

CASTLES[®] CRUSADES

LAMENTATION OF THE PEOPLE



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THE LAMENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

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PREFACE

A wicked group of cut-throats, Ubal's Axes has been terrorizing roads and villages near Swanshill for more than a decade. No one has been able to find these thieves and bring them to justice, and all those who have tried have never been heard from again. Ubal's Axes infamy is such that no bounty is even placed on their heads anymore lest they take vengeance upon those who offered it. A pall of fear and dread long ago fell upon these communities. But now, Ubal's Axes have been spied and, in a dark, quiet corner of a tavern a request is fearfully whispered, "Please deliver us from this evil?"

INTRODUCTION

Ubal's Axes, a gang of brigand's, rob and kill with near complete abandon in the region around Swanshill. The locals are terrified and have, in the past, sought to rid their lands of this scourge. These efforts have always come to naught. The local government quit offering bounties for their capture and do not even refer to them for fear that saying their name might bring cruel retribution. As the adventure begins, a man approaches the PCs with a reward for the capture of Ubal's Axes.

A man in commoner's clothing approaches the characters in a tavern or bar. He is dirty and ill-kempt. "I am Barl Munker. I am prepared to reward you for a service." Barl explains that he represents powerful barons and merchants in the area and seeks the characters aid. He describes the situation regarding Ubal's Axes. Barl is prepared to offer a reward for the capture of the gang: 1000gp per head if brought in alive and 500gp per head if dead. Ubal's capture is worth 2000gp dead or alive. Barl further explains that he would like the offer to be kept secret until after the capture of Ubal's Axes. So many have died in the effort to capture the ruffians, he explains, adding "I do not want on that list."

Barl tells the PCs that Ubal's Axes were spied in a manor house about 15 miles away. No one has seen the owners of the manor in a week. Most fear the owners are dead or worse. Most of those involved in offering the reward prefer the PC kill all members of Ubal's Axes and bring their heads back as proof. But, he continues with a quivering voice and balling fist, "there are a few who would prefer they are taken alive and made to pay for their crimes and suffer by those they have harassed these many years."

Barl Munker is not Barl Munker. Barl is Timsun Bathwik, a local merchant, who once served the local communities. He has disguised himself. He no longer travels in the area and has fallen on hard times because of Ubal's Axes raids. Timsun is willing to lead the PCs to the manor house as soon as they are willing or able. He gives each PC 200gp as a good faith down payment. If Timsun and the PCs reach an agreement, Timsun retires to a room or spends the night in a nearby tavern. If the PCs ask the locals about Timsun, most recognize him, despite the attempted disguise, and speak well of him. The locals do question why Timsun is so poorly dressed and appears so messy, as that is not the Timsun with whom they are familiar.

In actuality, this is not Timsun Bathwick. The person making the offer is none other than Fathun, a member of Ubal's Axes disguised as Timsun disguised as Barl. Ubal's Axes killed Timsun several weeks ago at the manor. Fathun has taken Timsun's identity to lure the PCs into a trap.

This entire scenerio is an elaborate plan by Ubal to ambush and kill the PCs. Several of Ubal's informers noted the PCs arrival in the area and Fathun spent a short time observing them at some point in the past. Ubal decided the PCs would make an excellent 'mark' and source of income. Ubal took the manor, killed most of the occupants, including the real Timsun, and using the offer of a reward as bait, intends to lure the PCs to the estate and execute them on the beautiful rug in the entry hall – or the patio, Ubal does not particularly care.

However, Ubal chose a poor location for the ambush. The manor is more than it appears. Ubal believed that the occupants, the Balwith family, were local gentry and nothing more. What Ubal does not know is that the estate itself is also a guard tower sitting over a cell with a devil locked inside. An ancestor, of the now mostly deceased occupants, captured this devil many generations ago and locked it in a cage beneath the manor. It is still there, and with the death of the last descendent of that line, the prison ceases to function. Not only does Ubal not know this, but the family who lived in the place did not know it either. In the ensuing scuffle with the PCs, if the last member of that family is killed, the devil is released. The devil is angry at having been pent up in a hole for two hundred years and is in no mood to do anything other than slaughter everything in its immediate vicinity.

It is a powerful devil. Once freed, it becomes apparent to everyone at the manor that the devil is so powerful no one person, or even the separate groups, are likely to defeat it. It should become evident to all that the choices are simple; die, flee, or form a temporary alliance. It is of course up to the person running the game to play this out but, Ubal is a survivor, and so are most of his followers.

UBAL'S AXES

Ubal's Axes consist of 23 members and Ubal himself. Fathun is with the PCs as the adventure begins. Yanna, Wastral, six brigands and three outlaws wait in the woods nearby the manor. Ubal and the remainder are in the house. The devil is in the cage underneath the manor.

BRIGANDS x 12 *(These are chaotic evil, human 1st level fighters whose vital statistics are HD 1d10, HP 8, AC 13, BTH +1, and MOVE 30 feet. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. They wear leather armor and shields. They carry spears, longswords, and short bows. They each have 100gp in coin and jewelry.)*

OUTLAWS x 6 *(These are chaotic evil, human 3RD level fighters whose vital statistics are HD 3d10, HP 22, AC 15, BTH +3, and MOVE 30 feet. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. They wear scale mail and shields. They carry spears, longswords, and short bows. They each have 100gp in coin and jewelry.)*

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Barlak is lanky and tall with a scruffy beard. His natural hide clothing and armor, unwashed body and general demeanor are all in keeping with his blending into nature. Barlak is quiet in action and speech, usually keeping to low whispers and animal sounds except in the direst of circumstances. Though not an especially cruel person, Barlak's outlook is that all living creatures are the same and he considers none above another. "Aflings? De same as rabbits, except they cook harder and taste worse."

BARLAK THE WHISPERER (He is a chaotic neutral, male, human 6th level ranger whose vital statistics are HD 6d10, HP 48, AC 17. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and wisdom. His significant attributes are strength 14, dexterity 16, wisdom 14 and intelligence 13. He wears +2 hide armor, leather coif, and leather gloves of damage absorption/1. He carries a +2 short bow, 20 arrows, a +3 short sword, two potions of cure light wounds and one potion of freedom of movement. He has 3000gp worth of coin and jewelry on his person. His favored enemy is humans.)

Yanna is thin and short even for an elf. She wears her hair in a braid that stretches to her ankles. Yanna despises most humans and halflings but especially dwarves. She joined Ubal's Axes to further her own goals, kill Durdin Darkbane, and locate some rare apples. She has no loyalty to this band.

YANNA THE VINDICTIVE (She is a neutral evil, female, elf 7th level ranger whose vital statistics are HD 7d10, HP 52, AC 19. Her primary attributes are strength and wisdom. Her significant attributes are strength 13, dexterity 14, and wisdom 17. She wears +3 leather armor, gloves of armor +3 and a cloak of elvenkind. She carries a +1 short bow, 20 type III poisoned arrows, a +1 short sword, +1 dagger and three potions of cure light wounds. She has 4000gp worth of coin and jewelry on her person. Her favored enemy is dwarfs.)

Wastral has a long history of crimes behind him. Not only was he a petty thief as a child, he grew up to be an untrustworthy acolyte and despicable friend to those who helped him in the past. To escape the punishments of those who harbor him ill will, he joined Ubal's Axes and has remained 'hidden' for a decade or more. This is something he intends to remedy real soon.

WASTRAL (He is a lawful evil, human 7th level wizard whose vital statistics are HD 7d4, HP 21, AC 14. His primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and charisma. His significant attributes are dexterity 13, intelligence 14 and charisma 14. He wears a +3 amulet of natural armor. He carries a wand of withering, 2 pearls of power 1st level recall x2 and 2nd level recall x2, +2 dagger of recall, and a robe of eyes. He carries 2000gp in coin and jewelry. He can cast the following spells: 0- dancing light, mage hand, ghost sound, mending, message; 1st- burning hands, hold portal, magic missile, shield, sleep; 2nd- fog cloud, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement; 3rd- fireball, haste; 4th- fire shield.)

This man is only in his element when a venomous knife is in one hand and a throat in the other. The only check he has on a natural murderous rage is an internal discipline and strict

code of conduct. A code of conduct aimed solely at his own protection. He has taken to Ubal's Axes as the perfect mixture of self-fulfillment and safety.

FATHUN (He is a lawful evil, human multiclass 3rd level rogue and 6th level assassin whose vital statistics are HD 6d6, HP 30, AC 17. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and disguise. His significant attributes are dexterity 17, charisma 16 and constitution 13. He wears +2 leather armor, a +1 brooch of protection, a hat of disguises and boots of freedom of movement. He carries a +3 short sword, vile of type IV poison, and +2 luck dagger. He has 2000gp in coin and jewelry on his person.)

Cast from his family, his tribe and thence his people, Durdin never thought of himself as an evil dwarf. His capacity for self-reflection is as low as one can go. Believing that all he does, he does for his people, Durdin is under the current delusion that Ubal's Axes allows for the destruction of the earthly kingdoms of man and the rise of the dwarven realms.

DURDIN DARKBANE (He is a chaotic evil, dwarf, 7th level cleric whose vital statistics are HD 7d8, HP 45, AC 17. His primary attributes are strength and wisdom. His significant attributes are strength 13 and wisdom 14. He wears +2 chain and a ring of counter spells. He carries two chaotic evil candles of invocation, +2 two handed mace of terror and a staff of healing. He has 5000gp worth of jewelry and coin on his person. He can cast the following spells: 0- detect poison, light, first aid, endure elements, detect magic ; 1st- bless, protection from lawful good, shield of faith, sound burst, sanctuary; 2nd- aid, hold person, silence; 3rd- magic circle vs. evil, prayer; 4th- damaging circle.)

Ubal comes from a long line of thieves. The habits and predilections of his ancestry have combined in him to create a near perfect thief, robber, highwayman, and brigand. His aplomb and sense of humor in the face of all that he does almost makes him likable. Almost. His greatest pleasure in life is stealing. He stops at nothing to get what he wants, which is usually other peoples money.

UBAL (He is a lawful evil, human, class, and a half 8th level assassin and 4th level fighter whose vital statistics are HD 8d8, HP 64, AC 20. His primary attributes are dexterity, constitution, and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 13, dexterity 18, constitution 15, charisma 17 and intelligence 16. He wears +3 leather armor, a +2 belt of protection, +2 coif of protection, brooch of mind shielding, ring of evasion and gloves of protection with 55 points left. He carries a +2 longsword of dancing, a +3 dagger of type III poison, +3 katar of wounding, and dust of disappearance. He carries 100gp in coin on his person.)

ARRIVAL

The manor is located 15 miles from where Fathun and the party meet. Fathun accompanies the party to within a quarter mile of the estate but prefers not to go any further. If the party forces him to, he reluctantly agrees and shows a palpable fear that only gets worse as the party approaches the manor.

The manor is on top of a small butte about 70 feet high. Beside this is another butte roughly 60 feet tall with a trail and staircase leading up it. The stair ends where a 40 foot long and 5 foot wide bridge crosses over to the manor. The manor is a simple two-story affair with several windows on each floor and a tile roof. Smoke comes from one chimney.

Yanna, Wastral, six brigands and three outlaws wait in the woods nearby. They are waiting for the signal to approach the manor. Ubal and the remaining members of his band are inside waiting for the arrival of the party. Ubal blocks the fire in the chimney once the characters cross the bridge. When the smoke from the chimney stops, Yanna and her crew move forward. They come up from the direction of the road and then up the steps. Once the party has crossed the bridge and come into the first room of the manor, Ubal moves in to attack. Ubal hopes the party leaves and when crossing the bridge are faced by Yanna and those with her. The characters will be stuck on the bridge between Ubal and Yanna, placing the characters at a distinct disadvantage in a fight.

Ambrose Balwith, the last surviving member of the Balwith family, is in Area 7 with Ubal. Ubal's current intention is to use Ambrose as a bargaining chip or to throw the characters off-guard should it be necessary. Ubal has no purpose of keeping Ambrose alive and kills him once his utility is gone. Ubal does not kill Ambrose until the PCs and Ubal have met. Once Ambrose is executed, the cage holding the devil dissipates. The devil then heads up the steps killing everything in its path.

In the ensuing battle, the devil likely scares many of Ubal's lower level followers. They run as far as possible into the woods. The loyalty of each member of Ubal's Axes is questionable. Should the battle begin to turn poorly for the NPCs, they try to escape as well. The devil becomes the primary opponent to everyone in the Manor. Ubal does work alongside the characters (as do some of the other members of the band) towards a common goal. In the end, though, should the devil be killed and Ubal sees an opportunity, he attacks the characters.

MANOR

1: THE DEVIL'S CELL

When the PCs arrive, this area is closed off. It appears as a normal cliff face covered in ivy and brush. If time is taken to examine the cliff face, one can easily see protective runes scrawled all over the place. These protective runes cover an area of approximately 10 feet by 15 feet. The area covered in runes is the door to the chamber within. It is opened from the outside with powerful magics. The door has an SR 15 and was placed there by a 15th level wizard. If Ambrose is killed, the door crumbles and the devil inside escapes.

The cell is a small rocky chamber and nothing more. The devil has sat here for a hundred years or more and is very angry. The devil's statistics are at the end of the module.

2: STAIRS

Stairs are carved into the butte, leading to its top. The stairs curve and twist up the butte to a landing. There, the steps

switchback and continue up the butte to another landing. From here, a 40 foot long and 5 foot wide wooden bridge built over the remains of an older stone bridge, cross over to the manor.

3: BRIDGE

At one time, a stone bridge stretched across the gap between the buttes. Now, a bridge made of rope with wooden slats spans the distance. Each end is attached to pylons buried in stone. The bridge is well constructed and holds several tons of weight before taxing the rope to the breaking point.

The slats are a different matter. Each slat can only bear 300lbs of weight before potentially snapping. Everything that crosses the bridge and is over 300 pounds, a check is made for every 10 feet moved. For every 10 pounds over 300 lbs add a +1 to the roll. If the result is 3 or over, the slats remain solid. If the check fails, several wooden slats break and the character or creature is breaking the planks makes a dexterity check. Failure indicates a 50-foot fall. Otherwise, they catch onto the bridge somehow.

4: PATIO

This is a patio. A four-foot-high stone railing wraps around the north and west side with three columns located on the north side of the patio and two columns on the west. These hold up a tiled and slanted roof. The terrace offers an expansive view of the area to the north and west side of the manor. The floor is a mosaic of colorful tiles spiraling in elliptical patterns. The door to 5 is closed. Blood spatters the east wall and trails onto the floor.

5: ENTRY ROOM

This room contains a shelf, a table, and a fireplace. Tapestries hang on each wall. On one tapestry is the image of a devil, and the others are of outdoor vistas. A long, narrow table is in the center of the room. Chairs are found only on one side of the table. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling with bright burning candles illuminating the room. Silver plates are laid out on the table as if dinner were about to be served. A carpet covers most of the floor. The smell of roasted chicken, garlic and rosemary permeate the room. An enclosed spiral staircase leads up to the second floor.

There are several valuable items in the room; the carpet, silver plates, chandelier, etc. It is well furnished and contains 5000gp worth of furniture and decorations. The tapestry with the devil on it is crucial. It is framed in metal rods on all sides and held taut. It permeates a little magic. Along with the bloodline protection, the tapestry helps keep the door to the devil's cell closed. If the tapestry is ripped, burned, marred or even folded, the door holding the devil in its prison ceases to function.

6: GUARD ROOM

This is a guard's room and armory for the manor. There are several stands for displaying armor and weapons. A corpse is propped up in the corner of the room. The room has been looted by members of Ubal's Axes and the guard who escaped to here for safety was killed. There is little of value here. Several swords and polearms and a broken crossbow lie on the floor.

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The wood paneling on one wall is torn off revealing a full, long space behind it. The latter was a secret panel that contained a magical bow. A member of Ubal's Axes found it and gave the bow to Barlak. There is nothing of any value in here.

7: MAIN HALL

This is the sitting room. There is a fireplace against the south wall. Two large chairs are arranged in front of and facing the fireplace. A bearskin rug lies between the two. A fire burns lazily. The room smells of roast chicken and herbs. A desk, writing area and shelves are arranged in the east end of the room. The west end of the room has several uncomfortable looking chairs, a shelf full of bric-a-brac and a tapestry hanging on the wall. The tapestry depicts a calming nature scene.

Ubal is likely in this room with half a dozen or more of his companions when the characters arrive. Ubal sits in one of the chairs in front of the fireplace gnawing on a chicken leg as the PCs enter the room. Barlak and three brigands are near the door to 9 standing over a tied up Ambrose. Barlak is smoking a pipe. Three outlaws are by the tapestry. All but Ubal watch the PCs as they enter the room.

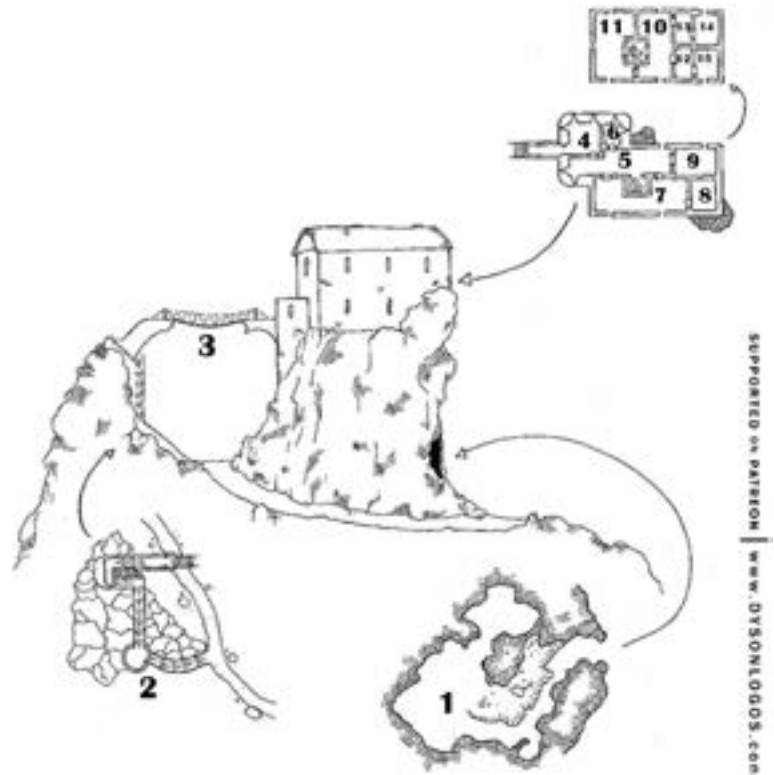
Ubal makes a few jokes, from behind the chair, before he turns, stands up and asks the characters to surrender their arms, armors, and wills. Ubal hopes the PCs surrender peacefully so they can be dispatched later with little or no effort. Ubal then threatens to have Barlak kill Ambrose if the characters do not surrender. The talks serve one real purpose. As Ubal hopes but does not expect the PCs to yield, he does need a little time for Yanna to make it up the steps and behind the party. The negotiations are a delaying tactic. Unless the PCs can save him, poor Ambrose dies no matter what happens as one of the first actions Barlak takes when the fight begins, or the talks break down, is to kill Ambrose.

There is not much of value in the room other than what Ubal's Axes carries. The furniture and finery have a total value of 6000gp. The desk contains letters, personal information, a diary, and daily accounting. There are several dozen books on the shelf. These are thin books, no more than 50 pages each. These are journals. If one reads the oldest of them, there is a reference to a devil haunting the house.

8: KITCHEN AND STORAGE

This is the kitchen and bathing area. There is a large pot belly stove, several tables, a cupboard, and a small bathtub in here. Pots and pans and cooking utensils hang from the ceiling. A large hole has been torn in the northern wall revealing the adjacent room. A chicken has recently been cooked in here, and a stew is bubbling on the stove. The room smells delicious. No one has cleaned up, and there are chicken entrails and feathers on the table and floor.

Three of the brigands are in this room waiting for a fight to break out – as well as cooking. As soon as a fight breaks out, they join.



The hole in the wall leads to Room 9. There is nothing of any real value in here except some fine herbs and a pile of fresh vegetables. The stew is good and hearty.

9: SERVANT ROOM

This room was used by the servants and guards who were, until recently, alive. There are two simple bunk beds in here, a wardrobe and two trunks. All have been dumped out and thoroughly ransacked. The south wall has a large hole torn in it revealing the kitchen beyond.

Durden and three brigands are in this room. They are listening to any conversation and waiting for a chance to attack the party.

10: COMMON ROOM

The paneling in this room is a light-colored pine panel giving it a bright, airy feeling. Large open windows are on either side of the room. The walls have several paintings on them. A carpet covers most of the floor. Arranged around a sitting table are four large chairs. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling. Several quivers and crossbows are next to the window. A large coil of rope lies beside the north window. It is tied off to several pieces of furniture.

This room has been left intact. There is nothing of portable value in here though the furniture and paintings would bring 2000gp if sold. Ubal has left this room alone so that he might enjoy some small moment of what it is like to have a sedentary and comfortable life. Also, the room is an escape route should the fight go wrong. The rope is by the window so that it can be lowered and used to climb down and out of the manor. Ubal's men sleep on the floor in this room.

11: COMMON ROOM

There are two small tables in this room, some chairs, a few racks with clothing on them, shelves cluttered bric-a-brac, rugs on the floor and tapestries on the wall. A fireplace, with a mounted griffon head above it, is beside the stairwell. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling, and game board is on one of the tables. Four bedrolls are on the floor.

The mounted griffon head is valuable, fetching 1000gp at a market. The other contents of the room might bring 500gp at market. Ubal's men sleep in this room.

12: ANTECHAMBER

This room has been upended and all the furniture removed, broken or piled up in the corner. Several pictures remain on the wall. Bedrolls are spread out on the floor. Members of Ubal's Axes sleep in here. The floor is bloodstained.

Everything of value has been removed from this room.

13: ANTECHAMBER

This room has several tables, chairs, a shelf, several bags and a few bedrolls in it.

The room was once a sitting room, used for dressing, eating, reading, and storage. It has been thoroughly pilfered. All the portable items of value found in the manor have been collected and placed in the too large burlap bags in here.

SACK 1: 1500gp in various coin, six silver candle holder valued at 100gp, silver plate and utensils valued at 200gp and three statuettes valued at 50gp each.

SACK 2: Five small silver oil lamps, some brassware worth 20gp, rare cooking spices worth 20gp and nice clothing worth 50gp.

14: BEDROOM

Two large beds are in here, one above the other. These are elaborately carved and decorated beds built into and against the wall and around the window. The lower bed has two drawers, and each bed has a curtain to draw across its' front. A table with a wash basin and two chairs are in here as well.

The drawers have been pilfered and all items of value taken. The room reeks of unwashed bodies, beer, food, and other bodily functions. Ubal sleeps in this room.

15: BEDROOM

This room stinks of beer, wine, and smoke. Strewn across the floor are clothing and personal items. A large bed is built into the east wall. There are two drawers beneath it. A curtain is drawn across the sleeping area. A table and chair are beneath the window with a wash pan and several mugs on the table. An open bureau is against the north wall. A woman lies gagged and tied up on the bed. There is a pile of personal items on the bed beside her. She is terrified.

The bureau is empty and the contents dumped on the floor. A sack at the end of the bed contains valuables taken from the

manor. There is jewelry, silver plate, and candles as well as a few statuettes of ivory. Together these items are worth 1000gp.

The lady is the baroness of the manor and is not of the blood line of those who built the prison for the devil. Ubel intended to take her and ransom her from the local nobility or sell her to anyone of the far-flung communities he regularly visited. Her name is Beatrice Devoe. If freed and all items returned to her, she is grateful and offers the PCs 2000gp reward from her personal belongings in Swanshill. She also offers them a place to stay for free the rest of their lives should they choose. This can either be in the manor or in Swanshill. If the PCs are particularly attentive to her needs, she gives them a tract of 100 acres of land with a small tower on it.

BEATRICE DEVOE (She is a lawful neutral, human 0 level commoner whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 4, AC 10 and Move 20. Her primary attributes are charisma and constitution. Her significant attribute is Constitution 13. She wears fine clothing.)

The geerthtool is a highly intelligent devil and has long plotted its revenge. Should it succeed in killing everyone in the manor or chasing them away, it decides to stay there and bedevil the locals for a few centuries. The geerthtool is a grotesque aberration. It looks like a pile of bones with too many appendages that have too many joints. Atop this is a massive angular skull much like a crocodile. All this is held together by foul smelling tendons, tendrils of flesh, and bulbous organs wrapped tightly about its many varied appendages.

THE DEVIL GEERTHTOOL (This lawful evil, aberration, vital statistics are HD 12d8, HP 80, AC 23 and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks with 5-8 claws for 1d4 damage and 1 bite for 1d10 damage. Its special abilities are standard devil abilities, create objects, hideous howl, limb defense, summon imps, true sight and, teleport.)



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CASTLES & CRUSADES

LAMENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

A wicked group of cut-throats, Ubal's Axes has been terrorizing roads and villages near Swanshill for more than a decade. None have been able to find these thieves and bring them to justice, and all those who have tried have never been heard from again. Ubal's Axes infamy is such that no bounty is even placed on their heads anymore lest they take vengeance upon those who offered it. A pall of fear and dread long ago fell upon these communities.

But now, Ubal's Axes have been spied and, in a dark, quiet corner of a tavern a request is fearfully whispered, "Please deliver us from this evil?"

A mid-level adventure for 3-5 characters.



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