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STRANGE SHELTER

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INTRODUCTION

This is a mini-adventure for four to five 6th-level characters. You (the DM) need the D&D rulebooks, including the Player's Handbook and the Monster Manual to run this adventure; the Dungeon Master's Guide will help. This scenario utilizes the D&D 5E rules. To get started, print out the adventure. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation and plot (maps are in the appendices). Text that appears in white is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The heroes are in the middle of a long journey, passing through a semi-wilderness area. The area was controlled by goblinoids until recently, and some are said still to prowl the area.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters take shelter from a storm in an abandoned farmhouse that is not what it seems. During the night, a ghost uses their dreams to take them back in time to the destruction of the farmhouse and the slaughter of its inhabitants to give the heroes a chance to prevent it.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure is not your typical one in that it does not have multiple hooks by which the PCs get involved. It is to be used as an interesting scenario the characters encounter while traveling from one location to another.

Unlucky travelers. The PCs are traveling and are some distance from the nearest settlement. The only signs of civilization are the occasional frontier-style farmstead; moreover, even one of those hasn't been sighted for some hours. As the overcast, dark day is drawing to a close, suddenly a loud peal of thunder booms overhead and drops begin to sprinkle the characters. It is apparent that the sky is preparing to unleash a deluge; the cold wind will make it considerably unpleasant for the heroes to be out in it. In fact, the clouds seem to be taking a funnel shape; a tornado might be possible.

PART I: BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

THE STORM AND THE SHELTER

The PCs should be prompted to find a place to weather the brewing storm. But there seems to be no place to find shelter. Then, up ahead, the group sights what seem to be the remains of a medium-sized farmstead, made from stone. Apparently deserted, it shows the marks of a fire, because only half the roof remains. All the walls are standing, though, and the sturdy stone walls will afford surprisingly good shelter from the brewing storm.

The storm the heroes find themselves in is one of rare ferocity. It has come up quickly, and they have a decision to make: seek shelter in the house or face the storm. You should make it clear that staying out in the storm will mean a miserable night at best and a dangerous night at worst. If they seek Shelter, go to **Staying in the Farmhouse**, on page 4. If they stay in the storm, go to **Facing the Storm**, on page 7, both in the next section.

PART 2: THE STRANGENESS

STAYING IN THE FARM HOUSE

If they do take the shelter, the fun really begins. They are able to find enough dry wood before the rain fully starts to light a pleasant fire and can make themselves comfortable enough to get a good night's sleep. If they set a watch, have the watchman make a Wisdom saving throw DC 20 or fall asleep. Have him continue to make it periodically until he fails. Elves are immune to this effect and may miss out on the encounter (DM's decision). Alternately, the DM may decide that they can take part because of some peculiar quality of their trance or the magic in the farmhouse. Read this to the PCs who are asleep:

After falling into a fitful sleep, you find yourself being shaken awake by a comely young woman. She is clutching a baby in swaddling clothes to her breast and is dressed in a rustic costume. "Please help, me, travelers," she pleads. "Another attack! My husband Alexander and my brother are away to the south, and little Agatha and I are in grave danger. I gave you shelter from the storm. Please defend us--they are approaching the farm, the cursed foul raiding creatures!" A look around indicates that something is strange: the house is fully restored, as it must have looked when it was lived in. The roof is whole, there is no fire damage, and the wood floor is neat and swept. Before you can get your bearings, however, you see through the window torches approaching from out of the woods. Guttural shouts and howls reveal that the torches are born by goblins and orcs... and things larger than orcs. "Please help us!" the woman wails, tears streaming from her attractive eyes.

They have a decision to make. If they help the woman, go to **Defending the Homestead**, on page 6. If they flee or otherwise do not help the woman, go to **Fleeing**, on page 6.



DEFENDING THE HOMESTEAD

If they stay they must face the monsters. The fight will be difficult, and the attack comes in two waves. The map of the environs in which the attacks take place is in the appendix. Both attack waves come from the woods in the north of the map. Place the monsters and PCs as you see fit and as makes sense.

Wave I of the Attack

The first wave of the assault on the farmhouse consists of a wave of goblins and a troll, sent by the orc war chief who is hiding in the woods, waiting to see how the first wave of the assault proceeds.

1 troll (see MM p. 291)

1 goblin boss (see MM p. 166)

9 goblins (see MM p. 166)

If the troll is slain, the goblin boss is killed, and 3 of the goblins are killed, the remaining goblins will flee. The troll will fight to the death. The goblin boss will flee if the troll is slain and 4 goblins are dead.

Wave 2 of the Attack

The PCs will have barely 5 minute's respite before wave 2 of the attack begins. Annoyed at the failure of wave I, the war chief and his henchmen mount an assault.

1 orc war chief (see MM p. 246)

1 orc Eye of Gruumsh (see MM p. 247)

3 orcs (see MM p. 246)

2 ogres (see MM p. 237)

The dark folk attack with ferocity and employ tactics on an individual level, but they generally do not employ group tactics, unless the war chief specifically directs them to do so. If both the War Chief and the Eye of Gruumsh fall, the remaining orcs will flee. An ogre will not flee unless the War Chief, Eye of Gruumsh, and the other ogre has been slain. The War Chief and the Eye of Gruumsh will not flee unless all of their allies have been killed.

If a PC dies during either wave of the assault, he or she must succeed at a Constitution saving throw DC 15 or actually die; if he succeeds, he awakens in the ruined farmhouse with the storm still raging. He will have gained a level of exhaustion which will remain until he has completed three long rests, because the horrific memory of death has shaken his confidence. Should all the PCs die, go to **Failure** in the **Concluding the Adventure section**, on page 8.

If the PCs succeed at rebuffing both assault waves, go to **Success** in the **Concluding the Adventure section**, on page 8.

If they flee during either assault, go to **Fleeing**, on this page.

FLEEING

Read this to the PCs if they avoid the fight or flee from it:

You turn tail, and, like cowards, flee the place, out the backdoor and into the night. As you stumble away from the restored, lit farmhouse and into the woods, the pelting of

rain awakens you. With bleary eyes, you find you have sleep-walked into the raging storm.

The obvious death of the young goodwife and her baby should weigh on their conscious; if they are good their gods will not be pleased. Paladins and clerics may have to atone. Good aligned characters will be haunted by bad dreams for some time to come: every night for two weeks, they will have to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion because of tiredness and guilt from their bad dreams. Plus, they will have to face the storm. **Go to Facing the Storm**, on this page.

FACING THE STORM

If the heroes do not take the shelter or they flee the shelter, pelt them with all the fury of the storm. Use the rules for strong wind and heavy precipitation on page 110 of the DMG, but PCs caught in the storm must succeed at a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or suffer one level of exhaustion. Should you choose that the storm spawns a tornado, PCs in the path of the tornado must succeed at a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 24 (8d6) damage. The storm lasts for 6 hours. After they suffer in the storm, go to **Failure** in the **Concluding the Adventure section**, on page 8.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

SUCCESS

Read the following to the PCs if they successfully defended the farmhouse:

You stand breathing hard, a bit battered but victorious, and satisfied in the knowledge that you have saved the young goodwife and her child. "Here, come with me. You deserve a reward." She leads you into a back room. Shifting aside a trunk, she removes a loose floorboard and takes out a box. Inside the box you see five large gems, glittering green in the map light. With gratitude on her face, she says, "Here, take them. You've earned them. My babe and I can rest easy now for the rest of the long night." As you reach for the treasure, you suddenly awaken. The storm has passed and dawn is beaming through the dilapidated walls of the burnt farmhouse. It was all a dream... or was it?

If the PCs had this dream, they can go to the location revealed in the dream, pry up the

floorboard, and find the box from the dream. Inside are five emeralds, each worth 100 sps, and an old but still-full vial, which will prove to be a potion of healing. Read the following.

You aren't sure, but as you take the items from the box, the wind whistling through the holes in the wall seems to say, "Thank youuuuuu." You have a strange feeling of satisfaction.

If the heroes for whatever reason did not have the dream but decide to thoroughly search the ruined farmhouse, it will take a successful Wisdom (perception) check DC 25 to find the box, if they are searching in the right room. They won't hear any words in the wind.

FAILURE

Read the following to the PCs only if they failed to defend the farmhouse:

You have a strong feeling that you have failed somehow, and it plagues you. You put distance between yourself and the ruined farmhouse as soon as you can and continue on your journey, but you do so with a heavy heart.

The PCs may be damaged or suffering from exhaustion and bad dreams at this point, depending on how they arrived at this section. It should be clear to them that they have missed an opportunity to right a wrong. They are free to continue on their original journey.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

It is very possible that this mini-adventure won't spawn future adventures that relate to it. The characters may simply journey on to their destination, although memories of this event, either positive or negative, are likely to stick with them. Energetic PCs may wish to attempt to uncover the identity of the original owners of the farmhouse and learn about their history and demise. These details are left to you as the DM but could well be used as hooks for future adventures.

APPENDICES

MAP (1 square equals 5 feet)



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