



An adventure for 4 to 6 PCs
Level 6



Saturday Night Special

— The Mires of Mourning —



Swords
& Wizardry

By Greg A. Vaughan
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Saturday Night Special

— The Mires of Mourning —

By Greg A. Vaughan and Kevin Wright

The Mires of Mourning is a Swords & Wizardry Complete Roleplaying Game adventure designed for a party of four to six 6th-level PCs. It is set in a swamp and takes place both in the swamp itself and the sunken remains of an old asylum that still stands there. The Creeping Mire, as the swamp is known, sits on the outskirts of the provinces that form the borders of a major kingdom. It is officially within the province of Keston, though it is far enough away from the main centers of power to be all but forgotten. Even if remembered at all, it is more a source of rumor and dire reputation than any sort of first-hand knowledge. It is a place where undesirables go away to be forgotten, and everyone seems happy with that arrangement. The Creeping Mire and province of Keston can be easily placed in any campaign world where an established kingdom has a swampy wilderness area on one of its outer boundaries.

The History of Mourninghaven Sanitorium

Mourninghaven Sanitorium was constructed by the church of Mitra, the Sun Father, god of the sun and benevolence, as a hospital for the advancing arts of medicine and healing. It was built on a spot traditionally held to have been visited by Mitra in ancient times and stood surrounded by the Hearthglen, a picturesque green moor where patients could take strolls at their leisure through the calming scenery to restore their flagging constitutions while undergoing the gentle healing arts of the clerics and lay brothers. For many years Mourninghaven faithfully served its role at the edge of the province of Keston and catered to the rich and poor alike, turning away no one in need of its healing.

Then came the Fiend Rains, a decade of torrential rains and swelling rivers said to have been brought on by the forces of darkness. Whether supernatural in origin or not, these unusually wet years brought about the end of the Mourninghaven Sanitorium's original purpose. The water table rose and the Hearthglen became a small marsh that continued to spread and grow wild with plant life, hidden bogs and pools, and the strange creatures that call such places home. As the tangled swamp expanded it became known as the Creeping Mire and began to undermine the foundations of the Mourninghaven facilities. Entire buildings began to sink and walls buckled and cracked as foundations shifted and settled. The road to the sanitorium grew increasingly wild and hazardous, and people stopped going to the facility for the healing it offered.

Eventually the unhealthy environment caused disease to break out among the lay brothers, and there were insufficient clerics present to stop its spread before several of the healers had succumbed and died. This proved more than the sanitorium could withstand, and ultimately the clergy of Mitra relocated their facility to a distant, more hospitable clime. They sold the rapidly deteriorating property to an ambitious baronet from the nearby provinces. However, they maintained their rights to visit the shrine of the Sun Father in pilgrimages, a condition of the sale to which the baronet readily agreed.

Baronet Wilbane Osterkrieg continued to run the sanitorium but changed it from a convalescent home to an incarceration facility for those

institutionalized due to mental illness or related crimes. Ostensibly the sanitorium served to treat and rehabilitate the offenders, but far from the prying eyes of the public in the dismal marshlands, Osterkrieg handled them in a very different manner; using treatment philosophies and experimental techniques he had developed involving isolation, hypnotism, sensory overload, and old-fashioned brutality. No more did people come of their own volition seeking treatment and recovery; the authorities from the provinces brought inmates to the sanitorium where they could be held and dealt with far from any population centers, and Osterkrieg charged them hard coin for his services. Those who were institutionalized within rarely emerged, and those who did were never whole again. The grim institution became known colloquially as Mourninghaven in light of the fates of the wretches who were interred within.

As the dire reputation of the sanitorium grew, so too did the hazards of the Creeping Mire. Rarely did the heavily guarded prisoner gangs or supply runs have trouble, but the lone pilgrims of Mitra that still made the trek to their shrine began to disappear. Searches were conducted by both the Keston authorities and the sanitorium staff, but no trace of these lost folk was ever found. Over time more and more began to disappear, on some occasions even entire parties of pilgrims traveling together for safety. Eventually, the church of Mitra reached the conclusion that it could not guarantee the safety of its pilgrims nor could it stomach the loss of any more to the increasingly dangerous trek. With this decision the church formally renounced the sanitorium as a holy site of its faith, and all use of the track through the Creeping Mire ceased other than the transportation of inmates and supplies for its maintenance.

Despite rumors of Osterkrieg amassing a sizable fortune by selling the services of the facility, eventually his house fell from the Crown's favor and its fortunes turned. After two decades of Osterkrieg administration, the lord-governor of the nearby province of Keston assumed control of the asylum and continued its use as a prison for the criminally insane, where they could be safely confined far from civilized folk, as well as a place for confining politically or socially valuable prisoners, where they could be isolated but kept out of harm's way in the rigidly enforced discipline and security of the sanitorium. Mourninghaven has continued in this capacity now for more than 30 years as it continues its slow slide into the depths of the swamp.

The Osterkrieg Legacy

The baronet Wilbane Osterkrieg was a vile and despicable man in more than just his dealings with the unfortunate folk incarcerated in his sanitorium. It was this reputation and other dire dealings that eventually spelled his political doom and ended with his neck on a headman's block and his family stripped of title and possessions. Despite the vast amount of gold paid to him over two decades by the Crown for the use of his facilities, his holdings upon confiscation were found to be quite modest, and it was assumed that his spending had been as wanton as his other unsavory activities. Once he was dispensed with and the properties had been sold off, little further thought was put into the matter.

However, the truth was another matter entirely. Wilbane Osterkrieg did amass a sizable fortune from the payments by the Crown. Further, he held a terrible secret that he had taken with him to the grave; he was the cause of the disappearance of the Mitran pilgrims. Through alliances with certain foul denizens of the Creeping Mire, he arranged for scores of

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pilgrims to be taken captive as they traveled the Swamp Road. He then sent letters of ransom, purporting to be from brigands or foul creatures residing in the swamp, demanding payment for the safe return of loved ones and threatening that any attempts at rescue would only result in their horrible deaths. Some families turned to the church or the authorities for help in recovering their family members, but the “swamp denizens” always proved too elusive and were never located, though the mutilated remains of the kidnapped pilgrims were sometimes found—left as a warning for failure to pay the ransom. Other families elected to pay the exorbitant sums demanded but, after being strung along through months or years of blackmail, eventually realized repatriation was not forthcoming and despaired of hope. Once Baronet Osterkrieg realized that a particular captive no longer held value, he murdered the unfortunate and moved on in his schemes. Not a one of the missing pilgrims was ever found alive.

Always careful of the Crown or the church catching wind of his schemes, Baronet Osterkrieg made sure that his prisoners and the payments for them were stored in a little-known section of the asylum called the Black Ward where he kept the very worst and most violent offenders incarcerated. Over time, the access building to this underground ward sank into the swamp so that its very existence was hidden from any who did not already know of its location. Despite his constant paranoia, the baronet was caught off guard when soldiers sent by the Crown arrived at the sanatorium and took him into custody. He never had a chance to flee to his secret sanctum or even release those still trapped within it. Those locked within the confines of the Black Ward were abandoned and slowly succumbed to starvation or their own madness—a host of lost souls left to guard a hidden treasure.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are hired by the lord-governor of Keston to escort a politically sensitive prisoner out to Mourninghaven Sanitorium for confinement. As they travel the Swamp Road through the Creeping Mire they are beset by attacks from tribes of primitive swamp humanoids. Finally reaching the sanitorium late in the evening, the PCs hand over their prisoner and bunk down for the night in preparation for leaving on the morrow.

During the night the sanitorium comes under attack by more of the swamp brutes accompanied by a black dragon. The dragon’s breath weapon destroys part of the building releasing many of the madmen locked within. The PCs are forced to battle both escaped lunatics and invading swamp beasts as confusion reigns. Fighting through the chaos, they come upon the dying curator of the sanitorium. He is beyond help but confesses with his dying breath that the secret to old Wilbane Osterkrieg’s stolen treasures lies within the mind of the madman they escorted to the asylum. He states that Wilbane’s grandson, a vile criminal, is also after the treasure and staged the attack to obtain the prisoner.

Following the information provided by the curator and a clear trail left through the swamp, the PCs are able to track the swamp brutes back to their primitive stockade. There they defeat the remainder of the tribe but learn that Vidas—Osterkrieg’s grandson—and the prisoner did not return here but instead went straight to the Black Ward to recover the treasure.

Returning to the sanitorium the PCs are able to locate the entrance used by Vidas and his prisoner and enter the Black Ward. Within they find the slaughtered remnants of Vidas Osterkrieg’s party, slain by the mad spirits locked away within the ward for the last 30 years. They encounter these spirits and Vidas himself, his sanity shattered by the horrors he has uncovered. Finally they find the escaped madman, now a powerful and twisted creature inhabited by the vengeful spirits of the insane and innocent whom he had a hand in condemning to torment and death so long ago. Defeating this powerful evil, the PCs are able to discover the resting place of the lost Mitran pilgrims as well as the treasure hoard of old Wilbane.

Getting Started

The adventure begins as the PCs are approached by the Lord-Governor of Keston about transporting a prisoner to Mourninghaven Sanitorium in the nearby Creeping Mire. Read or paraphrase the following.

Your summons has brought you to the offices of Miltrin Cormien, Lord-Governor of Keston Province. The old veteran sits before you at his desk of wood and slate, the sleeve of his gubernatorial tunic pinned up where he lost his arm in the wars of a decade ago. Despite his infirmity and the weight of years upon him, he is still a formidable man, hale and hearty with a head of close-cropped silver hair.

Once everyone is seated and his aid has left the office and closed the door, Governor Cormien produces a roll of parchment bearing the royal seal and clears his throat as he reveals it to you. “Thank you, good people, for responding to my entreaty on short notice. I have a matter of some urgency and political sensitivity. The Crown has ordered the transfer of one Haden Ward, male human, age indeterminate, to the secure facilities of Mourninghaven Sanitorium for convalescence until such time as the Crown has deemed his release to be prudent and acceptable.

“Basically the Crown wants this individual moved to a new and more secure location. Haden Ward—Ward is not his true name but rather a legal designation of the state for an individual of unknown lineage—was a soldier injured in the wars. His injuries basically rendered him catatonic and he has lived under constant care for the last 10 years. I don’t know why the Crown has taken an interest or what threatens this Haden’s well-being, but for whatever reason it has been ordered that he be moved to the Mourninghaven facility for his own protection.

The catch is that Mourninghaven is an older institution that has been engulfed by the Creeping Mire in the last few decades. It’s an old hospital that used to be run by the priests of Mitra for the treatment of the infirm, before being turned over to the State. It’s still accessible by the Swamp Road, but the trip is dangerous—Mitran pilgrims used to disappear along that road until they gave making the trip, and with the rainy season upon us the road is at its worst.

“I need you to escort Mr. Haden Ward safely to the sanitorium. I’m relying on you because I believe your skills show you to be as capable as any military escort I could provide, and I have checked out your credentials and confirmed that you are not associated with any of the possible political players that might have an interest in the matter. The Crown wants him to get there and in one piece, and I want what the Crown wants. I will provide you with Writs of the Treasury so that upon turning Mr. Ward over to the curator of the sanitorium, he will sign the writs and allow you to collect your payment in full. Do you have any questions?”

The Lord-Governor Cormien is telling the truth. He doesn’t know any more than what he is saying but fears that there may be other interested parties who will try to interfere, since normally the Crown would not send a request for the transfer of an individual like this if there was not an issue of State interests at stake. He sees the use of a party of unaffiliated adventurers of some reputation to be his best bet in complying with his orders.

If asked about Haden Ward, Governor Cormien will allow the PCs to see his file. It confirms that he is an unidentified soldier that served the Crown in the wars of the previous decade and suffered a severe head injury in a major engagement. He is ambulatory and cooperative, following simple instructions, but he is not able to care for himself and non-responsive to attempts at communication. The only word he has uttered in the last 10 years is “Haden” which they have assumed to be his name. Otherwise he is generally healthy, having physically recovered from his wounds. There is nothing in the file to indicate what special value he might have, however.

If the PCs ask about Mourninghaven Sanitorium or the Creeping Mire, you can reveal to them the information provided under “The History of Mourninghaven Sanitorium” above. Governor Cormien does not know the information described under “The Osterklied Legacy,” and the PCs will not be able to uncover any of it on their own either.

If the PCs accept the job, Cormien provides them with a map to the sanitorium showing little other than the route from the province to the Swamp Road, a letter of introduction for the curator, including a copy of the Crown’s orders, and a Writ of the Treasury in the amount of 500 gp for the curator to countersign. Attempts to forge the seal and signature necessary for a Writ of the Treasury require a Delicate Tasks check at -20% by an Assassin or Thief, and the penalty for doing so is 10 years hard labor. If the PCs elect to attempt this, it is beyond the scope of this adventure. If the PCs wish to bargain for a greater payment, the Lord-Governor may add up to an additional 500 gp to the amount of the writ, but will haggle in 50-100 gp increments.

Once all the negotiations have been completed, Governor Cormien arranges for the PCs to pick up their charge at the city gates at dawn the next morning.

Haden Ward

When the PCs first meet their charge, he is wearing a simple wool shift and trousers with tattered shoes. City guards turn him over to the PCs in a pair of manacles and provide them with the key and a traveling cloak in return for their signature upon the lord-governor’s transfer order. Haden is nondescript and, despite the presence of the manacles, seems completely harmless. He is a middle-aged man with stubble upon his face and long, ill-kept hair. Both hair and beard are dark but liberally peppered with gray. His face is seamed and leathered by years of exposure to the weather, as is befitting a former soldier, but is currently pale and wan from lack of exposure to the sun in recent years. His eyes are hollow with dark circles under them and with a vacant stare. A Druid, Elf, Ranger, or someone who spent a lot of time around elves has a 1 in 6 chance of noting that he is actually a half-elf with strongly human features. He responds immediately to firm commands but takes no actions on his own. He appears fit enough to walk, though the PCs can have him ride if they so choose. He is otherwise completely non-responsive, so full stats are not provided for him here. In his catatonia he has 6 Hit Dice and has:

AC 8 [11]; hp 41; and Saving Throw: 9, +2 vs. enchantment.

He is in a daze, which does not respond to even magical healing (his woes go deeper than merely physical hurts). He will pose no trouble for the PCs on the journey—his manacles notwithstanding.

Chapter I: The Swamp Road

The road from the city in which the PCs begin heads eastward towards the swamp for 36 miles. It passes numerous villages, crossroads, and homesteads for the first 20 miles, but for the remainder of its length it is abandoned and lonely. The weather is generally gloomy and overcast with frequent downpours and drizzles throughout the day. It is warm enough for now, though ominous dark clouds on the northern horizon make it look as though a change for the worse is coming. Despite these conditions, the road is well kept for most of its length, and the journey to the edge of the Creeping Mire takes 2 days on foot or 1 day ahorse. No encounters occur during this segment of the journey, though travelers are few and give the PCs and their prisoner a wide berth.

Upon reaching sight of the Creeping Mire, read the following.

The rain-drenched gloom stretches ahead into a green haze that slowly resolves itself into a tangled tree line festooned with thick undergrowth and overgrown with hanging mosses and vines—the Creeping Mire. A thin mist seems to hang around the eaves of this swamp, and brackish mires and pools grow more and more numerous as the tree line nears. The road itself becomes an elevated causeway of rubble and mud rising several feet above the surrounding marshes and in many places has a corduroy of ancient logs sunk into its muddy surface to try and create some stability and traction in the morass.

Despite the proliferation of plant growth, the shaded mire itself seems remarkably quiet—the only sounds are the continuous plops of falling water drops and a low, incessant hum, almost below the level of audibility—that seems to be felt as much as heard; the source of it is not readily apparent.

As mentioned, the Swamp Road is a raised earthen causeway—part dike and part road. It once had fairly regular upkeep, however as the Creeping Mire has spread and the fortunes of the Mourninghaven Sanitorium have declined, it has fallen into ever-greater disrepair. In addition, during the rainy season it sees almost no travel and no maintenance whatsoever. It is a muddy track that constantly sucks at the feet and hooves of travelers, and their mounts, occasionally even managing to pull off a boot. In tactical combat situations, it does not inhibit movement, but for long-term travel it creates a tiring and unstable experience that seriously hampers the travelers' efforts. It is 20 miles from the edge of the Creeping Mire to Mourninghaven, and regardless of whether the PCs travel on foot or by horseback it will take them 2 full days to reach the sanitorium and require them to camp at least one night on the Swamp Road.

The causeway upon which the road sits varies in height and width but averages rising about 5 feet above the surrounding marshes and about 20 feet wide. Climbing the muddy slope of the causeway requires great care to traverse it without slipping. In many places trees and undergrowth hug the causeway, even arching across its path in some places 10 feet above the track. At other places it is surrounded by swamp pools with only small hummocks of grass and mud bars to mar the placid surface below. All manner of swamp fauna can be spied from the road, but these are typically small birds of prey and aquatic or amphibious creatures. Snakes can often be seen dangling among nearby tree limbs, but they do not typically molest passersby that leave them be. Travelers and horses alike are often startled by the sudden plop and splash of a large frog jumping into the water at their approach. And during the few pauses in the omnipresent drizzle, the mires ubiquitous clouds of mosquitoes arise to harass anything

that moves, filling the air with their teeth-grinding whine.

Three set encounters occur as the PCs travel along the Swamp Road. These can be timed as you see fit, but **Event 2** occurs while they camp during their first night in the swamp. If the PCs stray from the Swamp Road, use the table below to determine random encounters and events while within the marshes. These random encounters do not occur while the PCs remain on the road, except as otherwise noted. Roll once on the table for every 4 hours spent away from the sanitorium or the Swamp Road.

Random Encounters in the Creeping Mire

d%	Encounter
01–12	1d6+4 giant mosquitoes
13–25	1d8 lacedons
26–37	1d3 mosquito swarms
38–45	Shambling mound
46–58	1d4+1 swamp brutes
59–63	1d2 chuuls
64–66	Gray render
67–00	No encounter

CHUUL: HD 8; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (3d4) or tentacles (paralysis); Move 12 (Swim 8); Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: If struck by tentacles, victim must save or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. (see appendix)

GIANT MOSQUITO: HD 4 hp; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1 + blood drain); Move 6 (Fly 15); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP B/10; Special: Blood drain 1d4 HP/round for 1d6 rounds. (The Tome of Horrors Complete, pg 389)

GRAY RENDER: HD 9; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (2d6 or rend); Move 12; Save 7; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Render may attack weapons or armor in lieu of doing damage. Victim must save (with a bonus to the roll equal to any magical enchantment the item possesses) or the item is destroyed. (see appendix)

LACEDON: HD 2; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3 + paralysis) and 1 bite (1d4 + paralysis) Move 9 (Swim 9); Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Immune to sleep and charm. Successful attacks require a save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. Elves are immune. (see appendix)

MOSQUITO SWARM: HD 3; AC 8[11]; Atk swarm (1d6); Move 6 (Fly 15); Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Blood drain 1 hp/turn when fighting the swarm in melee. (see appendix)

SHAMBLING MOUND: HD 9; AC 1[18]; Atk 2 fists (2d8); Move 6; Save 6; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Immune to fire, those hit by both fist attacks are enfolded into the slimy body and

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suffocates in 2d4 rounds unless freed. (Swords & Wizardry Complete, pg 112)

SWAMP BRUTE: HD 4+1; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or weapon (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Surprise opponents 1-3 on 1d6. (see appendix)

Event 1. A Taste of Blood

This encounter occurs in the evening hours of the first day before the PCs have stopped to camp.

The gloom of evening draws onward, and a few breaks in the omnipresent cloud cover provide both a temporary respite from the near-constant drizzle as well as tantalizing glimpses of occasional rays of the descending sun. The air fills once again with the high-pitched whine of mosquitoes as clouds of them begin to gather. This time, however, a thrumming of lower register fills the air—the same low buzzing you have heard since sighting the mires. The source becomes apparent as a number of mosquitoes the size of small dogs take flight from their perches beneath the drooping moss of a nearby tree and swoop towards you. With a chilling thought you realize that almost every tree has these monstrosities lurking beneath their branches, giving the entire swamp its low hum.

Creatures: Other than as irritants, the normal mosquitoes pose no threat to the party (unless they form into a true swarm as described under “Random Encounters of the Creeping Mire” above). However, the giant mosquitoes are a different matter altogether. The mire teems with these blood-sucking brutes, though they become more prevalent the deeper in one goes. Fortunately they mature at the same time that the rainy season strikes so most of them remain perched under tree branches to avoid the rain except for during dry spells, and consequently most of them starve to death. The mire’s ecology could otherwise never support such a population. In general, if it is raining travelers are safe from attack unless they attempt to climb the trees. However, when the weather breaks for a bit, these predators fly out and attack en masse. There are currently **9 giant mosquitoes** attacking the PCs that will fight until slain or sated on blood. The drizzle will start again preventing others from arriving as otherwise would surely happen.

GIANT MOSQUITOES (9): HD 4 hp; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1 + blood drain); Move 6 (Fly 15); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP B/10; Special: Blood drain 1d4 HP/round for 1d6 rounds.

Event 2. Strangers in the Night

This encounter occurs after night has fallen on the PCs’ first day of travel along the Swamp Road. The drizzle has continued intermittently into the evening hours and, though a wide enough space on the road can be found in which to make camp, the PCs are unlikely to be able to make a fire without resorting to magical means since all of the wood in the area is completely waterlogged. The point on the road where the PCs have found a suitable campsite is approximately 30 feet wide. The lower ground around it is soggy with standing water, but is nowhere more than a foot deep and is considered difficult terrain. Cypress trees grow in profusion, but none closer than about 20 feet from the road, and they are widely spaced with plenty of room between their trunks. However, as night falls those shadowed alleys become dark voids shielding what is within from prying eyes. At some appropriate time during the night, when most of the PCs have gone to sleep, proceed with the following.

The drizzle continues like a clammy blanket upon your camp site making the miserable night even worse. The solitude of the darkness is suddenly broken by a crashing sound, like something heavy smashing through branches, followed by a thump in your midst. A large stone, the size of a melon, has sunk into the earth in the center of road, still trailing bits of moss where it flew through the nearby tree branches. Sudden splashing and the sound of more thrown missiles alert you that an attack is underway.

Creatures: The PCs have come under attack by a group of **5 swamp brutes**, a tribe of primitive bugbears that lead a crude, barbaric existence within the depths of the Creeping Mire, far from the eyes of civilization. These hulking bugbears resemble ordinary bugbears but with a more heavily muscled and stooped frame making them both broader and shorter than their more advanced cousins. Their faces are more prognathic with a pronounced underbite and enlarged lower teeth. Their coarse hair is the grayish-green of tree moss allowing them to blend in easily in their swampy surroundings. Anyone standing downwind of them can detect the acrid stench of their stinkroot (see sidebar) within 10 feet, and a creature with the scent ability can detect them at double the normal distances.

SWAMP BRUTES (5): HD 4+1; HP: 20, 19, 18, 18, 15; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or stone greataxe (1d8+1) or throwing rock (1d4); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Surprise opponents 1-3 on 1d6; Gear: stone pot holding stinkroot (1d2 applications); hide armor, stone greataxe, bag of 8 throwing rocks

Stinkroot

Stinkroot is a plant that grows indigenously in the Creeping Mire. It resembles a small woody sapling no more than 2-3 feet high covered in clusters of needle-like thorns. The thorns are not its only defense, however, as its black, tuber-like roots give off an acrid stench that most animals find repulsive and instinctively avoid.

The shamans of the swamp brute tribe have discovered a way to render this root into a paste that can be smeared on their bodies to serve as insect repellent. In order for mosquitoes or other vermin to attack anyone who is wearing the stinkroot paste, they must first make Saving Throw. However, it causes obvious problems when attempting social interaction with any creature that is not also wearing the paste or understands its use. One application will protect a man-sized creature for 6 hours. The refined stinkroot paste can be created from the plant by any Ranger or Druid with a few hours of work. A typical stinkroot plant can produce 1d3+1 applications. A single application can be purchased for 1 sp and a single plant for 5 cp.



Event 3. Collapsed Causeway

This encounter occurs some time during the second day of the PC's journey on the Swamp Road.

The road passes through a swampy lake over a mile wide here, with only occasional hummocks of swamp reeds and flooded stumps breaking the surface. The water has eroded away parts of the causeway significantly, reducing it to a narrow trail in places. Ahead is a place where the erosion is complete. A section of the causeway more than 40 wide has collapsed into the murky waters leaving a gap with no visible means of crossing.

The poorly maintained road has collapsed here due to the recent rains. The waters of the lake average 20 feet deep, but the stretch between the broken ends of the causeway is only 5 feet deep, though this is not readily apparent from the surface. Treat it as a deep bog; unencumbered men have 3 movement or can elect to swim. Smaller creatures such as dwarves and halflings must swim. The water provides cover. This grants a -1[+1] AC bonus for man-sized and creatures and a -2[+2] AC bonus to smaller creatures or man-sized creatures that are swimming. Swimming creatures take a -4 penalty to attack opponents that aren't underwater.

Development: While the PCs are passing through this area, roll once on the Random Encounters table (see **Chapter 1**). Reroll if no encounter is indicated.

Tactics: The swamp brutes begin their attack by hurling rocks from the cover of the tree line 30 feet downwind from the road. After an initial volley focused on any obvious guards, they come charging into the camp hooting and yelling. None of them attacks Haden even if they come upon him as an easy target. They are under orders to bring him back alive, but they want to kill the PCs and loot them first. If three of the swamp brutes are killed, the rest retreat and scatter into the swamp. They do not return to the stockade (**Chapter 4**) for fear of punishment.

Development: If any of the swamp brutes are captured and questioned, it may reveal that they were ordered by the "Swamp King" to keep the "chained man" (Haden—though if his manacles have been removed, they find this quite befuddling) from reaching the stone house (the sanitorium). If asked to describe the Swamp King it will become confused as it considers "Swamp King" to be the best description, and its simple mind will be unable to conjure one that is any more illuminating. Further, they were actually ordered to capture the chained man before he could reach the sanitorium, but it considers its explanation to be an accurate rendition of this. It can provide no more information than this. Though this should be sufficient to tip off the party that someone knows Haden was being transported to the sanitorium and does not want him to make it for some reason.

Chapter 2:

Mourninghaven Sanitorium

The PCs arrive at Mourninghaven Sanitorium on the evening of their second day of travel as night begins to fall and a steady rain pelts the road and everyone on it.

The asylum rises like a tombstone from the dismal green of the swamp through the gray curtain of rain. Its once-white walls now bear dark stains from the mold and that grows in streaks upon it from years of runoff down the slate roof. Its windows are alight with the flicker of lanterns and are covered in wire mesh to keep out the fiercer denizens of the swamp. Smoke rises from its chimneys indicating habitation, but a pall of silence seems to hang over it like a shroud, broken only by the occasional forlorn cry as of some marsh bird—or is it coming from within the building itself?

Mourninghaven was once a magnificent campus of structures of shining white marble standing upon a green heath. Now its walls are cracked and stained, its foundations buckled and ruptured. The entire facility was once encompassed within a retaining wall that extended outward from the main building, but now that wall has collapsed and sunken, leaving only a few pitiful remnants rising in forlorn stacks from the mire, festooned with swamp vegetation. In addition, other than the main building and the curator's house, the other structures of the sanitorium have collapsed or sunk into the muck leaving little more than overgrown hillocks of tangled vines and tumbled stones.

The interior walls of the main building are composed of dressed stone, many painted with cracked and faded murals of the benevolent Mitra, with the outer walls made of marble except where the many repairs have been made in lesser masonry. Floors are hardwood as are the 9-foot ceilings, reinforced by heavy rafters. All doors are of strong wood and bear good locks unless otherwise noted. Individual entries indicate who possesses the appropriate keys. All rooms are lit by oil lamps that hang from the ceilings inside locked wire mesh cages to prevent tampering by the inmates. Ground floor windows are mere arrow slits and upstairs windows are only a foot wide. All can be shuttered from within and have wire mesh that cannot be easily removed (Open Doors check at -1 penalty). The interior of the main building is universally hot and humid with the omnipresent odor of excrement and many unwashed bodies in too small a space, with an underlying hint of fresh blood.

Mourninghaven Staff

Mourninghaven is administered by its curator, Xavien Drusus, and a small staff of orderlies and servants. The orderlies double as both guards and support personal while the servants tend to the cooking needs of the sanitorium and perform some filing and office tasks for the curator; the inmates actually perform most of the cleaning and laundering needs of the place.

Serving Staff: The 7 servants are all noncombatants (N male or female human commoners) who are a sullen and silent lot. They are undesirables that would have trouble finding work in more genteel surroundings. They don't necessarily approve of the cruelty and neglect that occurs on a daily basis but are inured to it and keep their mouths shut to avoid worse themselves. None will speak to the PCs during their visit.

Orderlies: If the servants are slovenly and tight-lipped, the 24 orderlies are brutal bullies. In other circumstances they would likely be brigands or perhaps prisoners themselves, but at Mourninghaven they represent authority and order and even assist Curator Drusus in administering "treatments" to the inmates. They wear simple white uniforms (usually bearing at least a few bloodstains) and leather masks (when on duty) to protect their eyes and faces from the more violent inmates. Selected for their brawn rather than their brains or hygiene, they are universally unwashed and insolent. They obey the curator unquestioningly, though if reduced to below half hit points an orderly may become panicked and flee (DM discretion). The orderlies may become opponents of the PCs at times, so a stat block is included below.

MOURNINGHAVEN ORDERLIES (24): HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 great club (1d8); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: None; Gear 2 tanglefoot bags (see appendix); Other Gear +1 studded leather armor, leather mask, great club, sap, pouch with keys, 1d4 gp, and 3d10 sp

Curator Drusus: **Xavien Drusus** (C male human thief 7) is a competent (if corrupt) administrator, but he is no doctor, though he refers to himself as a "physiker" when speaking of treating the inmates. He has flowing gray hair, thinning on top, with long sideburns that hang below his shoulders but is otherwise clean shaven. He wears a somewhat threadbare and out-of-fashion courtier's outfit and throws an oft-stained white smock over it when attending to his rounds. Though he typically carries a leather bag with an assortment of knives, pliers, needles, and other harmful devices, he avoids all combat and quickly flees or surrenders if confronted. He is the lawful administrator of the sanitorium, so threats and attempts at bullying him are met with a cold stare and quiet promises of retribution from the authorities.

Mourninghaven Inmates

The inmates of Mourninghaven are a mixed lot. There are a total of 67 of them, most of them are male, and the majority are human, though there are a number of females and most character races are represented to some extent. They range in age from late teens to mid-sixties and are universally in ill health due to poor nutrition, care, and poorer treatment at the hands of their keepers. Some tend to rave at random, but most are cowed and silent, quietly shuffling about their daily routines. All are noncombatant unless otherwise noted. Those that truly pose a danger are kept locked in the isolation cells (area K).

Mourninghaven Building and Grounds

An overview and initial description of the sanitorium is provided under **Chapter 2** above. This sidebar, however, provides a brief description of the various rooms on the map to allow you to flesh out the asylum as you see fit. Secret doors are not locked. Valuables that can be looted are listed in parenthesis. Only a coin value is given, but it can include various portable valuable items as well, as randomly determined or specifically placed by the GM.

A. Front Doors (keys: on-duty orderly, Drusus) — This overgrown gravel walk leads to the front doors, which are kept locked at all times. A worn plaque above the door reads, "Morninghaven Sanitorium, Doorway to a new life." A tarnished bell hangs by the door.

B. Reception Area (keys: on-duty orderly, Drusus) — A wooden counter always staffed by an **orderly** sits beyond the door where visitors and new inmates check in. A wide hallway wraps around the central courtyard and provides access to the rest of the building as well as the back doors. (5 gp)

C. Meditation Yard (keys: Drusus) — Once a tranquil garden dedicated to Mitra, this area is now a flooded yard of stinking muck and dead trees. A **shambling mound** sprouted here some time ago and attacks anyone who dares to open the door.

SHAMBLING MOUND: HD 8; HP: 31; AC 1[18]; Atk 2 fists (2d8); Move 6; Save 8; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Immune to fire, those hit by both fist attacks are enfold into the slimy body and suffocates in 2d4 rounds unless freed. (Swords & Wizardry Complete, pg 112)

D. Patient Records (keys: on-duty orderly, Drusus) — This room bears rows of shelves stacked with countless sheaves of moldering, stinking paper, most no longer legible. It hasn't been kept up in years.

E. Secure Records (keys: Drusus) — Drusus keeps records here on special inmates that he hopes will provide blackmail material someday. There is nothing of interest to the PCs though. (25 gp)

F. Secretary (keys: all staff) — Once an office, this chamber has been converted to living quarters for the serving staff. The accommodations are cramped and uncomfortable. (7 sp, 132 cp)

G. Curator's Office (keys: Drusus) — This room is finely appointed but aged and worn. Many of Drusus's tools are in a locked cabinet on the wall. An empty closet hides a secret escape route. (380 gp)

H. Bunkrooms (keys: orderlies, Drusus) — These rooms stink of sweat and mildewed clothing. They hold bunk beds and the orderlies' personal effects. The northernmost one is currently unused. (25 gp and 425 sp in each of the occupied rooms)

I. Basement Stair (keys: orderlies, Drusus) — The stairs to the basement are blocked by a brick wall, as it is completely flooded with swamp water. Insert any encounters you wish with mire denizens if the PCs decide to break through. No map is provided.

J. Security Room (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — **Two orderlies** are always on duty here. The eastern door is composed of iron bars (treat as portcullis). The north doors have a sliding view port in them.

K. Isolation Cells (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — These rooms are padded with tattered leather stuffed with wool, now infested with nits and fleas. Doors have a sliding view port. A total of **4 violent lunatics** are kept within these two areas.

L. Therapy I (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — A padded bed with straps occupies the center of the room. Next to it are a number of devices for inhibiting sight, speech, and sound to someone on the bed.

M. Therapy II (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — A metal table set with manacles is next to a cabinet holding an assortment of knives, tongs, saws, and needles. (50 gp in tools)

N. Observation (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Chairs and desks are set in front of windows looking into the therapy rooms.

O. Staff Lounge (keys: all staff) — Part lounge, part kitchen, the staff takes their meals and breaks in here.

P. Pantry (keys: serving staff, Drusus) — This closet holds a week's worth of food for the sanitorium staff. (85 gp in spices and spirits)

Q. Broom Closet (keys: all staff) — Cleaning supplies.

R. Main Stair (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Doors of iron bars block both ends of this stair.

S. Security Room (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — **Four orderlies** are always on duty here. The west door has a sliding view port. Next to it is a barred window. A side room holds stores for this level and a trapdoor to the attic where enough food stores for the entire sanitorium for two months are kept.

T. Dining Hall (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Long trestle tables and benches occupy this room where the inmates eat. Windows look out over the courtyard below.

U. Kitchen (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — This chamber is where the tasteless meals of gruel and hard bread are prepared for the inmates. Three times a day, at mealtimes, there are **4 members of the serving staff** and **2 orderlies** here.

V. Infirmary (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Inmates who are ill or injured are chained to beds here and treated by the orderlies and the curator. The seriously ill rarely recover. (5 healer's kits (see appendix), 4 potions of cure light wounds, 1 potion of cure disease)

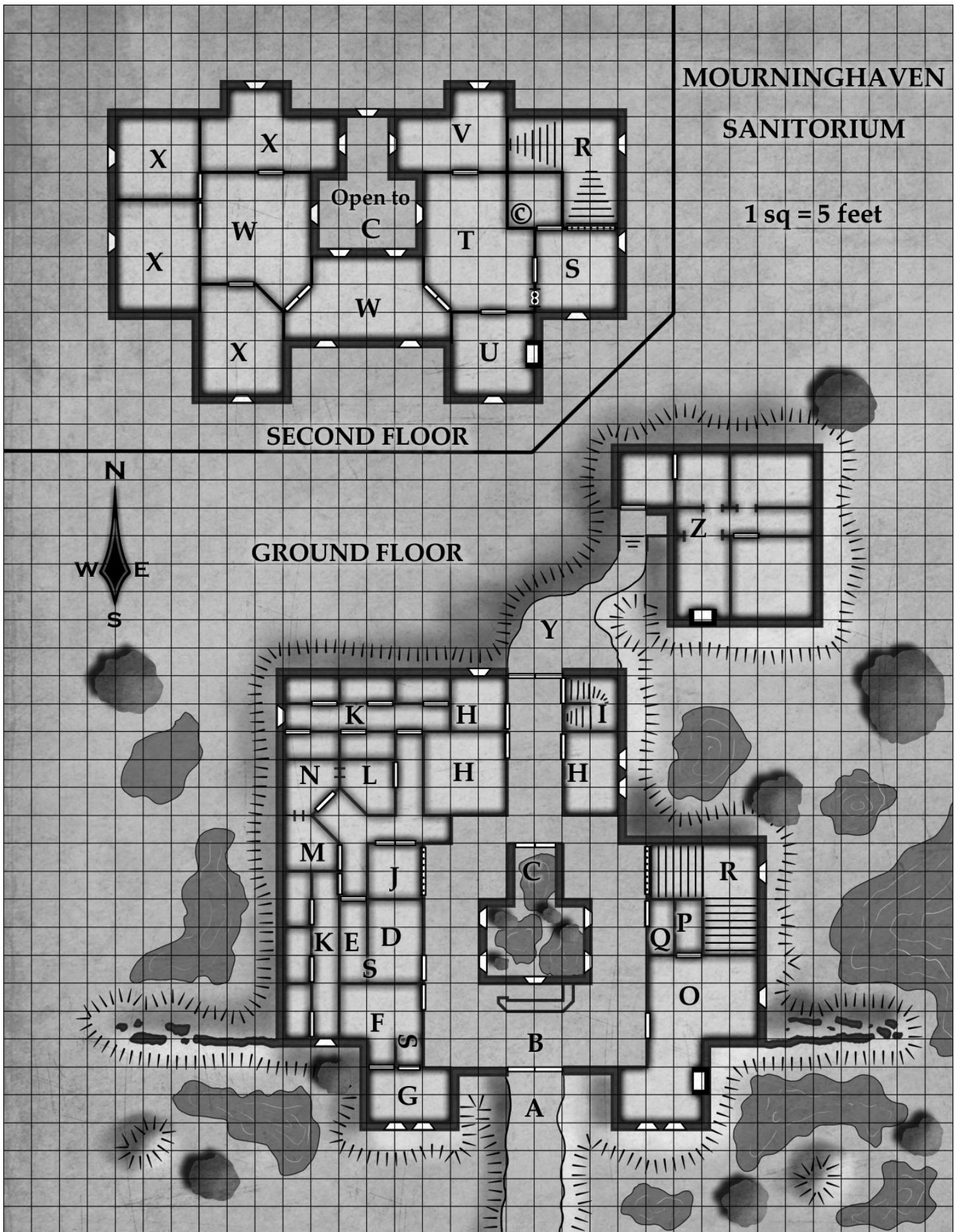
W. Common Areas (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Inmates are allowed to wander and congregate here during the day. There are a few chairs and tables. The doors are kept unlocked during these times.

X. Inmates' Quarters (keys: on-duty orderlies, Drusus) — Hard cots are crammed closely together in these rooms. The inmates are locked within at night, but the doors remain open during the day unless there is a lockdown. The southernmost room is for female inmates.

Y. Grounds — The mires have taken over most of the grounds leaving only stagnant pools and a few overgrown hillocks among the encroaching trees. One patch of high ground to the west holds several dozen wooden markers and serves as the burying ground for inmates who die. An overgrown gravel path runs from the backdoor to the curator's house.

Z. Curator's House (keys: Drusus) — This house is stoutly built of mold-encrusted red brick. Torches blaze on the front porch to ward away insects and worse. All of its windows have been bricked over. The furnishings within are old and prone to mildew. There are always two orderlies on guard duty in the front room whether Drusus is present or not. (2,500 gp)

THE MIRES OF MOURNING



MOURNINGHAVEN

SANITORIUM

1 sq = 5 feet

SECOND FLOOR

GROUND FLOOR



Event 4. Suspicious Welcome

This event occurs when the PCs ring the bell by the door or otherwise make their presence known.

A view port in the front door slides open and a human face appears, giving you a look over. Seconds later a lock slides and the door groans as it opens revealing a wide reception hall. A battered wooden counter stands across from the door, and the hallway extends deeper into the facility on either side. The once shining tiled floor is grimed with years of use, and the plastered walls are stained with mildew and worse. A hulking man in the white uniform of an orderly stands before you, ushering you in. He is soon joined by two more men, their uniforms bearing the spatters of old blood stains, and wearing hardened leather masks to protect them from the attacks of desperate inmates. Heavy clubs hang from wide leather belts.

Soon another man approaches, wearing the white coat of a physician. His face is wan and haggard, and his long gray hair blows errantly in the slightest breeze. In a voice like a creaking door he says, "I am Curator Drusus. Welcome to Morninghaven."

Curator Drusus and 3 **orderlies** meet the PCs at the front doors. The doors are secured behind the PCs as soon as they come in, with the orderly on duty giving a final nervous look outside before closing the portal. Drusus reviews the PCs' transfer orders before allowing them to enter any further. Though he is aware of who Haden is and has no intention of allowing him to leave, he makes a big fuss over examining the orders before having the orderlies admit him and escort him to away for processing. The PCs are not allowed to accompany him, and he is taken immediately to the northern area **K** and placed in one of the cells. Meanwhile, Curator Drusus will countersign the PCs' treasury writ, allowing them to cash it back in Keston for 500 gp (or more if they were able to negotiate the lord-governor higher).

Drusus answers few, if any, questions for the PCs, citing the need for the patients' privacy and security concerns for a facility of the Crown. He seems to be acting suspiciously and wants to be rid of the PCs as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, night is fully fallen and the rain has worsened so that any travel along the Swamp Road would be virtual suicide before first light due to the hazardous, muddy conditions that could dump an unsuspecting traveler into a hidden mire in a heartbeat. As a result, he allows the PCs to remain the night but informs them that they must depart at dawn. He allows them to stay in an unused bunkroom (the northern area **H**) but advises them that they are not free to roam around the facility and makes sure that there are always at least 2 **orderlies** hanging around outside their door. These lock the PCs in for the night. Any animals can be stabled in the relative shelter of the building's shadow right outside the back doors. Drusus then heads back to area **K** to begin questioning Haden. Unless the PCs make trouble, the night passes uneventfully until **Event 5** occurs.

Event 5. Midnight Raid

This event occurs around midnight while the PCs stay at the asylum.

The endless drone of the night rains is suddenly interrupted by a massive roar, like a clap of thunder, and then a heavy blow shakes the entire foundation of the building. There are shouts from the orderlies as a mad scramble ensues in the halls outside. Soon the sounds of combat reach your ears. The sanitorium is under attack!

Creatures: The asylum has come under attack by a force of **swamp brutes** accompanied by a **young black dragon**. The dragon has used its breath weapon to destroy a part of the northwestern corner of the building (area **K**) releasing several homicidal maniacs as well as Haden, while the

swamp brutes spread out through the asylum to eliminate any witnesses. The guards outside the PCs' room rush away to respond to the attack leaving the PCs free to try and get out. If the PCs remain in their room, eventually three swamp brutes smash down the door and attack. If the PCs leave their room, they find the two orderlies slain not far away. Every 3 rounds that they wander through the asylum, roll on the table below for encounters. Orderlies, swamp brutes, and maniacs, attack on sight. Other inmates attempt to flee into the night.

Sanitorium Attack Encounters

d%	Encounter
01-12	1d6 Panicked inmates
13-25	Escaped maniac
26-37	1d3 Mourninghaven orderlies
38-58	1d4+1 swamp brutes
59-74	Young black dragon
75-00	No encounter

ESCAPED MANIAC (RAGING): HD 5; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 great club (1d8); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: None; Gear: great club

MOURNINGHAVEN ORDERLY: HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 great club (1d8); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: None; Gear 2 tanglefoot bags; Other Gear +1 studded leather armor, leather mask, great club, sap, pouch with keys, 1d4 gp, and 3d10 sp

PANICKED INMATE: HP: 3 (See Mourninghaven Inmates above)

SWAMP BRUTE: HD 4+1; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or weapon (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Surprise opponents 1-3 on 1d6. (See appendix)

YOUNG BLACK DRAGON: HD 7; HP: 14; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (1d4) and 1 bite (3d6); Move 9 (Fly 24); Save 9; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Spits acid 3/day (5' wide, 60' long, 14 damage). (Swords & Wizardry Complete, pg 99)

Development: If the PCs search area **K**, they find Haden gone but eventually, regardless of where they go within the asylum, they spy Curator Drusus stumbling, wounded into his house. If they follow him, they find him collapsed in the entry room, badly seared by acid and a swamp brute spear point lodged in his shoulder—the poison on it coursing through his system. He cannot be saved. With his dying breath he confesses the secret history of the asylum (read or paraphrase "The Osterkrieg Legacy" but exclude the last two sentences). He admits that he has spent 30 years searching for the gold and learned that Osterkrieg's lieutenant, a half-elf knight named Haden Crestingdrake, also knew the secret location of the treasure.

Crestingdrake—who was often able to pass for a human—became a mercenary and disappeared until Drusus was able to determine that he had received a head wound and been placed in a convalescent home a decade ago with no one aware of his true identity. He admits that he forged the royal orders to have Haden transferred to Mourninghaven in order to extract the secret from him but includes that he was not alone in seeking Crestingdrake. Old Osterkrieg's own grandson, Vidas, has also been seeking Haden and has allied with the swamp tribes that used to work for his grandfather. He states it is Vidas who has to be behind the attack and who surely has Haden even now to be taken back into the swamp for questioning.

Chapter 3: Into the Swamp

After the PCs have talked to Drusus, the attack on the asylum dies down as the surviving swamp brutes retreat back into the mire. With the information provided by the dying curator, the PCs should have pretty good idea of what is going on and who has absconded with Haden—his corpse is not among those found within the sanitorium. The PCs can easily find a clear trail through the swamp that the swamp brutes arrived from and that the survivors have departed along. The rain has let up enough to follow it safely. The PCs can easily follow this trail as the best bet for locating Haden. Unfortunately for the PCs, Haden has not been taken by the retreating brutes as explained in **Chapter 4**.

After following the trail through treacherous mires for an hour, the PCs find that the trail grows less plain and the way more hazardous. In addition, the rain begins to fall harder. Continuing onward leaves a strong possibility of losing the trail and possibly even becoming lost among the uncertain footing of the mires. It would be safest for them to camp and recover from their ordeals (no wandering monsters attack their camp). If they choose to press on, allow them to do so, but they will likely be in poor shape to face the finale in **Chapter 4**. It takes four hours to reach the stockade; roll for random encounters normally (see **Chapter 1**).

The Old Stockade

Deep in the swamp is an old stockade fort. It was built in the time of Wilbane Osterkrieg and used as a meeting place and stronghold for the swamp brute tribes he employed to capture pilgrims on the Swamp Road. Abandoned for many years, it became the lair for a young black dragon named Asterise—the same dragon as was involved in the raid on the sanitorium. Recently it was rediscovered by Vidas Osterkrieg and his mercenary crew, who allied with the dragon and used the fort to rally the swamp tribes once again. As the PCs approach, read the following.

Through the tangle of vines ahead can be seen some sort of structure. It is an old stockade fort, part of its walls collapsed and all of it heavily overgrown by the swamp. The trail you have been following leads to a gap in the wall where a gate once stood. Thin trails of smoke rising from within reveal that it is inhabited.

A. Gate Guards (CR 5)

Lurking in the water here are **3 lizardfolk** and a **trained giant frog**. The black dragon Asterise has enslaved this lizardfolk tribe and uses them to guard its lair. The swamp brutes ignore sounds of fighting coming from here.

LIZARDFOLK (3): HD 2+1; HP: 12, 11, 7; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3) and 1 bite (1d6); Move 6 (Swim 12); Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Breathe underwater. (Lizardmen, Swords & Wizardry Complete, pg 107)

GIANT FROG: HD 2; HP: 10; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d8) or tongue (grapple); Move 9 (Swim 12); Save 16; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Leap. (The Tome of Horrors Complete, pg 629)

B. Back Entrance

A breach in the wall accesses the lair of Asterise. **Three lizardfolk** are in the water here guarding the lair. If Asterise is present in area C, he joins in the fight after 2 rounds.

LIZARDFOLK (3): HD 2+1; HP: 11, 10, 9; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3) and 1 bite (1d6); Move 6 (Swim 12); Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Breathe underwater (Lizardmen, Swords & Wizardry Complete, pg 107)

C. Dragon's Lair

This half-ruined structure serves as the lair of Asterise the **young black dragon**. If he survived the attack on the sanitorium, he is present recovering from the attack. If attacked, his roars bring the lizardfolk and swamp brutes in the fort to his aid in 1d6 rounds respectively.

YOUNG BLACK DRAGON: HD 7; HP: 14; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (1d4) and 1 bite (3d6); Move 9 (Fly 24); Save 9; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Spits acid 3/day (5' wide, 60' long, 14 damage). (Swords & Wizardry Complete, pg 99)

Treasure: Hoarded here is tribute from the lizardfolk and bribes from Vidas Osterkrieg totaling 895 gp, 1,270 sp, 3,508 cp, and five uncut gems worth 25 gp each.

D. Swamp Brute Camps

At each of these fires camp are **1d4 swamp brutes**—survivors of the raid. If they hear the sounds of combat at another fire, they respond in 1d3+1 rounds. They know nothing if questioned. Each camp has 2d20 gp worth of scattered coinage and small gems.

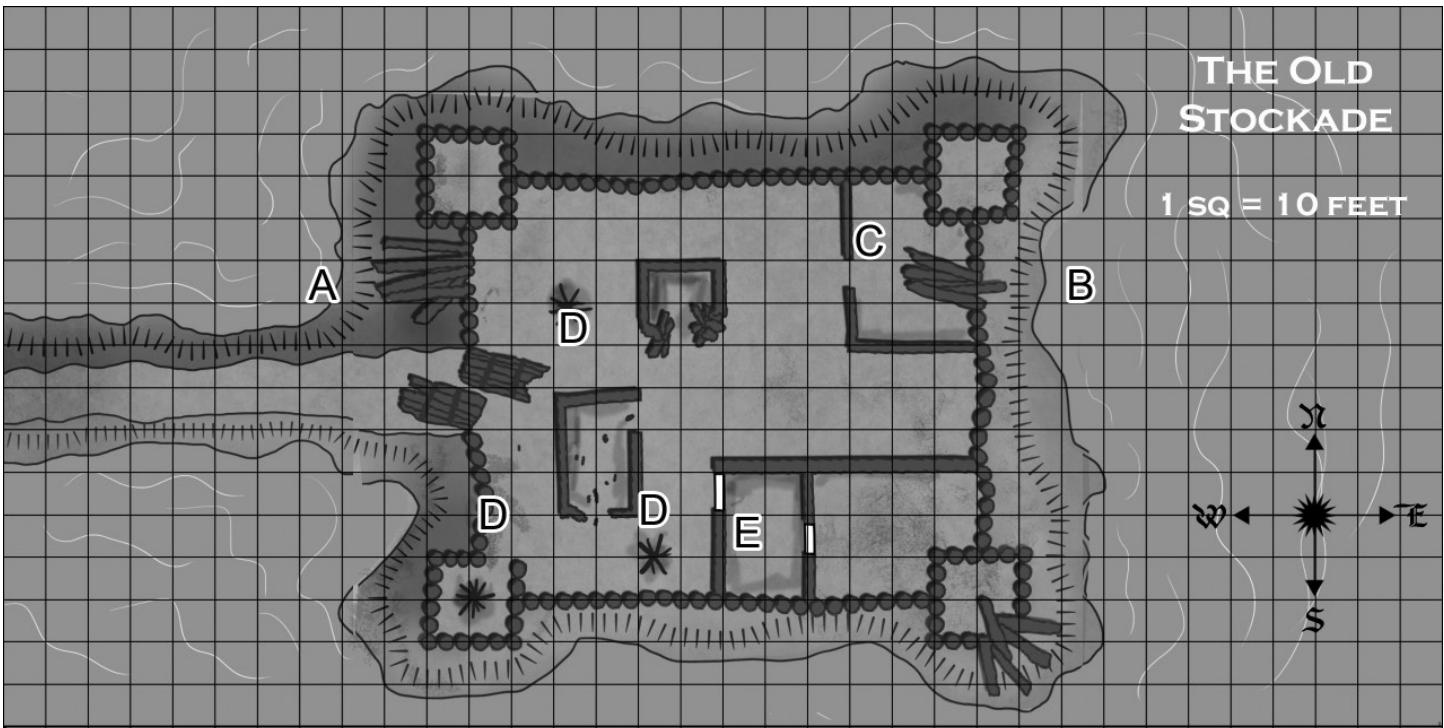
SWAMP BRUTES (1d4): HD 4+1; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or weapon (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Surprise opponents 1-3 on 1d6.

E. Commander's Camp

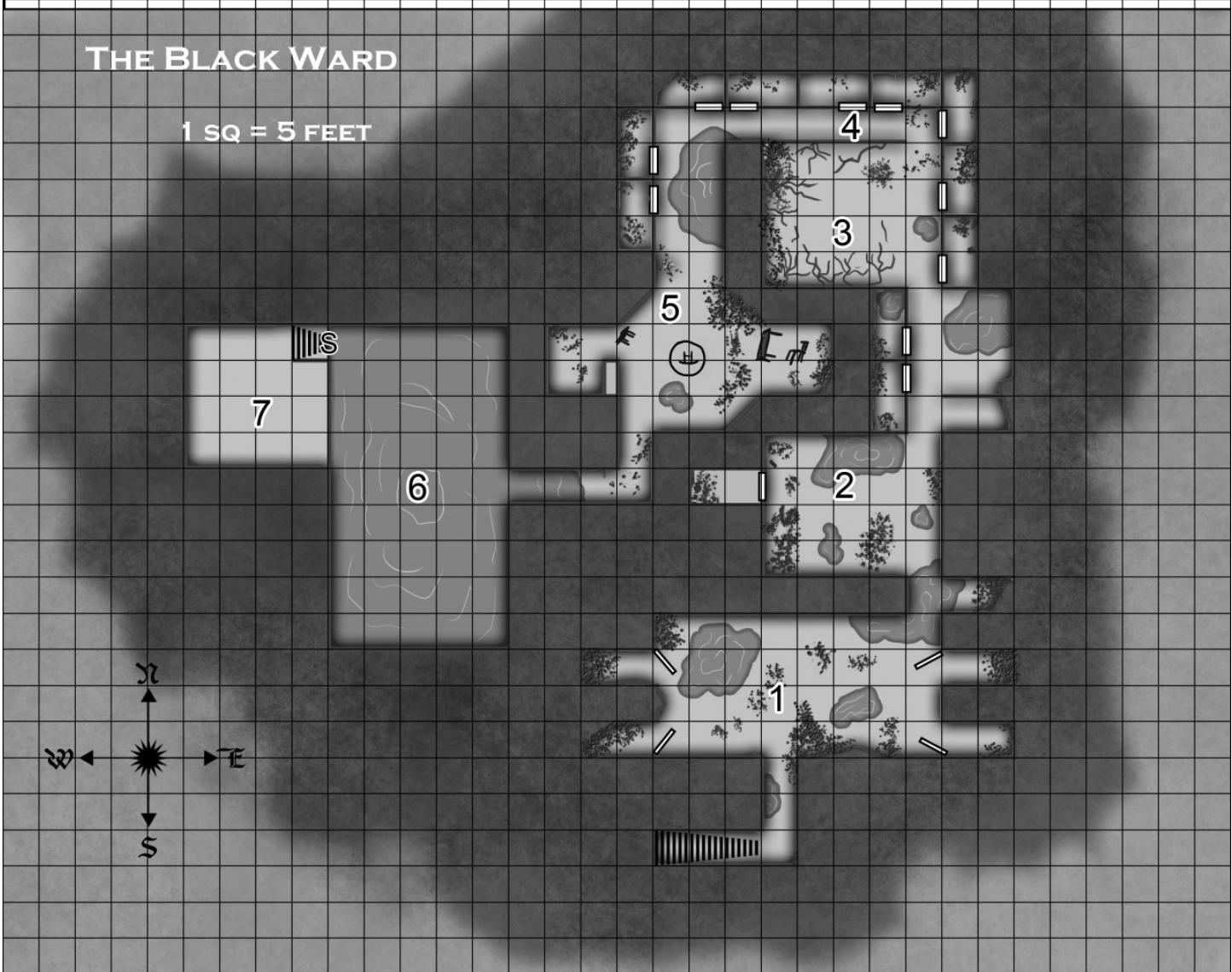
This intact building shows signs of recently served as the quarters for as many as a dozen men. The back room holds the leader's camp, complete with a brazier holding still-warm coals and some partially burned papers. None are legible except one page that can still be partially read. It says, “Grandfather hid the gold in the Black Ward on the grounds of the asylum, but only Crestingdrake knows its location. The old witch's potion should recover his memory and make him lead me straight to it.”

With the information gained in the stockade, it should be evident to the PCs that Osterkrieg never came back here but used a potion to get Haden to lead him straight to the Black Ward. They are likely already there, so the PCs have no time to lose in getting back to Mourninghaven. If the PCs are battered much, forgo any random encounters on the trip back.

THE MIRES OF MOURNING



THE BLACK WARD



Chapter 4:

The Black Ward

Mourninghaven Sanitorium has housed the insane of the Province of Keston for decades. The troubled, the demented, the lunatic—all forms of mental disturbance have been confined, and to some extent treated, in the infamous facility. Yet, some breeds of madness are worse than others. When a twisted mind mates with a corroded heart, the offspring is a uniquely perverse and vicious brand of evil. These poisoned souls are untouched by any human warmth or compassion, untreatable by any method known to man. Murderers, cannibals, serial killers—society could not bear to have them run loose and wreak havoc, yet political interests or scientific curiosity kept them from the hangman's noose. Too dangerous to be confined among the regular population of Mourninghaven, these monsters were placed in Baronet Osterkrieg's dreaded Black Ward.

When Osterkrieg fell from grace and his staff scattered, the Black Ward and all of its inhabitants were abandoned and forgotten. The new regime overseeing the facility had no knowledge of the ward, and its door was not only locked, but sealed. As the patients slowly starved to death in the near-airless dark, something dreadful happened; all of their misery and insanity and raving fear coalesced to create in them a horror beyond imagining. One by one, the inhabitants of the Black Ward perished and—in the throes of death—became something more.

Not only did the secret Black Ward house the worst of the worst, it also served as the perfect place for Wilbane Osterkrieg to hide his ill-gotten treasure reaped from the demise of innocent pilgrims and travelers. Deep within the ward's bowel lies a secret room where among the bones of the innocent victims, gold coins lie thick as dust.

The Current Situation

Vidas Osterkrieg, grandson of the sanitorium's former administrator, has finally located the Black Ward to claim what he thinks of as his inheritance: the ill-gotten gold of Baronet Wilbane Osterkrieg. To this end, Vidas orchestrated the attack upon the sanitorium in order to kidnap the near-catatonic Haden. He then fed him a magical brew to drag the memories of the invalid half-elf to the surface where he could remember the Black Ward's location. Vidas then dragged Haden to the secret ward and broke open the decades-old seals.

When they reopened the ward, two unthinkable things happened: first, Vidas and his minions were beset and overcome by the undead remains of some of the ward's former prisoners. Second, upon entering the Black Ward Haden finally broke through the decade-long mental haze he had endured...and remembered. He remembered the years of murder and rapine serving Wilbane Osterkrieg: the robbery, the looting, and the butchery. He remembered his years afterward on the run as a soldier of fortune: the sack of cities and the slaughter of innocents. He remembered who he really was.

In that moment of remembrance, the invalid Haden became the foul-hearted villain Lord Crestingdrake as he had been so many years before and, in that instant, the deranged spirits of the Black Ward recognized a kindred rage and blood-lust. They seized upon Haden, entered him, warped and twisted him, killing his black soul and replacing it with something blacker still. The spirits spoke to him of years of pent-up fury and unhinged glee, and they spoke to him of blood money—the treasure of Wilbane Osterkrieg. Leaving Vidas and his embattled men behind to die, Haden passed, unmolested, deeper into the ward to embrace his own dark legacy.

The Voice in the Dark

During the course of this adventure Haden speaks to the PCs, his voice echoing hollowly through the ward's defunct ventilation system. The spirits of the ward keep him informed of all that befalls the adventurers, and Haden mocks every failure and insults every flaw. Though he seemed catatonic at the time, Haden remembers when the PCs escorted him to Mourninghaven and is especially vicious toward those he felt demeaned him or that showed some weakness of their own for him to latch onto with merciless glee.

Examples of things he might say include: "Such tender mutton, perhaps you should try a taste as well," if a PC is bitten badly by a ghast; "From a fool springs a fool; from what did you spawn?" when the PCs defeat Vidas; "The sounds of freedom from concerns are inviting, are they not? Perhaps you should embrace purity and join us," when the PCs encounter the babbling of the allip; "Their blood still flows, though bones they be," at any random moment; and a long sigh followed by the whispered word, "Delicious," if one of the PCs should be killed.

Entering the Black Ward

When the PCs arrive back at Mourninghaven, they find that little has changed since they departed other than that it is now deserted—all surviving servants, inmates, and orderlies having fled down the Swamp Road for Keston and the swamp brutes having retreated back into the mire. The halls within are awash with blood and scavenging vermin from the deadly battle that recently took place. There are no random encounters.

Now that the PCs know that the Black Ward is somewhere on the asylum grounds and that Vidas has likely found the entrance with Haden's help, they can begin searching for it. They find upon one hillock of broken rubble and tangled undergrowth approximately 100 yards northwest of the main building that a minor excavation has occurred in its side revealing a once-buried portal. This door has been flung open revealing a stair descending into darkness within. Following this stair leads to room 1 below.

Features of the Black Ward

The Black Ward began to sink into the mire before even Osterkrieg assumed control of the asylum, and it is a crumbling ruin filled with swamp seepage and the lunatic screams of the undead. Its walls are of decayed and crumbling masonry and are covered with intrusive roots and slime, and in most places its cracked and uneven flagstone floor is covered in several inches of foul, stagnant water. Due to the slickness of the floor and its instability, it is considered difficult terrain. The long-rotten, broken remnants of devoured corpses can be found tucked in corners and behind piles of shattered furnishings. The air is stale and unwholesome with a faint, unidentifiable stench, and there is no light whatsoever, making for a claustrophobic, tomblike atmosphere almost tangible with the horrible deaths of so many tainted souls.

I. Chained Hunger

The ravages of time and the mire above have taken their toll on this room. The floor is swamped in dark, fetid water, and the walls are smeared with slime and filth. Naked ends of roots hang listlessly from the cracked ceiling. A tenebrous sphere of darkness sits in the center of the room, twenty feet across and reaching from the floor to the ceiling. From the murky guts of the sphere come the sounds of smacking, slobbering lips and the cracking of bones. The charnel reek of this place is overbearing.

Once a reception area, this chamber now holds only broken furniture and few holding cells, their doors hanging open on corroded hinges.

Creatures: Three ghosts, formerly known as the Shank Brothers, lurk within this black sphere. The Brothers Shank were scum in life—thugs who preyed on any travelers they could ambush in the wilds of Keston and beyond. One winter five decades ago during a fierce blizzard, they became snowed-in and trapped in a trading station high in the Eirtun Pass. As the weeks wore on and supplies ran out, they stalked and slew the families that ran the trading post, feasting on their bodies. With each new victim and each new meal, the brothers found themselves changing, gaining ferocious strength and unnatural health. When the spring thaw came, they came down from the pass with a newfound hunger for human flesh. The Shank Brothers then went on a rampage, killing and eating—seemingly unkillable. They were in the village of Ruh-Kabel, drunk on liquor and blood, when the Royal-Marshall and his troops arrived to arrest them. The brothers were to be summarily executed, but when evidence of the disease they carried and its ability to be transmitted was discovered, they were sent to Mourninghaven for further study.

In the Black Ward, they were bound with chains and placed in a secure observation room. By the time Wilbane Osterkleig realized that they were actually undead rather than just homicidal lunatics, he decided they could prove useful in his schemes. When the ward and its residents were abandoned, the brothers were ultimately able to break free of their bonds and prey upon their fellow trapped inmates, but they never completely shed their chains—they are still anchored to each other and none can go more than 2 squares from the others. Strangely over time the soul-infested darkness of the ward gathered round them, forming a globe of impenetrable darkness that follows them wherever they go.

They ambushed Vidas Osterkleig and his party as they entered the Black Ward. Vidas fled while the ghosts feasted on his former compatriots. As soon as the ghosts become aware of the PCs, they attack. They attempt to encompass prey in their darkness and then gang up on them. They gain a trip attack with their dangling chains whenever they hit with a claw attack, pouncing on anyone who falls. They don't resemble normal ghosts in that their skin tone and features are still those of living—if completely deranged—men. One of them still has the gnawed remains of Vidas's snake animal companion caught in his unnaturally sharp teeth.

THE BROTHERS SHANK (3): HD 4; HP: 17, 15, 14; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4 + paralyze) and 1 bite (1d6 + paralyze); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Immune to sleep and charm. Successful attacks require a save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. Elves are immune. Stench: all within 10 feet must succeed at a saving throw or suffer a -2 to attack rolls. The Brothers Shank are engulfed in a 10-ft. radius globe of supernatural darkness, which causes all opponents to have a -2 to attack rolls. It is centered on a point in between the three ghosts. Only the death of all three ghosts causes the darkness to dissipate. The ghosts can see through it with their see in darkness ability.

Treasure: The partially devoured corpses of twelve warriors—Osterkleig's men-at-arms—lie piled on the floor. Their chainmail, light wooden shields, and short swords are mundane, but among them they have a total 225 gp.

2. The Last Osterkleig

This chamber is empty of all save a single door opening off to one side. Its door hangs open just a crack and a skeletal hand protrudes partially from the threshold.

Creature: Hiding within the broom closet is none other than **Vidas Osterkleig**, lost heir of old Wilbane and last of an ignominious line. Nothing more than a petty bandit for much of his life, strangely, Vidas actually died several years ago. However, the spores of the odd swamp fungus that killed him caused his body to reanimate as a fungal creature. Working on base instinct alone for many months, the new fungal Vidas was able to piece together much of his former life and discovered once again the secret of Wilbane's treasure. Simultaneously energized and repulsed by his new existence, Vidas has spent the last several years marshaling his resources in order to locate and plunder the Black Ward in hopes that the money will help him find a cure for his condition.

Vidas resembles his old self a great deal—black beard and hair, pinched facial features, and a lazy eye—but now his face is further adorned by shelf fungi, mushrooms sprout from his shedding scalp and beard, and an odor of wet, putrid flesh hangs perpetually over him. He waits behind the door of the closet with his bow readied to fire as soon as someone opens it, having placed the skeletal hand there as a lure. He then releases his spore cloud and remains in the closet while fending off attackers with his axe. If reduced to 10 hp, he pleads for mercy but attempts to backstab anyone showing mercy at the first opportunity.

VIDAS OSTERKLEIG, 8th Level Ranger: HD 9; HP: 41; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 +1 battleaxe (1d8+1) or 2 short bow (1d6); Move 12; Save 6; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Tracking, Alertness, Giant/Goblin slaying, Scholar of Healing Magic (see Ranger class description, S&W Complete), Create Spawn, Fungal Metabolism, Poison Spore Cloud, Poisonous Blood, Rejuvenation (see below); **Gear** wand of cure light wounds (8 charges), chain mail, light wooden shield, brooch of shielding (50 hp, see appendix), +1 battleaxe, 2 daggers, short bow, quiver of 11 arrows, feather token (anchor, see appendix), signet ring, pouch with 35 gp.

Create Spawn: The body of a creature killed by damage from a fungal creature's spore cloud is slowly transformed into a fungal creature. This transformation takes 1 day. Once fully converted the creature can no longer be raised, but can still be resurrected or reincarnated. The application of *plant growth* halves the transformation time, and *hold plant* doubles it. A *neutralize poison* spell destroys the fungal spores and prevents transformation, but spells that remove disease are ineffective.

The fungal creature lacks the class levels and memories of the creature from which it gained its form. The creature begins as a 1st-level Fighter.

The fungal creature awakens as a free-willed being knowing all it needs to know (including language) in order to use its abilities and survive. Although it bears no allegiance to the fungal creature that created it, the new fungal creature immediately recognizes other fungal creatures as its own kind.

Fungal Metabolism: Fungal creatures do not breathe, nor do they need to eat or sleep in the typical manner. They gain all the sustenance they require from contact with moist natural earth, but they require rejuvenation (see Rejuvenation) as often and for as long as humans need sleep.

Poison Spore Cloud: Once per day, Vidas can release a choking yellow cloud of spores in a 15-foot-radius radius. The spore cloud lingers visibly in the air for 10 rounds, but it dissipates normally on the wind. Each breathing creature in the cloud must succeed on saving throw or lose 1d2

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points of Constitution and be at -1 to hit and damage for 1 minute. After 1 round, the creature must succeed on a second saving throw (whether or not it succeeded on the first) or lose 1d2 points of Constitution and be at -1 to hit and damage for 1 minute (and move at half speed if the save was already failed once). A creature that continues to inhale the spores continues to make saving throws against this effect. Creatures that are immune to poisons are immune to the fungal creature's poison spore cloud.

Poisonous Blood: Vidas's blood and flesh function as ingested poisons. Any creature that makes a bite attack against him, or otherwise ingests part of him is affected by the poison. Those affected must succeed at a saving throw or be unable to act.

Rejuvenation: So long as it is in contact with moist natural earth, a resting fungal creature regains hit points at 3 hit points per level for each day of rest. The fungal creature can engage in light activity during rejuvenation, but any strenuous activity (fighting, running, casting a spell, and so on) prevents it from regaining hit points for that day.

3. Swamp Preserves

This moldering space appears to be a boggy garden. Trailing vines climb the walls and a variety of plants shoot up from the murky water; water lilies, asp-orchids, drowning creepers and more all bloom in the dank gloom. The sporadic sound of droplets falling from the ceiling punctuates the silence.

At one time, this room served as a place to store food and other sundry items for the Ward, but various aquatic and bog plants have now made it their home.

Creature: A **basidirond** has taken root here, suckling on minerals that descend from the swamp above but would certainly prefer fresh blood to its present diet. The odd plant uses its hallucination cloud to disorient its foes. Then it uproots to move forward and attack. It resembles an inverted umbrella with several stems of dark brown hanging beneath it. The inside of its cone-shaped top is inky black.

Basidirond Hallucination Cloud

Rather than confusing an opponent, you can randomly determine hallucinations for each creature affected. The duration remains the same as detailed under the creature's special attack.

1d8 Hallucination

- 1 Individual believes he is in a swamp and strips off gear and armor to avoid sinking.
- 2 Individual believes he is being attacked by a swarm of spiders. He attacks the floor and surrounding area.
- 3 Individual believes item held has turned into a viper; drops item and retreats back from it.
- 4 Suffocation—Individual believes he is suffocating and gasps for air and clutches throat.
- 5 Individual believes he has shrunk to 1/10 normal size. He begins yelling for help.
- 6 Individual believes his associates have contracted a disease. He will not come closer than 10 feet.
- 7 Individual believes he is melting; grasps self in attempt to hold together.
- 8 Individual believes his back is covered with leeches. He tears armor, clothing, etc. from his back to get at them.

BASIDIROND: HD 5; HP: 23; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 slam (1d8 + spores); Move 9; Save 12; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Hallucination cloud, spores, immune to cold damage, slowed by cold. (The Tome of Horrors Complete, page 45)

Spores: A basidirond's slam attack transfers smothering, poisonous spores to its opponent. A creature struck must succeed on a saving throw or smother in 1d4+1 rounds unless a remove disease spell is cast on them.

4. A Grief for the Ages

This cell looks like every other, drenched in seepage from the bog above and affixed with various restraining chains and straps on the wall and ceiling. However, a heart-rending sense of sorrow and anguish pours forth from the enclosed space.

A century past, an impetuous bralani (see appendix) called Xander the Illuminated fell deeply in love with a lillend (see appendix) named Anac'Orli. To test his devotion, the lillend sent him on several difficult and dangerous missions. The lovesick celestial returned each time victorious, and each time the beautiful maiden fell more deeply in love with him. When Xander completed the seventh and final task, he joyfully returned to Anac'Orli's abode only to find her home destroyed and her servants slain. The lady herself was missing. For decades, the grieving bralani searched for his lost love but never found her. Eventually, he gave up all hope and, seeking forgetfulness and oblivion, had himself committed to the Mourninghaven Sanitorium. Not really knowing what to do with this strange but obviously powerful creature, Osterkrieg placed him in the Black Ward for study and incarceration. When the ward was abandoned, the celestial succumbed to his own enveloping despair and perished.

The bralani's sorrow has left behind a powerful residue in the form of a haunt. When any living creature looks into the cell, the haunt manifests. When this haunt is triggered, the image of the grieving celestial—still held in the shreds of a straightjacket—appears and implores any witnesses, "Where is she? Tell me now; tell me where she is!" All creatures who see this must make a saving throw or suffer a -1 to attack, damage, and saving throws from crushing despair. If a cleric casts *bless* within the cell, the haunt is laid to rest. In addition, everyone within a 20-ft. radius receives the benefits of the *bless* spell.

Treasure: Though Osterkrieg did not know it, Xander actually kept his favorite weapon on hand, hidden behind the leather padding on the walls. A find secret doors check in the cell locates the unstrung +1 longbow behind the shredded remains of the padding. A simple bow string will bring it back to working order.

5. Siege Perilous

A metal chair stands on a dais in the center of the floor, its legs bolted to the stone beneath. Metal straps and hooks hang from its arms and its back, instruments used to brutally restrain the seat's occupant. Broken desks and tables poke out of the muck. A curious burbling mutter fills the air, echoing and re-echoing through the dismal chamber.

One of the more distinguished inmates of the Black Ward was a man called Sipe. He was brought in by the Royal Guard, having been convicted of the despicable crime of impersonating nobility yet judged not guilty by reason of insanity. In his lunacy, he claimed to be the Lord-Governor of Keston himself (a lord-governor prior to the current Lord Cormien). Sipe insisted upon that claim over the many years he was held in the Black Ward, but obviously no one gave him any credence.

Sadly, he actually was the Lord-Governor of Keston. Through various underhanded deeds and political obfuscations, he'd been replaced by a doppelganger. Sipe, in his claims to be the governor, was completely

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sane and in his right mind... for awhile. The years of imprisonment, the screams and babblings of the insane, the bizarre experiments and mind games performed upon him by the suspicious Osterkrieg, and the special torturous "throne" that Osterkrieg had fashioned for him finally drove him over the edge and into the waiting arms of madness. When the ward was abandoned, the lord-governor—still confined to his chair—found a way to slit his own wrists, spilling his blue blood onto the common floor.

Creatures: In his death the lord-governor became an **allip**, a creature of boiling darkness and mad screams. Now, he waits to spread his madness to any who come upon this chamber.

ALLIP: HD 4; HP: 24; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 strike (touch of insanity); Move 12 (Fly 12); Save 13; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Immune to non-silver or non-magical weapons, immune to sleep and charm, babble, madness, touch of insanity.

Babble: The Allip constantly mutters to itself in a cycling pattern, hypnotizing onlookers. All within 60 feet must pass a saving throw or stare stupidly at the Allip for 2d4 rounds. Attacks made by the Allip do not end this effect.

Madness: Anyone targeting the Allip with any sort of mind influencing or mind reading spell or ability makes contact with its tortured mind and loses 1d4 points of Wisdom (no save).

Touch of Insanity: The Allip causes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage and gains 1d6 hit points with each strike. Being incorporeal, the Allip's claws do no normal damage.



6. The Prodigal's Return

The pooled water covering the floor in this room is perfectly still and smooth. Suddenly, the murky water explodes upward as a hail of disconnected bones shoot forth and fly wildly through the air. Haden's disturbing voice slithers through the gloom.

"Hail the conquering heroes! I'm glad to see you've made it, my brave escorts, my slave escorts, my dears. There is much death here, and I'm alone and afraid. All the beds unmade. All my veins are frayed. All my births decayed..."

The whirling bones fall to the water with a slap, and a figure rises from the pool in the center of the room. It is Haden, but warped and mangled beyond imagining. Dark blood courses from his eyes, his nose, and mouth. His body is twisted and shattered, bones poking through his skin and clothing. He lifts a claw-tipped hand and inspects it closely, exulting as blood seeps from under his wicked nails.

"Come closerclosercloser and still closer," Haden pleads as blood seeps from the walls and reaches yearningly toward him.

Once a room for experimentation of inmates, this chamber is now 2 feet deep in water.

Creature: The insane spirits of the Black Ward have infested this evil man, bending his wicked will to their own and creating a **bleeding horror**. The bones are those of former inmates of the ward, gathered here to focus their deranged power. After the PCs have been subjected to his horrific appearance, Haden uses his *bloodstorm* ability and then focuses his attacks on whichever PC showed the most weakness or compassion during their trek to the asylum. He is unaffected by the bloodstorm. He fights maniacally until destroyed at which point the spirits leave his corpse in an explosion of blood from his every pore.

HADEN CRESTINGDRAKE: HD 6; HP: 31; AC -1[20]; Atk 2 claws (1d8 + blood consumption); Move 12; Save 11; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Blood consumption, horrific appearance, +1 or better weapon to hit, magic resistance (10%), bloodstorm 3/day (See Sidebar). (The Tome of Horrors

Complete, pg 59)

Blood Consumption: When a bleeding horror successfully hits a living opponent with a claw attack, it heals a number of hit points equal to the damage dealt. However, it can't gain more than the subject's current hit points, which is enough to kill the subject. A bleeding horror can't gain more hit points than the maximum hit points allowed by its Hit Dice. If a bleeding horror hits an opponent with both claw attacks in a single round, that opponent suffers catastrophic blood expulsion, taking 1d4 points of constitution damage. A successful saving throw reduces the damage by half. For each point of constitution damage dealt, a bleeding horror gains 4 temporary hit points. Any creature slain by the blood consumption attack of a bleeding horror becomes a bleeding horror in 1d4 minutes under the command of its creator.

Horrid Appearance: A living creature within 60 feet that views a bleeding horror must succeed on a saving throw or take 1d6 points of strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's strength below 0, but anyone reduced to strength 0 is helpless.

New Spell

The spell *bloodstorm* originally appeared in *Relics & Rituals* by **Sword & Sorcery Studio** and is reproduced here for your convenience.

BLOODSTORM

Spell Level: Magic-User 3

Range: 150 ft.

Duration: 1 round/level

This spell summons a whirlwind of blood that envelops the entire area of effect and has several effects on those caught within it. First, those in the area must make a saving throw or be blinded by the swirling blood while they remain within the whirlwind and for 2d6 rounds after leaving it. Second, all attacks within the area have a -2 penalty to attack rolls, including ranged attacks fired into it. Third the blood deals 1d4 points of acid damage per round of exposure to the whirlwind.

7. Wilbane's Bequest

The floor is dry in this room. Stacked like cord wood are the desiccated corpses of dozens of men and women—many obviously tortured—wearing the simple traveling robes of pilgrims. A calm seems to surround them amidst the madness of this place. Around this macabre collection sit five iron-bound chests, their wooden seams splitting from years of exposure to the damp. One chest's side has given way spilling a cascade of gold onto the dusty floor.

Here is where Baronet Osterkrieg hid his treasure and the evidence of his dark deeds. A quick search among the corpses reveals many bearing the symbols of Mitra on their garb. These are the murdered pilgrims kidnapped by Wilbane.

Treasure: The chests are unlocked and hold the source of so much death and tragedy. Stored with them are coins, gems, and small valuable items worth a total of 65,300 gp, though the combined treasures weigh over 500 lb.

Conclusion

With Vidas defeated, the spirits of the mad laid to rest, and the treasures of old Baronet Osterkrieg recovered, the PCs have some decisions to make in regards to their next move. They can certainly take the treasure and return to Keston and claim their payment—no one would miss the extorted gold. However, if they choose, they may try to repatriate the pilgrims' blood money to the church of Mitra, for which they would surely be rewarded and possibly hired for future endeavors. Finally, they may simply continue to adventure in the area, using Mourninghaven as a base of operations. Surely many secrets remain to be discovered in the Creeping Mire.

Appendix: New Items, Magic Items, and Monsters

Items

Healer's Kit: This kit allows a Cleric to increase a subject's natural healing ability from 1 hp/day to 1 hp/level/day for non-fighting types and 2 hp/level/day for fighting types. It is usable ten times.

Tanglefoot Bag: Bag filled with a glue-like substance, requires attack roll to hit but ignores Armor. Immobilizes one man-sized or smaller humanoid for 2d4 rounds unless a Open Doors check is passed. Additional checks may be made by close non-stuck characters should this initial check fail.

Magic Items

Brooch of Shielding: An odd silver or gold brooch which can absorb damage dealt by magic missiles. Generally a brooch can absorb 101 points of damage in this way, often they are found with some of this capacity already expended, such as in this adventure.

Feather Token (Anchor): a token that creates an anchor capable of mooring a craft in water for up to 1 day

Monsters

Allip

Undead creature composed of boiling madness and dark screams.

ALLIP: HD 4; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 strike (touch of insanity); Move 12 (Fly 12); Save 13; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Immune to non-silver or non-magical weapons, immune to sleep and charm, babble, madness, touch of insanity.

Babble: The Allip constantly mutters to itself in a cycling pattern, hypnotizing onlookers. All within 60 feet must pass a saving throw or stare stupidly at the Allip for 2d4 rounds. Attacks made by the Allip do not end this effect.

Madness: Anyone targeting the Allip with any sort of mind influencing or mind reading spell or ability makes contact with its tortured mind and loses 1d4 points of Wisdom (no save).

Touch of Insanity: The Allip causes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage and gains 1d6 hit points with each strike. Being incorporeal, the Allip's claws do no normal damage.

Bralani

A dwarfish extraplanar fey.

Chuul

A humanoid-lobster with a mouth full of flailing tentacles.

CHUUL: HD 8; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (3d4) or tentacles (paralysis); Move 12 (Swim 8); Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: If struck by tentacles, victim must save or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.

Gray Render

A large, gray humanoid with several asymmetrical yellow eyes and a toothy maw.

GRAY RENDER: HD 9; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (2d6 or rend); Move 12; Save 7; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Render may attack weapons or armor in lieu of doing damage. Victim must save (with a bonus to the roll equal to any magical enchantment the item possesses) or the item is destroyed.

Lacedon

A ghoul that inhabits a body of water.

LACEDON: HD 2; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3 + paralysis) and 1 bite (1d4 + paralysis) Move 9 (Swim 9); Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Immune to sleep and charm. Successful attacks require a save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. Elves are immune.

Lillend

Spirits of inspiration and art that looks like a beautiful elven woman with the lower bodies of serpents. Rainbow-hued feathered wings sprout from their shoulders.

Mosquito Swarm

A large group of normal mosquitoes.

MOSQUITO SWARM: HD 3; AC 8[11]; Atk swarm (1d6); Move 6 (Fly 15); Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Blood drain 1 hp/turn when fighting the swarm in melee.

Swamp Brute

A tribe of primitive bugbears that lead a crude, barbaric existence.

SWAMP BRUTE: HD 4+1; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or weapon (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Surprise opponents 1-3 on 1d6.

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This series of adventures takes place in the frozen north, where men are men, beer is ale and monsters are, well, scary. Who has not loved the setting of the 13th Warrior or wished to relive the Frost Giant's Daughter by R.E. Howard? Heroes will fight evil in the cold lands, sail the treacherous ice filled seas where sea monsters swallow ships and crews and feast in fire-lit halls with Vikings! This series is sure to send shivers up even the bravest adventurer's spine!

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