

The Melford Murder

by Stuart Marshall

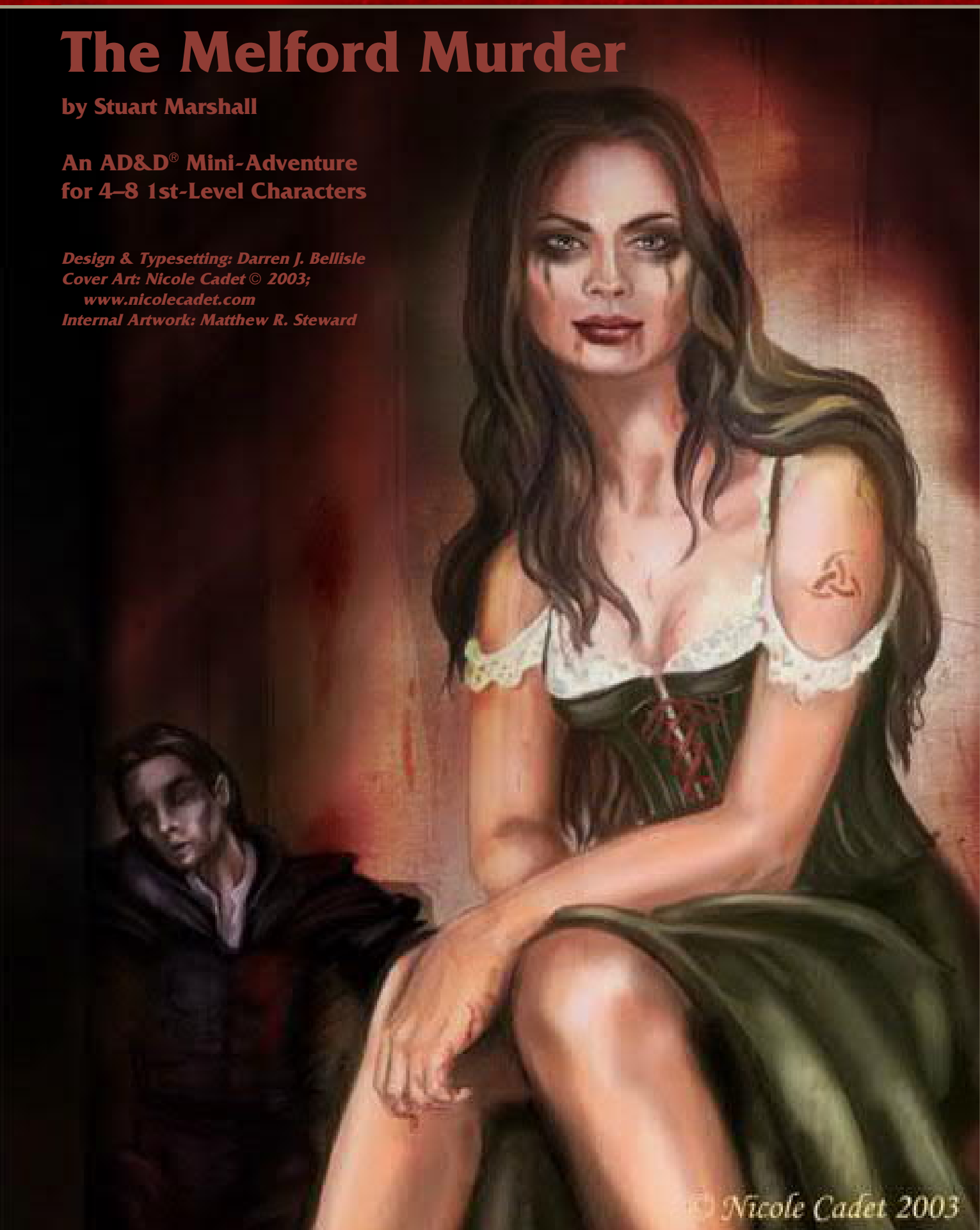
**An AD&D® Mini-Adventure
for 4–8 1st-Level Characters**

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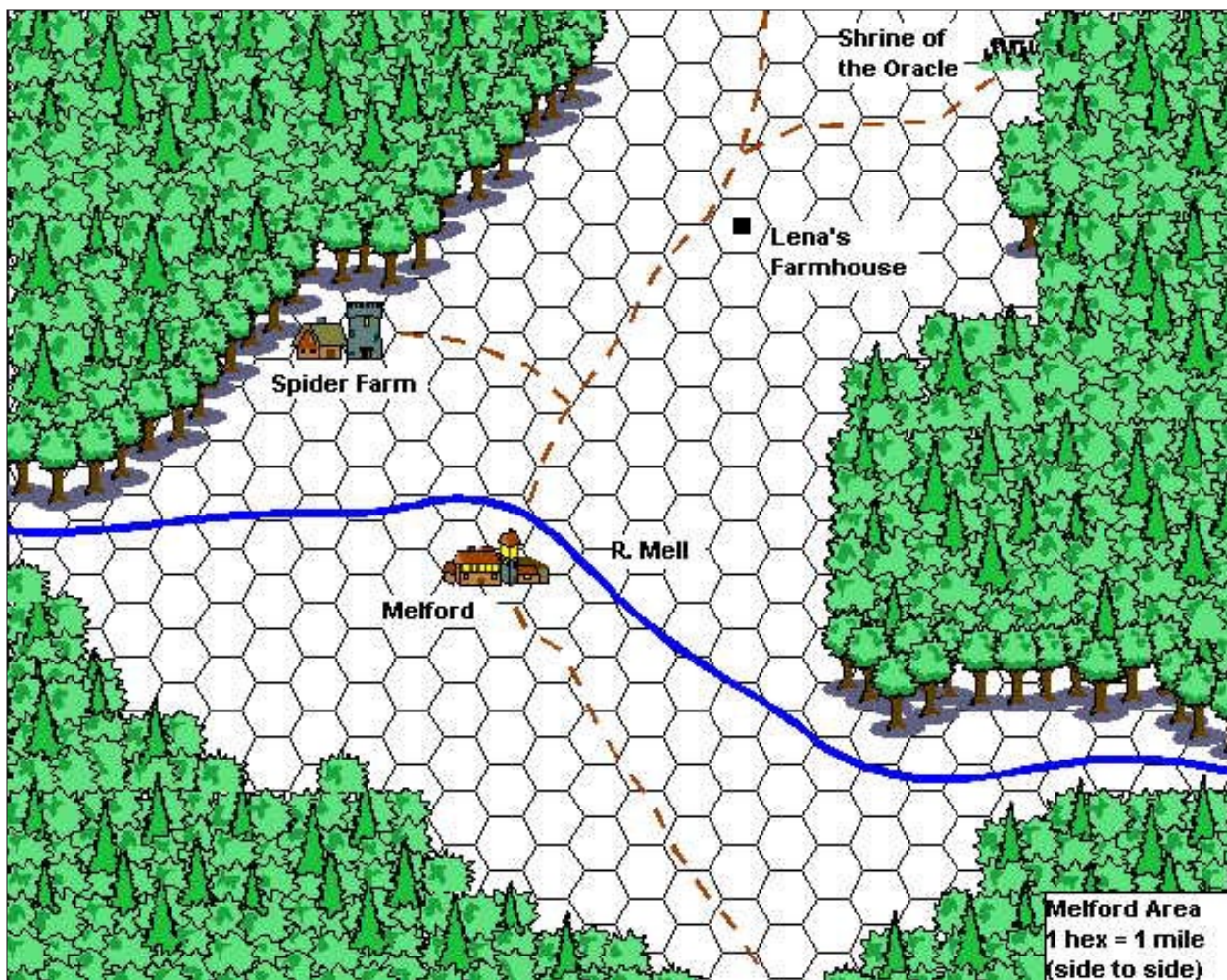
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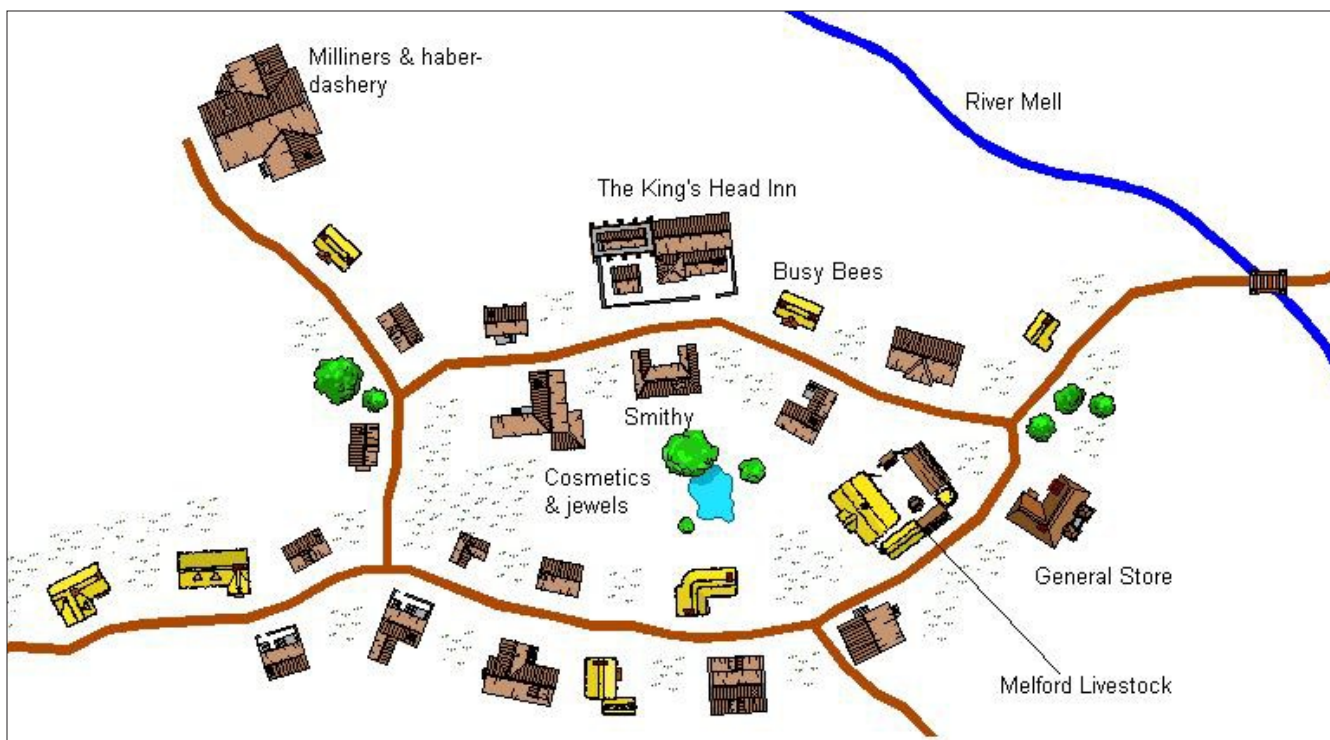


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Melford and surrounding areas

The village of Melford



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The Melford Murder is a whodunnit, and therefore needs to be handled with considerable care by the DM. I am aware that not all groups of players have the same enthusiasm for obscure clues and piecing together evidence. Therefore, I have provided two versions of *The Melford Murder* for the DM to choose from to suit the players available.

The Victim

Gerrit Wkye, o-level human male, and co-owner of the King's Head Inn (with his sister, Lena).

Gerrit *may* still be alive at the beginning of the adventure, depending on whether or not the entire module series (*The Spider Farm*, *The Melford*

Murder, and *Shrine of the Oracle*) is used. If all three are used, the PCs will be in Melford when a farm worker (who escaped the shadow goblin attack at the spider farm: see *The Spider Farm*, p. 1) arrives, begging for help. This will give the PCs time to meet some of the characters in this module *before* the murder takes

place, including Gerrit. If this module is played as a stand-alone adventure, Gerrit will *already* have been killed when the PCs arrive in Melford. In either case, Lena Wyke, Gerrit's sister, claims to have discovered his body in the inn's stable the morning after his death.



The Crime Scene

The stables of the King's Head Inn: Gerrit's body is discovered there, killed by a single blow from an edged weapon, most likely a sword, although no weapon was found near the body.

The Suspects

Irena Yar

First-level assassin, posing as a blacksmith: S16 I13 W7 D15 C15 Ch8, human female, age 34, AC 7 from leather jerkin and dexterity, move 12", hp 6, dam 1d4 (smithy hammer), AL LE.

Irena Yar appears very competent and offers a variety of weapons and armour as well as the usual village blacksmithing services. On a good roll on the reactions table (cf. *DMG*, p. 63, any result of "friendly" or higher), she might be persuaded to divulge a rumour if she knows one (see "Melford Rumours Table," on page 2).

Irena's Price List

Chain mail hauberk	75 gp	Scale mail hauberk	50 gp	Arrows, in quiver, 12	3 ep
Helm, small	12 gp	Studded leather	16 gp	Arrows, 12	1 gp
Padded gambeson	3 gp	Shield, round	12 gp	Axe, hand	1 gp
Bow, short	16 gp	Bowstring, spare	1 gp	Dagger & sheath	3 ep
Hammer	1 ep	Javelin	1 ep	Mace, flanged	5 ep
Mace, spiked	5 gp	Morning star	5 gp	Sling	1 ep
Sling bullets, 20	1 ep	Spear	1 ep	Longsword	20 gp
Scabbard and baldric	3 gp	Hanging loop*	1 sp	Haft, ash*	1 sp
Haft, hickory*	7 cp	Haft, softwood*	3 cp	Horseshoeing	3 sp

*For axe, mace, or hammer.

She can sometimes be found in the King's Head Inn of an evening, drinking mead and swapping tall tales. She lives with her cat in an apartment over the smithy.

Deborah Snaid

Milliner, o-level human: S9 I14 W10 D11 C10 Ch10, human female, age 51, AC 10, move 12", hp 1, dam 1d3 (knife), AL LN.

Her high-quality clothing establishment is successful because of its famous silks. (If *The Spider Farm* module is being used, then Deborah will be very friendly with Ulayah Reyn—so friendly, in fact, that they have arranged to be married this summer.)

Deborah's Price List

Gents' Clothing		Ladies' Clothing	
Britches, linen	4 sp	Gown, linen, plain	3 gp
Britches, silk	6 sp	Gown, linen, fancy	8 gp
Britches, woolen	2 sp	Gown, embroidered silk	15 gp
Tunic, linen	5 sp	Apron	2 sp
Tunic, woolen	3 sp	Shift, silk	1 gp
Tunic, embroidered silk	2 gp	Dress, linen	3 gp
Doublet, linen	2 gp	Dress, woolen, plain	4 sp
Hose, linen	5 sp	Cape/shawl, woolen	5 sp
Cloak, woolen	5 sp	Cape/shawl, silk-lined	2 gp
Cloak, silk-lined	2 gp	Wimple, linen	3 sp
Cap	1 sp	Wimple, silk	2 gp
Breechclout & socks, linen	1 sp	Breechclout & hose, linen	1 sp
Turnshoes, leather	1 gp		

Deborah is a widow. She might be persuaded to divulge a rumour to anyone who buys something and takes the time to indulge in small talk—no reaction roll is required, as she is extremely gossipy and will say anything to anyone. She lives alone in an apartment over her shop. Occasionally she dines in

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Melford Rumours Table

False rumours are denoted by *italics*. The DM will need to exercise caution and logic in revealing rumours. For example, Deborah is not likely to express rumour 01–06 to the players, so some results may need to be rerolled. Only PCs with high Charisma who take time to talk with the NPCs will generally be successful in obtaining rumours.

% Roll	Rumour
01–06	The local spider farm is a scary place. <i>The proprietor is an evil man who would have you thrown into the spider pit as soon as look at you.</i>
07–12	To the north, there is a shrine to a monolith of some kind. <i>It is secretly an evil blood cult.</i>
13–20	A party of adventurers disappeared recently on an expedition to a local dungeon. Their bodies have yet to be recovered.
21–26	Weird creatures, like goblins but with blue-black skin, have been seen hereabouts of late.
27–31	One of the villagers is really a <i>vampire</i> but nobody knows who it is.
32–40	There are two tribes of orcs with encampments hereabouts. Their feuding could break out into open warfare at any moment. (DM note: see page 7.)
41–44	The Darkshroud Peaks, several days' journey to the north of here, contain a <i>thriving</i> dwarfish citadel called Morrikul Zane. (DM note: This is partly false. Morrikul Zane is no longer thriving.)
45–50	One of the local orc tribes has joined forces with a human bandit village. If they attack Melford, the constabulary are too weak to prevent them from destroying the town. (DM note: see page 7.)
51–56	Ulayah Reyn, owner of the spider farm, is one of the richest men in the area.
57–61	Maenae, High Priestess at the Shrine of the Oracle, is a very powerful cleric. She is said to have the power to raise dead people back to life.
62–69	Felona Vedane, who runs the cosmetics and jewellers' with her husband, is having an affair with another man, and her husband knows all about it.
70–71	Lena and Gerrit, who run the King's Head Inn, had a big argument recently about whether to sell a plot of land out the back to the beekeeper. Lena wants to sell it, but Gerrit won't hear of the idea.
72–00	Villager knows no rumours of interest or value.

the King's Head Inn, but she thinks of herself as far too refined to drink into the evening with the hoi polloi.

Brad Jennings

Storekeeper, 0-level human: S12 I13 W15 D9 C10 Ch10, human male, age 43, AC 10, move 12", hp 2, dam 1d3 (knife), AL LN.

Brad, owner of the general store, is a simple, honest man with little time for the idle or the lazy, but he is cheerful and respectful to those he thinks are working hard to better themselves. He offers decent quality goods at fair prices:

Brad's Price List

Knapsack, leather	2 gp	Tent, basic	6 sp	Tent, pavilion	25 gp
Backpack, framed	3 gp	Candle, tallow	1 cp	Candle, beeswax	5 cp
Tentpegs & tarpaulin	5 gp	Bedroll	1 ep	Grappling hook	5 gp
Lantern, basic	3 gp	Lantern, hooded	6 gp	Lantern, bullseye	8 gp
Saddle	10 gp	Bit, bridle & stirrups	1 gp	Saddlebags	5 gp
Pouch, drawstring	1 ep	Cauldron & tripod	3 gp	Rope, 50'	2 sp
Skillet	2 gp	Waterskin	1 ep	Charcoal, sack	2 sp

On a good roll on the reactions table (any result of "friendly" or higher) he can be persuaded to divulge a rumour if he knows one.

If *The Spider Farm* module is used, then the ropes Brad sells will be made of braided, treated spider silk that he buys from Ulayah, making them exceptionally light and strong.

Brad can often be found in the King's Head Inn after dusk, drinking dark beer and smoking his briar pipe. He is in love with Deborah, but she has rejected his advances, believing him too common and cloddish for a lady of her refinement.

Reiner Vogg

Livestock keeper, 0-level human (with orc ancestry): S13 I15 W7 D8 C13 Ch6, human male, age 37, AC 10, move 12", hp 3, dam 1d4 (club), AL NG.

The proprietor of Melford Livestock, Reiner Vogg is a slovenly, ugly-looking man (his mother was a half-orc) with a sarcastic attitude, and he is unpopular with the villagers. However, he knows his animals, and he cares for them well. On a good roll on the reactions table ("friendly" or higher) he will tell the players a rumour if he knows one. To simulate Reiner's care and the quality of his animals, roll each hit die for any animal he sells twice, and retain the higher roll.

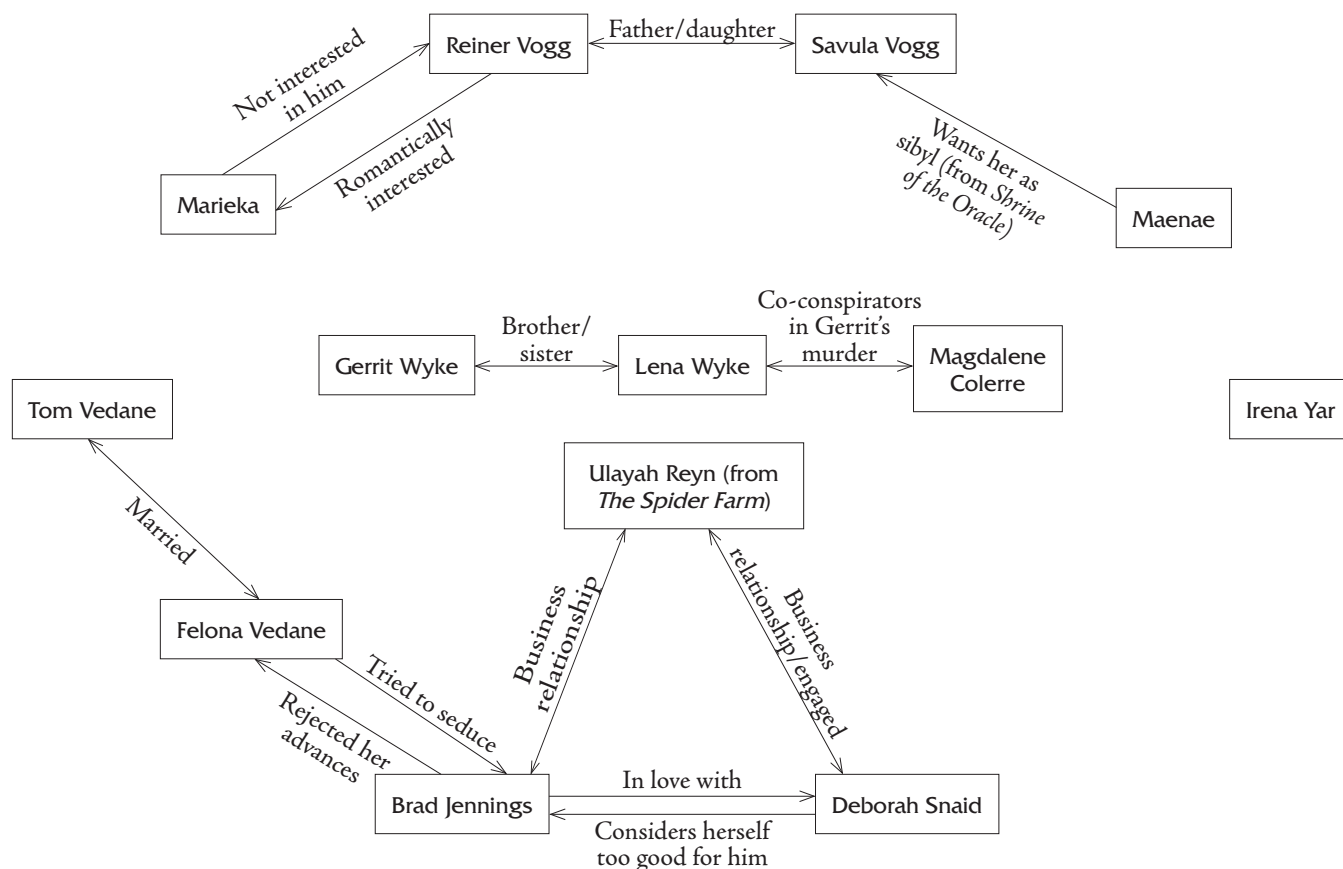


Diagram of various NPC interactions

Reiner's Price List

Mule	20 gp	Pony	20 gp	Donkey	10 gp
Horse, lady's palfrey	30 gp	Horse, riding	30 gp	Horse, draft	20 gp
Dog, hunting	15 gp	Dog, guard	20 gp	Cow	10 gp
Sheep	3 gp	Goat	5 gp	Chicken	5 sp

Reiner does not drink in the inn. He is a widower, though still in his mid-thirties, and lives in a small house near his corral with his daughter Savula.

Savula Vogg

o-level human (with orc ancestry): S12 I16 W17 D7 C12 Ch6, human female, age 14, AC 10, move 3" on crutches, hp 1, dam 1d4 (crutch used as a club), AL CG.

Savula is crippled, born with two club feet. She is also rather unattractive, favouring her father's side of the family. However, she is an extremely intelligent and thoughtful child, and if the *Shrine of the Oracle* adventure is used, then the High Priestess of that religion (Maenae) will already have approached Reiner about making Savula a future sibyl.

Tom and Felona Vedane

Tom Vedane, jeweller, o-level human: S8 I9 W8 D15 C10 Ch11, human male, age 31, AC 10, move 12", hp 2, dam 1d3 (knife), AL LN.

Felona Vedane, cosmeticist, o-level human: S9 I10 W11 D12 C10 Ch10, human female, age 29, AC 10, move 12", hp 2, dam 1d3 (knife), AL LN.

Tom and Felona's Price List

Soap, bar	1 sp	Needle, copper	1 cp	Thread, 10'	1 cp
Soap, aged & scented	1 ep	Needle, silver	1 sp	Ring, silver	1 gp
Comb, horn or antler	1 ep	Comb, wooden	5 cp	Pin, cloak, bronze	1 ep
Brooch, cloak, bronze	1 ep	Dice, pair, bone	3 cp	Earrings, pair, silver	1 gp
Brooch, cloak, silver	3 ep	Vellum, sheet	1 gp	Parchment, sheet	1 ep

Tom Vedane and his wife Felona run a neatly kept cosmetics and jewelry shop. They are relative newcomers to Melford, having lived here only half a dozen years, and they still feel lonely and friendless. Each will disclose a rumour to anyone



who buys something and makes the time to indulge in small talk—no reaction roll is required. Tom and Felona sometimes eat in the King's Head Inn together. They live in a small flat over their shop.

Magdalene Colerre

This NPC is actually a monster in disguise, a pēnanggalan. In her human form, her profession is beekeeping ("Busy Bees"), and she is also a 2nd-level magic-user: S9 I16 W12 D10 C11 Ch14, AC 10, *apparent* human female, age 33, hp 4, dam 1d4 (dagger), AL detects as LN; spells: *sleep*, *languid lassitude* (new spell: see p. 11). In her true pēnanggalan form, she is AC 8, move 12", HD 4, hp 18, #AT 1, dam 1d6, AL LE; see *Fiend Folio*, pp. 71–72, for her various special attacks and powers. She keeps her spellbook in her bedroom; it contains the following spells:

- *Read Magic*
- *Charm Person*
- *Affect Normal Fires*
- *Sleep*
- *Languid Lassitude*

"Magdalene Colerre" is a spinster in her mid-thirties. She makes a reasonable living selling honey to the villagers and to the King's Head Inn (for mead) and beeswax to Brad Jennings (for candles). She does not sell anything of likely interest to a party of adventurers, unless they like honey (she charges 1 sp a pot for it).

On a good roll on the reactions table (any result of "friendly" or higher) Magdalene will tell the players a rumour if she knows one.

There is no reason why the players should suspect that she is a pēnanggalan when they initially encounter her, and the DM should not draw their attention to her true nature. However, if a suspicious PC snoops around her house at night for some reason, they will observe that there is a small barrel of pickling vinegar kept open in the kitchen and that Magdalene sleeps with a first-floor window open. A player who notices these things and has an encyclopedic knowledge of obscure AD&D® monsters *might* deduce Magdalene's true nature. The player should be encouraged to roleplay his or her character's ignorance, since a low-level character is unlikely to know anything about pēnanggalans.

Lena Wyke

Innkeeper, 0-level human: S10 I15 W13 D12 C10 Ch14, human female, age 27, AC 10, move 12", hp 3, dam 1d4 (dagger), AL NE.

Lena, co-owner of the King's Head Inn with her brother, Gerrit Wyke, is also his killer.



The inn is the centre of village social life for many of the inhabitants of Melford. On a good roll on the reactions table (any result of "friendly" or higher), she might be persuaded to divulge any rumours that she knows about.

Marieka

Marieka is one of the members of the town constabulary. There are fifteen full-time constables, all 0-level humans. All wear scale mail armour and carry halberds, truncheons (treat as clubs), and slings. Their stats are: AC 6, move 9", hp 5, #AT 1, dam by weapon. Nine are male and six are female; the DM should determine who has what weapon.

(Over and above the full-time constables, in time of war, every able-bodied adult in Melford would be called out to join the fight. Theoretically, over 150 combatants could take the field if the town itself were threatened.)

One Module, Two Versions

The *Minor Melford Murder* should be used if the players are not adept mystery solvers and want a pleasant evening's entertainment rather than a challenge to their powers of deduction.

In the *Minor Melford Murder*, the players need only talk to everyone who was in the King's Head Inn on the night of the murder. If they follow up each person's story, they are virtually

guaranteed to solve the murder and identify the perpetrator. The Minor Melford Murder is more of an excuse for some roleplaying than a puzzle.

The Major Melford Murder should be used if your players prefer to get their teeth into a more challenging mystery that will require some genuine thought in order to solve it. With the Major Murder, there is a real risk that the players will *not* be able to identify the murderer.



Wilderness Encounters—Melford Area

Roll for wandering monsters three times each day and once each night; a monster will appear 1 in 12. If an encounter is indicated, roll percentile dice and consult the following table:

% Roll	Encounter	Details
01–14	2d6+3 brigands from the Goat Skull Clan roster (see page 6)	The brigands will not attack if paid off with at least 30 gp.
15–26	1d4 wild boars	If one is encountered alone, it will be a rogue male, very ornery; if more than one, they will be a mated pair (with or without piglets). Mated pairs will not attack if treated with proper respect, but a rogue male will usually charge on sight.
27–34	2d6 wild dogs	The pack will be rabid on a 1 on 1d8 (if rabid, attack is guaranteed, and the party will need a <i>cure disease</i> afterwards); otherwise they can easily be distracted with food.
35–36	2d6 dwarves from the hills to the north	They are here to sell their mutton, wool, or tin. Enquiries about other matters will not usually be welcome.
37–38	2d6 elves from the woodlands to the east	They are here on a lark, and they will gently mock non-elves and be unhelpful with enquiries. (This will change if the characters are in serious trouble; under these circumstances, the elves will help.)
39–40	2d6 gnomes from the foothills	They are here to sell their mead, wine, or pottery. Enquiries about other matters will not usually be welcome.
41–42	2d6 halflings from the south	They are here on a religious pilgrimage that they do not wish to discuss. They will seek to avoid contact if possible.
43–49	2d4 jermalines	They will seek to pilfer whatever they can. If attacked, they will scatter and hide but will attempt to return and steal some more later; they will flee for good if the characters kill more than three of them.
50–56	1d4 lionesses	They are after the party's horses, ponies, or mules; a party with no riding animals is of no interest to them.
57	Special NPC	Roll 1d4; see NPC subtable, p. 7.
58–65	2d6+2 orcs from the Goat Skull Clan roster (see page 6)	The orcs will attack unless paid off with at least 30 gp
66–73	3d4 orcs from the Red Tusk Clan roster (see page 6)	These orcs will attack on sight if there are elves or dwarves in the party; otherwise they can be bribed not to attack with at least 50 gp.
74–90	2d6+3 patrolmen	There is a 5% chance that they will be corrupt ("Show me your weapons licenses! You know there's a 100 gp fine for carrying one of those without a license?"). If not corrupt, they will be helpful, provided the party is not on the run from the law locally.
91–97	Snake	A poisonous snake creeps into a boot, backpack, or bedroll during a rest stop. It won't bite if it's spotted before anyone treads on it and is subsequently handled correctly.
98–99	3d4 vultures	They will attack only if the party is very weak (limping home wounded, etc.).
00	Werebear	Yael, the werebear, looks like a pretty peasant girl in human form. She will react well to good-aligned PCs and will render assistance if necessary. She will try not to reveal that she is a lycanthrope. She is here on business of her own and cannot tarry long.



Orc Clans: Red Tusk vs. Goat Skull

The Red Tusk Clan

The Red Tusk clan of the Rotting Eye tribe has its base in the hills to the north. They are pure orcs, and so they hold the other orcish clan (the Goat Skulls) in contempt because the latter consort with and interbreed with humans. Both clans are part of the Rotting Eye tribe, so although they bully one another, they are not at war. The Red Tusk clan lives in a stockaded village* with three catapults and three ballistae (these are manned by the females so as not to reduce the fighting force.) There are no ogres.



The Goat Skull Clan

The Goat Skull clan is much weaker than the Red Tusk clan but compensates by associating with human brigands. The brigands and the Goat Skull clan have dwelt together for years, and there is considerable interbreeding. For convenience's sake they are described as if either human brigands or orcs, but in practise many of these are half-orcs who favour one parent or the other.

The Goat Skull clan lives in an informal camp like human brigands would. The location of this camp changes frequently, since the leaders are very concerned about being tracked back to their lair and attacked.

Red Tusk Clan Roster


- + 15 orcs with sword and flail—hp 5 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 30 orcs with sword and spear—hp 5 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 30 orcs with axe and spear—hp 5 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 30 orcs with axe and halberd—hp 5 each, AC 6 (no shield)
- + 30 orcs with axe and crossbow—hp 4 each, AC 6 (no shield)
- + 30 orcs with axe and short bow—hp 4 each, AC 6 (no shield)
- + 15 orcs with sword and battle axe—hp 5 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 30 orcs with spears—hp 4 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 30 orcs with axes—hp 4 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 60 orcs with halberds—hp 5 each, AC 6 (no shield)
- + 30 "assistants" with sword and spear—hp 8 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 10 leaders with sword and battle axe—hp 8 each, AC 5 (shield)
- + 1 subchief with axe and spear—hp 11, AC 4
- + 10 subchief guards with axe and spear—hp 11 each, AC 4
- + 1 chieftain with sword and flail—hp 16, AC 4
- + 20 bodyguards with sword and flail—hp 15 each, AC 4
- + 1 witch doctor with staff—hp 16, AC 6—5th/4th level cleric/magic-user
- + 1 witch doctor's assistant with staff—hp 8, AC 6—2nd/2nd level cleric/magic-user
- + 150 females—hp 3 each, AC 9
- + 300 young—hp 2 each, AC 10

Goat Skull Clan Roster

- + 10 brigand cavalry with medium horse, chain/shield, and sword—hp 4 each, AC 4
- + 10 brigand cavalry with light horse, leather/shield, and spear—hp 3 each, AC 7
- + 10 brigand horse archers with light horse, leather armour, and light crossbow—hp 3 each, AC 8
- + 40 brigand infantry with leather/shield and sword—hp 4 each, AC 7
- + 10 brigand infantry with leather and halberd—hp 3 each, AC 8
- + 10 brigand archers with leather and light crossbow—hp 3 each, AC 8
- + 10 brigand archers with leather and short bow—hp 3 each, AC 8
- + 10 orcs with sword and flail—hp 5 each, AC 5
- + 20 orcs with sword and spear—hp 5 each, AC 5
- + 20 orcs with axe and spear—hp 5 each, AC 5
- + 20 orcs with axe and halberd—hp 5 each, AC 6
- + 20 orcs with axe and crossbow—hp 4 each, AC 6
- + 20 orcs with axe and short bow—hp 4 each, AC 6
- + 10 orcs with sword and battle axe—hp 5 each, AC 5
- + 20 orcs with spear—hp 4 each, AC 5
- + 20 orcs with axe—hp 4 each, AC 5
- + 40 orcs with halberd—hp 5 each, AC 6
- + 20 "assistants" with sword and spear—hp 8 each, AC 5
- + 7 leaders with sword and battle axe—hp 8 each, AC 5
- + 1 subchief with axe and spear—hp 11, AC 4
- + 7 subchief guards with axe and spear—hp 11 each, AC 4
- + 1 chieftain with sword and flail—hp 15, AC 4
- + 10 bodyguards with sword and flail—hp 13 each, AC 4
- + 100 female orcs—hp 3 each, AC 9
- + 100 human women—hp 3 each, AC 9
- + 300 assorted young—hp 2 each, AC 10

* No maps/treasure lists for the Red Tusk village and Goat Skull encampments are provided, since it's unlikely that the PCs will attack either location.

Wilderness Encounters—Special NPC Subtable

1d4 Roll	NPC	Stats	Details
1	Zhrukhu Glol Dwarf fighter, level 1	S15 I17 W8 D11 C16 Ch8 Chain mail, military pick, and shield. AC4, HD 1d10+2, hp 9, #AT1, dam by weapon, AL variable (see details)	Zhrukhu is insane, suffering from schizophrenia. When first encountered, and 50% of the time thereafter, he will be: AL LG and virtually incapable of communicating intelligently (a serious case of post-traumatic stress disorder). He spends most of his time clenched in a fetal position, alternately whimpering or screaming about “the doom that came to Morrikul Zane.” His other personality is: AL CE; psychopathic and cunning. Will attack the party first chance he gets, crying, “Die, dwarf slayers!” Given a choice of targets he will attack a PC dwarf first.
2	Azaelin N`Rek Drow male fighter/magic-user, level 1/1	S9 I17 W10 D16 C9 Ch7 Chain mail and two long swords. AC3, HD (1d10+1d4)/2, hp 5, #AT2, dam by weapon. Spell: <i>sleep</i> . AL CN	Azaelin is a survivor of one of the losing houses in a drow power struggle, hence his exile to the surface. The magical properties of his mail and swords have long since decayed. His spell book contains: <i>sleep</i> , <i>read magic</i> , <i>detect magic</i> , and <i>spider climb</i> . He is impoverished, and his belt pouch contains no more than a couple of coppers. Azaelin is a potential henchman if approached correctly by a chaotic character.
3	Cadellin the Yellow Human monk, level 1	S15 I12 W15 D16 C14 Ch8 Wields a Staff. AC10, HD 2d4, hp 5, #AT1, dam by weapon + 1/2 (rounded to +1). AL LN	Cadellin is returning to his monastery following a trip to the Old Kingdoms to pay the monks’ taxes. He has no possessions other than a staff, robe, sandals, and a couple of days’ rations. The player characters are likely to mistake him for a magic-user when they first meet him. Cadellin will delay his return to the monastery and become a henchman if he can be convinced that this is a good way to serve the cause of law. He will only become a henchman to a lawfully aligned character.
4	Elizabeth (“Beth”) Tallienne Human female paladin, level 1 	S13 I9 W14 D14 C15 Ch17 Plate mail, mace, and shield. AC2, HD 1d10+1, hp 9, #AT1, dam by weapon. AL LG.	Beth will introduce herself as a knight seeking to win her spurs. She talks like a seasoned adventuress, but following a recent encounter with a group of goblins, she’s realized that she’s nowhere near as tough or competent as she’d thought. She would gladly join a predominantly good-aligned party. Although her pride will prevent her from actually suggesting this, if asked, she’ll sign on like a shot. She has 53 gp in her saddlebags. Beth will keep quiet about the fact that she’s partly deaf. This is no problem when she’s talking to people normally because she’s proficient at reading lips, but in battle when she’s wearing her helm, she will be unaware of changes of plan or shouted commands. She’ll just do what she thinks she ought to be doing and hope nobody notices.

If in doubt, you should probably choose the Minor Melford Murder. Both versions involve the killing of Gerrit Wyke, co-owner of the King’s Head Inn. He is slain in the stables of that inn by a single blow from a short sword. (NB: The stables of the King’s Head Inn are different and separate from the livestock stables owned and maintained by Reiner.)

The constabulary is at a loss to find out who committed the murder, so they have posted a reward for information about who did it. This reward is 100 gp in the case of the Minor Melford Murder, or 250 gp if the Major Melford Murder is used.

The Minor Melford Murder

In this version, the players know that the murder must have taken place at around 7 P.M. At that time, only a few people were inside the inn:

- Irena Yar
- Deborah Snaid

- Brad Jennings
- Tom and Felona Vedane
- Lena Wyke
- Magdalene Colerre

The only route which will be productive in the Minor Melford Murder is to hear the statements of each of these seven people. The inept investigations of the constabulary have obliterated any clues that might be found at the site of the murder.

The following is what each NPC will say when questioned: the DM should provide answers appropriate to the questions posed by the PCs.

Irena:

- Lena was in and out of the common room serving dinner.

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- At around seven, Brad was outside the inn, and she thinks that Felona might have been outside as well. Both had presumably gone to the privy.
- Brad and Tom were both fairly drunk that night.

Deborah:

- She thinks that Lena was arguing with Magdalene at the time of the murder. It seems that there was a dispute over the split of money from the sale of mead in the tavern, and Lena and Magdalene were discussing this in the brewing cellar. She remembers hearing their raised voices.
- She thinks that Tom and Felona were having an argument that night as well.

Brad:

- He admits that he was as drunk as a lord.
- He was out at the privy when the murder must have taken place.
- He saw Reiner, the animal breeder, hanging around outside the inn.

What Brad *isn't* telling is that Felona was outside with him, doing her level best to seduce him. Brad rejected her advances, and he doesn't want to cause a scandal or embarrass Tom, so he doesn't see it as anyone else's business what she was doing.

Tom:

- He was very drunk that night.
- He remembers that Lena was arguing with Magdalene in the beer cellar at the time of the murder.

He will also make much of the fact that Brad was outside the inn at the time of the murder. Tom suspects that Brad was trying to seduce his wife (which isn't true; *she* was trying to seduce *him*), and so he would love it if Brad were blamed for the murder.

Felona:

- She claims that she was outside, but she was just going to the privy (this is not true).
- She remembers seeing Reiner hanging around the inn.

What Felona *isn't* telling is that she was trying to seduce Brad, basically in order to spite her husband, but she will not admit this if she can avoid it.

Lena:

- She claims that she was in the beer cellar arguing with Magdalene about mead.

This is a flat-out lie! She was murdering her brother in the stables.

Magdalene:

- Claims she was in the beer cellar arguing with Lena about mead.

This is also a lie; she is covering for Lena. Magdalene is an accessory to the murder.

Taking all these accounts into consideration, the PCs will want to talk to Reiner as well.

Reiner:

- He was hanging around the inn because he had an assignation with Marieka from the constabulary and he was due to meet her there, but she stood him up. (If asked directly, Marieka will rather shamefacedly admit that this is true. She didn't have the heart to tell Reiner that she didn't want to meet him, but she didn't want to turn up either.)
- He saw Felona kissing Brad outside the tavern.
- He saw that the hatch from the beer cellar on the side of the inn was open.

This should be sufficient for the PCs to deduce that either Lena or Magdalene is the murderer, and the other is an accessory to murder. If directly questioned, Lena will deny everything, but Magdalene will point the finger at Lena in order to save her own skin.

At this point, the constabulary will order a search of the inn and Magdalene's home, which will reveal the sword used to stab Gerrit in Lena's quarters, along with a copy of Gerrit's will, which leaves his interest in the King's Head Inn to his sister. In Magdalene's home, the searchers will find a letter of credit from Lena to Magdalene for 100 gp.

You should move to the section of the adventure entitled "The Chase" from here.

The Major Melford Murder

In this version of the murder, the events are as described for the Minor Melford Murder except that (a) Reiner failed to see the open cellar door, and (b) the constabulary's investigation hasn't destroyed any clues. The players will have to search the inn's stable for clues.

Inside the stable, where Gerrit's body was found, there are two sets of tracks, Gerrit's and the tracks of a largish man leading into the stables, and the large man's tracks are the only ones leading out. Unfortunately, the man stepped out onto the cobbled road, so it is impossible to identify which way he went.

The DM should season this section of the adventure with red herrings according to his or her taste and the mystery-solving ability of the players. For example: the PCs could find a recently cleaned short sword concealed in the hayloft of the stables and a marriage license showing that Gerrit had secretly married Reiner's fourteen-year-old daughter, Savula, and lied about her age in order to marry her. (The sword is actually Gerrit's; he uses it to threaten customers who make trouble when in their cups. The marriage license is a forgery planted by

Lena to implicate Reiner.) The DM can add extra red herrings if the players are super-sleuths.

Please note that in the Major Melford Murder, the incriminating documents from the Minor Melford Murder (the will and the letter of credit) are *not* available to confirm the PCs' guesses.

The key to solving the mystery is a detailed search of Gerrit's quarters. One of his pairs of shoes has mud on the inside as well as on the outside. Gerrit's shoes were always kept in his quarters, which were always kept locked. The only other person with a key to these quarters was Lena; examination of the lock by any thief will show that it has not been picked.

This should enable an intelligent party to deduce that someone with small feet was wearing Gerrit's shoes over their own shoes in order to create false tracks. The only person who could have done this was Lena, implicating her in the murder.

As soon as the PCs have figured this out, move to the section of the adventure entitled "The Chase."

The Chase

When Lena believes that she has been (or is about to be) accused of the murder, she flees the village. Lena is on a light riding horse, moving north/northeast at maximum speed (24").

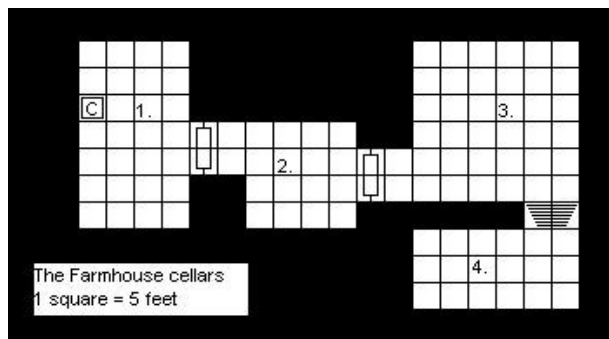
The characters will be hot on her heels if they depart immediately and travel at this speed. If they can travel faster than this, then they will catch her in the wilderness. If it takes them time to gather up their horses and saddle up—or if they don't have horses—then the party will be forced to follow Lena's trail on foot. Use the Wilderness encounter tables on pages 5 and 7 accordingly.

Lena's isn't a hard trail to follow, since it is recently made, runs along a dirt road, and she has made no effort to conceal it. Use the *Players Handbook* rules for tracking if the party has a barbarian or a ranger along with them; failing that, the players will be able to locate a tracker from among the more wilderness-wise NPC's in Melford. (Reiner, for example, would be able to track Lena with 90% accuracy if asked.)

Some miles up the road is a former farmhouse built of unmortared stone. Supposedly, this farmhouse has been abandoned for a few years, ever since the previous owners died of plague; the fear of disease has kept visitors away.

In truth, there is no risk of disease. The farmhouse is Lena Wyke's hideout, and she has gone to ground in the cellars there. The characters will need to explore the farmhouse, find the cellar entrance, and flush her out!

At the farmhouse is *another* sibling of Lena and Gerrit: their brother Mipp, whom nobody knows about. They don't let him out on account of his gross physical deformities and twisted, evil nature. Mipp is an aspiring necromancer, and although he isn't very good yet, the cellars beneath the house do contain the results of some of his "experiments."



The abandoned farmhouse, Lena's hideout

Key to the Farmhouse

1: Mipp's Necromantic Laboratory

This room contains a largish number of deformed webs, and the players might catch a glimpse of a scuttler (new monster, see p. 11).

There are 43 scuttlers in the room—all have 1 hp. They will not attack unless the players aggravate them in some way. However, searching the room will certainly disturb the webs and aggravate them; as a result of each round of searching, 1d6 of the scuttlers will be annoyed and attack.

If the room is successfully searched, the players will find a flask of a thick, viscous, sky-blue, odourless liquid—a *potion of silence* (new magic item, see p. 11); a flask of a translucent, effervescent, salty liquid—a *potion of healing*; and a glass-stoppered beaker containing a transparent, strongly acrid-smelling, slightly smoking liquid (which is fuming *aqua regia*, a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids that can dissolve gold and platinum). The acid is nonmagical but might have a variety of uses for clever characters...drinking it is not advised!

2: Mipp's Larder

This room contains four cave worms (new monster, see p. 10), with 4, 3, 3, and 2 hp, respectively. These repulsive creatures are basically nonaggressive, but they will certainly defend themselves. They are here because Mipp likes to eat them.

3: Mipp's "Experiment" Room

This is where the corpses that Mipp has successfully animated suffer his experiments.

Mipp is trying to find a way of severing undead limbs and using them to replace his own malfunctioning organs as a kind of prosthesis. Thus each of the corpses in this room is a crawling corpse (new monster, see p. 10). There are seven of them in the room (hp 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 3, and 3), and they will attack on sight. He has 141 gp and 19 sp hidden inside an unremarkable-looking skull that is on a shelf among various other body parts.



Mipp will automatically respond to the noise of combat in this room (unless the characters somehow battle the crawling corpses in silence.) He will attempt to control any undead that have been affected by any PC cleric's turning.

Mipp is a 5th-level cleric, human: S9 I7 W9 D7 C8 Ch5, AC 6 from manskin armour (essentially leather armor made from human skin) and *Mipp's shield* +1 (new magic item, see p. 12), hp 16, #AT 1, dam 1d6+1 (mace). He is Gerrit and Lena's deformed younger brother. He suffers from serious physical malformations and some psychological difficulties, simulated in game terms by his low stats. Note that any spells he casts have a 20% chance of failure (PHB, p. 11).

His spells are:

- + First level: *command* ×2, *cure light wounds*
- + Second level: *hold person* ×2, *silence 15' radius*
- + Third level: *animate dead* (already cast)

4: Mipp's Shrine

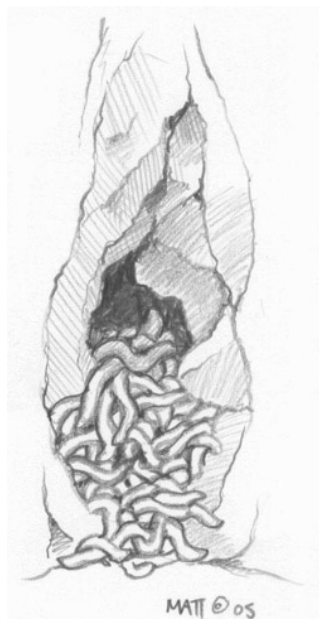
The DM should decide which deity Mipp worships based on the campaign: Arawn (Celtic), Surma (Finnish), or Hel (Norse) are all good candidates. The DM should also decide what the shrine looks like based on the deity chosen.

Lena will be hiding in this room. If Mipp has been killed, she will surrender and come quietly with the players if given the opportunity, although some parties might execute her on the spot instead.

New Monsters, Spells, and Magic Items

Cave Worm

FREQUENCY: Common
 NO. APPEARING: 2–24
 (2d12)
 ARMOUR CLASS: 7
 MOVE: 6"
 HIT DICE: 1d6 hp
 % IN LAIR: 90%
 TREASURE TYPE: Nil
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4
 SPECIAL ATTACKS:
 None
 SPECIAL DEFENCES:
 None
 MAGIC RESISTANCE:
 Standard
 INTELLIGENCE: Non-
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral



SIZE: S (2')

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

ATTACK/DEFENCE MODES: Nil

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 1/5 + 1/hp

Cave worms may be distantly related to purple worms. They resemble huge maggots with pinkish underbellies and yellowish backs. Their mouths are sphincter toothed like a lamprey's. They taste surprisingly good when cooked!

It is a mystery why cave worms were never discovered by the wizard-sages of the Condsec Toineid in their endless quest to understand the ecology of dungeons, since these creatures explain much about that subject. They are extremely fecund and are able to subsist on almost anything—from mosses and lichens to kobold dung and stirge guano—and their larvae form an important part of the diets of many dungeon-dwelling creatures.

Crawling Corpse

FREQUENCY: Uncommon
 NO. APPEARING: 2–20 (2d10)
 ARMOUR CLASS: 9
 MOVE: 3"
 HIT DICE: 1
 % IN LAIR: 50%
 TREASURE TYPE: Nil
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d6
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: None
 SPECIAL DEFENCES: None
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
 INTELLIGENCE: Non-
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral
 SIZE: M
 PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
 ATTACK/DEFENCE MODES: Nil
 LEVEL/XP VALUE: 1/10 + 1/hp

Crawling corpses result when an *animate dead* spell is cast upon a body that has significant pieces missing, such as one that has



been dismembered or partially eaten. For those bodies that can move normally, of course, this is not a problem; someone who has been decapitated still makes a pretty good zombie. However, some of these corpses cannot even walk normally. Those that must pull themselves around with their forelimbs become crawling corpses.

Often rejected as unfit for their purpose and dismissed by their masters—sometimes formally, more usually just through being accidentally or deliberately left behind—these “failed” skeletons and zombies are moved by some primitive, vestigial instinct to band together and hide away from light and from living things.

They can be turned as skeletons and count as undead for the purposes of *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and similar magics.

Scuttler

FREQUENCY: Rare

NO. APPEARING: 1–100

ARMOUR CLASS: 9

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 1 hp each

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: Nil (poison only)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Poison

SPECIAL DEFENCES: None

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Non-

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral

SIZE: S (6")

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

ATTACK/DEFENCE MODES: Nil

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 1/8 xp

Scuttlers result when spider eggs are affected by magical emanations, seeping potion residues, alchemical experiments, and other exposure to magical substances or effluences. They might have any number of legs, from four to thirteen ($3d4 + 1$), and frequently suffer gross mutations in body shape (two heads, nine eyes, one mouth part four times the size of the other, and so on.). They might be any colour of the rainbow, and striped, spotted, and piebald varieties have also been reported. Not all scuttlers build webs; those that do tend to build irregular, crazily shaped structures. They tend to be about the size of a man's fist.

Scuttler poison can be weak or strong (save at -2 , 0 , $+2$, or $+4$, equal chance of each) but is rarely fatal (only if the victim rolls a natural 1 on his/her saving throw vs. poison). Instead, it has a very strong psychedelic effect on the nervous system. There is a 50% chance that someone failing his or her save will be affected by *confusion* (as the 4th-level illusionist spell) and a



50% chance he/she experiencing an *emotion* (again as the 4th-level illusionist spell—roll randomly for the type of emotion experienced.)

Scuttler ichor is a component in many recipes for *potions of delusion*.

Languid Lassitude (Alteration)

Level: 1

Components: V, S

Range: 9" + 1"/level

Casting time: 1 segment

Duration: 3 rounds + 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Neg.

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Explanation/Description: A *languid lassitude* spell reduces the number of attacks of the affected creature. If the target has 3 or more attacks per round, it loses one attack per round (so $4/1$ attacks would be reduced to $3/1$, $3/1$ to $2/1$, etc.) If it has 2 attacks per round, its attacks are reduced to $3/2$. If it has $3/2$ or $5/4$, its attacks are reduced to 1/round. If it has 1 attack per round, it is reduced to one attack every two rounds. The spell does not reduce number of attacks below $1/2$ rounds.

Languid lassitude also counters (and is countered by) *haste*.



Mipp's Shield +1

Mipp's shield +1 is a large, round, bronze shield emblazoned with the symbol of a fish. Inscribed on the inside of the shield are three command words.

The first command word causes the shield to shed light as if it were a torch (40' radius, see *PHB*, p. 102). The second command word causes it to shed light as if it were a bullseye lantern (80' directional beam, see *PHB*, p. 102). The third shuts off the shield's light completely.

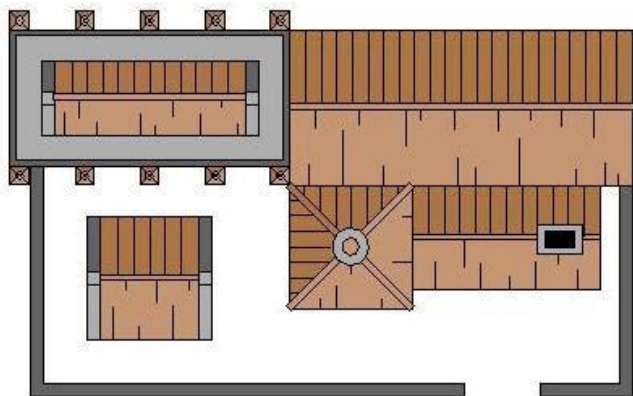
Similar to a *continual light* spell, the light shed by the shield gives off no heat and will continue indefinitely until a different command word is spoken.

Potion of Silence

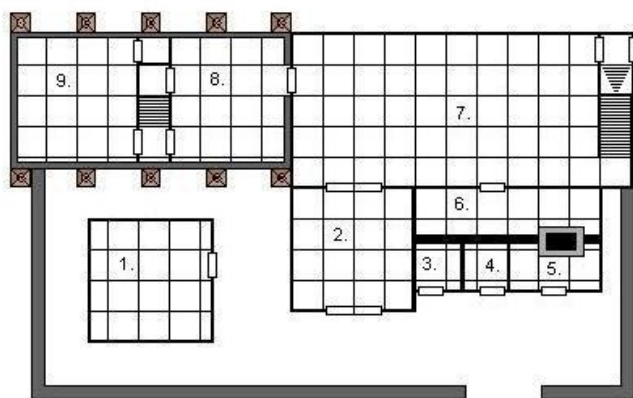
A *potion of silence* is similar to a *potion of invisibility* in all respects save that it makes the drinker inaudible instead of invisible. Any item that would be rendered invisible by a *potion of invisibility* will be silenced (so it affects the drinker's armour and any equipment personally carried).

Note that unlike invisibility, offensive moves do *not* cancel the silence effect.

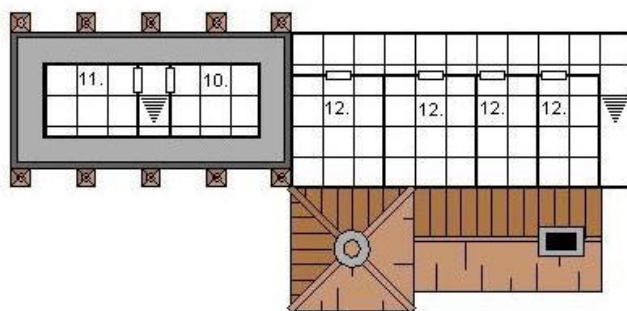
If a *potion of silence* is used on an unknowing or unwilling target—for example, if it were tipped in a wizard's winecup prior to an assassination attempt—then a saving throw vs. spells is allowed to avoid the effects.



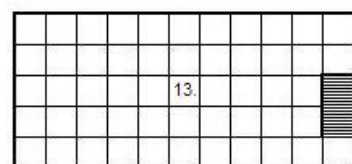
The King's Head Inn, plan view



The King's Head Inn, ground floor



The King's Head Inn, first floor



The King's Head Inn, cellar

KEY:-

1. Stables
2. Entrance hall
3. Gents' privy
4. Ladies' privy
5. Bath house
6. Kitchens
7. Common room
8. Owner's living room
9. Owner's dining room
10. Lena's bedroom
11. Gerrit's bedroom
12. Guestroom
13. Cellar

0 10 20 30
Scale in Feet

Winding Up

If the player characters summarily executed Lena, the village council will pay them the promised reward for solving the mystery (100 gp in the case of the Minor Murder, 250 gp in the case of the Major Murder). They will also pay a bounty of 50 gp for Lena's head.

If the player characters captured her and brought her back alive, the council will arrange for her to be tried and executed for murder. The PCs will be called as witnesses in this trial, and the council will pay them a further 150 gp in witness' fees over and above their reward for solving the murder.

If Lena got away, the council will only pay the 100 gp/250 gp as appropriate.

As for Magdalene Colerre, if at all possible, she will have fled—taking her possessions if time was available, but abandoning everything if necessary. (She will save her spellbook if she can, but not at the risk of being captured.) The player characters will not be able to locate her tracks.

If You Are Running the Module as Part of a Series

If you intend to follow this adventure with the third in the series, "The Shrine of the Oracle", Lena's trial represents an excellent opportunity for the DM to introduce characters from that adventure. In this case, Maenae herself will preside over the trial—and she will make sure that the truth is told, through the use of *Detect Lie*, *Speak with Dead*, or any other method she thinks appropriate.

"The Shrine of the Oracle" includes an opportunity for the player characters to learn more about pēnanggalans, and a clever party might well deduce more about Magdalene Colerre at that stage.

Changes to Melford

Following the events described in this module, both the King's Head Inn and Busy Bees will become vacant lots. The King's Head Inn will be administered by the village council, and they will sell a lease on the premises in order to cover the expenses disbursed to the player characters in the matter and in order to raise additional revenue. If play in the Melford area is to continue, the DM may wish to design new NPCs to take over the premises.

Since no replacement beekeeper is available in the area, Busy Bees will be offered to the player characters as a place of residence (provided they haven't annoyed the villagers, of course). As a gesture of goodwill, the town council will offer them a short-term lease on the house without charge.

— HERE ENDS THE MELFORD MURDER —

Thanks to Jerry Mapes and the posters on the Knights & Knaves Alehouse Forum for much help and assistance with this module. Visit the Knights & Knaves Alehouse Forums at <http://knightsnknaves.proboards43.com>.



Death Strikes in the Night

The people of the small village of Melford are stunned when one of the most prominent citizens is found dead one morning. Clues are scarce, suspects are everywhere, and the constabulary is stumped. A rich reward has been offered to anyone who can help drag the killer out of the web of shadow and intrigue they have woven around themselves.

The Melford Murder provides two levels of challenge: as a standalone adventure, the PCs will have to catch the killer and bring them to justice. If played as the second module in the trilogy (*The Spider Farm*, *The Melford Murder*, *Shrine of the Oracle*), the risks and challenges are greater, but so are the rewards. Are your players willing to match their wits against a killer? Particularly one who may be willing to kill again to keep their secret...

*Special thanks to Chris Hopkins for
invaluable feedback and support*

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