...

Fill in the blanks on the following chart with people, places, and things that come up while the players are rolling on their first three tables: their childhood backgrounds. A person might be a cult member, an item could be a cursed artifact associated with the cult, while a place might be under the control of the cult.

## 1d8 Who or what has betrayed the characters?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8 Nothing! The characters' friends and possessions are free from the cult's influence for now.

As above, fill in the blanks on the following chart with people, places, and things that come up while the players are making their characters, but this time from their four class specific charts. Whatever the result, the cult will do everything in its power to get the result rolled on this table.

## 1d8 What does the cult desperately need?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8



## 1d6 What is the cult's true purpose?

- 1 The cult wishes to conduct a great and terrible summoning and bring into the world an ancient spirit of Chaos. At least one of their number has discovered the ritual to do so, but needs the involvement of the entire cult (as well as some disturbing ingredients, like a human sacrifice) to pull it off.
- 2 The cult wishes to force various minor spirits to possess the entire population of the village.
- 3 Either the leader of the cult or some dark powers from beyond the veil wish to dominate the region, and so are attempting to rouse the village to war against its neighbors.
- 4 The cult is straightforward in its evil, wishing to kill all the villagers and let none escape.
- 5 The cult desires only to control the villagers' mundane lives, perhaps for material gain or a simple lust for power. Its aims are temporal, rather than spiritual.
- 6 Sometimes, people just get bored and start worshipping dark gods. That sort of horseplay always leads to grief.

**1d6 Who is the leader of the cult?**

- 1 A powerful sorcerer, perhaps even as high as 3rd level. This sorcerer may practice his magic in secret, with his neighbors none the wiser, or may be a known magician.
- 2 A foolish young person, goaded into these activities by dark powers beyond his ken for petty reasons.
- 3 A priest of the old gods, tired of worshipping in secret and desiring to spread the word of his dark lords.
- 4 A disembodied spirit, perhaps a spirit of Chaos itself, or perhaps the ghost of a human worshipper of old or someone terribly wronged in the village's past.
- 5 A demon incarnate who has gained physical entry into the world. All shall tremble before its terrible power.
- 6 A lost aristocrat who recently came to the village, either openly or in secret, and brought his occult practices with him.



## EVENTS DURING THE GAME

Near the beginning of the session, while the characters are starting their investigation, what kicks things into high gear? Bring this result in after 15-30 minutes of play. You might want to ignore this table if the game gets off to a fast roll on its own, but you can still use the result to inform your thinking while you are figuring out what is really going on with the cult.

**1d6 What pushes the characters to action?**

- 1 The characters are attacked personally by the cultists. Why do they need the characters dead?
- 2 A relative or friend of the characters is kidnapped by the wicked cultists. Why do they need him?
- 3 The cultists burn down the inn, whether the characters are in it or not! Why did they do this?
- 4 Some minor cultists are having a clandestine meeting which the characters either stumble upon or notice discreetly. What will the cultists do to stay hidden?
- 5 The cult finds a way to steal something precious from one of the characters. What do they need it for?
- 6 A man is found murdered and mutilated. Why did the cult do this?

What leads the characters off the track? Many mysteries have a good red herring, and this table gives you one for this adventure. Whatever the result, it should be totally unrelated to the activities of the cult, and is good to introduce after an hour or so of gameplay. If you are short on time, you should probably ignore this table.

**1d6 What might lead the characters off the track?**

- 1 There is an unconnected murder in the village, resulting from greed, jealousy, or other normal human emotions.
- 2 A monster is roaming the woods nearby. This beast is vicious, though not necessarily evil or after the characters.
- 3 Outside forces stage an attack on the village. Perhaps seaborne raiders land nearby, or a small vanguard from a foreign king's army passes through.
- 4 Cattle theft! Greedy neighbors or a feuding family from outside the village launch a cattle raid.
- 5 The moon turns the color of blood. Many strange occurrences accompany this ill-omen, such as the presence of uneasy spirits and the curdling of milk.
- 6 An old stranger wearing robes with mysterious marks stays the night in the inn. He might be a wandering wizard, a foreign king's envoy, or a priest from far away.

# THE DUNGEON

A good dungeon is a staple of fantasy gaming. Of course, the place doesn't have to be a literal dungeon (and, in fact, usually shouldn't be). Have the adventure culminate with the characters infiltrating a secret place important to the cult, such as their base of operations or a hidden temple to their demonic gods.

## 1d8 What guards the dungeon?

- 1 An unnatural beast (or a whole group of them) guards the entry to the dungeon. Use the hellhounds, minor demon, or gargoyle from this scenario pack, or choose another appropriate monster from the bestiary. A pair of demonic hounds is an appropriate challenge.
- 2 The entrance to the dungeon is sealed by the cult's magic. Perhaps the door is covered in warding runes which keep the party out, or contains a riddle that must be answered before entering. The party may be able to research for clues if they need help, or they may just have to find another, more hidden entrance to the dungeon.
- 3 Heavy Gates bar the way. The characters will have to make their way into the dungeon through strength or ingenuity, either battering down the entrance or picking the lock.
- 4 The characters must survive a punishing gauntlet to make it into the dungeon. A dungeon located deep in a dangerous swamp would work, as would an entry passage filled with dangerous traps.
- 5 Armed men guard the dungeon. The most obvious choice is to have the cultists themselves do this, but they could also hire other warriors to do it for them.
- 6 The entrance is unguarded, but concealed. Perhaps the only way in is through a hidden trap door in a villager's house, or perhaps the entrance is a small cave hidden in the mountains.
- 7 The cult convinced a spirit to guard their lair. Use a spirit from the Bestiary, or a minor demon in incorporeal form.
- 8 The dungeon does not lie in our world, but halfway between it and another plane entirely. The characters only enter by crossing into this other realm, and may need to perform a simple ritual of some sort to do so. Perhaps an ancient stone circle leads to the other world, or maybe a mound used to imprison a demon in forgotten times is actually a gateway to Chaos.

## 1d6 What challenge awaits inside the dungeon itself?

- 1 The dungeon passages make a difficult and confusing maze of some sort, either twisting passages which seem never to end, an underwater tunnel which is difficult to traverse, or some other confusing situation.
- 2 A society of monsters which is not fully in league with the cult lives in the dungeon. A small band of gargoyles or a den of intelligent wolves would be appropriate. They are dangerous to the characters and largely leave the cult alone, for now.
- 3 The dead call the dungeon their home, either the ghosts of the cult's victims, spirits from long ago, or reanimated skeletons.
- 4 Disembodied spirits defend the dungeon. Appropriate choices would be a group of confused spirits troubled by the cult or a minor demon.
- 5 Organized warriors patrol the dungeon and stand in the characters' way. The cultists or their mercenaries are good choices.
- 6 Someone or something inside the dungeon grants the characters false hospitality. A beautiful and deceitful demon may attempt to gain their trust, or the cult leader himself may appear and offer friendship.

## 1d6 What is the final challenge of the dungeon?

- 1 The cult's champion (probably a warrior of level 2 or 3) stands between the characters and their goals.
- 2 The cult has a great animal under its sway, and this beast is in the final chamber of the dungeon. A giant snake from the suggested monsters below would work, as would a bear possessed by demon.
- 3 A demon incarnate is the final challenge. A sample demon in physical form is given below in the suggested monsters section, or you can make your own ahead of time.
- 4 The final challenge of the dungeon is not a combatant, but the room itself. The chamber is probably trapped, but may be dangerous to the characters in some other way, and they must traverse these dangers to accomplish their goal.
- 5 Magical forces seek to stop the characters at their final challenge. This is probably the cult leader himself (or at least a high ranking cultist) with magical powers (see the Cult Magus from this pack), but there could be other magical challenges.
- 6 It is unlikely that strength of arms alone can finish the cult; social challenges lie before the characters instead. Perhaps they find many of their friends or family in the final room of the dungeon and must convince them to change their ways.

# THE ROAD GOES ON

If you are playing this scenario as a one-shot, success in stopping the cult will probably be satisfying enough for the players. However, if you plan to continue with these characters on further adventures, it might be nice to give them a reward to help them in future endeavors. The following tables will give you some ideas for such rewards, as well as seeds to plant for further adventures.

## 1d6 What do the characters find in the cult's lair?

- 1 The characters manage to acquire a great deal of money being hoarded by the cult. They may share 5d10 gold pieces amongst themselves.
- 2 The cult keeps an enormous, precious gem in its inner sanctum. The gem is worth a fabulous amount of money (perhaps 200 gold pieces), but there is no one in the village who can even begin to afford it. It would have to be sold in a large city or a noble's court.
- 3 A book of magic spells sits on a pedestal in the corner. The book contains the spells Conjure Darkness and Masked Image spells, as well as the rituals Circle of Protection, Call Storm, and Summoning.
- 4 For their greatest champion, the cult kept a magical blade in their inner sanctum. The sword is obviously magical and gives its wielder +1 to hit and to damage, as well as causing double damage against disembodied spirits, undead, and demons.
- 5 A black robe of soft velvet is draped across a chair in the inner sanctum of the cult. It grants its wearer +3 AC but does not count as armor, so may be worn by mages.
- 6 A scroll containing a list of a dozen demonic True Names is bound in twine and stuffed away in a corner. The list tells a brief history of each demon, so crafty players may be able to identify some of the demons they encounter in the future and determine their names.

You may want to leave the players hanging with a threat of more danger from the cult. This allows you to continue your story with the same characters later. If you think you might want to do that, roll on this table and have the hint show up at the end of the session.

## 1d6 What hint do the characters find?

- 1 Either in the inner sanctum or amongst the cultists' things elsewhere, the characters find a map which leads to a hidden temple to the forgotten gods of Chaos.
- 2 Someone from a neighboring village is a member of the cult, and the characters discover that their neighbors are also facing these problems.
- 3 The nearest city is revealed by one of the cultists to be the source of the dark magic, and he tells the characters where they meet and how to infiltrate one of their great gatherings there.
- 4 The characters discover that a possessed man wandering from town to town brings corruption with him. He passed through their village two months ago, and is likely still nearby, bringing problems to other towns in the region.
- 5 A powerful, embodied demon is now running rampant. It is probably a Lesser Demon as described in the Bestiary, and only the characters can track it down and stop its mad rampages.
- 6 Within the inner sanctum of the cult the characters see a portal leading to a ruined and blasted landscape. Are they brave enough to step through? What is on the other side?

## RECENT EVENTS

The previous tables all help the GM get some ideas about how to set up the adventure with the hidden cult. The Recent Events table on the next page pushes things into high gear.

At the start of play, each player should roll on the following Recent Events table to see what has happened. The player to the left was there too and may be able to help by either having a relevant skill or spending a Fortune Point.

Remember that if a player rolls a duplicate event, one of the special events at the end of the table happens instead. For instance, if one player has already rolled a 7 and that number comes up again, have the first \* event happen instead. If another duplicate roll occurs, go on to the \*\* event and so forth.

## 1d8 What has happened lately?

1 One of your kin was murdered three weeks ago. His body was found, mangled and hanging upside down from a tree. Test Intelligence (History and Lore skills may help). *Success*: you recognize the patterns of an ancient ritual. *Failure*: you are mystified by these strange events (GM: the cult now knows who disturbed their sacrifice).

2 Last night you heard a chilling scream in the village and smelled the foul odor of brimstone. Test Dexterity (stealth related skills may help). *Success*: you crept to the village square and saw a twisted, winged shape take flight. (GM: you'll find stats for gargoyles in this booklet) *Failure*: you find the miller alone in the square. (GM: You can still use the gargoyles if you want)

3 For two weeks, since the new moon, you have had horrible nightmares which you cannot recall upon waking. Test Wisdom (certain Lore skills may help). *Success*: you remember a name from the dreams (GM: this is the name of a summoned demon; this player may banish it if he puts two and two together). *Failure*: your every waking moment is haunted. -2 to saving throws against the cults' magic.

4 Several of the farmers have found their livestock dead and mutilated. Test Intelligence (Farming and animal skills may help). *Success*: you recognize the tool that made the cuts, a serrated sickle, but you know of no one in the village who has such a thing. *Failure*: no animal you have ever seen could make these wounds (GM: the cult notices this player's snooping).

5 Although it is not yet harvest time, snow is already in the air. The elders in the village say that they have never seen such things and the farmers say that they will lose their crops. Test Charisma (gossip related skills may help). *Success*: you hear rumors of a group of villagers who began making trips to the mountain when the snows started. *Failure*: the regulars at the inn are tired of your questions. -1 to all Charisma checks in the inn.

6 A stranger came to the inn two nights ago. He spoke words you did not understand and then suddenly attacked several of your friends. Test Strength (Athletics and related skills may help). *Success*: you wrestled the stranger to the ground and he is now in the stocks. You swear his eyes glowed. *Failure*: he broke free of your grasp and in his flight killed the innkeep.

7 While walking in the woods, you overheard a strange conversation and tried to remain hidden. Test Dexterity (stealth related skills may help). *Success*: you got in the right place and overheard everything; you now know that some cultists are having a meeting tonight outside of town. *Failure*: You were attacked and chased off. Be careful! The cult is on to you.

8 Last week, the river ran red with blood. It overflowed its banks after a preternaturally powerful storm. Many villagers were caught by the thick red water, but you braved the danger to save them. Test Constitution. *Success*: you managed to wade through the flood and save your neighbors; get +2 to all Charisma tests with non-cultist villagers for the rest of the adventure. *Failure*: you were almost drowned yourself, and many died, including someone important to you.

9 A strange star rose in the north, and all trembled with fear at this portent. It shines still, even during the day. Test Intelligence (obscure knowledge skills may help). *Success*: you recall a bit of old lore about the star and know the True Name of a demon associated with the cult. *Failure*: you were transfixed by the unnatural glow of the star and are now cursed; -5 to the first saving throw you have to take.

10 The crops are growing strange flowers of a sickly green color. The farmers are frightened and confused. Test Wisdom. *Success*: you discover a way to cleanse the blighted flowers and make a healing paste. You have enough to heal 1d6 hit points three times. *Failure*: Your village's crops are ruined and burned in the fields to prevent the spread of this blight. Food is now scarce and selling for 10 times the price. It will be long, cold winter.

11 This morning you spotted carrion birds circling the village. Test Strength (athletics related skills may help). *Success*: you manage to bring one down and notice that it bears the brand of a farmer from town. How has he become entangled with the cult? *Failure*: the flock swoops down upon you. Take 1d4 damage before the start of the game.

12 Several weeks ago, a disease suddenly spread amongst the villagers. You were one of those afflicted. Test Constitution (endurance or healing related skills may help). *Success*: you fought off the disease and quickly became healthy. You noticed several families that were strangely unaffected. *Failure*: you became extremely ill, but recovered after a fever. Lose 1 Fortune point before the start of the game.

\* A wise priest from far away visited the village last week and sensed great evil. He spoke with you and granted a blessing. Test Charisma (skills related to socializing may help). *Success*: you impressed the priest, and he said a long prayer to his god. You receive +1 to all saving throws for this session. *Failure*: he pitied you and granted a quick blessing before going on his way. You receive +2 to the first saving throw you must take this session.

\*\* The witch began to guess that something was greatly wrong two weeks ago. She sent you far from the village to a hidden spot in the woods where a secret herb grows. Test Constitution (athletics and endurance related skills may help). *Success*: you gathered many of the special herbs and the witch was able to make you two potions; one heals 1d12 hit points and the other gives the drinker +1 to all saving throws for a day. *Failure*: you barely made it back and crumpled many of the herbs. The witch was still able to make you a minor potion which heals 1d8 hit points.

\*\*\* A wandering wizard came to town some days ago and spoke with you in the inn. He took pity on your cursed village and gave you a gift. Test Charisma (skills related to socializing may help). *Success*: he gave you a powerful warding amulet. While worn, it grants +1 AC. *Failure*: he didn't like you much, but still wanted to help and gave you a minor amulet, a pouch filled with foul smelling herbs. It allows you to disregard the damage from a single attack and is useless afterward; at least it stops stinking then.

# SUGGESTED MONSTERS

The following monsters are particularly appropriate for this scenario pack, and so their summaries are provided here for your convenience. Feel free to use any other monsters from other sources as you see fit, of course, including our “Bestiary” booklet. With each category of monster is a suggested number which will provide a challenge to four Level 1 PCs. Groups which are smaller or larger, or which contain characters of higher levels, will require the GM to adjust the numbers accordingly.

## HUMAN THREATS

The members of the cult are likely to be the most common adversary for the characters to face in this adventure. They are typically unarmored and only poorly armed. A group of four or five should be enough of a challenge for level 1 characters to become aware of the danger around them.

### CULTIST

These are the ordinary, rank-and-file members of the cult. They are probably your neighbors.

**Hit Dice:** 1d6 (4 HP)

**AC:** 10

**Attack:** +0 to hit, 1d4 damage (dagger)

**Alignment:** Neutral, or, most likely, Chaotic

**XP:** 15

### CULT CHAMPION

A cult champion will be much tougher, being a Warrior with levels. There is usually only one cult champion, though he is often accompanied by 2 ordinary cultists.

**Hit Dice:** 2d10+2 (13 HP)

**AC:** 15

**Attack:** +3 to hit, 1d8+4 damage (longsword)

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**XP:** 50

### CULT MAGUS

A cult magus has levels in the Mage class. He makes an appropriate leader for a cult, or a high ranking member. He knows a few spells, but it is easiest and most effec-

tive to have him use Burning Hands and False Friend on the characters before he runs out of magic. There is usually only one cult magus, though he is often accompanied by 2 ordinary cultists.

**Hit Dice:** 2d6 (7 HP)

**AC:** 11

**Attack:** +1 to hit, 1d4 damage (dagger)

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**XP:** 100

**Notes:** *Spellcasting* (may cast 2 spells per day)

## WILD BEASTS

Mundane creatures are another easy threat for the characters, whether they have been possessed by a demon, driven mad by the cult’s dark magic, or simply stumbled upon. Four dogs, three wolves, or a single bear make for good challenges for a group of first level characters.

### DOG

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (5 HP)

**AC:** 12

**Attack:** +1 to hit, 1d4 damage (bite)

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP:** 15

### WOLF

**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 HP)

**AC:** 13

**Attack:** +1 to hit, 1d4+1 damage (bite)

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP:** 35

### BEAR

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 (14 HP)

**AC:** 13

**Attack:** +3 to hit, 1d6 damage (claw), 1d8 (bite)

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP:** 80

**Notes:** *Swift* - if there are enough foes in its immediate range, the bear may claw twice and bite once per round. Stay away!

## SUPERNATURAL FOES

The cult likely has at its disposal some supernatural allies which will threaten the characters. Two demonic hounds or a group of four or five skeletons are good group challenges. The giant snake and gargoyle are strong enough to challenge the party by themselves, or, at most, in pairs.

### HELLHOUND

**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 HP)

**AC:** 14

**Attack:** +2 to hit, 1d8 damage (bite)

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**XP:** 110

**Notes:** *Demonic Sight* (hellhounds may see spirits and invisible things), *Immune to Fire* (hellhounds may not be harmed by fire of any kind)

### GIANT SNAKE

**Hit Dice:** 3d10 (16 HP)

**AC:** 15

**Attack:** +3 to hit, 2d4 (bite)

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP:** 145

**Notes:** *Constriction* (instead of attacking, the giant snake may attempt to grapple and constrict an opponent. If it hits successfully, the target must make a Strength test at -4 or be caught, suffering 1d10 points of damage a turn)

### GARGOYLE

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 (18 HP)

**AC:** 15

**Attack:** +3 to hit, 1d4 damage (claw), 1d6 (bite)

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**XP:** 175

**Notes:** *Invulnerable* (gargoyles may only be hit by magical weapons or spells), *Swift* (if there are enough foes in its immediate range, the gargoyle may claw twice and bite once per round)

### SKELETON

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 HP)

**AC:** 13

**Attack:** +1 to hit, 1d8 (longsword)

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP:** 20

**Notes:** *Dead and Mindless* (skeletons are immune to sleep and charm effects)

## DEMONS

Finally, the cult is likely surrounded by demons. These are often not actually in the cult's service; in fact, the situation is often the reverse, with the demons pulling the cultists' strings, leading them with false promises.

### GIDEON

#### Minor Demon Incarnate of Fear and Pride

This demon feeds on fear and accomplishes his devilish work by manipulating the pride of men. He appears as a short and strong man with reddish skin and wicked claws on his hands. He frequently is found wearing thick leather gloves and working the smith's forge at night when the rest of the village is abed.

**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 HP)

**AC:** 12 (only harmed by magical attacks)

**Attack:** +2 to hit, 1d6 (claw) or 1d8 (longsword)

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**XP:** 218

**Notes:** *Invulnerable* (may only be hit by magical attacks), *True Name* (Gideon has a true name which gives his foes power over him), *Cause Fear* (all foes in sight must make saving throw vs. spell or flee or tremble), *Incredible Skill: Smithing* (automatically passes any test involving this skill), *Vulnerable to Iron* (the smith is allergic to his own craftwork!, double damage, powers cancelled when in contact with iron, non-magical iron attacks may harm the demon)

### THE CROSSROADS DEMON

#### Minor Incorporeal Demon of Greed

This minor demon likes to possess traveling mages and wanderers of all sorts. His withered host bodies, whether human or animal, are often found lounging about the crossroads, waiting for a new victim.

**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 HP)

**AC:** as host

**Attack:** +2 to hit, damage as host

**Alignment:** Chaotic

**XP:** 218

**Notes:** *Incorporeal* (the demon has no physical form and may only be hit by magical attacks), *Possession* (must possess a mortal host, see demon rules), *True Name* (this demon has a true name which gives his foes power over him), *Wealth* (assume that it has access to as much money as it wants at any time), *Ritual Magic* (may cast rituals as a second level mage; knows all level 1 and 2 rituals), *Vulnerable to the Sun* (banished in 2d4 rounds, all powers cancelled in sunlight)