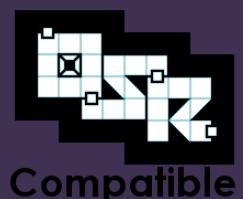


Baba Smerta

By Dave Tackett



An OSR compatible module for any old school RPG or modern clones, designed
for character levels 5-6.



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This module is OSR Compatible and can be used with any old school RPG or modern clones. It was designed with the classic version of the game in mind, but with minimal changes it can be used with any original or advanced rules or their clones.

Encounters are listed in the following format: Orcs (4) – AC 6, HD 1, #AT 1, D 1d6
Armor Class is given descending values. An unarmored character is AC 10.

Background

This mini-adventure is designed for a party of characters of levels 5 to 6. However, it might be suitable for a strong group of fourth level characters or a low magic group of seventh to eighth level characters.

For decades, the villages and farms surrounding an old homestead claimed by an unbalanced, witch (magic-user) who calls herself Baba Smerta (or Grandmother Death), have been subjected to predations, tortures, and humiliations from her and her varying minions. While actual violent raids are fairly rare, just a few each year, the people of the area live in terror of her.

Currently, Baba Smerta has taken control of a small tribe of goblins, keeping many of the tribe's warriors as her personal guard, servants, and occasionally victims. These goblins hunt for her food, often resorting to stealthily stealing food from neighboring farms or collecting tribute from their own tribe. The raids are typically led by Baba Smerta's "apprentice," a young goblin witch doctor who has recently taken to calling herself Baba Goba.

The characters will come into conflict with Baba Smerta through her minions. Leading a raid, Baba Goba spots the characters and decides to prove herself by taking on the party and attempting to bring back prisoners. This attack will occur at night, but the location is left up to the game master. It might occur as the PCs are travelling at night or more likely while they are staying at an inn. If it is at an inn, the PCs will be the only resistance as all other patrons will hide or flee.

After this first encounter, the characters can follow the raiding party's trail back to Baba Smerta's home or just ask anyone at the inn. She

is a local legend and everyone knows where she lives so that they can avoid her.

A. Raiding Party

Out looking for food, the raiding party will either stumble across the characters travelling at night and mistake them for easy prey or attack the inn that they are staying in, hoping to steal food and wine. If the raid is taking place in winter, there will be worgs in the raiding party, otherwise there will be hellhounds. The raiding party will not be expecting too much resistance and should be quickly dispatched by the PCs. If any raiders survive, they will join with their companions at Baba Smerta's house.

Goblins (12) AC 6, HD 1-1 (5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 1, 1 hp) #AT 1, damage by weapon (1d6). All are armed with short swords and short bows. They are extremely undisciplined and will waste time breaking bottles, drinking, and screeching at cowering patrons.

Hell Hounds (3) AC 4, HD 4, (hp 22, 21, 10), #AT 1, damage 1d10 + fire or **Worgs** (4) AC 6, HD 4+4 (27, 23, 20, 20), #AT 1, damage 2d4

Baba Goba AC 7 Lev 4 Witch Doctor, HP 16, #AT 1, damage by weapon (1d4+1 from dagger +1). In combat she will hang back and attack magic users and clerics with a Wand of Magic Missiles (30 charges). An accomplished rider, she will ride one of the worgs if the adventure occurs during the winter, otherwise she will ride a stolen horse. She has the following spells memorized: Level One: *Affect Normal Fires* (*2), *Shield*. Level Two: *Invisibility*, *Scare*.

B. The House

What once might have been a relatively pleasant farmhouse is now a decaying wreck. The house, while still reasonably sound structurally, is overgrown with climbing vines and has fallen

into extreme disrepair. All windows are completely boarded up and the front porch looks ready to collapse. All around are overgrown weeds and scrub trees, allowing the characters to get quite close without being observed.

Downstairs

0. Front Porch

Dilapidated and heavily overgrown with creeping vines, this rotted porch is nearing the end of its existence. At all times, there are three armed goblins hiding among the vines. The goblins have short bows and short swords and will attack the characters as soon as they are within range. They prefer to kill at a safe distance and will not leave the porch. Only after one of their number is killed will they call for help. Each goblin carries 3d6 sp.

Characters who weigh over 200 lbs (including armor and other encumbrance) have a 5% chance of stepping through a rotting floor board. Characters stepping through the floor will be attacked by the large spider living underneath it. The spider will make a single attack on the character that annoyed it then back away unless it is attacked in return.

Goblins (3) AC 6, HD 1-1 (5,4,4 hp), #AT 1, damage by weapon (1d6).

Large Spider (1) AC 6, HD 1+1 (6 hp), #AT 1, damage 1d4 + save vs poison at +2 or die.

1 Entry hall

This large room may once have been a formal dining room, but it is now in disrepair and used as a sleeping area for a small group of goblins. There are a dozen old cots in the room and at any time, there will be 3d6 goblins sleeping on and under the cots. However, unless the party has taken out the goblins on the front porch without making a sound, they will be awake and

expecting trouble. Each goblin is armed with a short sword and carries 3d6 sp. Half the goblins, round down, are armed with short bows and these will flee to kitchen and try to shoot from there when the battle start going against their side. The room is otherwise empty except for cobwebs and piles of cockroach infested garbage.

Goblins (3d6) AC 6, HD 1-1, #AT 1, damage by weapon (1d6).

2 Living Room

Once this room might have been quite pleasant, a quiet sitting room for the household and their guests, but now it is what you would expect from a room frequented by goblins and a half-insane, old witch. There are three stone chairs (obviously made for outdoor use), and a long, wooden bench that have all taken severe damage. Cockroaches scurry across chicken bones and other garbage strewn across the floor, avoiding the occasional stomp by goblins who find the crunch amusing. A noticeable exception to the poor condition of the room is a large (5' by 4') painting of an elderly witch riding what appears to be a large mortar through a forest (worth 550 gp). In the room are four goblins, who are ostensibly guarding the house. Two of the goblins (hp 7, 5) have short swords and short bows and two merely have short swords (hp 4, 2). All carry 3d6 silver pieces each. Those with bows will fire a couple shots at the PCs then run upstairs to join Baba Smerta. The two with just swords will join the melee in or around room #1.

Goblins (4) AC 6, HD 1-1 (hp 7, 5, 5 1), #AT 1, damage by weapon (1d6).

3 Kitchen

This combination kitchen/pantry/meat locker is disgusting enough to turn the stomachs of characters with weaker constitutions. Characters

with constitutions lower than 13 must save vs poison or be affected as if by a *stinking cloud*. There are numerous skinned, but not cured, rabbits and deer carcasses hanging from the roof on the western side. Many of the carcasses are already maggot infested, as is the rubbish scattered across the floor. Flies and cockroaches are everywhere except in the ceiling corners where spiders are living large on the easy prey. The fire-burning stove is currently being used to make a foul smelling stew that is being tended by two unarmed goblins. The goblins panic at the sight of the characters and flee into the back yard. If they are not killed by the PCs, they will flee into backyard, only to be slaughtered by the Hell Hounds (or Worgs) which chase anything that runs, even allies.

Goblins (2) AC 6, HD 1-1 (2, 1 hp), #AT None.

4 Indoor Outhouse

This small room is even more disgusting than you would imagine. It contains a solid wooden bench with an oval hole that is built over a deep, though not deep enough pit. In addition to the smell coming from the pit, someone apparently has very poor aim and waste is all around the room. [The waste actually comes from Baba Smerta dumping it from the second floor onto unlucky goblins, most of which have stopped using this room.]

If a character manages to squeeze down into the pit, they will find 10d20 sp and a lost gold ring (25 gp) but will likely suffer serious ridicule from their comrades. Looking up, they see another reason why this room is so nasty; it is two stories high with the holes lining up. If any character enters this room to search, they will get an unpleasant surprise. Baba Smerta is waiting upstairs with a bucket of waste to dump on them (save to avoid). Hit or missed, they will hear cackling laughter from above.

5 Red Room

Dominated by a large fireplace [room #10], this room might be almost charming if it weren't for the odd dark-red paint and the smell of decay that permeates the air. A large wooden bench sits along the west wall and a large chair sits against the east wall. On the fireplace mantle is a small collection of old children's books, all telling tales of Baba Yaga (12 books are in fair shape and have a total value of 10 gp).

If any character closely examines the walls, they will realize that they are painted in blood. It's mostly chicken blood, but Baba Smerta will claim that it's all human, except for a bit of Halfling and elf mixed in. Characters who remain in this room for more than five rounds will hear someone walking upstairs (Baba Smerta).

6 Stairs Up

Closed off from room #5, this bare wood, rickety old stairway is empty except for a few gnarled chicken bones and one terrified goblin who fires a poisoned crossbow (save at +1 or fall asleep) at the first character to enter the stairs and then screams loudly. He will not be able to reload the crossbow and will try to draw his short sword. The goblin will not flee, preferring certain death to the tortures that will be inflicted on him if Baba Smerta catches him fleeing. He carries 9 sp.

Goblin (1) AC 6, HD 1-1 (4 hp), #AT 1, damage by weapon (1d6)

7 Stairs down.

Another rickety set of stairs, these are unguarded and lead down into the basement.

8 Back Porch

In even worse shape than the front porch, the floor of this porch has collapsed and is little more than a collection of rotting boards on the ground. The roof is still in good shape and there is a chair in which Baba Smertaa likes to sit and watch her “curs” tear apart a sheep or person that she has tossed into their yard.

9 Back Yard

This large area is partly enclosed by short (3' tall) fences made of human arm and leg bones with wooden fence posts topped with human skulls, all from the remains of Baba Smerta's many victims. If not stopped, she will finish the fence in about five years and then begin adding to its height.

In the spring, summer, and fall, there will be 2d4 small (4 hd) hell hounds here. In the winter, these will be replaced by 2d6 worgs. Except when the “curs” are on a raid with the goblins, they rarely leave the yard, despite the fence's short height and large gaps, for fear of missing a tasty victim. If the yard is searched, the characters will find a *Necklace of Fireballs* (Type III) that had fallen from a victim before Baba Smerta collected his bones. The well in the yard is the primary source of water for the house.

Hell Hounds (2d4) AC 4, HD 4, #AT 1, damage 1d10 + fire or Worgs (2d6) AC 6, HD 4+4, #AT 1, damage 2d4.

10 Fireplace

A small fire burns in this large fireplace. It has clearly not been cleaned in a long time as there are plies of ash, half burnt firewood logs, and what might be charred human bones, underneath the fire. If any character starts to search in or around the fireplace, 1d4 Ash Skeletons (new monster – see appendix) will animate and attack the characters. If the characters search after the

battle, another 1d4 Ash Skeletons will animate and attack the party, until a maximum of six have animated, after which time it is safe to search, but there is no treasure.

Ash Skeletons (1d4) AC 3, HD 4, #AT 1, damage 1d6 + 1d6 fire damage.

Upstairs

11 Bedroom

This large room has stairs coming up in the middle, with a dusty, but still solid, railing around all but the opening. On the east side is a medium sized bed that is in good shape, but the bedding has obviously not been washed in a very long time. Near the bed is a small dresser with a couple of half-burned candles on top. Surprisingly, there are no clothes in any of the six drawers. The bottom right drawer contains about fifty candles and the other drawers each contain bottles of cheap wine (63 bottles total, worth 2 sp each). A nightstand is also by the bed and has a candle and a well-worn, children's book called Tales of Baba Yaga and the Rusalka. Against the south side of the railing is a fixed ladder going up to a trap door that leads to the attic.

Elsewhere the room is extremely dusty and has many empty wine bottles on the floor. In one corner is an obviously underused broom (actually a *Broom of Flying*). If a character examines it, a barely visible label “graycloud 20” can be read. The command word is “fly;” Baba Smerta knows she is forgetful and used a command word she couldn't forget.

Here is where Baba Smerta will make her stand. With her are a dozen zombies, a dretch, and the two goblin archers from room #2 if they survived. The Dretch carries 7 cp, 7 ep, and 8 gp.

Zombies (12) HD 2, AC 8, #AT 1, damage 1d8

Dretch (1) HD 4, AC 2, #AT 3, damage 1d4, 1d4, 1d4+1

12 Upstairs Bathroom

Similar to room #4, this is an indoor outhouse. Unlike the ground floor section, this part is relatively clean. Although there is still a very unpleasant odor wafting upward from below and from the small bucket that Baba Smerta likes to leave waste in to dump on unsuspecting goblins. If she has tried to dump the bucket on a PC then it will be empty, otherwise it will be half full of human waste. The room has a thick layer of dust and there is a book of fairy tales lying on the floor. Otherwise the room is empty.

13 Torture room.

Not a place in which a sane person would want to spend much time, this room has a primitive rack in its center, various shackles, whips, branding irons, and other torture devices. The floor is stained with blood and near the door is what looks like an old desiccated finger. On the west side of the room is a small door that is about waist high. It is wizard locked.

14 Crawl-in Closet

This long, narrow, unlit closet is mostly empty except for a thick layer of dust. Barely visible against the south wall is a locked chest. Inside is the skeleton of a viper that died of starvation when this chest was forgotten. The skeleton lies on top of a small pile of 100 platinum pieces. Baba Smerta hid this emergency money here years ago, placing a living viper inside to deter thieves, then promptly forgot all about it. The closet is only about four feet high so the characters entering it will have to stoop or crawl.

15 Library

This room has a small bookshelf filled with books on magic theory and practice, as well as, appallingly, books on torture techniques. On top of the shelf is Baba Smerta's spellbook.

Otherwise this room is empty except on the east side where there is a small, unlocked door about waist high. There is a strong smell of decay in the room because the zombies are kept here when performing other tasks.

16 Crawl-in Closet

The same size as room #14, this closet is so filled with broken crates and other trash (a broken cauldron, empty bottles, a couple goblin skulls, rags, etc.) that it would at least a half-hour to empty it all out. If the characters do empty it all out, they will find a few good items: three regular daggers, a small silver dagger (10 gp), a bag of 80 sp, a backpack, and a silver mirror (45 gp).

Basement

This large, unmapped, 30' by 30' basement is partly flooded, with pools of water as deep as a couple of inches in places. There are thick cobwebs hanging from the beams and walls. The spiders are normal, though some are as large as a person's hand. There are numerous camel crickets, and a few other insects here.

In the center of the floor is a carved pentagram with nearly completely melted black candles at each point. Along the walls are shelves with numerous jars of food and a few jars that seem to contain preserved organs from unknown sources. There are a couple of giant rats that are feasting on the insect bounty and will ignore the characters unless they are attacked or cornered.

Giant Rats (2) AC 7, HD 1d4 hp (2 hp each), #AT 1, damage 1d3 + disease.

Attic

Completely unlit, this 25' by 25' room is only 6' tall at the center and a low as 3' along the edges and is filled with empty boxes and crates.

Everything is covered in thick layer of dust. Chained to the south wall is a ghoul that was placed up here years ago. As soon as the first character has stepped off the ladder, the ghoul will break free and attack, crashing through boxes. Like the basement, this room is unmapped.

Ghoul (1) AC 2, HD 2 (12 hp), #AT 3, damage 1-3/1-3/1-6 + Paralysation.

Concluding the Adventure

The characters will likely have killed Baba Smerta and most of her minions. The house will stay abandoned and collapse in few years, remaining a local legend. The goblin tribe from which she recruited her raiders will recover and likely leave the area. If Baba Smerta is killed, she will likely be raised from the dead by her more powerful allies, but will not return to this area nor will seek out the PCs. However, if she somehow escapes, she will bide her time and then try to hunt down the characters.

Appendices

New Monster: Ash Skeletons

Frequency:	Very Rare
No. Encountered:	6
Size:	Medium
Move:	120 ft
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	4
Attacks:	1
Damage:	1d6 + fire damage
Special Attacks:	See below
Special Defenses:	See below
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Lair Probability:	100%
Treasure:	None
Intelligence:	None

Alignment: Neutral
Level/XP: 4/105 + 3/hp

Created by a dark magic spell, these monsters appear as a small fire, a burning mixture of ash, logs, and bones until they are disturbed. When they rise, they look like ash-grey skeletons with a thin layer of flames coating their bones.

Unless otherwise directed, they will remain still unless disturbed. Typically, they are left to guard a single room or even a fireplace. They will follow their initial instructions unless given new ones by their creator or the person designated to control them. As non-intelligent undead, they simply attack without regard to tactics. They may not travel more than 20' from their fire.

Ash Skeletons animate in waves of 1d4 and will fight until they are destroyed. If the first wave is defeated, another 1d4 will rise from the fire and attack, until they are victorious or all six are destroyed. They do not use weapons, preferring to attack with their bony fists for 1d6 damage + 1d6 damage from heat and fire. If even one ash skeleton survives to return to the fire, all six will re-animate the next time they are disturbed.

They are immune to fire and heat damage, take half damage from edged and cutting weapons, and piercing weapons do only 1 point of damage. However, holy water causes 2d4 hp of damage per vial and cold based spells and attacks do double damage. They may be turned as if they were a ghast.

Baba Smerta (Human female magic-user level 7; Chaotic Evil; AC 4; HP 29; Dam 1d4) S8, I17, W9, D10, C16, Ch8.

Spells Memorized

Level 1: *Affect Normal Fires, Burning Hands, Magic Missile (*2).*

Level 2: *Mirror Image, ESP, Scare.*

Level 3: *Lightning bolt, Protection/Normal Missiles.*

Level 4: *Polymorph Self.*

Once known by her birth name, Svetlana Akubov, Baba Smerta changed her name and personality to emulate the legendary witch, Baba Yaga. However, while Baba Yaga is a complex figure whose motives are often inscrutable, Baba Smerta is simply a nasty piece of work. She is a psychopath who lives to inflict pain and suffering on anything that she can.

An outcast loner from childhood on, she quickly learned to hate. Tutored in magic as a child by her grandmother, she quickly turned her newfound powers upon her peers and helpless pets. After her grandmother's death, she lost her only protector and was driven out of her village.

Since then, she has used her magic to bully various groups of humanoids into serving her, most recently goblins. She has them raid neighboring areas for victims, not to gain wealth or power but out of pure sadistic spite. Although she is chaotic evil, she does work well with others and has powerful allies (they do not appear in this adventure, although the ash skeletons were animated by one of them.).

Magic items carried: *bracers of defense AC4, wand of fear* with 16 charges, and 2 potions (1 *extra-healing*, 1 *invisibility*).

Other items: 2 daggers, 1 bottle of wine (2sp)

Carried treasure: 250gp, 2 gems worth 150gp and 300gp each.

Although Baba Smerta has modeled herself after the legendary Baba Yaga, this mini-adventure makes no assumptions about the existence of a

real Baba Yaga in your world. She could be a real contemporary villain, a historic figure, or merely a fiction character.

Spell: Ash Skeletons

Arcane Necromancy

Level: Magic user 7

Range: 10 ft

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: See below

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 Turn

Saving Throw: None

This rather evil spell causes the bones of an individual who has been burned alive to merge with the wood, coals, and ash of a burning fire to form six ash skeletons. They take the form of low burning fire, though wood or coal will burn normally on top of it, with bits of human bones visible.

This spell can only be partially *dispelled* by the spell. Dispelling it does not cause any ash skeletons to be destroyed, but it prevents the regeneration effect. After the dispelling, any ash skeleton destroyed does not return.

The spell components are the corpse of human who has been burned alive and a fire. The spell cannot be cast within 100 yards of another ash skeletons spell or both will be fully dispelled and any ash skeletons will be destroyed. The spell is almost always cast on an indoor fire because two rounds of heavy rain will destroy it.

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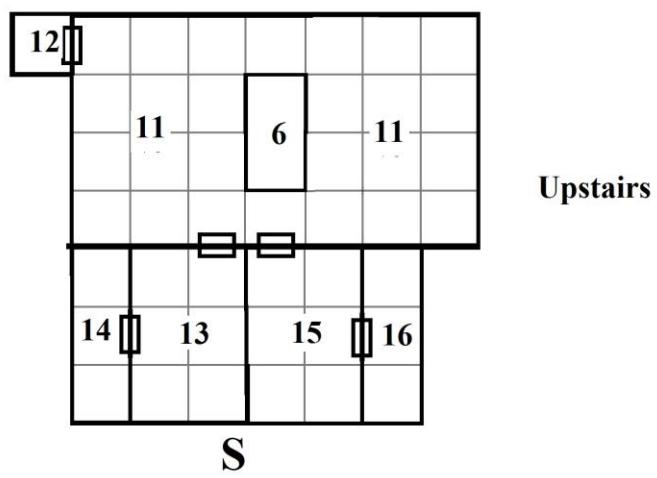
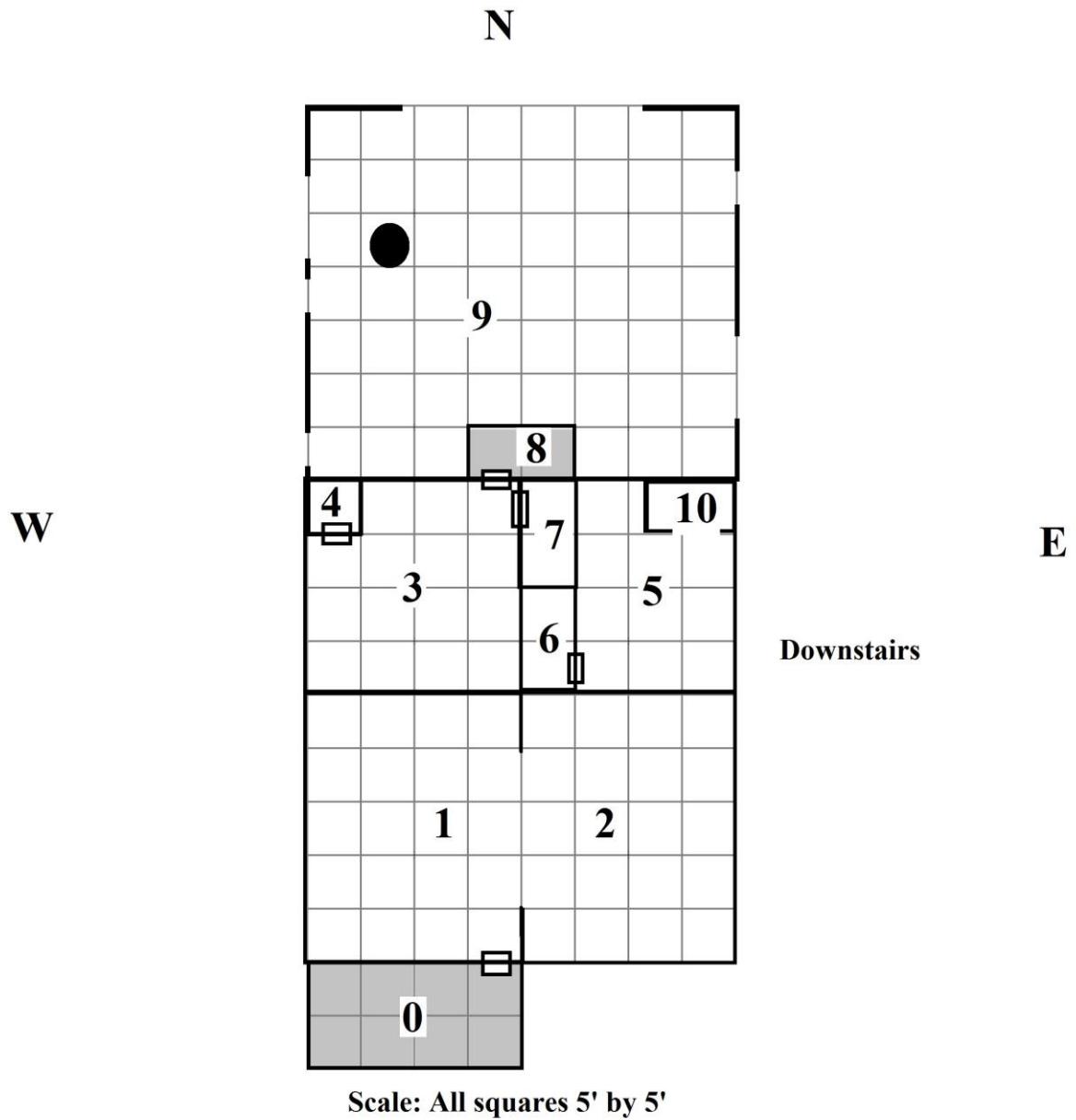
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Baba Smerta

As night falls on the marsh and the fog blankets the land, the people of the surrounding villages lock their doors and pray that they will be overlooked by the minions of Baba Smerta. For nearly three generations they have suffered her tortures and humiliations. When one of her raiding parties takes on the PCs, have they bitten off more than they can chew? Will this long reign of terror finally come to an end? An OSR compatible mini-module for any old school RPG or modern clone, designed for character levels 5-6, Baba Smerta is easily adaptable to other levels.