
OLD BENGART'S MILL



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Rumours & Hooks:

Villagers on the outskirts of *Skegg End* have grown very sick, with an increased number of vermin in the fields. *Mayor Loris* wants someone expendable to investigate.

Unusual numbers of sheep are going missing from farms, dragged away and devoured by ferocious beasts. But the tracks suggest something other than wolves or bears... Solving this mystery is an opportunity to build goodwill with the local villagers.

Skegg End is a frontier village of approximately 250 people, close to barbarian and beastmen territories, with fields covering about two square miles. Residents raise livestock and crops, and generally keep to themselves, trading with local barbarians from time to time. A standing guard and hardened militia help fend off any beastmen incursions.

The *Bengart* farm fell into disuse some years ago, ostensibly abandoned after shifting territories made it too dangerous to live in. In fact, *Bengart* fell victim to lycanthropy, and sent his family away. He is now a wererat, with precious little humanity left. He lairs in his old windmill, gathering vermin to him like a fetid cloud before sending them out to scavenge.

In the last few months, more than half a dozen farmers have contracted *Slough Pox* from the rats; a viral infection that causes the victim's skin to break out in sores and slough off. The disease is deadly in about 50% of human cases, but animals are immune. Those victims that recover are often badly scarred. Herbal remedies can alleviate the pain and scarring, but do not assist in fighting off the disease itself. Four farmers have died so far, and another three are in strict quarantine in a remote outhouse.

Mayor Loris, a trusted and hardy farmer in her fifties, is willing to pay generously for some adventurers to determine the source of the plague, and either report back, or preferably deal with it. She suspects a large vermin nest somewhere on village outskirts.

Investigations

If the party makes inquiries, they might discover some other strange occurrences on in the area. Sheep have been going missing at an alarming rate, and tracks suggest something other than wolves or bears are responsible (Cha (Gather Information) check). On a great success, one hunter by the name of *Motely* even suggests he saw what appeared to be enormous rat tracks nearby old *Bengart's* place.

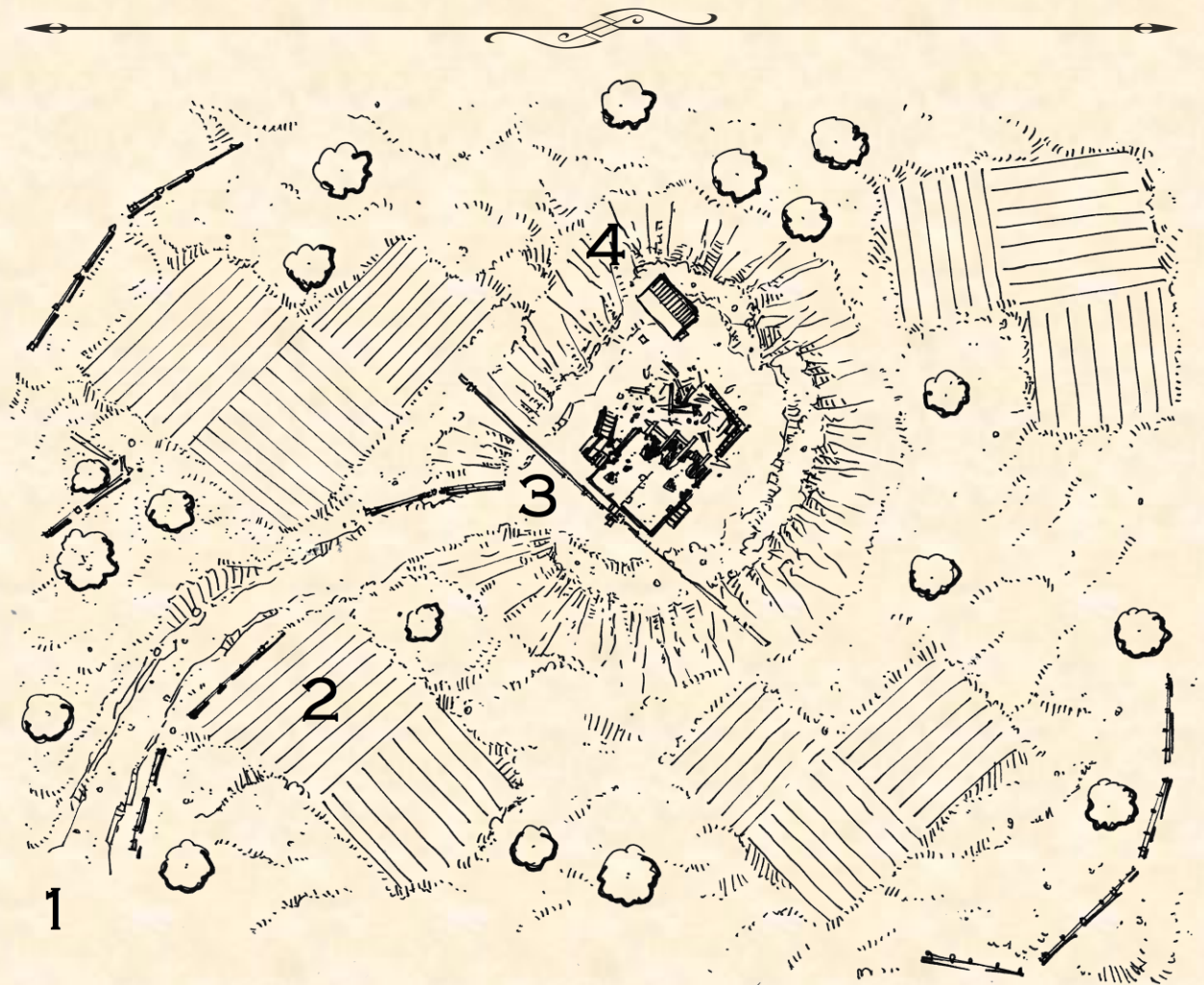
If the party investigates some of the raided farms, it doesn't take long to locate tracks in connection with missing sheep. An Int or Perc (Wilderness Lore) check identifies giant rat tracks (cat sized), as well as one very large set of paw prints (a dire rat, with paws the size of a horse hoof).

Tracking the beasts leads to Old *Bengart's* farm, and the windmill (the GM determines how long the trip takes to the farm, and whether to roll for any Plains random encounters; LFG p.171).

When the party first approach, they immediately notice large numbers of mice and rats in the fields (hundreds upon hundreds), that skitter away at the slightest provocation. The fields here are completely overgrown, having been abandoned for years.

Area 1 - Outskirts

Characters passing through the farm perimeter at this point notice the occasional sheep carcass lying in the tall grass or shrubbery. Anyone in the vicinity of the dead corpses must make a Con



check or contract bacterial Slough Pox, which begins manifesting symptoms within 1d6 hours: lose 1d3 Str each day for 1d4 days, then make a *Luck* (Con) save. If successful, the disease subsides with no further deterioration over 1d6 months. If fail, lose another 1d3 Str, and repeat). A character who survives the pox has a 50% chance of losing 1 point of Cha permanently due to severe scarring.

Adventurers that take precautions against infection, such as wearing face wraps or imbibing protective concoctions, gain advantage on the *Luck* save (or by employing multiple protections, might avoid the need for a *Luck* save at all).

Disturbing the carcasses, or physically touching them, requires a second *Luck* save (assuming the first was successful).

Area 2 - Overgrown Fields

At this perimeter point, unless the adventurers are being very stealthy (Dex (Stealth) vs Perc (Detection) contest), 5d4 giant rats are hiding in the overgrown fields, hoping to ambush the party.

Giant Rat, AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: If appropriate, another Giant Rat (60%) or Dire Rat (40%) comes to aid this Giant Rat, S3 D14 C8 I2 P13 W6 Ch4, L3, Mv 40 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to Slough Pox.

If more than half the rats are killed, the remainder must make a Will check at disadvantage or flee.

Area 3 - Old Windmill

The windmill is dilapidated and in a poor state of disrepair, its blade rotted, and mortar crumbling.

The building has three stories, the exterior door long since fallen from its hinges. The lower entry level is generally inhabited by 1d4+1 dire rats. Dirty straw, fur and scattered bones litter the floor in places.

Dire Rat, AC 12, HD 2+3, Bite 2d4, 19: the target must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer a virulent disease, draining 1d4 Str over the next 1d10 minutes, S13 D15 C13 I2 P13 W9 Ch4, L5, Mv 60 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to Slough Pox.

A narrow staircase leads to the middle level, where Bengart resides. The second storey has enough holes in the floor that he can see (and hear) what is happening below.

The wererat and his dire rats retreat to this area if possible for fighting. All of the rat kin can climb the mortar here at their normal movement rate,

and will flee out the windows and down the walls (a 20 ft drop) to the escape if necessary.

While fighting on the middle level, scores of rats from the attic above drop through the rafters onto intruders, biting, scratching and generally going for the eyes/ears. PCs fighting here must make a *Luck* save each round or suffer a -3 penalty on attack rolls, or spell interruption, due to dive bombing vermin.

Bengart - Wererat, AC 12, HD 3, Bite 2d3 and Sword 1d8, 19: if appropriate, a giant rat comes to Bengart's aid, S14 D18 C10 I13 P14 W10 Ch8 (Hybrid), L6, Mv 30 ft.

Bengart is a lycanthrope with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, he may exert control and issue orders to ordinary rats, giant rats and dire rats, which are compelled to obey. Wererats are extremely sneaky and gain advantage on Stealth checks.



Bengart is now more rat than man, but he retains aspects of his humanity. With the right prompts or pressure, he might be persuaded to show mercy, or offer his treasures (including those hidden in Area 4) in return for a truce and/or exile.

If the windmill is searched, 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) is stashed in the attic, amidst rat detritus (exposing any who touch it to Slough Pox).

Area 4 - Rickety Shed

This 30 ft by 20 ft shed is almost in ruins, crumbling and unstable, with vegetation growing inside.

Bengart has hidden 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147) in the viney undergrowth of a rare *Jitter Vine*: anyone disturbing the brush sets off its flowery spores, causing the subject to flee in irrational

fear for 5d4 minutes (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). At the GM's discretion, an adventurer might harvest 1d2 spore pods that will keep for 1d6 weeks before turning inert (the plant produces spores only once per season).

Aftermath

Unbeknown to Bengart, when he sent his family away years ago, his daughter was already infected with early stage lycanthropy. Over time his entire family became lycanthropes (his wife, son and two daughters).

Recently the pack has heard tales of a vermin plague in the area, and a giant rat that walks on two legs. They are en route to investigate. If they find Bengart dead, they will seek vengeance against his killers if possible. Alternatively, if Bengart is alive, the family reunites and sets about infecting a nearby village.



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