



The Fiddler's Lament

By Greg Vaughan



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The Fiddler's Lament

CREDITS

AUTHOR: Greg Vaughan

ARTIST: Tanyaporn Sangsnit, Colby Stevenson

CARTOGRAPHY: Robert Lazzaretti

PATHFINDER SECOND EDITION DEVELOPMENT: Jacob W. Michaels

EDITING AND DEVELOPMENT: Alistair J. Rigg

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Rick Kunz

LEGENDARY GAMES TEAM MEMBERS: Alex Augunas, Kate Baker, Jesse Benner, Clinton J. Boomer, Robert Brookes, Benjamin Bruck, Carl Cramer, Paris Crenshaw, Joel Flank, Matthew Goodall, Jim Groves, Amanda Hamon, Steve Helt, Thurston Hillman, Tim Hitchcock, Victoria Jaczko, Jenny Jarzabski, N. Jolly, Jonathan H. Keith, Michael Kortes, Jeff Lee, Nicolas Logue, Will McCardell, Julian Neale, Jason Nelson, Jen Page, Richard Pett, Tom Phillips, Alistair Rigg, Alex Riggs, David N. Ross, Wendall Roy, Amber Scott, Mark Seifter, Tork Shaw, Mike Shel, Loren Sieg, Neil Spicer, Todd Stewart, Russ Taylor, Greg A. Vaughan, Mike Welham, Linda Zayas-Palmer, and Clark Peterson

PUBLISHER: Jason Nelson

EXECUTIVE PARTNER: Neil Spicer

BUSINESS DIRECTOR: Rachel Ventura

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The Fiddler's Lament (PF2) © 2020,
Legendary Games; Author Greg Vaughan.
Adapted by Jacob W. Michaels.
ISBN: 9798649237543
First printing June 2020.
Printed in USA.



Legendary Games

524 SW 321st St.
Federal Way, WA 98023-5656
makeyourgamelegendary.com



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WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE COME OF MADNESS

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast, it's true, but some music truly is the devil's music. An orphan raised by gypsies, now full-grown but still lost and alone, must face once more the tragic curse that destroyed her past. Will her darkling music bring ruin to the village she now calls her home? The adventure can help PCs gain additional experience and much-needed trust with the townsfolk even as they unravel the mystery of the haunted prison overlooking the town.

The Fiddler's Lament is a *Pathfinder Second Edition* adventure designed to be set in any small town where low (1st-2nd) level PCs may find themselves, though it works best set in a village with a ruined fortress, cathedral, or prison nearby, a place of tragedy and sorrow with a fell reputation. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Check it out and **Make Your Game Legendary!**

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Adventure Background

Alhindri's parents used to say she had her head more in other worlds than in this one as she sang and danced her way through life, sprightly even for an elf. When her parents died in a tragic boating accident, she was subdued for their funeral, but even that fugue was short-lived as she soon went back to her ways of prancing across meadows to stir the butterflies and singing nonsensical songs to the birds. Many of the elves thought her stricken or possessed, and ultimately none were anything but secretly relieved when upon reaching the beginnings of adulthood she upped and left her hedged community to explore the greater world outside.

Alhindri wandered for weeks before finally falling in with a band of Wanderers headed north. In this people of dusken skin and dervish dances, Alhindri had finally found a kindred spirit. They knew the ways of the night song and the dance of the moonlight upon the water; they too could hear the music in the crackle of the campfire and freedom of nature as it flowed through their veins in an expression of purest joy, devoid of thought or artifice. In turn, the Wanderers accepted her as one of their own and allowed her to dance to the sound of their fiddle and tambourine as they traveled the rugged countryside of the North.

For more than a decade, Alhindri danced among the Wanderers, and even they had to recognize something different about her—something special that transcended the mundane and touched on some other plane of existence where the troubles of life were a trifling thing next to the trill of the music and the thrill of the dance. More than one of the dusky men offered to take her in marriage and make her a respected matron of their tribe, but she gently rebuffed them all content in their company alone, seeking neither companionship nor station—known to all the towns they visited as the dancing elf maid of the Wandering Folk.

Unfortunately, though the years of an elf are long, her state of bliss came to an end all too soon. One evening as their caravan camped in the wilderness, a Dark Stranger came into their midst. Swathed all in cloak, scarf, and wide-brimmed hat, though it was a warm spring night, he requested the hospitality of their fire. This was begrudgingly given but the elder matron of

the tribe immediately made the ward against the Evil Eye at the stranger, and all fell silent in his presence. Perturbed at the end of the festivities the stranger demanded that the fiddler strike up a tune and that the elf maid dance for him. Alhindri thought that he seemed handsome enough from what she could see, but before she could acquiesce to his request—nay demand—the strangest thing happened. Lothiaro, the head of the caravan, took his fiddle and smashed it upon a rock claiming that none of the Wandering Folk would play for the Dark Stranger and that none under his protection would dance before him—as it has always been among the Wandering Folk, and as it would always be.

Alhindri did not quite understand what was going on and watched in a strangely calm daze as the Dark Stranger proclaimed, “So be it,” and proceeded to gruesomely slaughter the Wanderers—her kin of the last several years—with his bare hands before her very eyes. Some of them sought to fight; others tried to flee. It mattered not, for the stranger moved with a speed and savagery unmatched by mortal limbs. In moments, the gory massacre was done, and the blood-slicked stranger stood before Alhindri. She found that she could not look up into his mesmerizing eyes and only stared dumbly at the ground where she noticed the curious detail that he had cloven hooves instead of feet.

“Your adopted kin have purchased your freedom at a dear price this night,” he intoned to her, “but the demand of the Stranger cannot be denied forever. We will meet again, you and I.”

Then he was gone in the darkness, and Alhindri found that she couldn’t bring herself to move for some time and simply sat and stared at the dew-stained grass where he had stood and the imprint of two cloven hooves that remained faintly visible.

When villagers from the nearby town of Raven came upon the scene of the massacre three days later, they found Alhindri sat there still, staring at the ground, silent and unresponsive, her cheeks hollow from hunger and thirst, and her brow burned from days in the unrelenting sun. The villagers buried the Wanderers in the consecrated ground of their town cemetery to prevent them from arising again to trouble the living and took the elven waif in out of the kindness of their hearts, thinking her one of the forlorn members of

her race presumably in shock over what she must have witnessed. They nursed Alhindri back to health but soon learned that her injuries were more to her spirit than to her body. She never spoke nor emerged from her silent stupor. Finally, realizing that they could do no more for the young elf, one of the local councilmen paid out of his generosity to have her transported to a hospital in a distant city where she could be cared for in hopes that she would eventually emerge from her fugue and be able to tell what had occurred to the Wanderers she had been with.

There Alhindri waited, known only as the Raven Patient, passed from hospital to prison to asylum, silent and alone for 85 years...until today. In the darkest hour of the early morning, Alhindri opened her eyes to discover the Dark Stranger standing in her cell with her. He called her by name and told her it was time for her to return to her lost kin and dance for them once more. She was fascinated, as he spoke, by the pair of cloven hooves that peeked out from beneath his cloak but became even more astonished when he handed her a meticulously cared for viol that in her mind's eye she recognized at once as being that which had belonged to Lothiaro, made whole once more.



Immediately the color returned to Alhindri's face and her life as she took the beloved instrument in her hands. She didn't even notice when the Dark Stranger wrapped his cowl around her and she found herself no longer in her lonely cell but standing upon a hill covered in tombs, surrounded by ancient unmarked graves. In the pre-light of dawn, she gave no thought to her surroundings but touched bow to fiddle and began to play. Though the fiddle had never been her instrument, as she played upon Lothiaro's beloved viol she found that it practically played itself. She soon lost herself to the music and began to dance as of old...and she did not dance alone as her long-lost Wanderer kin rose from the ground to join her.

INTRODUCTION

The Fiddler's Lament takes place in the town of Raven near a haunted prison. The enigmatic Dark Stranger, for reasons of his own, has brought Alhindri back to the region where he slaughtered her adopted kin and has provided her not with the beloved fiddle of her former protector but an infernal instrument called the *Rebec Malevolenti*, crafted in the pits of Hell with the sole purpose to bring ruin upon mortals. With this instrument, Alhindri heedlessly summons forth the dead from their rest and causes them to descend like a plague upon the unsuspecting town of Raven nearby. Only with the destruction of the fiddle can the plague of zombies and worse be stopped.

The adventure begins as the PCs, who have already come to the town of Raven for their own reasons, make their way to the general store to gather supplies.

A FIDDLE AT DAWN

The early morning sun has barely peeked over the eastern horizon as you make your way through long shadows across the town square. The village is awakening around you as goodwives push their sleepy-eyed children out the door to begin the day's chores. The usual sounds of cock crows and dog barks are joined this morning by something unexpected. Floating lightly upon the morning breeze is the sound of a hauntingly beautiful melody, as if the world's saddest fiddler were out this dawn plying his bow to catgut in a dirge for the day to come. Who the mysterious player might be is unguessed and the music, though mournful, is not unpleasant.

Though it is morning, the PCs are assumed to be wearing their normal gear and equipment as befits an adventuring party. Their reasons for visiting the general store are unimportant and should just be to pick up some mundane supplies or equipment. Unfortunately, while there they learn that there is more to the fiddler's music than they know and that its effects have come to visit upon the town.

VISIT FROM GRAMMY

The storekeep and a local gaffer chat idly near the front counter talking about the strange music, which has apparently been heard across parts of town since before dawn, speculating as to who could be the source. The storekeep's wife stocks shelves while their gaggle of young girls run around playing chase. You once again eye the suit of fine plate armor that stands near the back of the store, wondering what kind of coin it would take to get the storekeep to part with it—you've heard him mention that it belonged to his wife's long-deceased grandfather from back when he fought for his country.

As one of the young girls opens the cellar door to fetch a bag of herbs for her mother, you hear her small child's voice suddenly exclaim with delight, "Grammy!?" to which the storekeep's wife patiently explains, "No, dear. You know Grammy and Grampy passed on from the fever last winter. She's not waiting in the cellar for you."

Out of the corner of your eye you notice that the arm of the suit of armor seems to shift and slightly raise, as if it had been dislodged and the whole thing was about to fall over forward, but you are distracted from further investigation by the sound of the heavy, slow tread of bare feet climbing the cellar stair and the look of delight still on the young girl's face as she shouts, "It is Grammy!" at something behind the cellar door that you can't see yet. As the suit of armor clatters to the floor at your feet and you see standing in the alcove behind it the worm-eaten corpse of what was once a gray-bearded old man, you can only think to yourself, "And this must be Grampy."

Then the screaming begins.

The map shows the floor plan of the general store. The shelves hold only mundane equipment and supplies, though the waist-high shelves and front counter do provide cover to anyone behind them. A PC can easily Leap over them or Climb onto them, but must succeed at a DC 13 Acrobatics check to Balance if they want to move around on one of the counters.

TRIVIAL 1

Creatures: The first of the undead brought forth by Alhindri's bone fiddle that the PCs encounter are indeed the zombies of Grammy and Grampy come back to visit their young folk. They crept into the store before light while the owners were busy elsewhere and instinctively took up hiding places as they had once done to play with their grandchildren. The sound of the young girls playing has brought them out of their hiding places but has also triggered their instinct to destroy all living creatures, so playtime is over. They lurch to attack whoever is closest. Hopefully this will be the PCs as the storekeep's wife grabs the young child and bolts for the stairs to the upper floor while the storekeep gathers up his four older girls and hustles them that way as well. The gaffer likewise scoots out the front door leaving the PCs to deal with the zombie menace. They attack and pursue until destroyed.

GRAMMY & GRAMPY

CREATURE -1

Zombie shamblers (2)

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +0; darkvision

Development: When the PCs have finished with the zombies, they can hear the sound of screams from out in the town square with a successful DC 15 Perception check. However, immediately afterward they automatically hear the shrill screams of the storekeep's wife and their five little girls coming from upstairs. Encourage the PCs to stick together unless they have more than four PCs as they decide if they will go outside to see what is going on or if they wish to head upstairs to face the more immediate threat.

LINGERING SHADOWS

TRIVIAL 1

If the PCs head upstairs in the general store, they find it still dark and shuttered from the previous night's repose. The sound of whimpering cries and shrill little screams come from the master bedroom. A single candle lights the room and just a hint of dawn light leaks through the heavily curtained window, making the whole area dim light. Across the room, behind the bed, huddle the storekeep and his entire family. They point wordlessly to the open closet door that stands near the exit. From within the closet, sinister shadows can be seen to move in unnatural ways.



General Store



First
Floor



Second
Floor

One square = 5 feet

Creature: Another dire visitor from the town cemetery has made its way into here. It is a lesser shadow, much like its normal brethren but weaker and more stunted in its power. It lurches forth to attack as soon as the PCs enter, trying to get at the helpless family but willing to take on adventurers if they interfere. As long as the room remains in dim light, the lesser shadow treats the entire room as a shadow and can Hide or end its Sneak in any square. If anyone thinks to open the curtain (the storekeep can do so if they PCs think to tell him), the bright dawn light floods into the room and removes this ability, plus means it must worry about its Shadow Dependency. In addition, it must make a DC 10 Will save each round to stay and fight or flee back into the closet and out through the walls of the house to find some shadowy corner of the town in which to hide. If it flees, it is not encountered again in this adventure.

LESSER SHADOW

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL UNDEAD

Perception +7, darkvision

Languages Necril

Skills Acrobatics +6, Stealth +9

Str -5, Dex +3, Con +2, Int -2, Wis +0, Cha +2

AC 15; Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +7

HP 15; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** light vulnerability; **Resistances** all 3 (except force, ghost touch, or positive; double resistance against non-magical)

Light Vulnerability An object shedding magical light (such as from the *light* spell) is treated as magical when used to attack the shadow.

Shadow Dependency A lesser shadow is sickened 1 for 1 round after any turn in which it doesn't end its turn in a shadow.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee  shadow hand +9 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d6+1 negative

Slink in Shadows The shadow can Hide or end its Sneak in a creature's or object's shadow.

Steal Shadow (divine, necromancy)  **Requirement** The lesser shadow hit a living creature with a shadow hand Strike on its previous action. **Effect** The lesser shadow pulls at the target's shadow, making the creature enfeebled 1. This is cumulative with other enfeebled

conditions from shadows, to a maximum of enfeebled 4. Enfeebled from Steal Shadow decreases by 1 every hour or ends when the lesser shadow is destroyed.

Development: If the PCs rescue the storekeep and his family, they receive a 10% discount off any items in the general store.

FIGHT OF THE OLD DOG

MODERATE 1

When the PCs emerge from the general store, whether they have defeated the zombies and lesser shadow within or not, they witness the following scene.

The mysterious fiddle plays on, barely audible above the ruckus that has arisen in the town square. Townsfolk flee everywhere with lurching undead horrors shambling along after them. Most people seem to be managing to lock themselves within their homes and businesses causing the walking dead to wander elsewhere in search of prey, but in the center of the square, where stands the old gazebo, a different scene unfolds. A number of disembodied, clawlike hands clamber across the ground towards the structure and up its rails. Within stands the town's mangy stray dog that has been adopted by the children. As the crawling hands approach menacingly the dog stands its ground growling at them and blocking the way towards a small group of children behind it who at the same time appear to be trying to get past the dog with their sticks and play swords in order to bravely defend it from the approaching horrors. None of the townsfolk seem to have noticed this yet, and it is only a matter of time before the dog and children find themselves in trouble.



Creatures: Just as it appears, the local mutt is trying to protect four small children from a group of four crawling hands, while the children try to protect their pet as well. If the PCs hurry, they will be able to intervene in time to save them. The crawling hands will turn on the newcomers while the dog will bolt causing the children to squeal and chase after it, leading them to safety.

CRAWLING HANDS (4)

(Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition))

Initiative Perception +5; lifesense 30 feet, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

CREATURE -1

Development: Once the crawling hands have been dealt with, the PCs can take stock of the situation around town. A few zombies wander hither and yon but without any apparent real motivation, and with most of the villagers safely locked up in their homes they are out of immediate danger. Checking with the sheriff reveals that he is away at one of the outlying farms this morning and most of his deputies are currently off duty tending to their own farming chores. There doesn't seem to be anyone around in any better position to defend the town than the PCs themselves. All of the walking dead are recognizable to various townspeople as their departed family and friends who are supposed to be safely interred in the town cemetery to the north. No one knows why they would be up and about like this.

NOW HIRING: ZOMBIE FIGHTERS, SOME EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

To the south of the square, the moneylenders have stationed their troop of bodyguards outside the door to their establishment, and this group of eight veteran warriors (statistics as **Guard**, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*) has dispatched a half dozen of the walking dead themselves. They put the finishing touches on a seventh as the PCs watch. One of the moneylenders leans out the second-floor window of his shop and shouts to the PCs that he will pay them 12 gp each if they will stay and defend his shop alongside his guards. At the same time, the haunting music continues to drift from the north and the sounds of additional shouts and screams can be heard from that direction.

If the PCs choose to take up post alongside the moneylenders' mercenaries, they receive a chorus of boos from any of the villagers watching from their windows. Every 10 minutes, another 1d4+1 **zombie shamblers** wander through the town square and attack while the sounds of battle elsewhere in town will eventually die down to an ominous silence with only the fiddle music as accompaniment. This can go on for days with the sheriff and all his deputies eventually arriving and falling to the endless waves of zombies. At some point, the PCs need to either give the town up for dead or head north to try and stop the fiddling that seems to be somehow connected to the zombie plague.

GUARD

(Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide)

Initiative Perception +7

CREATURE 1

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS

(Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition))

Initiative Perception +0; darkvision

CREATURE -1

If the PCs head north proceed with "Extra! Extra! Read All About It!" If they head south to reach the temple or some other area of town, see "A Slimy Skeleton in the Closet" for details of what is going on elsewhere.

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

MODERATE 1 OR SEVERE 1

This event occurs at the town's notice post at the east end of a covered bridge.

The town's notice post lies just ahead at the end of a covered bridge: a thick tree trunk, stripped of branches, sawn off at head height for a tall man, and set upright in the ground so that notices and broadsheets can be tacked to it for all to see. The young lad that you recognize as being responsible for hanging the notices crouches at the top of the post trying to stay out of reach of two clay-encrusted skeletons that swipe at him with jagged claws. His stack of bills and notices lies scattered on the ground. Sitting astride a skeletal horse nearby is another skeleton, this one armored in a rusted breastplate. A frayed noose dangles from its broken neck, and a cracked leather eye patch covers one eye socket. The other two skeletons likewise have the remains of nooses hanging from them.



Creatures: The town's posting boy has run afoul of a group of malevolent dead raised by the music of the *Rebec Malevolenti*. The bandit Kurchega was caught and hanged at the covered bridge by the townsfolk of Raven 40 years ago after plaguing the area with his bloody raids for an entire year. Two of his accomplices were hanged with him, and before he died he watched the townsfolk slaughter his prized mare. All were buried in the river embankment near the bridge in unmarked graves so that their memory would be forgotten by all. With the coming of the supernatural music, they have dug forth from their clay resting places. They came upon the posting boy unawares and have been making sport of him at Kurchega's orders until he grows bored and orders the kill. When they see the party, they turn to attack. If the PCs have been having an easy go of things so far, include the skeletal horse as a combatant. Otherwise it serves Kurchega as a mount but does not enter the fray as a combatant itself and likewise crumbles to dust when the bandit chief is destroyed.

KURCHEGA THE SKELETAL BANDIT CREATURE 2

Skeletal champion

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +8; darkvision

SKELETON GUARDS (2)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +2; darkvision

WEAK SKELETAL HORSE

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +8; darkvision

Development: If the posting boy is rescued, he immediately runs to his father's restaurant at the river's edge and tells him everything that transpires. The heroism of the PCs will then appear in tracts on the notice post over the next several days.

A SLIMY SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

TRIVIAL 1

This event occurs as the PCs reach a crossroads west of the covered bridge. Here the PCs run into Rufio, one of the acolytes (see "Raven's Rest" for stats) from the temple of the goddess of fate and prophecy, the deity venerated by the locals. He has a small cut across his

forehead and is much disheveled but otherwise seems none the worse for wear. He is running north towards the cemetery, but sags to his haunches out of breath in relief when he sees the PCs.

In between gasps for breath, he explains that Father Grimble and most of the acolytes went to the cemetery early this morning before the ghostly music started in order to prepare for a funeral. They have not returned. Just a short while ago a group of walking dead overran the temple and killed the other acolyte there while he fled out the back. He says he has to get to the cemetery to alert Father Grimble and bring him back. He says that on his way here he passed Councilor Murik's home and saw that they were having some sort of trouble. He kept going but promised he would send help as soon as he found Father Grimble. He now begs the PCs to head to Murik's house and help him while he goes to fetch the good father. He will not force the PCs to go that way but will give them a pouch of seven *scrolls of heal* (1st level) that he snatched before fleeing the temple if they agree to do so. He will also expend the last of his own *heal* spells to heal the PCs (assume he has enough to bring them all to maximum hit points). If the PCs refuse to help Councilor Murik, Rufio will not give them the scrolls, but will still heal them.



If the PCs agree to head south, Rufio tells them to not bother going to the temple as it is overrun. As soon as they help out the councilor, he asks them to join him up at the cemetery so that Father Grimble and the other acolytes can link up with them to sweep the undead from the town.

If the PCs head south to Councilor Murik's house, proceed with the following. If they instead follow the acolyte to the cemetery skip to "Raven's Rest".

The stately home of Councilor Murik stands among the trees beside the road. Several of the lower windows are broken and the occasional scream issues from within followed by the sound of shattering glass and breaking furniture. Soon the aged councilor himself hobbles out onto the front porch, slams the door behind him, and huddles behind a large flower urn to hide. Following him a slimy apparition that appears to be wearing the finery of a wealthy man—a wealthy man with a striking resemblance to the councilor himself—steps through the door as if it wasn't there and leaves a spot of viscous ooze upon the hardwood. As the dripping creature lurches towards the cowering councilor, you see that the ghostly image of a hatchet protrudes from the back of the apparition's head. When the councilor catches sight of you he shouts in a raspy, fear-choked voice, "Help me! I didn't do it! He thinks I'm my father!"

Creature: Councilor Murik is currently being menaced by the ectoplasmic remains of one of his own ancestors, Pecrit Murik, foully murdered many years ago and now come back to visit revenge upon the wrong descendant. The ectoplasmic creature attempts to slay Councilor Murik unless the PCs interpose themselves between it and the feeble old councilor. If the PCs do not do so, assume that the creature manages to finish the old man off in 3 rounds before wandering off to vent its rage elsewhere. If the PCs manage to damage the creature, it turns its attention towards them. The councilor's servants remain hidden in the house and do not emerge to assist until the battle is over.

PECRIT MURIK THE ECTOPLASMIC MAN CREATURE 1

UNIQUE | CE | MEDIUM | MINDLESS | UNDEAD

Perception +7, darkvision

Skills Athletics +7, Stealth +6

Str +4, Dex +1, Con +3, Int -5, Wis +1, Cha +3

AC 16; Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6

HP 20, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyze, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** precision 5; **Weaknesses** slashing 5

Speed 25 feet; air walk

Melee ♦ punch +9, **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning plus horrifying ooze

Divine Innate Spells DC 17; **Constant (4th)** air walk

Horrifying Ooze A creature hit by the ectoplasmic man's punch must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). On a critical success, it is temporarily immune to Horrifying Ooze for 1 minute.

Phase Lurch ♦ (move) The ectoplasmic man passes through a wall or other solid object. It can't move through a corporeal creature or end this action within a solid object. Any surface it moves through is coated with a thin, silvery mucus that lingers for 1 minute.

Development: If the ectoplasmic creature is defeated and Councilor Murik survives, the old politician emerges from hiding and thanks the PCs profusely for their aid. He sheepishly admits that the creature was undoubtedly his grandfather, Pecrit Murik, a vile and abusive drunk. According to family lore, the councilor's own father Alberit—himself dead now for over 40 years—waylaid his grandfather in the woods with a hatchet when he was drunk and buried him in a hidden grave somewhere on the property. The councilor has never known where the grave was or even if the legend was true, but based on the apparition that appeared seeking vengeance, it would seem that the old tale was true. Here the councilor clears his throat awkwardly and states that it would be quite an embarrassment to his family and the town if it was revealed that one of their councilors was the son of a murderer. He assures the PCs that he will do all he can to make their stay in Raven as welcoming as possible if they would, how shall we say, use the utmost discretion in any matters pertaining to what they have learned here. Regardless of their response, he then encourages them to hurry and help the acolyte who was heading to the cemetery to find Father Grimble and end this plague of undead.



RAVEN'S REST

The cemetery lies a short distance north of the town. If the PCs accompanied the acolyte, then omit the portion in parentheses from the following description.

The source of the day's trouble lies ahead: the Raven's Rest Cemetery. It rises from the moor like a well-tended garden of stone, rising beyond its gates past row upon row of headstones to a low hill crowned by a circle of ancient tomb vaults. The fiddling floats over the cemetery much louder than elsewhere in town and achieves an almost manic quality. Everywhere across the cemetery tombstones tumble over and the earth churns where things that ought to lie still struggle to emerge from the cold ground. Yet atop the hill a single figure can be seen racing around, jumping to and fro in time to the music. There lies your quarry, and a road runs straight to the top if only you can win past the emerging hordes of the unquiet dead. From the brush beside the gate steps a foul creature—obviously once a wolf—its skin hanging in ragged strips from its moldering hide with ribs showing through the gaps in its bloated, putrid flesh. There is fresh blood on its jaws, and the torn robes of a temple acolyte beside the road hide the remains of the wolf's recent handiwork.

If Rufio preceded the PCs here, he was paralyzed by the ghoul wolf when he attempted to enter the cemetery. If the party instead accompanied him here, then his stats are included under "Development" below (they include the *heal* spells that he may have cast when they first met). He does not know exactly where Father Grimble and the other acolytes were making their funeral preparations but assumes the high ground at the boneyard's center is as good a place to start looking as any. He will assist in any combats unless you feel the PCs are having too easy a time of it, in which case he hangs back and stays out of any fights.

Creature: A wolf died in the brush near the edge of the road after running afoul of a hunter's trap and developing infections in its wounds. With the summons of the *Rebec Malevolenti*, it has arisen as a ghoul wolf and attacks anyone it meets, fighting until destroyed.

Low 1

GHOUL WOLF

N MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

CREATURE 2

Perception +7; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +6, Stealth +8, Survival +8

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2

AC 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

HP 24, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 35 feet

Melee  jaws +10, **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing plus ghoul fever and Knockdown and paralysis

Consume Flesh  (**Requirements** The ghoul wolf is adjacent to the corpse of a creature that died within the last hour. **Effect** The ghoul wolf devours a chunk of the corpse and regains 2d6 Hit Points. It can regain Hit Points from any given corpse only once.)

Ghoul Fever (disease) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 16;

Stage 1 carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 2d6 negative damage and regains half as many Hit Points from all healing (1 day); **Stage 3** as stage 2 (1 day); **Stage 4** 2d6 negative damage and gains no benefit from healing (1 day); **Stage 5** as stage 4 (1 day); **Stage 6** dead, and rises as a ghoul the next midnight.

Pack Attack The ghoul wolf's Strikes deal 1d4 extra damage to creatures within reach of at least two of the ghoul wolf's allies.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) Any living, non-elf creature hit by a ghoul wolf's attack must



succeed at a Fortitude save or become paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save.

Swift Leap ➔ (move) The ghoul wolf jumps up to half its Speed. This movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Development: If the PCs did not accompany Rufio the acolyte here, then he is lying wounded by the edge of the road where he fell after being attacked by the ghoul wolf. He is currently paralyzed, but assume he succeeds on his saving throw after 2 more rounds. He has a single *minor healing potion* on him (which the PCs could use to cure his wounds if they so choose) plus the pouch of scrolls if he did not already give it to them. If he was with the PCs all along, then he is not wounded.

RUFIO THE ACOLYTE

CREATURE 1

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +7

Languages Common

Skills Crafting +5, Diplomacy +4, Medicine +5, Occultism +5, Religion +7

Str +1, Dex +2, Con -1, Int +2, Wis +4, Cha +3

Items crossbow (10 bolts), dagger, *minor healing potion*, religious symbol, 7 scrolls of heal (1st level)

AC 15; Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +9

HP 16 (currently 10)

Speed 25 feet

Melee ➔ dagger +4 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+1 piercing

Ranged ➔ crossbow +4 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Ranged ➔ dagger +4 (agile, thrown 10 ft., versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+1 piercing

Divine Prepared Spells DC 17, attack +9; **1st** bless, heal (x4), mindlink; **Cantrips (1st)** divine lance, guidance, light, read aura, stabilize

Cleric Domain Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 17; **1st** read fate

CEMETERY HILL

EXTREME 1

The Raven's Rest cemetery is large and sprawling with multiple pathways leading through ranks of headstones, but one path in particular leads directly to the crown of the hill at its center. Everywhere the PCs look they see graves churning as their occupants slowly unearth themselves or open graves where the

occupants have already departed. Straying from the path or exploring the cemetery has a 50% chance of an encounter with an undead creature each round (see table in the "Rebec Malevolent" sidebar to determine what kind). Searching for Father Grimble and the missing acolytes will likewise cause these random encounters.

When the PCs climb the hill read the following.

A cluster of aged stone vaults stand atop the hill overgrown with creepers and high wild grass. It seems this portion of the cemetery is older and gets less tending than other areas. Barely visible in the tall grass are a number of headstones, cracked and crumbling with age and canted at wild angles from their long years exposed to the elements. Dancing among them like a vision out of a fever dream is an elven maid. She is barefoot with long, lithe limbs and wears a tattered and stained hospital shift and the ragged remains of a straitjacket that no longer restrains her. In her arms she holds a narrow-bodied gypsy fiddle which she plays energetically as she dances about. Her face is the very picture of transported bliss as her eyes dance with gaiety, and unbidden laughs actually burst forth from her mouth from time to time.

Though the elf may be the image of grace and joy, the effects of her playing cannot be denied, as rotten and skeletal arms continue to rise from the ground around her, clawing their way to the surface as they sway in perfect time with the frenetic music.

The stone vaults all remain sealed, so no undead have come forth from them yet. The headstones around her are dated 85 years ago and simply say "Unknown Wanderer. Foully murdered." Wanderer is the name for the enigmatic gypsy bands that wander the North. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge remembers tales of Alhindri's band massacred near Raven and of the lone elf maid survivor who never spoke a word and was eventually locked up and forgotten. The headstones do not impede movement but do provide lesser cover to Small creatures.

Creatures: Here at the summit of the hill the PCs have found Alhindri, totally enthralled in joy as she plays the fiddle provided for her by the Dark Stranger. She is blissfully unaware of the effects it is having on the surrounding graveyard and cannot be interrupted in her playing. And since the fiddle provides her with unnatural vigor, she will go on playing it for days



Cemetery Hill





without stop until she actually dies of dehydration. As the PCs will soon discover, attacks upon Alhindri herself are pointless as it is the *Rebec Malevolenti* that must be destroyed to end the zombie plague. In the meantime, concealed among the tall grass at the points marked on the map are the skeletal remains of her former gypsy companions. They still wear the tattered remains of their distinctive Wanderer garb and rise up to defend Alhindri from anyone that attempts to interfere with her playing. She Fiddling Jigs and dances about atop the hill, aware enough only to try to avoid moving through a threatened square that could provoke an Attack of Opportunity. She does not otherwise react to the PCs' presence. There are a total of seven skeletons guarding Alhindri. Every 2 rounds, another gypsy skeleton emerges from the earth. This is a three-action activity with the move trait, during

which the skeleton is flat-footed to all creatures though it is concealed by the tall grass. Choose the spot of its emergence at random. When the *Rebec Malevolenti* is destroyed, all remaining undead in the cemetery and nearby town fall dead once again and no more emerge.

SKELETON GUARDS (7)

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +8; darkvision

CREATURE -1

ALHINDRI

CREATURE 2

UNIQUE **N** **MEDIUM** **ELF** **HUMANOID**

Perception +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven, Wanderer

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +8, Performance +15, Wanderer Lore +5

Str +1, Dex +3, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +4

Items *Rebec Malevolenti*

AC 16; Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +8

HP 30; **Immunities** controlled, death effects, disease, fatigued, frightened, grabbed, immobilized, paralyze, poison, restrained, sleep; **Resistances** physical 5 (except magical)

Fascinated Alhindri is fascinated as long as she plays the *Rebec Malevolenti* (her Perception and skill modifiers reflect this condition).

Undying Music ♦ (necromancy) **Requirements** Alhindri is playing the *Rebec Malevolenti*; **Trigger** Alhindri is reduced to 0 HP; **Effect** Alhindri gains 10 temporary Hit Points, is not knocked out, and does not gain the dying condition.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ fist +8 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+1 bludgeoning

Fiddling Jig ♦ (auditory, concentrate, manipulate, move) **Requirements** Alhindri has a fiddle and bow in her hands; **Effect** Alhindri Strides twice and Performs on her fiddle.

Tireless Dance While playing the *Rebec Malevolenti*, if Alhindri is ever slowed or stunned so that she has fewer than 2 actions when she begins her turn, she immediately gains 2 additional actions she can only use for Fiddling Jig.

Minor Artifact: *Rebec Malevolenti*

REBEC MALEVOLENTI

ITEM 20

RARE | ARTIFACT | INVESTED | MAGICAL | NECROMANCY

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk 1

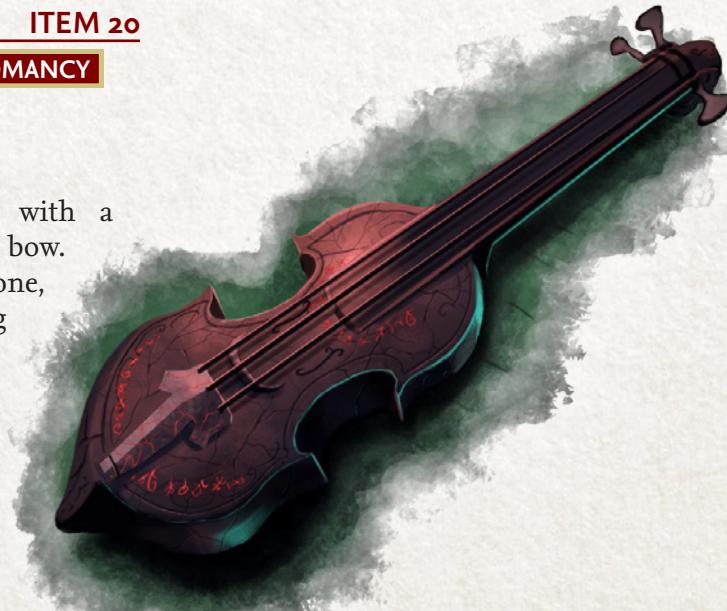
This is a three-stringed fiddle made with a narrowboat-shaped body and a horsehair bow. Its finish has the cracked polish of old bone, and when stared at intently tiny glowing red letters can be seen to swirl about just beneath its varnish, never staying still long enough to be read.

While you play the fiddle, you gain the following abilities:

- A +1 item bonus to AC and resistance 5 to all physical (except magical).
- **Immunities** controlled, death effects, disease, fatigued, frightened, grabbed, immobilized, paralyze, poison, restrained, sleep.
- **Fascinated** You are fascinated as long as you play the *Rebec Malevolenti* and must use your actions to continue to play the instrument.
- **Undying Music** ♦ (necromancy) **Trigger** You are reduced to 0 HP; **Effect** You gain 10 temporary Hit Points, are not knocked out, and do not gain the dying condition.
- **Tireless Dance** If you are ever slowed or stunned so that you have fewer than 2 actions when you begin your turn, you immediately become quickened. You can use the extra action only to Perform with the *Rebec Malevolenti*.

The effects and powers of the rebec cannot be dispelled or nullified by magical silence.

Activate ♦ envision; **Effect** The primary purpose of the rebec is to animate the dead to wretched unlife. Each round that the rebec is played, any corpses within range of its sound (including those buried in this range) are subject to reanimation. Even corpses that have rotted away can return as incorporeal undead. For each round of playing in an area where dead bodies are available, roll 1d6 to determine the type of undead creature that is created. These creatures do not attack the fiddler but are not otherwise under the fiddler's



command; they remain true to form, attacking living creatures as opportunity presents. They remain animated until destroyed or the rebec is destroyed, at which point all previously animated undead return to death once again.

D6	UNDEAD TYPE
1-2	skeleton
3-4	zombie
5	ectoplasmic man
6	creature of GM's choice (lesser shadow or ghoul wolf in this adventure)

Destruction The rebec can be targeted and destroyed like any object. It has the following statistics: AC 18; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +8; **Hardness** 8, HP 32; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage. When reduced to 0 Hit Points, it crumbles to dust and is destroyed.

Epilogue

When the *Rebec Malevolenti* is destroyed, all undead created by it are immediately destroyed as well. The other powers it provides likewise end immediately. If still alive, Alhindri stops in her tracks. The expression of jubilation and total abandon vanishes from her face instantly and is instead replaced by the ashen pallor that once again leaches the color from her cheeks. She is visibly reduced to a shell of her former self becoming completely unresponsive and listless. She offers no resistance and can easily be slain or led about. Alhindri has become one of the forlorn once again. The twisted work of the Dark Stranger is over for now. Who he was or what his purpose may have been remains a mystery

to be solved for another day. The townsfolk recognize Alhindri from tales of the gypsy massacre and will wish to lynch her to prevent her from being able to come back and threaten the town again at some time in the future. If the PCs can succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression and change their attitude from hostile towards her to indifferent, they agree to let the sheriff lock her up until she can be transported back to the asylum from which she escaped.

If the PCs search for Father Grimble and the missing acolytes, they find that one of the burial vaults at the eastern edge of the cemetery has been blocked shut with broken headstones piled against the door. This can be cleared in a matter of minutes, but clearly visible in the dust before this pile is a pair of cloven hoof prints much too large to be a goat or other natural creature. Father Grimble can only state that as he and his acolytes entered the vault in the predawn darkness to prepare it for the coming funeral, the heavy door slammed shut behind them and became held fast. They then began to hear the eerie fiddling and knew something foul was afoot.





The Fiddler's Lament

Music Fit to Wake the Dead!

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast, it's true, but some music truly is the devil's music. An orphan raised by gypsies, now full-grown but still lost and alone, must face once more the tragic curse that destroyed her past. Will her darkling music bring ruin to the village she now calls her home? Can the heroes earn the townsfolk's trust, or must innocence be sacrificed for the heroes to save town from the mysterious hauntings that plague a village huddled in the shadow of an accursed ruin?

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