

LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
ADVENTURES



TALES OF THE SCARECROW

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SETUP

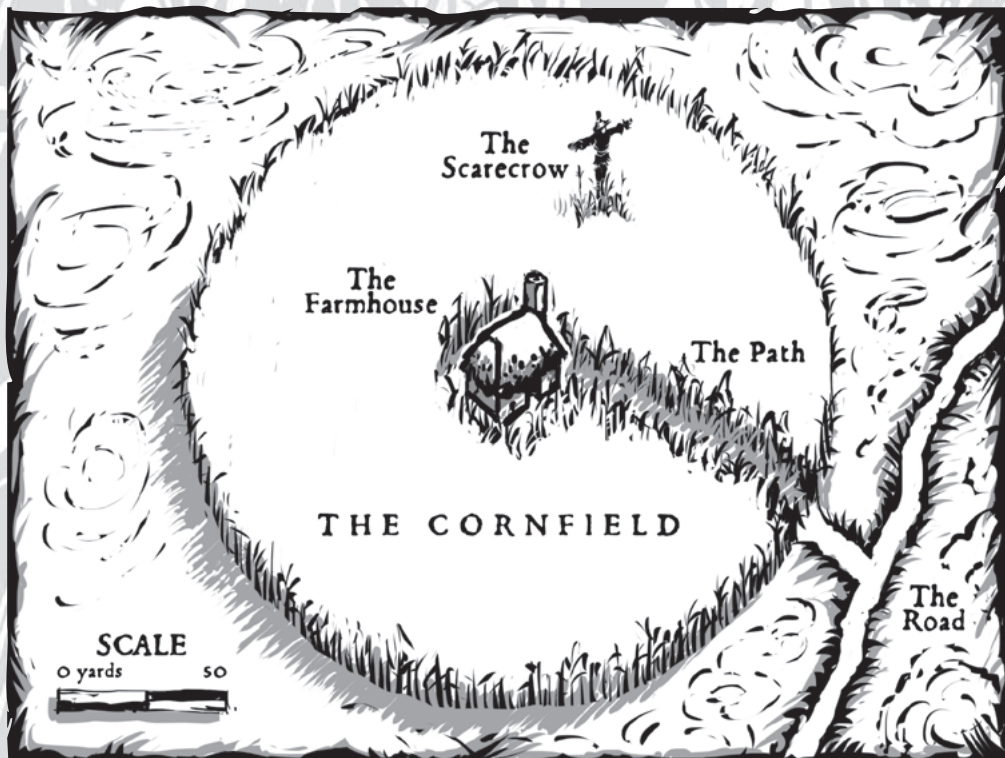
This adventure location can be placed in any out-of-the-way rural area, located along a scenic route between two larger settlements.

Somewhere along the route, just off the road, will be a roughly circular lush green cornfield—even out of season. (Yes, the cover shows something else, but when an artist turns in something that great, you don't correct him.) A trail from the road leads through cornfield, leaving a gap in the crop through which can be seen a farmhouse standing in the middle of the field. This might be enough to get the player characters to investigate, but if not, the Referee knows what will entice his players more than any writer would, and he should use that knowledge.

THE FIELD

Below the cornfield lives a gigantic beast which cannot stand the air above. If conditions are right, it can detect the most minute vibrations in the ground around it, and it will use its million tentacles to attempt to snatch prey from the surface.

The "right conditions" are rather peculiar. Potential prey must be within range of its tentacles (which can reach to the perimeter of the corn field), but not directly above its brain (which is quite coincidentally the same size as the farmhouse and the cleared area inside the cornfield). It also cannot detect targets moving towards its brain, so moving from the outside of the cornfield to the inside renders a potential target safe from attack. Those standing still in the cornfield, or moving away from the farmhouse while still in the cornfield, are subject to attack by the beast.



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It also finds the open air intolerable, so it can only attack one target with one barbed tentacle each round. It attacks as a 5 Hit Dice monster, doing 1d8 damage per hit. The attack is a fast strike-and-withdraw maneuver, the tentacle's barb tearing away flesh, so unless the victim is acting on the same Initiative number as the monster (or if the character won the Initiative and holds his action until the creature strikes), the tentacle cannot be attacked. Only when a victim falls to the ground and does not move will the creature ignore anything else in the corn field and feed on it, sucking the body through hollows in the tentacle barbs. Note that the tentacles are sufficiently long to attack levitating or flying characters up to 100' off the ground.

Each tentacle is Armor Class 14 with 8 Hit Points. "Killing" a tentacle will cause it to be withdrawn from the surface, but will not deter the creature from continuing to attack with another of its tentacles.

The creature itself is 1000 Hit Dice and except for its tentacles, is immobile.

The corn grows closely together and is a difficult obstacle to move through, reducing movement rates by three-quarters. The corn is poisonous: eating it triggers a save versus Poison in each of the next four turns, with each failure resulting in the consumer suffering 1d8 points of damage.

The corn, thanks to the strange fertilizing influence of the creature below, almost instantly regenerates any damage done to it. Any corn stalks cut down or burned grow back within minutes. The trail from the road to the farmhouse is intentionally kept open as a trap by the creature, and as soon as any victims have entered the clearing around the farmhouse it will allow the corn to grow back in the gap and thus block the easiest route back to the road.

THE SCARECROW

The scarecrow stands at the point in the field indicated on the map. The Creature will not attack anyone within 20' of it, so this area can be used as a safe haven.

However, close examination of the scarecrow itself is not advised: it drains life. If anyone wishes to examine the scarecrow or gets close enough to touch it, confirm with the player first how many Hit Points that his character currently has (whether this involves asking the player or informing him based on your own records depends on the individual style of the Referee). Then begin counting down; this represents actual Hit Point losses for the character until the character is no longer within reach of the scarecrow.

The physical scarecrow itself is mundane. It can be destroyed or burned normally, but its destruction does not cancel or nullify any of the area's effects. The scarecrow is a physical manifestation of the malefic power at work here, but is not its cause.



THE FARMHOUSE

The farmhouse is a small brick structure with wooden flooring and a tiled roof. There are only two features worthy of outside of the house:

- The water pump.
- The horses.

There are several features worthy of note inside of the house:

- The stench of death and rot throughout the house.
- The corpse in the bed in **room B**.
- Another corpse on the floor covered with a blanket in **room C**.
- The live man in **room A**.
- The harpsichord in **room A**.
- The Sword Which is Uncertain, lying on the bed in **room C**.
- Two books, *Malleus Deus* and *Tales of the Scarecrow*, on the table in **room A**.

THE WATER PUMP

The water pump at the side of the house is operational, but the water it draws is thick and foul-smelling. It will quench the thirst of any drinker, but it is full of microscopic parasites—anyone drinking the water will require twice the usual amount of food per day beginning the day after the thick water is first ingested.

After two weeks have passed, the parasites will be visible in the host's urine, at which point the character loses 1d3 points total from his Constitution, Dexterity, and/or Strength (determine randomly). The character must make a saving throw versus Poison. Success means that the character fights off the infection in 2d10 days' time and the ability score points lost are restored. Failure means that the infection and its effects—the increased appetite and the ability point loss—are permanent.



THE HORSES

Four horses lie dead and rotten behind the house, all four still bridled and saddled with saddlebags attached. If the remains are disturbed, evidence of dozens of large puncture wounds on the flank and sides of the horses in contact with the ground will be discovered. The saddlebags are empty except for one which contains a scroll case which holds the receipt of sale for Fox's purchase of the sword and the two books which are detailed below. The seller's name and address is noted on the receipt, and the Referee is encouraged to use this or the additional contents of the saddlebags of his devising to seed campaign-specific information so as to develop further adventure hooks.

THE HARPSICHOARD

Despite the dilapidation of the farmhouse, the harpsichord is somehow still in perfect condition. It is finely crafted and worth 10,000sp if it could somehow be removed undamaged from the house. The creature below will not attack while the harpsichord is being played by a skilled musician. If an unskilled character plays the harpsichord, it will enrage the beast below, causing it to make 1d4 attacks per round in the field instead of the usual one attack as long as the playing continues.

THE MEN

A badly decomposed corpse of one man, **Kingsly Addams**, lies on the straw-mattress of the bed in **room B**. Another, that of **Edward Corley**, lies on the floor in **room C** covered with a blanket. A third man, sickly and pale, still lives. His name is **Richard Fox**, and he will barely acknowledge anyone entering the house. He will just sit on the floor in **room A**, staring into space. If disturbed, he will demand food and water, claiming not to have eaten for five days. He will refuse to speak or cooperate in any way until he is given some food and water. Both the body of Edward Corley and Richard Fox himself stink of excrement as they both abandoned hygiene and even rudimentary waste disposal some time ago.

Fox is a wealthy adventurer and collector of odd and bizarre items. On his journey home after collecting his latest crypto-paraphernalia with his three servants, he spotted the farmhouse. He still had some way to go, and expecting to purchase supplies from the residents, he instead decided that they would stay the night once he discovered that the house was abandoned.

The first to die was Nicholas Gristleman, who was unafraid to walk through the corn field after they discovered the path had closed. The others did not see exactly what happened to him, but his screams and the sprays of blood above the corn made it clear that the fields were deadly. The horses refused to enter the fields.

Kingsly Addams was the second to die, after the men's food ran out. He decided to eat some of the corn. He became ill immediately and died within minutes of his companions bringing him inside. Unbeknownst to his fellows, he robbed the man who sold the books and the sword to Fox. Addams attempted to swallow the valuables, but only got a few things down before accidentally biting down on a coin and chipping his tooth. His pouch contains 2gp (both of them with teeth marks) and 47sp, but in his stomach is a small, brilliantly cut ruby worth 1750sp, a platinum charm worth 550sp, and 4gp.

Edward Corley was the last to die, as he and Fox stayed in the house, too afraid to leave despite having quickly gone through their meager supplies; none of them were expecting to eat on the road at all. Corley eventually starved to death, but Fox, near death himself and quite desperate, resorted to cannibalism. Fox has been picking at Corley's raw flesh the past couple of days, and Corley's left thigh shows the signs of this. It is not enough to sustain Fox, but it staves off death that much longer, although Corley is beginning to get a bit rank. Corley's corpse still wears a gold ring worth 500sp on its left hand, and in a pouch inside Corley's vest, is an exquisite music box worth 1300sp.



If questioned after being fed, Fox will relate the story of what happened to his party (leaving out the cannibalism bit of course). If asked about the sword and books in the room, he will explain that he bought them only recently in [nearest large city], and that he believes that they are quite valuable, but has not had them properly appraised, having bought them quickly because he believed that he was getting such a good deal. If pressed, he will admit to paying 50,000sp total for the three items. He does not know that they are magical. If the player characters offer to help him escape, but only if they are rewarded for doing so, he will reluctantly agree to a 5000sp reward if he is returned home safe, plus 1000sp for each of his companions whose body is returned to his family. (This amount should not count towards experience awards.)

He will not resist if the player characters take the items, but should he return to civilization, Fox will file legal grievances with the appropriate authorities. Note that this will make the authorities aware of the *Malleus Deus*, at least, bringing all of the complications that entails. Fox will soon “disappear.”

Despite his weakened state, if Fox discovers that the bodies of his fellows have been looted or robbed, he will attempt to kill the perpetrators and will actively undermine all of their efforts as best he can, even if cooperation with them would be in his best interest.

Richard Fox is a 3rd level Fighter who currently has 2 Hit Points (out of a maximum of 15 Hit Points). He has 12gp and 231sp in a sack (“You should have met me before I bought this junk, I had a cart full of gold!”), a rapier and a dagger, but no other equipment or possessions worthy of note.

THE SWORD WHICH IS UNCERTAIN

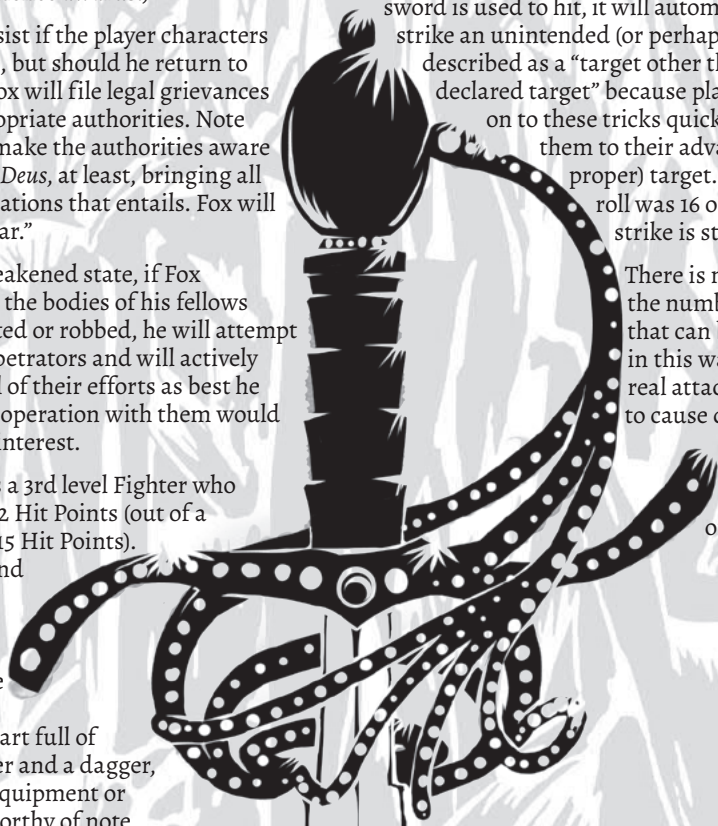


his exquisitely decorated rapier (worth 5000sp just for the craftsmanship and inlaid gems and precious metals) is also magical.

It treats all opponents as if it they had Armor Class 14. However, on any attack roll of 16 or 17 (including all modifiers), the sword will instead strike one random nearby target within striking range of the attacker. This target can be friend or foe or indifferent, but it will not be the intended target. When this happens, roll 1d8 for damage twice, and use the higher roll.

If there are no other possible targets when a 16 or 17 is rolled, then the errant strike is “banked,” meaning that the next time the sword is used to hit, it will automatically strike an unintended (or perhaps better described as a “target other than the declared target” because players do catch on to these tricks quickly and use them to their advantage, as is proper) target. If this attack roll was 16 or 17, one extra strike is still “banked.”

There is no limit to the number of strikes that can be “banked” in this way, but only real attacks intended to cause damage to a target count for the purposes of “banking”.



THE SPELLBOOK



ne book on the desk is a massive tome called *Malleus Deus*. Any Cleric or Magic-User will recognize the title and although they will not know what is in it until they (try to) read it, they will know that it is supposed to be a book that lends order and understanding from the world.

Religious authorities (of all organized religions, bar none) consider possession of the book a capital crime; even knowing why is grounds for burning if one is not in a “need to know” position.

Clerics will be able to recall stories of people who even jested about possessing a copy found their entire households and even their acquaintances, tortured and killed in order to determine the whereabouts of the book. Magic-Users will have heard stories that the destruction of the Library of Alexandria was a deliberate act committed just to ensure that this one book was destroyed.

Given the book’s reputation and the supposed lengths to which the authorities will go to ensure its destruction, surely anyone who values their life would simply let the thing be and leave the area at once, telling no one where they have been or more importantly, that fact that they have seen the book.

As a spellbook, the *Malleus Deus* contains the following number of Magic-User spells:

SPELL LEVEL	SPELLS	SPELL LEVEL	SPELLS
1	2d6	6	1d4
2	2d4	7	1
3	1d6	8	1
4	1d4	9	1
5	1d4		

If more than one spell of any particular level is present, then the extra spells of that level are not Magic-User spells, but instead Cleric spells of the same level. These Cleric spells are written in magical script and are Magic-User spells for all intents and purposes, and thus cannot be used by Clerics.

If a Magic-User casts one of these usually-Cleric spells in the presence of a Cleric, that Cleric must make a saving throw versus Magic or never be able to cast that spell again—or at all, if the spell cast is of a higher level than the Cleric can currently cast. This also happens if a Cleric knows such a thing has happened. (“Clever” players of Cleric characters may make a fuss about how their character never picks up on such things, even despite the fact that to a Cleric, such things should be obvious. Fine. The player just declared the character to be both unobservant and oblivious, and a good Referee will remember that.) A Cleric who has lost the use of a spell in this fashion, who relates the events to another Cleric also causes that Cleric to have to save versus Magic or lose use of the spell.

Determine all spells in the book randomly.



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he other book on the desk is a storybook titled *Tales of the Scarecrow*.

It is a creepy horror anthology with all of the stories concerning, you guessed it, evil scarecrows.

What exactly happens in the stories? The players will determine that.

The players should be told that each of them will determine, in secret, the possible powers and effects of the scarecrow. Whoever comes up with the most interesting (and/or dangerous) effects will have their entry become the actual power of the scarecrow, and that player's character will receive an experience bonus.

(If they ask how much of a bonus, tell them the truth—it will be random. There is every possibility it will be a negligible increase, every possibility of many thousands of experience points being awarded, and every possibility of something in between.)

Let them know that they do not have to make the scarecrow a monster or assign abilities or powers to the scarecrow itself; it can merely have an effect on the area inside the cornfield or anyone within it. Nor do the effects have to follow any established game mechanics. Any described effects cannot name a specific character or class (unless every character or class receives an individual effect, in which case it is okay; also, “the first one to do x” is acceptable, but any sort of “Yeah, I’m screwing Josh’s character but good with this one!” stuff is not.). *Tales of the Scarecrow* is a book of scary stories and whatever the players invent should work in that context.

Tell them that the entry which leaves the party in the worst position will likely win the experience award, so they need to weigh their desire to get experience against the disadvantages of creating a truly debilitating or horrific effect.

Give each player ten (or fifteen, or whatever you think is appropriate) minutes to invent these effects without discussing his idea with his fellow players—this is not a collaborative exercise. These should be written down and each player must sign his idea so that the Referee can tell which player wrote which entry.

The entries must then be passed to the Referee, who should choose the entry that is the most sinister and diabolical before putting it into effect. The “winning” player’s character will then be awarded experience according to the following chart with the player being allowed to make all of the rolls instead of the Referee:

D6 EXPERIENCE INCREASE

- 1 +1d100 percent
- 2 +2d20 x 100
- 3 Total of all ability scores x 1d100
- 4 Reroll every digit of the character’s current experience point total on a d10, and continue until each digit comes up an equal or larger number. For example, if a character currently has 4425xp, re-roll the 4, the 4, the 2, and the 5 each on 1d10 and replace the previous number with the number rolled if it is a higher number. If the number rolled is not equal or greater than the current number, reroll.
- 5 + 1d10 x 10 percent
- 6 + the character’s current level x 750.

While the character gains the experience immediately (and this bonus is not subject to any “only gain one level per session” rules), the character will not actually increase in level until he has returned to a safe area.

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ISBN 978-952-5904-47-5
LFP0017

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